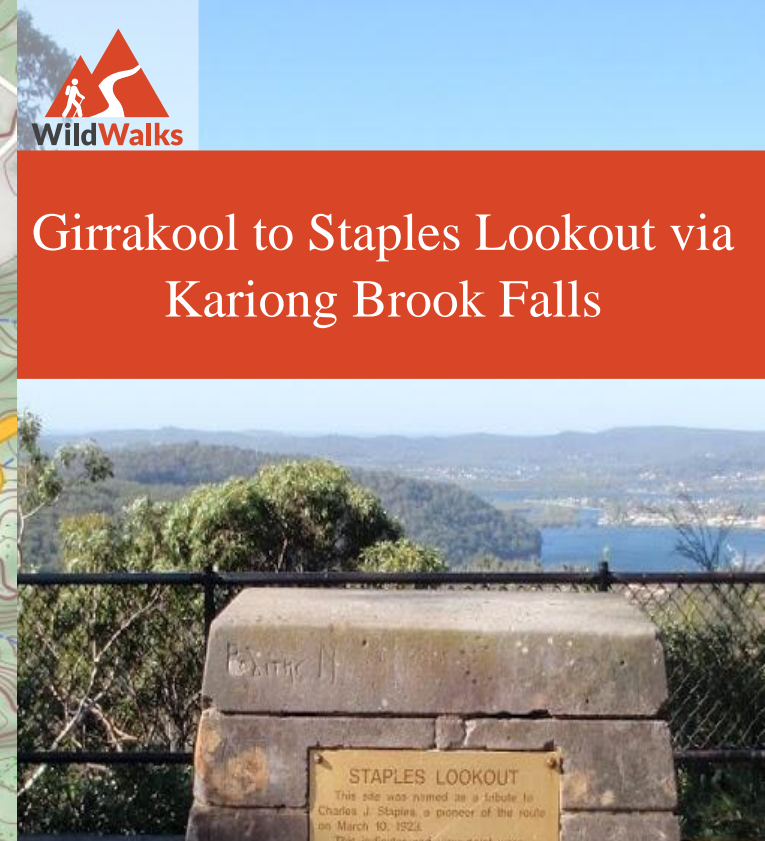
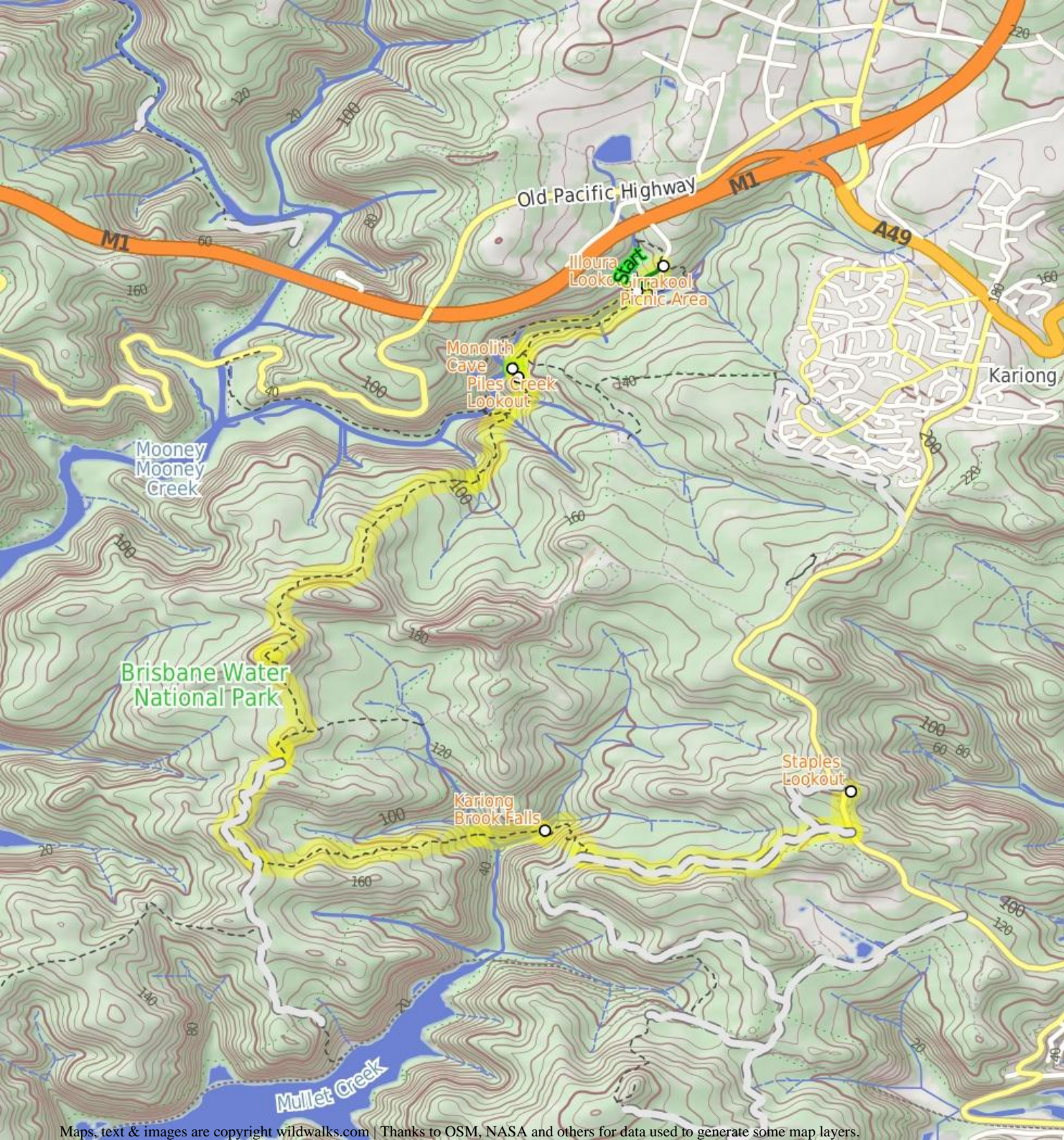


