

WELCOME TO CARNARVON GORGE

Take an unforgettable journey deep into a spectacular steep-sided gorge, where towering white sandstone cliffs envelop a creek-side oasis. Let every twist and turn of boulder-strewn Carnarvon Creek reveal a splendid scene, new plant or amazing animal. Venture deep into cool, lush side-gorges, their subtly-coloured walls carved by water and time. Awaken your senses and nurture your spirit discovering the wealth of cultural and natural treasures of this very special park.

Hasten slowly in this wild place. Let the feeling of peace and tranquillity enter the spirit. Breathe deeply and enjoy the scents of the bush.

Photographer Duncan McDermant, 1978

We acknowledge the long and ongoing connection Aboriginal people have with this significant cultural heritage place and ask that you explore the country with care and respect.

Living and working on a remote national park is not without its challenges. However, the opportunity to protect and conserve one of Queensland's most spectacular national parks is a privilege that I, and my fellow rangers, appreciate every day.

Ranger Mark



Photo: Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt

GETTING TO THE GORGE

Feel the excitement build as you drive across plains towards cliffs rising above the distant tree-line. Carnarvon Gorge is approximately 740km north-west of Brisbane, 450km south-west of Rockhampton, 246km north of Roma and 241km south-east of Emerald.

Carnarvon Gorge is remote so expect some challenging conditions along the way. There are unsealed sections of road within the national park and Carnarvon Creek rises rapidly after rain, cutting access roads. If it's flooded, forget it! Before you set out, check road conditions at 131940.qld.gov.au or phone 13 19 40.

STAY A WHILE

Enjoy Carnarvon Gorge your way. Tackle an adventurous walk, relax over a picnic or explore along the creek—this is a special place that will entice, inspire and recharge you. Spend a few days exploring Carnarvon Gorge and discover its many secrets.

Set up your home away from home in the leafy Carnarvon Gorge camping area during the Easter, winter and spring Queensland school holidays or hike your gear into Big Bend for a bush camping experience. Book your camp site well in advance at qld.gov.au/camping.

At any time of year you can stay just outside the park at Takarakka Bush Resort, a 4km drive from the Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Centre. The Carnarvon Gorge Wilderness Lodge, 3km from the visitor centre, is open from 1 March to 31 October. Both resorts have cabins and Takarakka also offers camping facilities with powered sites and communal kitchens.

Photo: © Michael O'Connor



Take a torch and go spotlighting in the gorge at night. Be very quiet and avoid sudden movements. Listen for the calls of yellow-bellied gliders as they head out to feed.

Ranger Russell



Camping in Carnarvon Gorge Camping Area (top); yellow-bellied glider (above left); Picnicking at Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Area (left)

Photos: Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt (top); Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt (above left); Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt (left)

REST AND RELAX

Rejuvenate in a green oasis beneath tall eucalypts and palms amid grazing kangaroos and chattering birds after your long hot day on the road or after exploring the gorge's many sites. The lush and inviting Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Area has plenty of cool shady spots where you can rest and refresh.

Enjoy a picnic or cook up a storm on a gas barbecue. You might see whiptail wallabies grazing, apostle birds squabbling, busy fairy-wrens snapping up insects or a rummaging echidna.

What was that bird you saw or the little orchid you spied beside the track? Satisfy your curiosity by exploring the Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Centre.

VENTURE ON FOOT

Take your time exploring deep into Carnarvon Gorge on foot. Delight in the dazzling colours reflected in the sparkling waters of Carnarvon Creek as you stroll along its shady banks on short walks or discover hidden wonders tucked beneath towering sandstone walls and deep inside cool narrow side gorges on longer walks. Soak up the magnificent views over the luscious green gorge below a lookout or answer the call of adventure and trek some or all of the 87km Carnarvon Great Walk. Wind up towering slopes and out onto the rugged plateaus of the Great Dividing Range—the aptly-named 'Roof of Queensland', the source of many great rivers.

SHORT WALKS

Nature Trail

1.5km return from the Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Area

Spot lots of wildlife from the shady banks of Carnarvon Creek. Look for turtles basking in the sun, and if you're quiet, you might spy an elusive platypus. For the best wildlife watching visit at dusk or dawn.



