

Welcome to Cooma North Ridge Reserve - A Place for Space

Cooma North Ridge Reserve is recognised for its conservation of the plants, animals, and natural features within the Reserve. It provides an important place for personal space, passive recreation, and education. It is a local place for people to reflect and build personal resilience.

The background...

This Reserve of 124 hectares is approximately 2.5km long on the North-South axis and 0.5 km wide. It comprises three parcels of land that have been amalgamated. In 1981 the majority of the Ridge area was transferred from the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority (SMHEA) to the NSW Lands Department. Cooma-Monaro Shire, now Snowy Monaro Regional Council, became the trustee of this land in 1991 and purchased further land from SMHEA in 1996. The southern Flora Reserve of the 1950s was added in 1997.

The land where you stand...

Five hundred million years ago Cooma North Ridge was a sea floor. During the next hundred million years this was pushed up to form mountains. Subsequent erosion has exposed various rocks which consist mainly of Cooma Granodiorite.

This contrasts with the surrounding open Monaro grassland which is of basalt origin and occurred later.

Recent archaeological evidence suggests that the Ngarigo Aboriginal people lived on the Monaro for thousands of years. The Cooma North Ridge Reserve was a gathering place and would have provided food, fibre, medicines, and the materials for tools, for the tribes who met there.

Focus on the plants...

The ridge contains a relatively uncommon combination of Black Cypress Pines (*Callitris endlicheri*) and eucalypts.

Black Cypress Pines (*Callitris endlicheri*)

The name *callitris* is derived from the Greek words *kallos* (beauty) and *treis* (three) and refers to the arrangement of leaflets in whorls of three.

It was named in Honour of Stephan Endlicher (1804-1849) – an Austrian Botanist.



Black Cypress Pines

This species occurs in unnaturally high numbers in Cooma North Ridge Reserve due to their proximity to housing.

The timber has been a valued resource that was used on local farms for sheds and fencing posts.

This species regenerates mostly from seed after fire. It is a slow growing native and therefore needs time between fires to produce seeds for next generations.

The main eucalypt species are the widespread Manna or Ribbon Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), Broad-leaved Peppermint (*E. dives*) and the Inland Scribbly Gum (*E. rossii*)

The ridge in season has a rich understorey of plants including flowering shrubs, peas, heaths, daisies, bluebells, orchids, and native grasses.

Among the 184 species of plants are the native, Donkey, Tiger, Bearded Greenhood and Ruddyhood Orchids.

Spring is heralded by the yellow shades and heady perfume of the wattles. The first to flower is the feathery-leaved Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*). This is followed by the widespread shrubby **Red-leaved Wattle** (*A. rubida*). Not until November-December do the pale-yellow flowers of Black Wattle (*A. mearnsii*) appear.



Red-leaved Wattle

In the sky.....

The acrobatic Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, colourful Crimson Rosellas and the tiny Silver Eyes are included in the list of 80 species of local birds. Honey-eaters including **Eastern Spinebills** are attracted to the reddish flowers of the grey-leaved **Grevillea Lanigera** bushes.

Some grevilleas have greener less hairy leaves, the result of cross pollination with other grevillea varieties in nearby gardens. You may also hear the raucous **Gang-Gang Cockatoos** or a melodic Grey Shrike Thrush.

Cooma North Ridge Reserve functions as a significant bird migration corridor.

On the hop...

In the daytime or walking along the creek at dusk, you may hear one of the four species, Eastern Banjo, Spotted Grass, Common Eastern Froglet or the Whistling Tree Frog.



Eastern Spinebill



Gang-Gang



Woolly Grevillea

Slinking and slithering...

Of the many reptiles in the Reserve, the **Rosenberg's Monitor** is particularly interesting. It is up to one metre long, has powerful limbs, eyes with movable lids and a deeply forked tongue like that of a snake, which constantly flicks in and out. Four species of snakes have also been recorded, these creatures pass through our landscape, so take care where you place your hands and feet.



Rosenberg's Monitor

On the ground...

On the Ridge's scenic walks, you may meet one of the Macropod family, like the Large Grey Kangaroo, the heavily built Wallaroo, the Red-necked Swamp Wallaby all are residents of the Reserve. Watch out for tell-tale signs of our Monotreme, the **Spiny Echidna**, as it forages through the bush and termite mounds for ants.



