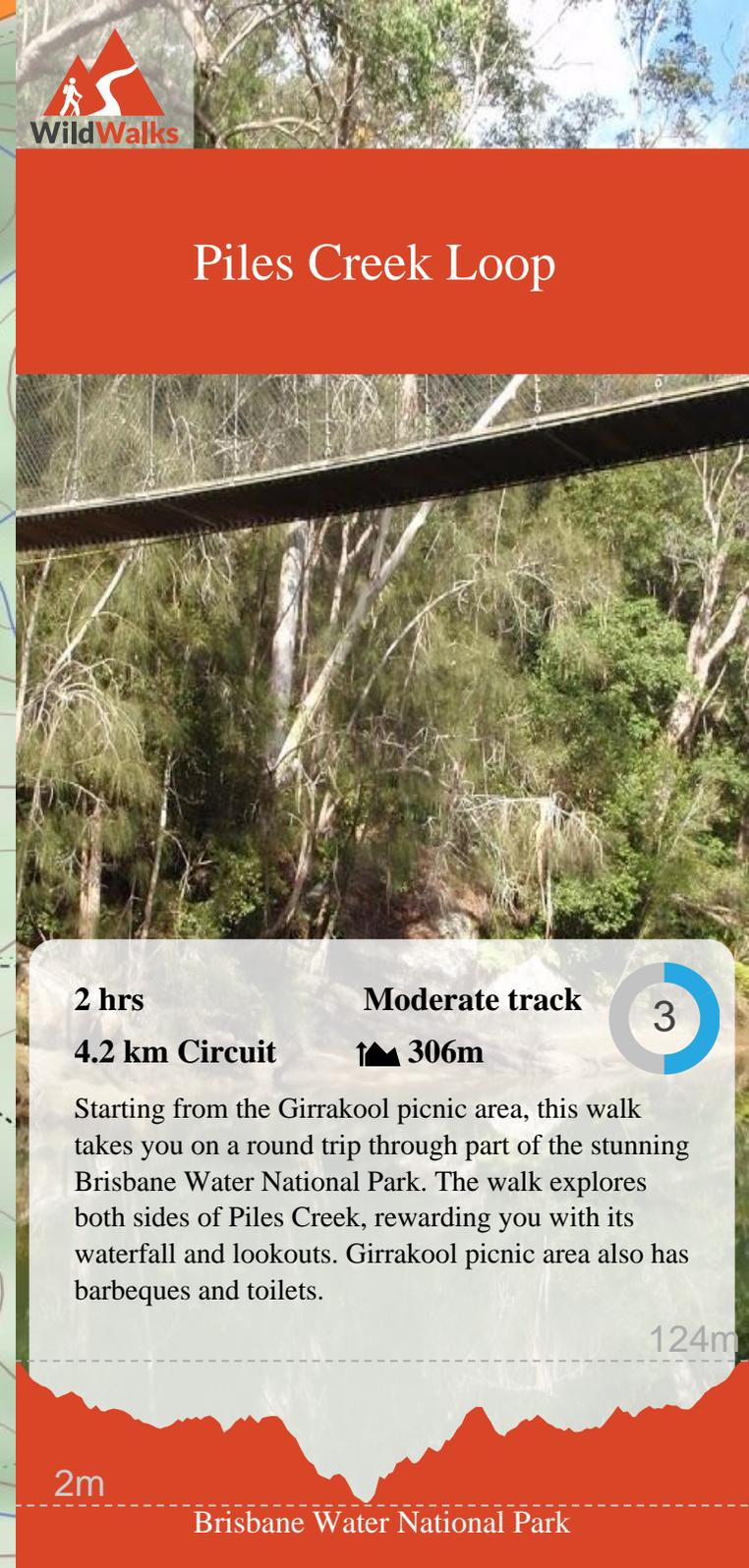