Mickey Creek Gorge

3km return from Mickey Creek car park

Wander along Mickey Creek and into narrow side-gorges where walking changes to an off-track adventure. Here you can look for swamp wallabies resting from the heat. Rocky sections of the track are slippery and caution is needed on creek crossings. The formed track ends 1.5km from the Mickey Creek car park.

Baloon Cave

1km return from Baloon Cave car park

Stroll among Carnarvon fan palms and ancient cycads to a fine example of stencilled Aboriginal rock art. Baloon Cave is located within a gap in Clematis Ridge, used by Aboriginal people as an entry point to the gorge for thousands of years. This track is suitable for wheelchair users who have someone to assist them.

Rock Pool

600m return from Rock Pool car park or 3.6km from the Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Area


Linger in the shade of fig and casuarina trees watching for fish and turtles, or take a refreshing dip on a hot day. Carved from the bed of Carnarvon Creek by the turbulent water of past floods, the Rock Pool is the only place in Carnarvon Gorge where you can go swimming.


Exploring Carnarvon Creek (left); Mickey Creek Gorge walk (below)

Photos (left to right): Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt; © John Augusteyn




CONNECT WITH QUEENSLAND NATIONAL PARKS

 queenslandnationalparks.com.au/carnarvon_gorge

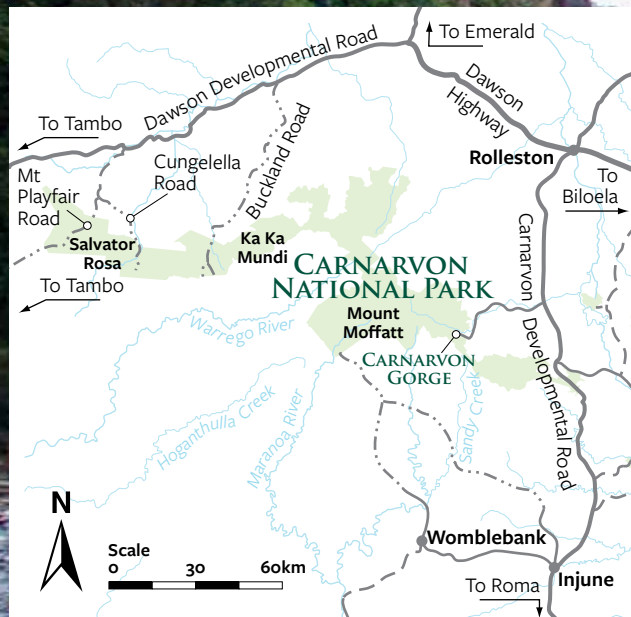
 book at qld.gov.au/camping

 check npsr.qld.gov.au/park-alerts for park access, closures and conditions

 facebook.com/qldnationalparks

 @QldParks; #QLDParks

For help with planning your holiday, visit queensland.com



Front cover photo: Robert Ashdown © Queensland Government
Back cover photo: © Robert Ashdown

©State of Queensland 2016.
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service,
Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing.
BP2173 June 2016

Printed on eco-friendly paper to save energy and resources.



Photo: © Robert Ashdown

LONGER WALKS

The main gorge walking track

Criss-cross Carnarvon Creek as it winds 9.7km to the tranquil waters of Big Bend. Explore side-tracks leading to narrow, hidden gorges and timeless rock art sites. This track is mostly flat, although you must step from rock to rock across the creek and some side-tracks are steep.

At Big Bend the graded track system ends and the remote hiking trail of the Carnarvon Great Walk begins.

Boolimba Bluff

6.4km return

Discover what lies above the cliff line. Scale the steep slopes and be rewarded with views out towards distant ranges at Boolimba Bluff, towering 200m above Carnarvon Creek. Walk through spotted gum woodland, rainforest scrub and stands of budgeroo in the early morning rays to best enjoy the gorge's most diverse and only lookout track.

Moss Garden

7km return

Beneath tree ferns straining for sunlight, a small waterfall tumbles over a rock ledge into an icy pool, a perfect place to seek refuge from the heat. Here water dripping constantly from the sandstone sustains a lush, green carpet of mosses, ferns and liverworts.