Girrakool to Staples Lookout via Kariong Brook Falls



5 hrs 30 mins

Hard track

12.3 km One way

▲ 697m

4

This walk starts from the Girrakool picnic area and winds down alongside Piles creek, before climbing up through the Brisbane Waters National Park to Scopas peak, and then on to the lovely Kariong brook falls. The walk finishes at the Staples Lookout. This walk mostly follows a section of the Great North Walk. Depending what time you start, either Scopas Peak or Kariong Brook can make great lunch and rest stops.

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.](#)

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.

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.

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.

Kariong Brook Falls

This tranquil spot of the Great North Walk is home to some lovely falls and a water hole. The eastern side of the creek has a tall sandstone cave and wall. After rain these falls can become very spectacular, other times is a cool place to rest. A great spot to stop for a snack.

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:91313S GUNDERMAN, 91312S GOSFORD

1:100 000 Map Series:9131 GOSFORD

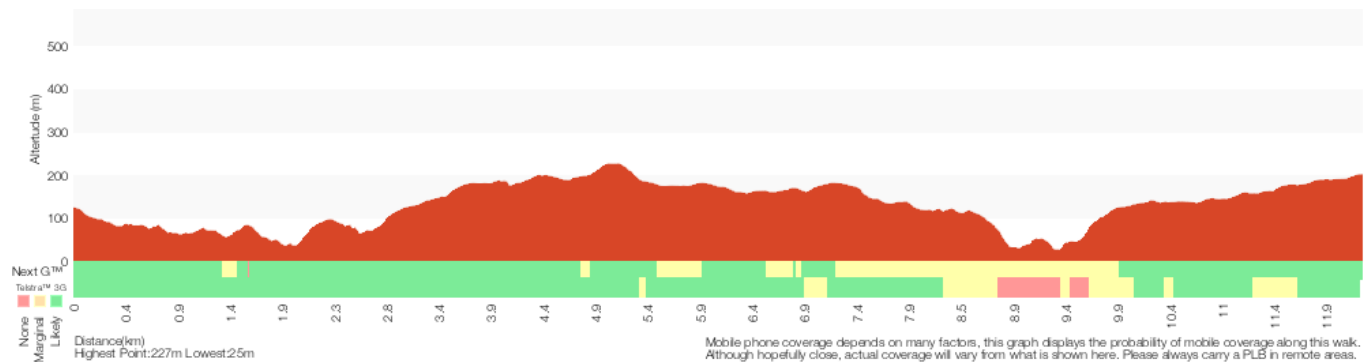
Grade

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 4/6
Hard track

Length	12.3 km One way
Time	5 hrs 30 mins
Quality of track	Rough track, where fallen trees and other obstacles are likely (4/6)
Signs	Minimal directional signs (4/6)
Experience Required	Some bushwalking experience recommended (3/6)
Weather	Storms may impact on navigation and safety (3/6)
Infrastructure	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 Gurrakool picnic area car park (gps: -33.4317, 151.2766). Car: A park entry fee is required for driving into the park.