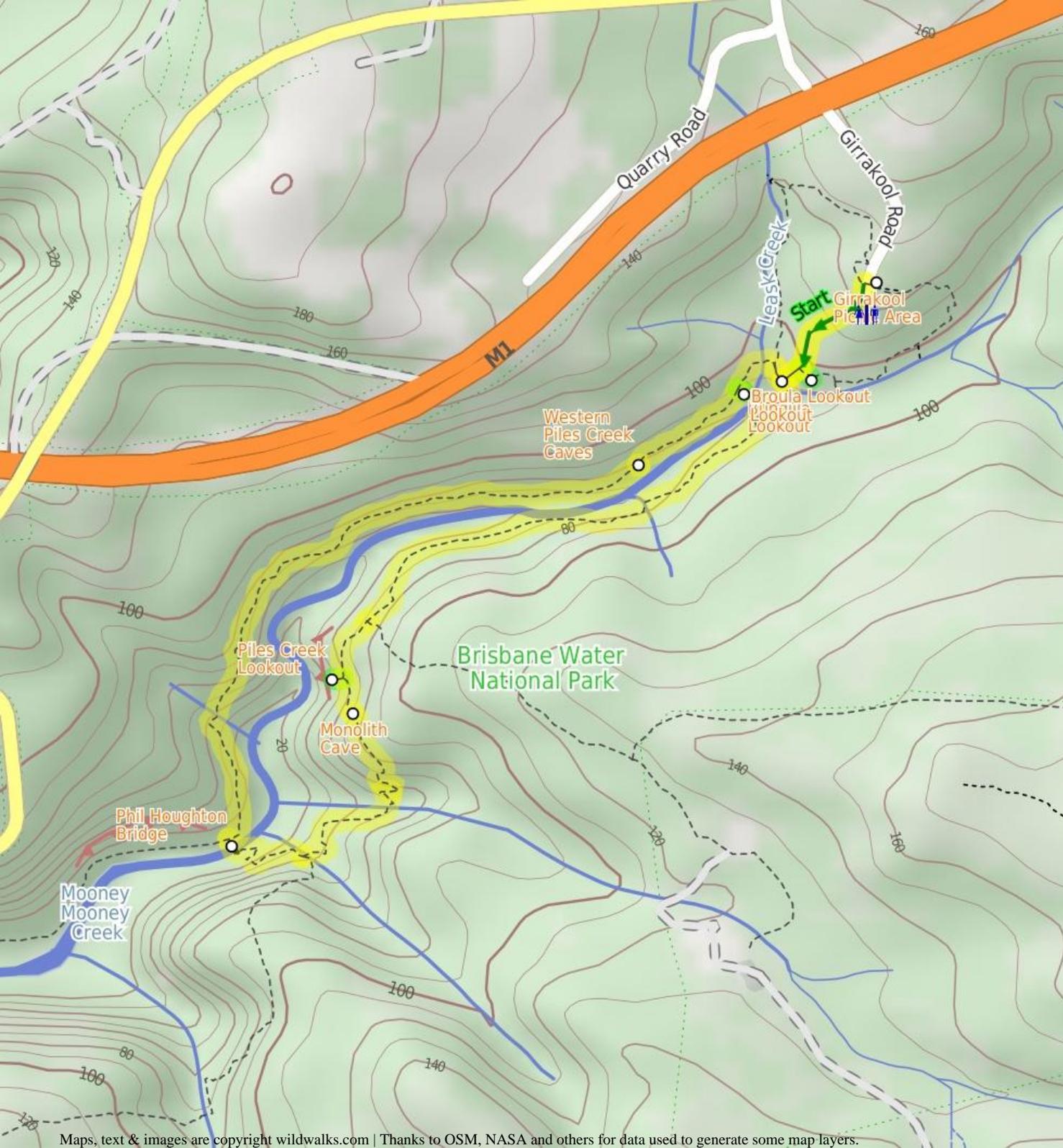