Boolimba Bluff is the perfect spot to capture a great photo of the rising sun splashing colour along the gorge's white cliffs.
Ranger Tony

Amphitheatre

8.6km return

Discover a secret oasis. Hidden inside the gorge walls is a 60m deep chamber gouged from the rock by running water. This is a place for quiet contemplation—the towering stone walls and natural skylight create an awe-inspiring atmosphere within.

Wards Canyon

9.2km return

Be enticed into cool and inviting Wards Canyon on a hot day. Climb the short, steep track winding through spotted gums, past a small waterfall and into a beautiful side-gorge, sheltering the world's largest fern, the king fern *Angiopteris evecta*. These impressive green 'dinosaurs' have strong links with the ancient flora of Gondwanan origin.

Art Gallery

10.8km return

Nurture your spirit gazing at over 2000 engravings, ochre stencils and free-hand paintings adorning the 62m long sandstone walls of this significant Aboriginal site. The Art Gallery contains some of the best examples of stencil art in Australia.

Cathedral Cave

18.2km return

This massive wind-eroded overhang sheltered Aboriginal people for thousands of years. Admire the panorama of rock imagery adorning its walls—reflecting the rich cultural life of those who gathered here.

Boowinda Gorge

18.4km return

Rock-hop into a sculpted side-gorge 100m upstream of Cathedral Cave. The first kilometre of this boulder-strewn gorge is the most spectacular with its sculpted walls of moss covered sandstone.

Big Bend—end of main walking track

19.4km return

Visit a natural pool nestled beneath looming sandstone walls in Carnarvon Creek. Rest here in the shade of large spotted gums and watch catfish and turtles swim in the calm waters of the upper reaches of Carnarvon Creek. A composting toilet and picnic table are provided. You can camp here all year round.

REMOTE HIKING

Pack your hiking gear and take on the remote sections of the Carnarvon Great Walk linking the Carnarvon Gorge and Mount Moffatt sections of Carnarvon National Park. You'll need 6–7 days, good preparation and high-level bushwalking experience to complete this amazing journey through spectacular and remote sandstone country. Organise your camping permit at qld.gov.au/camping and purchase a map before you head out. Complete a bushwalking advice form and leave a copy with someone responsible before you depart.

GUIDED ADVENTURES

Treat yourself and enhance your Carnarvon Gorge adventure.

Guided tours are offered by commercial operators—just search on the Internet for Carnarvon Gorge guided tours.

OTHER TOP SPOTS TO VISIT

If you enjoy Carnarvon Gorge, why not visit some other wonders in Carnarvon National Park—it covers nearly 3000km² of some of Central Queensland's wildest scenery.

Dip your toes into the spring-fed waters of Nogoa River, winding its way through a broad, picturesque valley beneath craggy sandstone outcrops at Salvator Rosa. Drive 168km from Springsure or 135km from Tambo via Mount Playfair Road. 4WD is required.

Relax at the peaceful camping spot near Bunbuncundoo Springs in Ka Ka Mundi where more than 30km of remote sandstone escarpments and plateaus dominate the skyline. Drive 130km south-west of Springsure. 4WD is recommended.

Venture by 4WD to explore Mount Moffatt where sandstone monoliths tower above a carpet of open woodland. Basalt-crested plateaus form a backdrop to this subtle but spectacular landscape at the headwaters of the Maranoa River. Drive 220km north of Mitchell.

Access roads to all sections of Carnarvon National Park have unsealed sections which are slippery when wet and can become impassable after heavy rain. Take care to avoid stock on unfenced roads and leave gates as you find them.

EXPLORE RESPECTFULLY

Unfortunately, some cultural sites within national parks have been damaged through deliberate or natural means, with some rock art ruined or even completely destroyed. Help us work with the local Aboriginal people to protect this precious heritage. When visiting rock art sites please remember the art is very fragile and can be permanently damaged if touched—even by accident. Enjoy a close look, but please remain on boardwalks where provided.

PACK THE ESSENTIALS

- Plenty of drinking water—walking up the exposed gorge can be hot and thirsty work.
- First-aid kit—you never know when you might need it.
- Sunscreen, hat, appropriate clothing and good walking shoes.
- Strong plastic bags or containers to remove your rubbish. No bins are provided.
- Satellite phone, Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), topographic map, navigation equipment and sterilisation tablets if taking on the remote sections of the Carnarvon Great Walk.
- Camera for recording the wonderful memories of your unforgettable visit to this awesome park.