Traveling by car is the only practical way to get back from Staples Lookout (gps: -33.4717, 151.2883). Car: There is free parking available.

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

0 | Gurrakool Picnic Area

Gurrakool 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 Gurrakool 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. 'Gurrakool' is an Aboriginal word meaning 'place of still waters'. [More info.](#)

0 | Gurrakool picnic area car park

(270 m 6 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.

Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Gurrakool 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 Gurrakool 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

(1.1 km 27 mins) Turn left: From Illoura Lookout, the walk follows the left-hand 'Piles Creek' and GNW arrow down the wooden steps (keeping the valley to the right). The track soon passes a 'Caution Low Water Level Crossing Only' sign and crosses Piles Creek using the concrete stepping stones (the creek may be impassable after rain). The track then opens up on an unfenced rock platform, at the top of the waterfall.

Veer left: From the top of Piles Creek waterfall, this walk follows the track heading south away from the waterfall (keeping the big valley to the right). The clear track winds through the thick bush crossing a few small tributaries and though four sandstone caves. The caves provide good shelter and a great spot to rest. The track then flattens out and comes to a 3-way intersection and

a 'Gurrakool' sign.

Continue straight: From the intersection, the walk heads south along the wide track in the opposite direction of the 'Gurrakool' sign. Soon the track heads down a short wooden staircase to the intersection at the bottom (Piles Creek Lookout visible to the right).

1.38 | Optional sidetrip to Piles Ck Lookout

(20 m 1 mins) Turn right: 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 right.

1.38 | 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.

1.38 | Int of Gurrakool and Piles Ck lookout tracks

(80 m 2 mins) Veer left: From the intersection, this walk heads away from the steps and lookout to soon pass a rock wall. A short time later the track leads through the cleft in a rock to reveal a cave on the right.

1.46 | 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.

1.46 | Monolith Cave

(220 m 7 mins) Continue straight: From the cave, this walk heads south following the track away from the rock to soon come to another large and interesting monolithic rock. Soon after this large rock the track starts to head down the hill to come to an old fenced lookout, looking over Rat Gully.

1.68 | Rat Gully Lookout

(1 km 29 mins) Continue straight: From the lookout, the track follows the bush track heading downhill. The track soon does a sharp left hand switch back (at the 'Gurrakool' sign) and continues down to Rat Gully. The track then crosses the creek and boulder field following the cut steps (and passing the old bridge). On the other side the track heads right, under the fallen tree and then climbs up the hill. After a short meander through the bush the track drops down and crosses another gully (passing a sign pointing back to 'Gurrakool') and coming to a 'Great North Walk' signpost and intersection.

Turn sharp left: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Patonga Ferry' sign up the side of the gully, keeping the intermittent creek to your left. The track leads past a 'Patonga' sign then winds steeply up the hill for about 130m, through a cleft in the rock and past a few rock walls, and then the track mostly flattens out with some filtered distant views. The track continues gently uphill for another 300m, becoming progressively flatter before passing along the side of a long rock wall, with a tall sandstone overhang. The track then crosses a small gully and leads past another overhang, where the track begins to lead downhill. The rocky track winds steeply downhill for about 130m to then cross an intermittent creek which flows over the solid sandstone platform.

2.69 | Tributary Crossing

(2.4 km 57 mins) Continue straight: From the west side of the creek, this walk climbs uphill following the rocky track. The track climb for about 600m, fairly steeply for a while then becoming progressively less steep. The track passes a couple of rocky outcrops to then come to a large flat rock platform, with distant views. The rocky track then leads off this rock platform and continues up the ridge for just shy of 300m to come to the edge of a much larger rock platform with more views. A series of GNW arrow posts lead across this rock platform, generally leading towards Scopas Peak for about 400m where the arrows lead off the rock platform and back onto a heathy track. Keeping Scopas Peak up to the left, this track leads around the side of the hill for about 150m to pass a view across the valley to Mooney Mooney Bridge. Over the next 800m, the track leads up across a few more rock platforms then climbs fairly steeply up to a view point, just to the west of Scopas Peak.