## Piles Creek Loop



2 hrs

4.2 km Circuit

Moderate track

306m

3

Starting from the Girrakool picnic area, this walk takes you on a round trip through part of the stunning Brisbane Water National Park. The walk explores both sides of Piles Creek, rewarding you with its waterfall and lookouts. Girrakool picnic area also has barbeques and toilets.

124m

2m

Brisbane Water National Park

## Girrakool Picnic Area

Girrakool picnic area is a wonderful family destination, just 5 minutes' drive from Kariong. The picnic area provides all the necessary facilities for a full day's activities, including barbecues, tables, shelters, water and toilets. National Park fees apply. The main picnic area is on the eastern side of the car park, and smaller, older picnic area is at the north-eastern corner of the car park. The southern Girrakool picnic area is located near the toilets. The picnic area is dedicated to John 'Jack' Higgs, the first superintendent of Brisbane Water National Park, and Mrs Vera Murdoch, who provided the funds. 'Girrakool' is an Aboriginal word meaning 'place of still waters'. [More info.](#)

## Broula Lookout

Broula Lookout is fenced and a fairly short walk down from the Girrakool picnic area. Over time, the trees in the area have grown, filtering what would otherwise be a great vantage point for the Piles Creek waterfall. Broula is an Aboriginal word referring to a place of trickling water.

## Illoura Lookout

Illoura Lookout, Brisbane Water National Park, can be found a short walk south-west of the Girrakool picnic area, following the Great North Walk sign. This lookout provides a filtered view up and down the Leask and Piles Creek junction. There is a view of a waterfall from Piles Creek. Illoura is an Aboriginal word referring to a pleasant or peaceful place.

## Bundilla Lookout

Bundilla Lookout provides a good (but filtered) view from the southern side of the Leask and Piles Creeks junction. From the fenced lookout, you can see the top part of Piles Creek waterfall and much of the surrounding bushland. Bundilla is an Aboriginal word meaning 'meeting of waters'.

## Western Piles Creek Caves

The Western Piles Creek Caves are series of sandstone caves, not formally named, on the north western side on Piles Creek. The Piles Creek loop passes at the base of a cliff helping find these sandstone caves. Each overhang providing a cool sheltered spot for walkers to rest and enjoy the surrounding bushland. Some are very tall and others much shorter, but all fairly narrow.

## Before You walk

Bushwalking is fun and a wonderful way to enjoy our natural places. Sometimes things go bad, with a bit of planning you can increase your chance of having an enjoyable and safer walk. Before setting off on your walk check

- 1) Weather Forecast ([BOM Hunter District](#))
- 2) Fire Dangers ([Greater Sydney Region](#))
- 3) Park Alerts ([Brisbane Water National Park](#))
- 4) Research the walk to check your party has the skills, fitness and equipment required
- 5) Agree to stay as a group and not leave anyone to walk solo

## Think before you TREK

The 'Think before you TREK' program developed by NSW Police & NPWS promotes the benefits of planning ahead for your bushwalking trip by using an easy to remember acronym:

- T** Take adequate supplies of food, water, navigation and first aid equipment.
- R** Register your planned route and tell friends and family when you expect to return.
- E** Emergency beacon (PLB's) should be carried on walks with significant gaps in mobile coverage (check terrain profile).
- K** Keep to your planned route and follow the map and walking trails.

## Topo Maps

The maps provided on wildwalks are helpful, but there are times where you may need maps covering a broader area. Maps that cover this walk include;

**1:25 000 Map Series:**91312S GOSFORD

**1:100 000 Map Series:**9131 GOSFORD

## Grade

This walk has been graded using the AS 2156.1-2001. The overall grade of the walk is determined by the highest classification along the whole track.



**Grade 3/6**  
Moderate track

<b>Length</b>	4.2 km Circuit
<b>Time</b>	2 hrs
<b>Quality of track</b>	Formed track, with some branches and other obstacles (3/6)
<b>Signs</b>	Directional signs along the way (3/6)
<b>Experience Required</b>	Some bushwalking experience recommended (3/6)
<b>Weather</b>	Storms may impact on navigation and safety (3/6)
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Limited facilities, not all cliffs are fenced (3/6)



Mobile phone coverage depends on many factors, this graph displays the probability of mobile coverage along this walk. Although hopefully close, actual coverage will vary from what is shown here. Please always carry a PLB in remote areas.

### Are you ready to have fun?

Please ensure you and your group are well prepared and equipped for all possible hazards and delays. Check park closures, weather information and Fire Danger Rating before setting out. Optional side trips and alternate routes noted are not included in this walk's overall grade, length or time estimate. Please allow extra time for resting and exploring areas of interest. The authors, staff and owners of wildwalks take care in preparing this information but will not accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury you may experience. Please take care, have fun - Happy Walking.