EMERGENCY!

There is no mobile phone reception at Carnarvon Gorge. A pay phone is provided near the Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Centre. Call (Triple Zero) 000 on the pay phone or your satellite mobile phone.

Photo: Robert Ashby / Art © Qld Govt

CARNARVON GORGE CARNARVON NATIONAL PARK

CHERISH
timelessly



Queensland
national parks
keep DISCOVERING





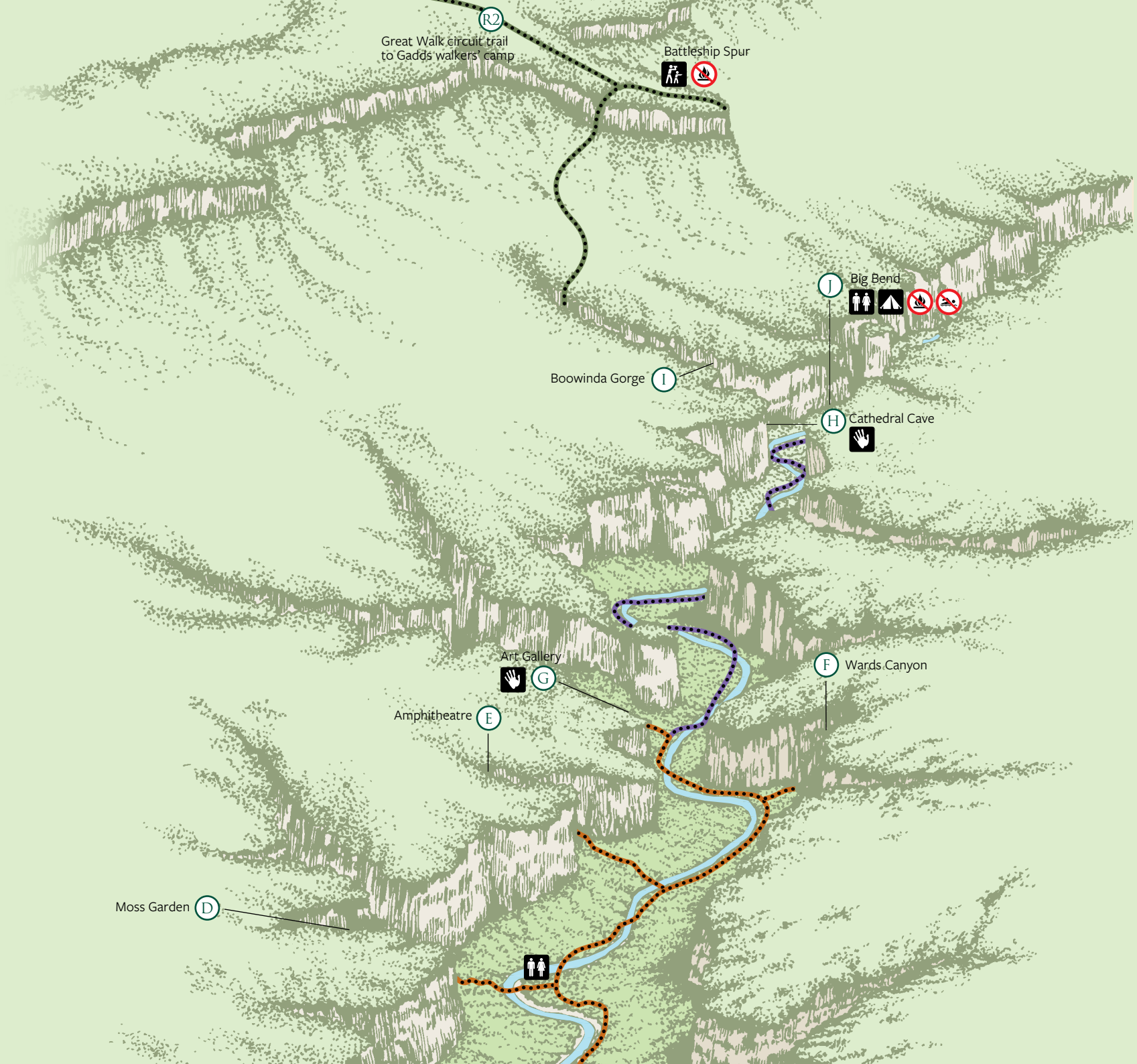
Map not to scale

Legend

- QPWS estate
- Private land
- Waterways
- Road
- Wifi access
- Parking
- Toilets
- Picnic table
- Lookout
- Camping
- Shower
- Barbecue
- Accommodation
- Restaurant
- General store
- Rock art
- Car camping
- Caravan site
- Swimming
- No swimming
- No diving
- No fires

Track and trail legend

- Class 2 track
- Class 3 track
- Class 4 track
- Class 5 track (Carnarvon Great Walk)



CARNARVON GREAT WALK

Head out on a hiking adventure along the rugged trails of the spectacular and remote landscapes typical of the Sandstone Wilderness on the 6–7 day, 87km Carnarvon Great Walk. Purchase a Carnarvon Great Walk topographic map before you head out.

