



Visit

Gardens of Stone

State Conservation Area

About Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area

The 28,322 hectare Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area is located on the junction of the Great Dividing Range and the Blue Mountains Range, north of Lithgow in the Central Tablelands Region.

The park is comprised of three former state forests including Newnes State Forest, part of Ben Bullen State Forest and Wolgan State Forest, and provides an important link between Blue Mountains National Park, Gardens of Stone National Park and Wollemi National Park.

The park conserves rich eucalypt forests, important Wiradjuri cultural heritage and an array of threatened species and ecological communities.

What is a State Conservation Area?

State Conservation Areas are lands reserved to protect and conserve significant or representative ecosystems, landforms, natural areas or places of cultural significance. They provide opportunities for sustainable visitation, public enjoyment, and research.

State Conservation Areas may allow mineral and petroleum exploration and mining.

All flora, fauna, rock formations and cultural heritage in Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area is protected.

Protecting cultural values

The park is an important part of the Wiradjuri cultural landscape with ongoing cultural connections and many recorded sites including artefacts, art engravings and pigmentations, carved and scarred trees, stone arrangements and grinding grooves.

Ongoing engagement with Wiradjuri Traditional Owners aims to ensure the protection of cultural values and that the park's management aligns with the community's aspirations.

Protecting natural values

The park is characterised by the spectacular 'pagoda country' and protects exceptional conservation values including:

- internationally significant geo-heritage with spectacular sandstone pagodas, cliffs, steep gullies, slot canyons and grassy woodlands
- the Newnes Plateau – the highest elevation sandstone plateau in the Blue Mountains, containing species such as the Wolgan Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus gregsoniana*), which is not found in the existing Blue Mountains reserves
- at least 16 threatened ecological communities, including elevated swamps listed under both Commonwealth and State legislation, as well as box woodland and tableland grassy forest
- over 80 rare and threatened species, including koalas, spotted-tailed quolls, regent honeyeaters, and the Blue Mountains water skinks.



Photo: Lookout view of Lithgow (Juicy Projects/DCCEEW).

Frequently asked questions

Getting there

The main access roads to the park are:

- State Mine Gully Road from Lithgow
- Old Bells Line of Road (Zig Zag Railway) from Clarence
- Maiyingu Murrugu Trail from Wolgan Valley
- Long Swamp Road from Wolgan Valley

Driving and motorbike riding in the park

All roads in the park are unsealed and mostly accessible by 4WD vehicles only. Glow Worm Tunnel Road may be accessible by two-wheel drive vehicles in dry weather only.

- NSW road rules apply. All drivers and riders must have a current driver's licence and all vehicles must be road registered.
- Obey all signs and speed limits.
- Check for park closure alerts before you travel at www.nswparks.info/gos-sca
- There is zero tolerance of illegal motorbike riding on public land including national parks and state forests. No licence, no rego, no ride.
- All vehicles are only permitted on park roads and designated formed trails.
- The creation of new tracks and 'bush bashing' is not permitted. It is an offence for riders and drivers to create or use new tracks.
- Roads and trails may be temporarily closed in wet weather to prevent damage and for management purposes.
- Road conditions may vary. Drive according to the conditions and your vehicle's capabilities.

The Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area Vehicle Access Strategy provides for safe and sustainable vehicle access in the park.

View the strategy here:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/gardens-of-stone-state-conservation-area-vehicle-access-strategy.

No licence, no rego, no ride

- There is zero tolerance of illegal motorbike riding on public land, including national parks and state forests.
- Motorbikes must be registered if ridden on public lands.
- Riders must be licenced to ride a motorbike on public lands (this means no underage riding or driving).

Is camping allowed in the park?

Yes. Vehicle-based camping is allowed in previously used camping areas only. Remote, backpack camping for overnight bushwalks is also permitted.