**Getting there** Traveling by car is the only practical way to get to Girrakool picnic area car park (gps: -33.4317, 151.2766). Car: Parking fees apply in the area.

This is a circuit, so you will finish back at the start.

Find up to date and more information including; travel directions, weather, park closures and walker feedback at <http://wild.tl/pcl>

### 0 | Girrakool Picnic Area

Girrakool picnic area is a wonderful family destination, just 5 minutes' drive from Kariong. The picnic area provides all the necessary facilities for a full day's activities, including barbecues, tables, shelters, water and toilets. National Park fees apply. The main picnic area is on the eastern side of the car park, and smaller, older picnic area is at the north-eastern corner of the car park. The southern Girrakool picnic area is located near the toilets. The picnic area is dedicated to John 'Jack' Higgs, the first superintendent of Brisbane Water National Park, and Mrs Vera Murdoch, who provided the funds. 'Girrakool' is an Aboriginal word meaning 'place of still waters'. [More info.](#)

### 0 | Girrakool picnic area car park

(230 m 5 mins) From the lower side of the car park, this walk follows the 'To The Great North Walk' sign down the path to the lower picnic area. The walk passes the toilet block (on the left) and comes to another picnic area. The path passes through this picnic area to turn right following the 'Piles Creek Loop Track' sign down the steps. The footpath then leads to an intersection with the Broula Lookout track (on the left) and a 'car park' sign pointing back up the hill.

### 0.23 | Optional sidetrip to Broula Lookout

(30 m 1 mins) Turn left: From the intersection, this walk leaves the main footpath and follows the rocky track to the signposted 'Broula Lookout' a short distance away. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Turn left.

### 0.23 | Broula Lookout

Broula Lookout is fenced and a fairly short walk down from the Girrakool picnic area. Over time, the trees in the area have grown, filtering what would otherwise be a great vantage point for the Piles Creek waterfall. Broula is an Aboriginal word referring to a place of trickling water.

### 0.23 | Int of Picnic Area and Girrakool Loop tracks

(40 m 1 mins) Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Girrakool Loop' sign down along the stone path. The path soon heads down some steps and comes to a fenced and signposted 'Illoura Lookout'.

### 0.27 | Illoura Lookout

Illoura Lookout, Brisbane Water National Park, can be found a short walk south-west of the Girrakool picnic area, following the Great North Walk sign. This lookout provides a filtered view up and down the Leask and Piles Creek junction. There is a view of a waterfall from Piles Creek. Illoura is an Aboriginal word referring to a pleasant or peaceful place.

### 0.27 | Illoura Lookout

(140 m 4 mins) Turn right: From Illoura Lookout, this walk follows the 'Girrakool Loop' sign keeping the green fence to the left. The track leads up some steps to soon come to a 'Y' intersection and a sign pointing back to 'Girrakool Car Park'.

Veer left: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Piles Creek Loop' sign down the rocky steps (keeping the valley to the right). The track soon crosses Leask Creek on a narrow concrete footbridge. The track continues to wind gently through the bush, soon coming to an intersection with a track which heads down to Bundilla Lookout (on the left).

### 0.41 | Optional sidetrip to Bundilla Lookout

(10 m ) Turn left: From the intersection, this walk follows the track downhill to the fenced and signposted Bundilla Lookout (which is visible). At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Turn left .

### 0.41 | Bundilla Lookout

Bundilla Lookout provides a good (but filtered) view from the southern side of the Leask and Piles Creeks junction. From the fenced lookout, you can see the top part of Piles Creek waterfall and much of the surrounding bushland. Bundilla is an Aboriginal word meaning 'meeting of waters'.

### 0.41 | Int of Bundilla Lookout and Piles Creek tracks

(240 m 5 mins) Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the track down the hill keeping the valley (and lookout) to the left. The track soon heads down some rocky steps to pass a large rock wall on the right and further down hill the track comes close to a water hole on Piles Creek. The track then heads up the hill to pass more stone boulders and down some steps next to another rock wall. The track passes a couple of metal arrows markers to soon come to a large rock overhang at the top of a set of stairs.