5.11 | Scopas Peak

(1.2 km 23 mins) Veer left: From the view point, just west of Scopas Peak, this walk heads south steeply down the rocky track, initially keeping the distant view to your right. The track leads steeply down past a few rock walls then climbs down over some rocks with cut steps, enjoying more views for about 230m, and then the track mostly flattens out to lead gently down across the narrow saddle. The track gently undulates along this ridge for about 750m to come to a green painted metal box on a post (on your left), containing a Great North Walk intentions book.

Continue straight: From the Great North Walk intentions book, after leaving your comments, this walk heads south, gently downhill along the clear track. After about 150m, the walk comes to a T-intersection with the Gosford Rifle Range trail - At this intersection is a 'Gurrakool' sign, pointing back along the track.

6.27 | Int of GNW and Gosford Rifle Range trail

(2.7 km 58 mins) Turn right: From the intersection, this walk follows the GNW arrow post downhill along the management trail (directly away from the 'No Entry Past This Point' sign). The trail undulates moderately steeply in a few places) along the ridge line for about 900m, to then walk over a large rock platform. From the top of this platform, there are some distant views over Mooney Mooney Creek. On the large rock platform, this walk tends left to follow the scrape marks on the rock and soon find the wide trail again. The trail leads downhill for about 50m, coming to a signposted intersection with a track on your left and a 'Gurrakool' sign pointing back up the trail.

Turn left: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Patonga' sign heading east down along the rocky track. The track soon bends right and heads around a rock outcrop then continues down through the heath and scribbly gums for about 400m to come to a flat rock platform. Here the track continues downhill over several more rock platforms, becoming progressively steeper for just over 1km to head into the cool valley and come to the bank beside Myron Brook.

8.96 | Myron Brook crossing

(400 m 11 mins) Continue straight: From the western side of Myron Brook, this walk crosses the creek on the sandstone rock platform to follow the track up a few stone steps and up the short steep hill. The track then flattens out as it leads around the side of the hill for about 200m to pass alongside a long rock wall (on your left). Now leading downhill, the track continues for another 100m then heads down a short steep section into the dense moist gully, coming to a faint intersection in front of Kariong Brook Falls (on your left) (just before crossing the creek, which is often underground).

9.36 | Kariong Brook Falls

This tranquil spot of the Great North Walk is home to some lovely falls and a water hole. The eastern side of the creek has a tall sandstone cave and wall.

After rain these falls can become very spectacular, other times is a cool place to rest. A great spot to stop for a snack.

9.36 | Kariong Brook crossing

(690 m 24 mins) Continue straight: From Kariong Brook, the walk crosses the creek and heads up the hill towards the cave (keeping the waterfall to the left). The track leads under the overhang and then winds up the rocky path for about 400m, past a few rock walls and among the grass trees. The walk then heads up some more stone steps, bending left on the steps with a metal handrail. The rocky track continues up for another 130m over a few more rocks to come to a flat clearing (on your right, that has been used as a campsite). From the clearing, the track continues uphill, passing another rocky outcrop after about 60m, then after about 80m more, the track leads to a T-intersection with a management trail (and a sign pointing back to 'Girrakool').

10.05 | Int of the GNW and Patonga service trail

(1.2 km 24 mins) Turn left: From the intersection, this walk heads north-east following the 'Staples Lookout' sign along the management trail. The walk steadily climbs uphill until to comes to a long rock platform with good views of the valley (to the left)

11.26 | Rock platform

(620 m 13 mins) Continue straight: From the rock platform, this walk heads north east along the management trail, keeping the main valley views to the left. The trail winds up the hill to come to a four-way intersection with the power line management trail and a 'Thommas Loop' (sign pointing back down the hill).

Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk heads up the hill following the service trail, past the National Park gate to the intersection of Woy Woy Road.

11.88 | Int of Thommos Trail and Woy Woy Road

(370 m 7 mins) Turn left: From the intersection, heads along Woy Woy Road passing the large brown 'Scenic Lookout 300m' sign. The walk crosses the road (where safe) and crosses a grassy area to come to the car park and signposted Staples Lookout.