Echidna

The mainly nocturnal **Common Wombat** makes its burrows in the banks of the Cooma Creek but marks its territory throughout the Reserve by its prolific dropping, recognised by its cubed shape. Their scat is usually left on rocks and accompanied by scratching. They feed on grass and low vegetation.



Common Wombat

Dusk brings the possums out to forage for leaves and fruits. The Common Brushtail Possums produce single young each season. When it leaves the pouch, it is carried on the mother's back until maturity. The smaller Ringtail Possum use their tails as a fifth limb to climb or carry nesting materials up a tree. The third possum is the **Sugar Glider** with a dark stripe down its back.



Sugar Glider



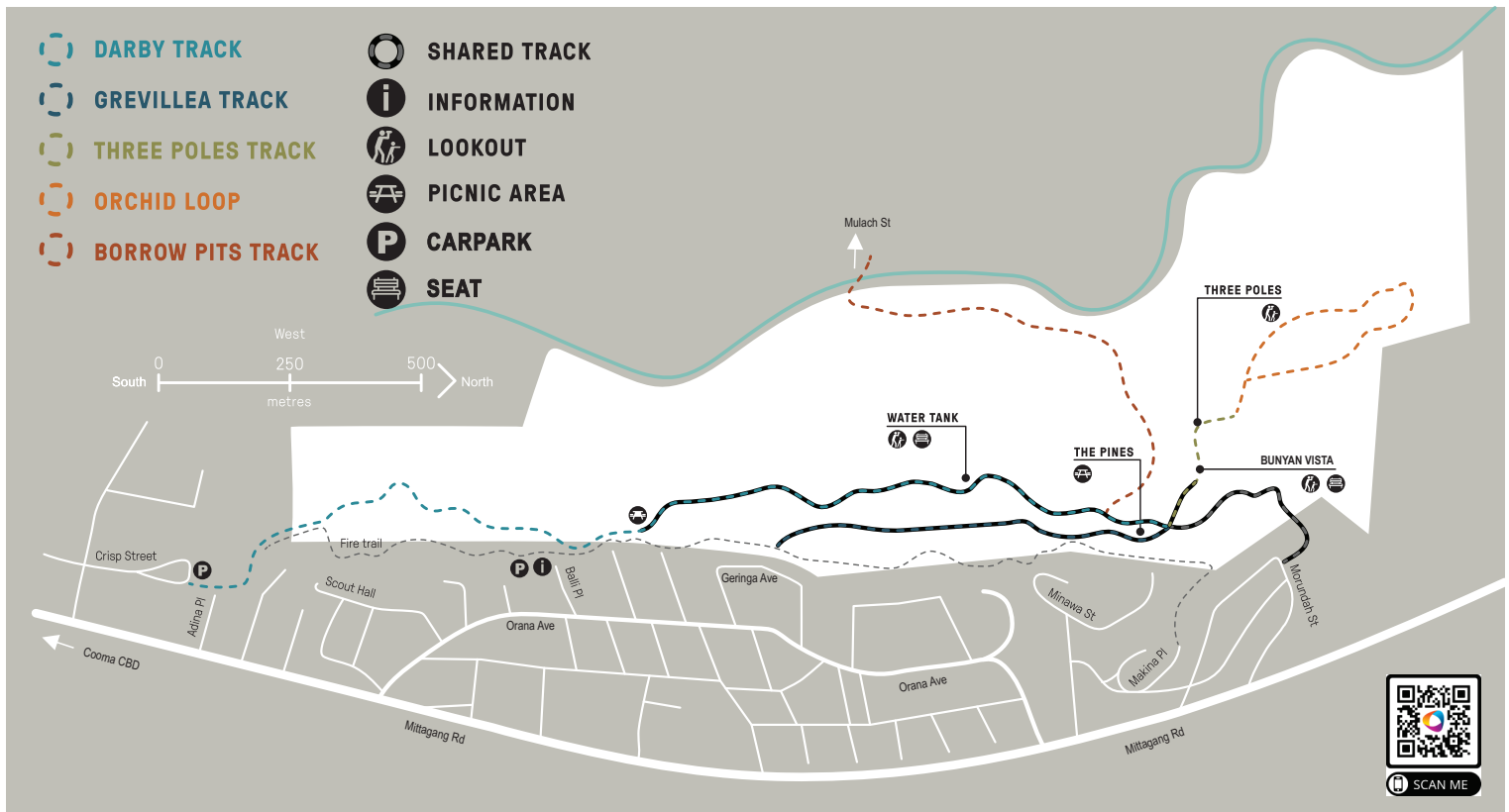
Australian Government



NSW GOVERNMENT

This is a Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund project through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Although funding for this product has been provided by both the Australian and NSW Governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either government.