### 0.65 | Western Piles Creek Caves

The Western Piles Creek Caves are series of sandstone caves, not formally named, on the north western side on Piles Creek. The Piles Creek loop passes at the base of a cliff helping find these sandstone caves. Each overhang providing a cool sheltered spot for walkers to rest and enjoy the surrounding bushland. Some are very tall and others much shorter, but all fairly narrow.

### 0.65 | Western Piles Creek Caves

(1.3 km 33 mins) Continue straight: From the cave, this walk heads down the stairs keeping the cave wall to the right. The track winds through the bush for a while, passing another rock wall and crossing over 3 small foot bridges. The track then passes a couple more caves and a rock wall and then some distant views to the left. After passing another cave the track crosses a creek using a hand railing and passes a section of track with a steep drop to the left. Soon the track heads down a long set of steps with an old hand rail then winds down the hill to come to a large clearing and the Phil Houghton suspension Bridge.

### 1.96 | Phil Houghton Bridge

The Phil Houghton Bridge is a metal suspension bridge that crosses Piles Creek. It is part of the Great North Walk and replaces an older bridge, with part still visible upstream. The bridge can hold up to 8 people and feels very stable. There are great views both up and downstream half way across this bridge. There is a clearing on the northern side that people have used for camping.

### 1.96 | Phil Houghton Bridge

(220 m 9 mins) Turn left: From the clearing, this walk heads up the stairs and across the Phil Houghton suspension footbridge, enjoying the views of the tidal Piles Creek. On the other side, the walk heads down the stairs and turns

left, passing the old bridge, where the track bends right to head uphill. The rocky track winds steeply uphill for about 170m to come to a well signposted three-way intersection beside a small intermittent creek.

### 2.18 | Int of Patonga Ferry and Girrakool tracks

(290 m 8 mins) Turn left: From the intersection, the walk crosses the small creek and then follows the 'Girrakool' sign along the bush track. The track winds up the side of the hill to soon head back down hill into Rat Gully. The track heads under a large fallen tree and crosses the boulder field and creek. There are steps cut in the rock to help the crossing. The walk then passes the old bridge and heads into the bush again. The track then does a right hand switch back (at the 'Girrakool' sign) and climbs a small hill to an un-signposted but fenced lookout.

### 2.47 | Rat Gully Lookout

(220 m 7 mins) Continue straight: From the lookout, this walk heads up the hill initially keeping the large gully to the right. The track soon turns left and heads to the top of the hill and passes a large and interesting monolithic rock. About 60m after this rock the track leads to another similar rock with a large cave just to the left of the track.

### 2.69 | Monolith Cave

Monolith Cave is an informally named cave and interesting rock formation high on the ridge east of Piles Creek and North of Rat Gully in the Brisbane Water National Park. The cave is a fairly large sandstone overhang on the edge of the track. The cave provides shelter for walkers and is a great spot to rest and enjoy the area. This rock and the more Monolithic rock about 60m to the south are interesting to explore, and provide great views of the surrounding area. Take great care if exploring the rocks.

### 2.69 | Monolith Cave

(80 m 2 mins) Continue straight: From the cave, this walk heads north through the cleft in the rock. The clear track soon passes another rock wall then comes to an intersection at the base of the timber staircase.

### 2.78 | Optional sidetrip to Piles Ck Lookout

(20 m 1 mins) Turn left: With the stairs to the right, this walk follows the short track to the fenced lookout. There are a few steps that then lead down the the lookout platform. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Turn left.

### 2.78 | Piles Creek Lookout

Piles Creek lookout (not formally named), Brisbane Water National Park, sits high on the ridge, east of Piles Creek and north of Rat Gully. This lookout provides views over the Piles Creek valley and can be enjoyed from behind a fence. The valley is surprisingly steep at this point and the views downstream are quite extensive.