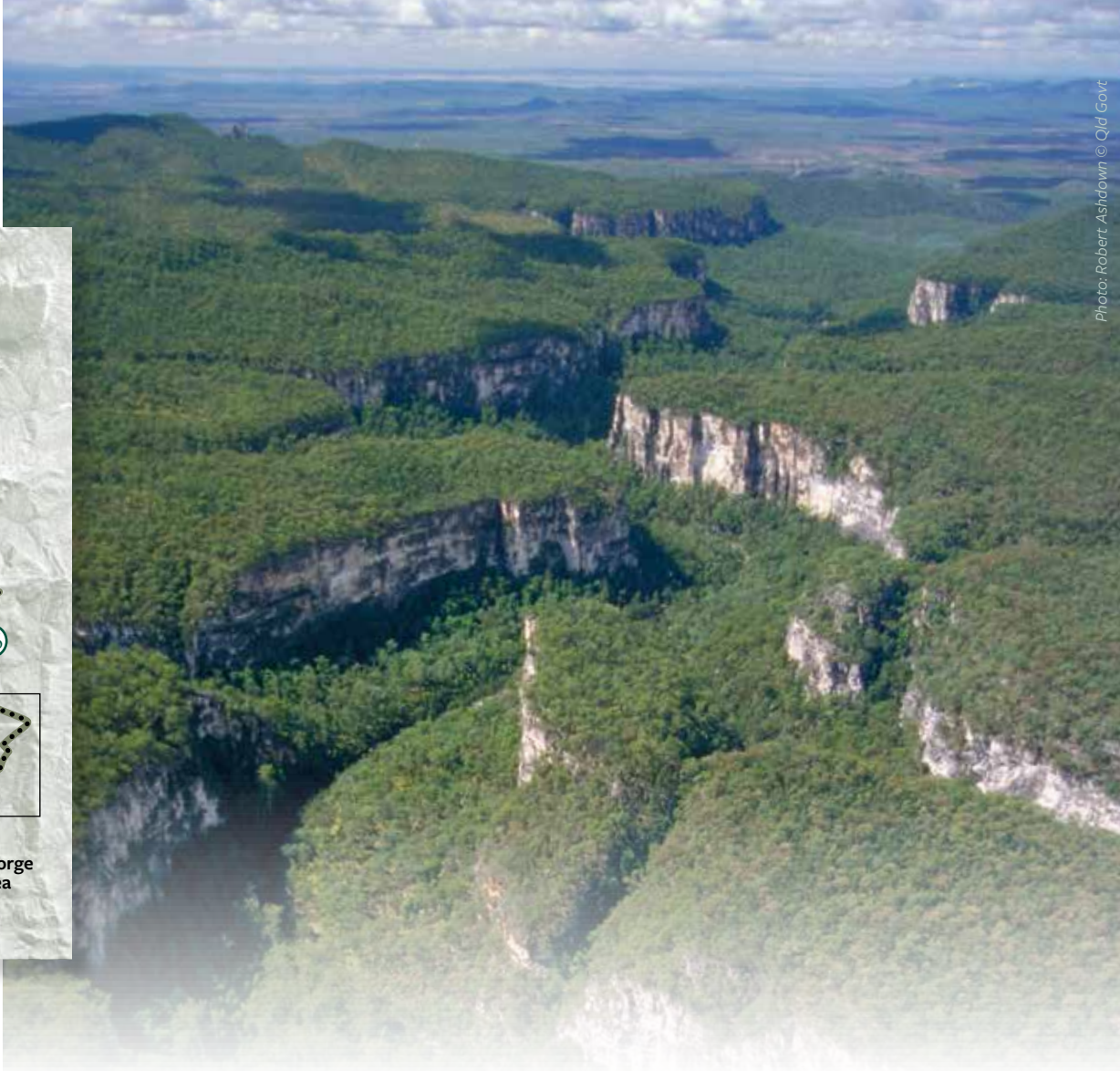
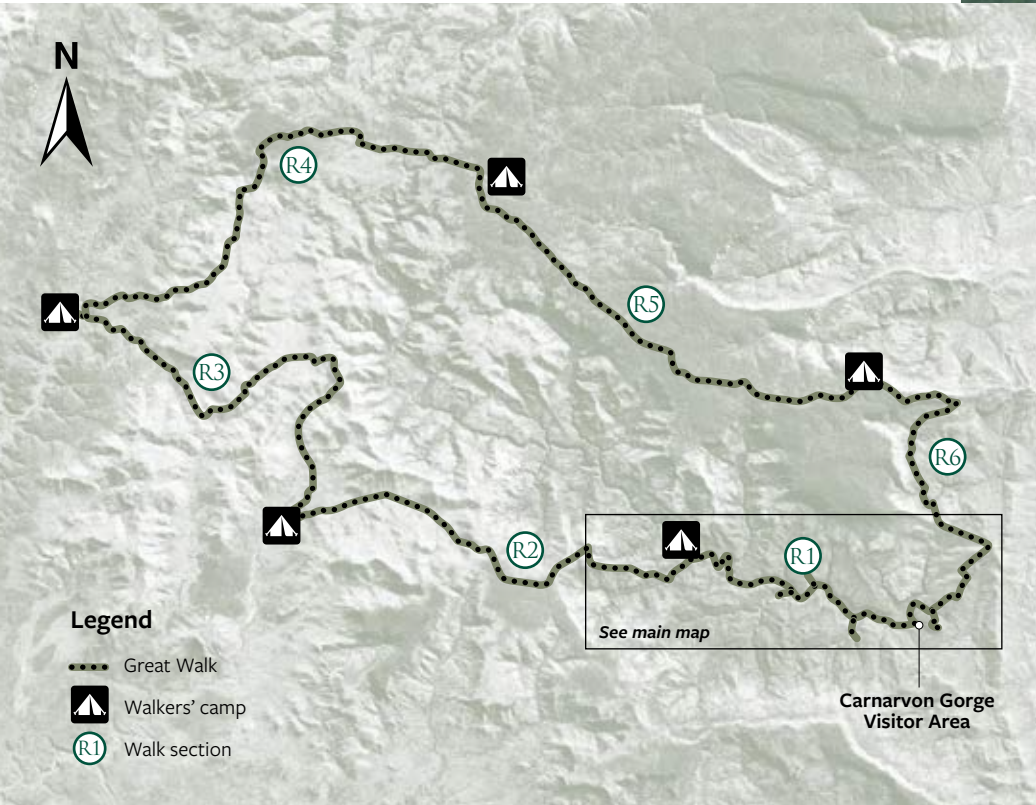


Photo: Robert Ashdown © Qld Govt

TRACKS AT A GLANCE

Distances and return times are measured from Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Area unless otherwise stated.