- Please do not camp in undisturbed forested areas or remove plants to clear a new campsite.
- There are no facilities at the park. Be prepared to be self-sufficient. Take all your rubbish with you.
- Consider bringing a portable camp toilet. Do not empty your toilet in the park. RV dump points are available outside the park.
- Generators and chainsaws are not permitted.

Can I have a campfire?

Yes. Small campfires and gas cookers are permitted, except during park or total fire bans.

- Bring your own firewood as collecting wood or other vegetation is not permitted in the park.
- Ensure your campfire is fully extinguished before you leave your campsite.

It is your responsibility to know when there's a fire ban. Check www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fdr-and-tobans or www.nswparks.info/gos-sca

How is camping changing in the future?

Previous unregulated camping had a significant impact on the environment and visitor safety and experience. Camping will be managed to be more sustainable, protect the park's natural and cultural values and improve visitor safety and experience. Designated vehicle-based camping areas will be established in the park in the next few years.



Photo: Camping is popular at Gardens of Stone (DCCEEW).

Are dogs allowed in the park?

No. Dogs and other domestic animals (other than certified assistance animals) are not allowed in the park including in vehicles.

- The sights, sounds and smells of dogs and other pets cause native animals stress.
- Poisonous baits are often laid to control foxes and wild dogs and can be fatal to pets.
- Leaving your pets home helps protect the park and your pet.

Where can I bushwalk in the park?

Explore the family friendly 6-kilometre return Lost City Walking Track for spectacular views of the pagodas.

Other informal bushwalking tracks are also available in the park. Before you trek check www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/safety/bushwalking-safety/think-before-you-trek.

Where can I mountain bike ride in the park?

Mountain biking and cycling is permitted on the park's existing roads and tracks. Please don't ride off-track or on wet tracks as they are easily damaged.

Is horseriding allowed in the park?

Horse riding is permitted on roads and management trails including the National Trail. It is not permitted on walking or cycling tracks or off-track.

Can I rock climb, abseil or canyon in the park?

Yes, these activities are permitted but no new bolts or anchors can be installed. Park infrastructure must not be used as anchor points.

Caring for the park

- Camp in previously used camping areas. Don't clear vegetation to make new sites.
- Store food and rubbish in sealed containers to keep it away from wildlife.
- Take all your rubbish away with you.
- All flora, fauna, rock formations and cultural heritage are protected.
- Make sure your campfire is fully extinguished before you leave.
- Consider bringing a portable camp toilet. Empty at a RV dump point outside the park.
- Be considerate of other campers. Keep noise to a minimum.
- Please respect this special place, other visitors and our staff.

Things to know

Temporary park closures

The park may be temporarily closed at times for visitor safety or management purposes. Check the national parks website for closure alerts before you travel.

Activity consents

A consent is needed if you are visiting the park in a group of more than 40 people, holding an event, using a drone or undertaking commercial activities such as tours, filming or photography. Email npws.kanangra@environment.nsw.gov.au

No firewood collection

Collecting firewood is not permitted in the park.

No hunting

Hunting is not permitted in the park.

Staying safe

- All park roads are unsealed and conditions may vary. Drive according to road conditions.
- The park has no facilities, so you'll need to be self-sufficient. Bring plenty of water.
- Take care around the sandstone pagodas, cliff edges and rocky outcrops. These fragile ancient landforms could be unstable.
- Before you trek check **www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/safety/bushwalking-safety/think-before-you-trek**
- Be prepared. Weather conditions in the park can change rapidly, even in summer months.
- Mobile phone service in the park is limited.
- Let a family member or friend know where you are going and your likely return time.
- Check for park closure alerts **online** before you travel.

Planning for the future

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is delivering a new visitor experiences at Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area, including a multi-day walk through the unique ancient pagoda landscapes.

The Wollemi Great Walk will showcase the park's extraordinary natural and cultural values and link Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area to Wollemi National Park.

More information

For more information go to www.environment.nsw.gov.au/gardens-of-stone-state-conservation-area or email

npws.kanangra@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area