### 2.78 | Int of Girrakool and Piles Ck lookout tracks

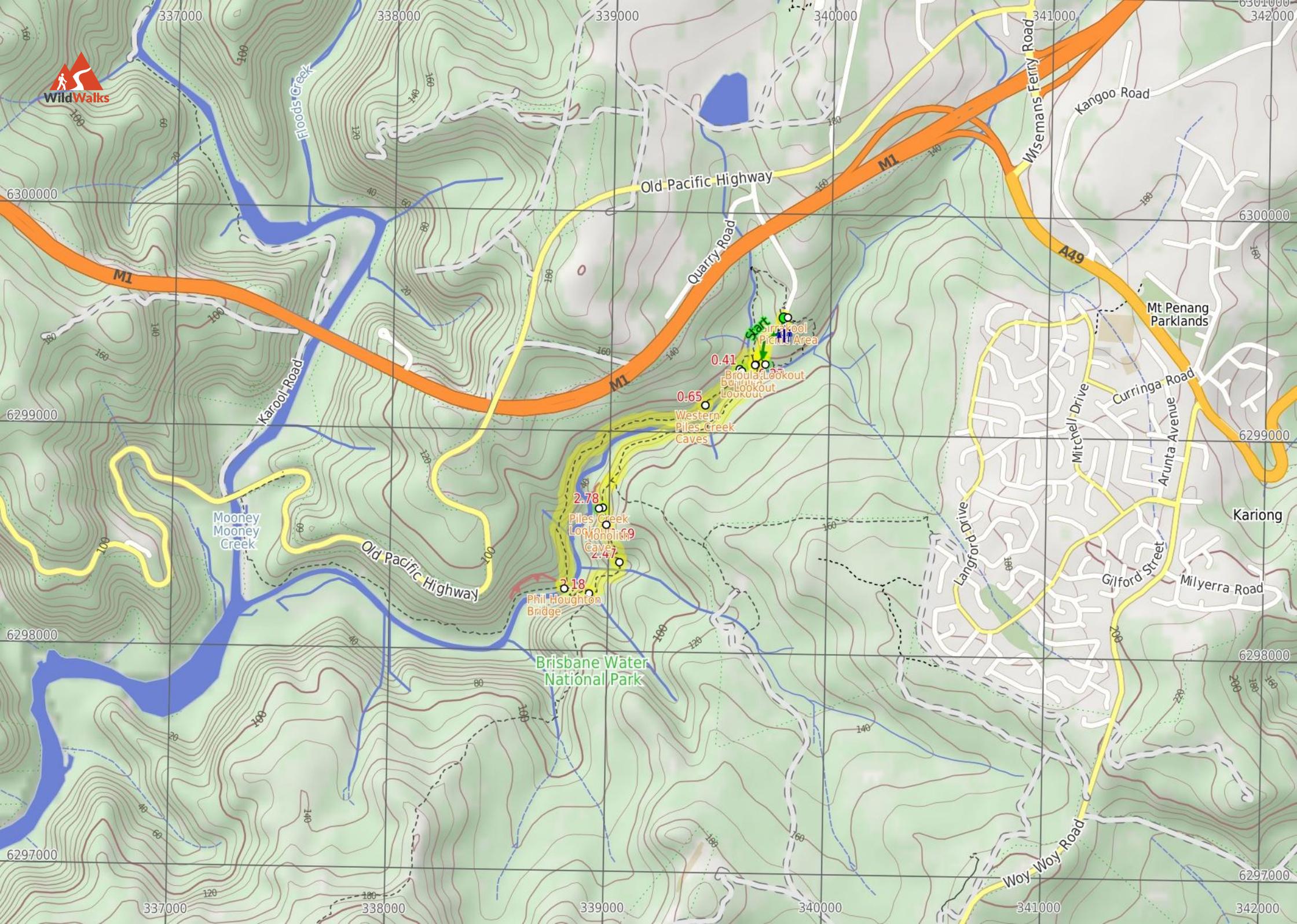
(1.4 km 33 mins) Veer right: From the intersection, the walk heads up the wooden staircase and along the track for a little while, until it comes to a three-way intersection and a 'Girrakool' sign.

Continue straight: From the intersection, the walk follows the 'Girrakool' sign along the bush track. After a short time the track passes under four sandstone caves (overhangs) and then crosses a few small tributaries. The caves provide good shelter and a great spot to rest. The track continues through the thick scrub and soon opens up on an unfenced rock platform at the top of Piles Creek Waterfall.