12.25 | Staples Lookout

Staples Lookout beside Woy Woy Road, is a fenced lookout providing good views east across the Central Coast, the Brisbane Water and out to the ocean. There is a large car park and picnic tables, with plenty of natural shade. The lookout was named as a tribute to Charles J Staples, a pioneer of route that Woy Woy Rd now follows. The lookout was constructed in 1955 by the Rotary Club of Woy Woy. An inscription at the lookout quotes 'and I shall meditate on your wondrous works' from Psalm 119:27.





Brisbane Water
National Park

9.36
Kariong
Brook Falls

10.05

11.26

11.88

Staples
Lookout

Spion Kop

Brisbane
Water

Phegans
Bay

Horsfield
Bay

Horsfield Road

Woy Woy Road

Nagri Street



WildWalks

Mooney Mooney Creek

Old Pacific Highway

Piles Creek
Lookout
Smith
Cave
1.00

Brisbane Water
National Park

Kariong Scout Camp Trail

5.11

6.27

8.96

9.36

Kariong
Brook Falls

10.05

11.26

Mullet Creek

Summary navigation sheet for the Girrakool to Staples Lookout via Kariong Brook Falls



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 -33	270 m 6 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.
0.27	Illoura Lookout -33.4336,151.2752 (GR Gosford, 397993)	47 -83	1.1 km 27 mins	Turn left: From Illoura Lookout, the walk follows the left-hand 'Piles Creek' and GNW arrow down the wooden steps (keeping the valley to the right).
1.38	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 right: With the stairs to the right, this walk follows the short track to the fenced lookout.
1.38	Int of Girrakool and Piles Ck lookout tracks -33.4395,151.2677 (GR Gosford, 390987)	16 0	80 m 2 mins	Veer left: From the intersection, this walk heads away from the steps and lookout to soon pass a rock wall.
1.46	Monolith Cave -33.4402,151.2678 (GR Gosford, 390986)	13 -29	220 m 7 mins	Continue straight: From the cave, this walk heads south following the track away from the rock to soon come to another large and interesting monolithic rock.
1.68	Rat Gully Lookout -33.4417,151.2685 (GR Gosford, 391984)	96 -81	1 km 29 mins	Continue straight: From the lookout, the track follows the bush track heading downhill.
2.69	Tributary Crossing -33.4481,151.2653 (GR Gosford, 388977)	189 -33	2.4 km 57 mins	Continue straight: From the west side of the creek, this walk climbs uphill following the rocky track.
5.11	Scopas Peak -33.4614,151.2523 (GR Gosford, 376962)	14 -80	1.2 km 23 mins	Veer left: From the view point, just west of Scopas Peak, this walk heads south steeply down the rocky track, initially keeping the distant view to your right.
6.27	Int of GNW and Gosford Rifle Range trail -33.4696,151.2532 (GR Gosford, 377953)	76 -205	2.7 km 58 mins	Turn right: From the intersection, this walk follows the GNW arrow post downhill along the management trail (directly away from the 'No Entry Past This Point' sign).
8.96	Myron Brook crossing -33.4751,151.2655 (GR Gosford, 388947)	28 -33	400 m 11 mins	Continue straight: From the western side of Myron Brook, this walk crosses the creek on the sandstone rock platform to follow the track up a few stone steps and up the short steep hill.
9.36	Kariong Brook crossing -33.4749,151.2693 (GR Gosford, 392947)	122 -21	690 m 24 mins	Continue straight: From Kariong Brook, the walk crosses the creek and heads up the hill towards the cave (keeping the waterfall to the left).
10.05	Int of the Great North Walk and Patonga service trail -33.4768,151.2717 (GR Gosford, 394945)	48 -19	1.2 km 24 mins	Turn left: From the intersection, this walk heads north-east following the 'Staples Lookout' sign along the management trail.
11.26	Rock platform -33.4768,151.2832 (GR Gosford, 405945)	35 -3	620 m 13 mins	Continue straight: From the rock platform, this walk heads north east along the management trail, keeping the main valley views to the left.
11.88	Int of Thommos Trail and Woy Woy Road -33.4749,151.2884 (GR Gosford, 410948)	13 0	370 m 7 mins	Turn left: From the intersection, heads along Woy Woy Road passing the large brown 'Scenic Lookout 300m' sign.