

Exploring Dunns Swamp - Wollemi National Park

An ancient, rugged and spectacular landscape

Just a few hours out of Sydney you will find Wollemi National Park. Sprawling over 500, 000 hectares, from the Blue Mountains north to the Hunter region, it is the second largest national park in New South Wales.

Known for being the home of the Wollemi Pine, one of the world's oldest and rarest trees, the rugged and spectacular landscape still boasts many inaccessible and unexplored areas. Part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, the park is important for its flora, fauna and Aboriginal rock art sites.

Dunns Swamp sits on the Cudgegong River and was created when the Kandos Weir was built in the 1920's to supply water to the Kandos Cement Works.

Dunns Swamp is a 20 minute drive from Rylstone and about an hour from Mudgee. The road in to the national park from Rylstone is a combination of bitumen, gravel and dirt but is accessible by 2WD vehicles. There is no entry fee to the National Park, however if you are staying overnight there are self-registration camping fees of \$6/adult/night.

The area is known as Ganguddy to local Aboriginal people. The natural swamps of the area were an important resource for them, providing fresh water and food such as duck eggs, tortoise and snake meat as well as reeds for making baskets.

There are numerous ways to enjoy Dunns Swamp including bushwalking, kayaking and camping. A **Visitor Guide can be downloaded here**

<https://www.visitmudgeeregion.com.au/uploads/176/dunns-swamp-ganguddy.pdf>

At Dunns Swamp you can reconnect with nature and enjoy a small piece of the ancient wilderness of Wollemi National Park.

Dunns Swamp Walks

The walking trails around Dunns Swamp are well marked with signs and there are also steps, rails and chains provided where necessary. There are five signposted walks to explore:

Campsite Rocks Walk

This is an easy and short walk (approx. 500m) around the rocks of the campsite area. There is a lot of signposted information provided on this walk covering the history, both natural and man-made, of the area. You can learn about the local Aboriginal people, the Wiradjuri, who are known to have lived in the area for more than 12, 000 years. You can also view some Aboriginal rock art in the form of hand stencils made from red ochre.

Platypus Point Walk

This is another easy walk (approx. 800m) from the campground area to a rocky point level with the water offering great views of the river. It is great for birdwatchers as the reeds along the banks of the river and the surrounding bush are home to many species of birds.

Pagoda Lookout

This walk will take you to the top of the rock pagodas allowing stunning 360 degree views over the river and valleys. It is only from this vantage point that you can appreciate the way the river meanders through the landscape.

Getting to the top is a difficult climb with lots of scrambling up the steep rocks. The views over the Wollemi National Park are your reward when you reach the top.

The landscape at the top is stunning and ancient, from the Triassic period, and definitely worth the difficult climb. Caution is advised at the cliff edges on this walk and obviously once you reach the top. This walk is approx. 1.8 km return to the camping area.

Weir Walk and Long Cave Circuit

This walk is classified as moderate as there are steep steps in several places. This track takes you from the camping area right along the edge of the waterway with beautiful views of the river and the surrounding mountains and up past the Kandos Weir. We were told that it is possible to see turtles and even platypus near the weir wall but we didn't see any on this particular day.

If you want to continue on the track after the weir you will come to the Long Cave, a long rock overhang. It is a 4.5km return trip.

Waterside Walk / River Gauging Weir Circuit

This walk is classified as an easy, level walk of 5.5km taking you on a tour of the riverside and woodlands and up to the river gauging weir. We did not do this walk.

Exploring Dunns Swamp by Kayak

A paddle from the campsite up to the weir takes around half an hour so it is possible to get up there and back in the one hour time frame. Life jackets were provided as well as a quick lesson on how to steer our kayaks using the rudders. Then we were off.

On the water you can really appreciate how spectacular the sandstone gorges are, having being sculpted by wind, rain and erosion over time. From our kayaks we could explore the overhanging ledges and crevices in the gorge and view the honeycombed walls up close.

The water of the river is fresh and clean, and is suitable for swimming and fishing (if you have a licence).

The river is said to be home to long-necked turtles and platypus as well as golden perch, Murray cod and catfish. We saw one small lizard sitting on a rock ledge, but unfortunately no other wildlife on this morning.

Camping at Dunns Swamp (\$6/adult/night)

. Unmarked camp sites are available and are suitable for tents, camper trailers and caravans. Some camping sites are scenically located right next to the large sandstone rocks of the Campsite Rocks Walking trail.

Sites can not be booked but operate on a first come - first served basis. Picnic tables, BBQ facilities and composting pit toilets are provided, however you must bring your own water and firewood and take your rubbish with you when you leave.

Dunns Swamp - Ganguddy campground is on the west side of Wollemi National Park. [To get there from Rylstone:](#)

Getting There

Turn off Ilford Road on to Fitzgerald Street

Continue on to Narrango Road for 2.4km

Slight left on to Narango Road continue for 15.4km

Continue straight on to Coricudgy Road and then Mount Coricudgy Road for 7.1km

Please note front-wheel-drive vehicles towing caravans and heavy trailers are not recommended.

Other Accommodation options

<https://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/country-nsw/mudgee-area/rylstone/accommodation>

Ryleston hotel, Wollemi retreat, Cubby house farmstay

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/camping-and-accommodation/accommodation/capertee-cottage>

Capertree cottage

Kandos also check Booking.com and

<https://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/country-nsw/mudgee-area/kandos/accommodation>