Illustrated by Rowena Evans



Track: Darby Track

Grade: 3

Colour totems and signage: Blue

Access point: Darby track at Crisp St distance to:

- Balli Place 1 km
- Water Tank 1.8km
- Three Poles 2.5 km

Starting at Crisp Street in the south, the Darby Track runs the length of the reserve, along the ridge and parallel to the fire trail. It showcases scribbly gum woodlands, rock outcrops, panoramic vistas, diverse floral communities, marsupials and bird life.

This walk can also be started at the main information board at Balli Place. Follow the blue totems along the Darby Track.

The semi-circle shape of 'The Pines' area at the top of the ridge was originally planted as a wind break for grazing. At the Three Poles Gate, take time here to admire the Bunyan Vista from the natural rock lookout a few metres to the right.

Track: Grevillea Track

Grade: 3

Colour totems and signage: Dark Blue

Access Point: Grevillea Track from Geringa Ave distance to:

- The Pines: 750m

Access Point: Grevillea Track from Minawa Place distance to:

- The Pines 250m
- Three Poles 500m
- Crisp St 1.8km

Branching from the fire trail at Geringa Ave and snaking to the east of The Pines, the Grevillea Track treats walkers to displays of woolly grevillea from spring to summer. The sweet-scented heath also flowers in the spring.

Track: Three Poles

Grade: 3, walkers only area

Colour totems and signage: Green

Beginning at the Bunyan Vista, this track links The Pines to the Orchid Loop providing views across Cooma Creek to the Lambie Street end of town. On the horizon, the basalt grasslands and the volcanic plugs of "The Brothers" can be seen. Take time to admire the view northwards to Bunyan and Bredbo from the rock lookout, Bunyan Vista.

From this point north, the environment is extremely sensitive and hosts a wide variety of rare native orchids in season and rare bryophytes.

Return can be via the same route with a variation along the Grevillea Track, Dark Blue totems and signs, or walk on to the Orchid Loop Orange totems and signs.

Track: Orchid Loop

Grade: 3, walkers only area

Colour totems and signage: Orange

- Orchid loop 750m return

From late October through to the end of November, and again from March to late April, you may see local native orchids in flower. These ground dwelling orchids are sensitive to rainfall and fire and don't appear regularly. Scattered throughout the reserve they are most often seen along this loop.

Please admire them but leave them to regenerate.

At the northern end of the loop this track continues along the ridge through inland Scribbly Gum woodland (*Eucalyptus rossii*) for another kilometre to the northern extremity of the Reserve.

Track: Borrow Pits Walk

Grade: 4

Colour totems and signage: Brown

Access points: Mulach St or The Pines
2km return, walk in either direction

Branching from Darby Track, near The Pines, the track takes its name from a period when council borrowed the rich basalt soil for gardens and other uses. The track descends steeply through the gully, with many rock steps. It passes the ruins of saddler JE Pretty Walker's stone house, now an overgrown garden of irises, quinces and plum trees, to Cooma Creek where you may spy a platypus. The track finishes at Mulach St, the major western entrance to Cooma North Ridge Reserve. The ford may be covered with water and the rocks are slippery.

To extend this walk you can return to the Cooma CBD via Mulach St and Nijong Oval. This is approximately 2km. Please take your time and enjoy our wonderful reserve.

In 2022, a Bushfire Community Recovery Resilience grant funding was used to upgrade and extend the steps and improve the drainage of the section of track from the ridge to the valley floor.

Track: Morundah

Grade: 4

Colour totems and signage: Shared

Morundah to The Pines is 400m. Check the trackhead at the crest of the ridge for these walk options.

Three Poles trackhead at top of Morundah distance to:

- Three Poles 200m
- Orchid Loop 300m
- Balli Pl 1.2km
- Crisp St 2km