Track name	Class	Distance (return)	Walking time
(A) Main walking track	3/4	19.4km	7–8hrs
(B) Nature Trail	3	1.5km	1hr
(C) Boolimba Bluff	4	6.4km	2–3hrs
(D) Moss Garden	3	7km	2–3hrs
(E) Amphitheatre	3	8.6km	3–4hrs
(F) Wards Canyon	3	9.2km	3–4hrs
(G) Ant Gully	3	10.2km	3–4hrs

TREAD THOUGHTFULLY

Take up the challenge to leave no trace of your visit. It’s easy—here’s how:

- Pack it in, pack it out. Take all rubbish (including food scraps, cigarette butts and sanitary items) with you.
- Cook on a fuel stove. No open fires are allowed.
- Bush hygiene—keep it clean! Use toilets at the Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Area, the Moss Garden turn-off and at Big



CARNARVON GORGE
VISITOR AREA

- Icons for picnic table, toilet, shelter, and fire
- Icons for picnic table, tent, and Wi-Fi
- Text: Main walking track starts here







Finger orchid *Caladenia catenata* (above);
Echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus* (above right);
Robust rainbow skink *Carlia schmeltzii* (right);
Moss Garden (far right)

Photos: © Qld Govt (above); Robert
Ashdown © Qld Govt (above right);
© Robert Ashdown (right);
© Michael O'Connor (far right)

(G) Art Gallery	3	10.8km	3-4hrs
(H) Cathedral Cave	4	18.2km	5-6hrs
(I) Boowinda Gorge	4	18.4km	5-6hrs
(J) Big Bend camping area	4	19.4km	7-8hrs
(K) Mickey Creek Gorge from Mickey Creek car park	3	3km	1.5hrs
(L) Baloon Cave from Baloon Cave car park	2	1km	45 mins
(M) Rock Pool from Rock Pool car park	3	600m	30mins
(M) Rock Pool from Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Area	3	3.6km	2hrs
(R) Carnarvon Great Walk	3/4/5	87km	6-7 days

TRACK CLASSIFICATION

Class	Symbol	Suits	Track description
2		Families with young children	No bushwalking experience required. The track has a compacted surface with gentle incline sections, some steps and a ramp. May be suitable for wheelchair users who have someone to assist them.
3		People with some bushwalking experience	Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Tracks may have short steep hill sections and many steps. Caution is needed on creek crossings, ladders and lookouts. Ankle-supporting footwear required.
4		Experienced bushwalkers	Tracks may be extensively overgrown, rough and very steep. Caution is needed on creek crossings, loose surfaces, cliff edges and exposed naturally-occurring outlooks. Ankle-supporting footwear required.
5		Very experienced bushwalkers	High level of physical fitness and map reading skills required. Track has very steep sections, irregular surface and loose stones. Directional signs limited. High-quality, ankle-supporting footwear required.



- o Gorge Visitor Area, the Moss Garden turn on and at Big Bend. Take care not to pollute the natural water supplies.
- o Wash away from streams, gullies and watercourses.
- o Bury all faecal waste and toilet paper 15cm deep and at least 100m from waterways (carry a small trowel or spade for this purpose).
- Never feed wildlife. This upsets the balance of nature and harms the animals in the long term. They can also become aggressive to humans.
- Keep to tracks and boardwalks to avoid damaging fragile Aboriginal rock art, trampling sensitive vegetation, causing erosion or accidentally caving in platypus burrows.
- Graffiti is not ‘leaving your mark’—it’s vandalism. Penalties apply.

ADVENTURE SAFELY

Make your visit memorable for all the right reasons.

Carnarvon Gorge is remote with many natural hazards, so be careful and don’t take risks. Rescue and medical help can be hours away.

- Check Park Alerts online and obtain weather forecasts and river level information before heading to the park as conditions can change rapidly.
- No matter what type of walk you intend to do, you should always plan ahead. Judge your ability and conditions carefully before setting out, even on short walks.
- Learn as much as you can about the terrain and local conditions and make sure that you carry appropriate clothing and reliable gear. Choose walks that suite the capabilities of your entire group. Stay together and keep to the walking tracks.
- Take care on the many rocky creek crossings. Stepping stones can be slippery or unstable. Serious injury has occurred to visitors as a result of falling on the rocks. Wear appropriate footwear with a good grip.
- Carry plenty of drinking water. Creek water is unsuitable for drinking. Treated drinking water is only available from taps in the visitor area.
- Falling trees and limbs, flash flooding and rock falls occur naturally at any time. Avoid walking in extreme weather. See the weatherboard at the Carnarvon Gorge Visitor Centre for current weather updates.
- Never dive or jump into any creek or waterhole. Shallow water and submerged objects present a serious risk. You may be severely injured or killed.