Veer right: From the top of the waterfall, the walk crosses the creek using the concrete stepping stones (the creek may be impassable after rain) and heads up the wooden steps to soon come to Illoura Lookout.

Turn right: From Illoura Lookout, this walk follows 'Girrakool Loop' sign up the stone steps directly away from the lookout. The walk follows the footpath up the stone steps to soon come to the intersection with the Broula Lookout track and another 'Girrakool Loop' sign pointing back down the hill. Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'car park' arrow up the few steps and along the stone footpath. The path heads through the bush, up some more steps to come to the lower Girrakool picnic area. The walk then heads through the picnic tables and past the BBQ up the straight path to the large car park passing the toilet block (on the right).





## Summary navigation sheet for the Piles Creek Loop



km	From	Up/Dwn	Length	Initial directions (Use full tracknotes and maps for more detail)
Start	Girrakool picnic area car park -33.4317,151.2766 (GR Gosford, 398995)	0 -27	230 m 5 mins	From the lower side of the car park, this walk follows the 'To The Great North Walk' sign down the path to the lower picnic area.
0.23	Int of Picnic Area and Girrakool Loop tracks -33.4334,151.2755 (GR Gosford, 397993)	0 -2	30 m 1 mins	Optional sidetrip to Broula Lookout. Turn left: From the intersection, this walk leaves the main footpath and follows the rocky track to the signposted 'Broula Lookout' a short distance away.
0.23	Int of Picnic Area and Girrakool Loop tracks -33.4334,151.2755 (GR Gosford, 397993)	0 -6	40 m 1 mins	Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Girrakool Loop' sign down along the stone path.
0.27	Illoura Lookout -33.4336,151.2752 (GR Gosford, 397993)	7 -10	140 m 4 mins	Turn right: From Illoura Lookout, this walk follows the 'Girrakool Loop' sign keeping the green fence to the left.
0.41	Int of Bundilla Lookout and Piles Creek tracks -33.4338,151.2744 (GR Gosford, 396993)	0 -1	10 m	Optional sidetrip to Bundilla Lookout. Turn left: From the intersection, this walk follows the track downhill to the fenced and signposted Bundilla Lookout (which is visible).
0.41	Int of Bundilla Lookout and Piles Creek tracks -33.4338,151.2744 (GR Gosford, 396993)	9 -17	240 m 5 mins	Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the track down the hill keeping the valley (and lookout) to the left.
0.65	Western Piles Creek Caves -33.4353,151.2727 (GR Gosford, 394991)	65 -138	1.3 km 33 mins	Continue straight: From the cave, this walk heads down the stairs keeping the cave wall to the right.
1.96	Phil Houghton Bridge -33.4426,151.2657 (GR Gosford, 388983)	47 -17	220 m 9 mins	Turn left: From the clearing, this walk heads up the stairs and across the Phil Houghton suspension footbridge, enjoying the views of the tidal Piles Creek.
2.18	Int of Patonga Ferry and Girrakool tracks -33.443,151.267 (GR Gosford, 389983)	33 -14	290 m 8 mins	Turn left: From the intersection, the walk crosses the small creek and then follows the 'Girrakool' sign along the bush track.
2.47	Rat Gully Lookout -33.4417,151.2685 (GR Gosford, 391984)	29 -13	220 m 7 mins	Continue straight: From the lookout, this walk heads up the hill initially keeping the large gully to the right.
2.69	Monolith Cave -33.4402,151.2678 (GR Gosford, 390986)	0 -16	80 m 2 mins	Continue straight: From the cave, this walk heads north through the cleft in the rock.
2.78	Int of Girrakool and Piles Ck lookout tracks -33.4395,151.2677 (GR Gosford, 390987)	0 -8	20 m 1 mins	Optional sidetrip to Piles Ck Lookout. Turn left: With the stairs to the right, this walk follows the short track to the fenced lookout.
2.78	Int of Girrakool and Piles Ck lookout tracks -33.4395,151.2677 (GR Gosford, 390987)	116 -47	1.4 km 33 mins	Veer right: From the intersection, the walk heads up the wooden staircase and along the track for a little while, until it comes to a three-way intersection and a 'Girrakool' sign.