

RAVENSBOURNE NATIONAL PARK



Ravensbourne National Park is situated on a spur of the Great Dividing Range between Toowoomba and Esk. It has short walks and spectacular vistas from Gus Beutel's Lookout.

Discover towering trees, palm groves, trickling streams and amazing birdlife in the best remaining example of the rainforest that originally covered this part of the Great Dividing Range.

Local Aboriginal people and those travelling to the bunya feasts in the Bunya Mountains used the area extensively. Rainforest hardwoods, red cedar *Toona ciliata* and other timbers were felled from about the 1860s.

Piccabeen palms, ferns, elkhorns and fungi thrive in the cool, moist remnants of rainforest and wet eucalypt forest along the edge of the Great Dividing Range. Evidence suggests the rainforest is slowly overtaking the open forest. Gullies with trickling streams are moist and inviting, while exposed ridges are warm and dry.

Listen for the calls of the green catbird, noisy pitta, eastern whipbird or wompoo fruit-dove that are often heard but rarely seen. Flocks of topknot pigeons feed in the piccabeen palms and large fig at the Cedar Block day-use area, while eastern yellow robins, white-browed scrubwrens and grey fantails are common visitors to the Blackbean day-use area.

On the edge of the Cedar Block circuit track, look for circular hollows on the rainforest floor made by the black-breasted button-quail *Turnix melanogaster* as it spins around while feeding. Spectacular red-tailed black-cockatoos and glossy black-cockatoos feed on casuarina seeds in the open forest in winter.

WALKS

Cedar Block circuit (Class 3) - 500 m circuit, allow 15 mins

This short self-guided walk starts at the bottom of the Cedar Block day-use area. Wayside signs interpret the rainforest and how it was used by Aboriginal travellers and by timber-getters.

Rainforest circuit (Class 3) - 1.7 km return, allow 40 mins

Large Sydney blue gums *Eucalyptus saligna* emerge through the rainforest canopy. In the understory there are many attractive ground ferns, epiphytic ferns and vines. Along the higher section of this walking track the remains of an Aboriginal yam-digging site can be seen.

Palm Creek circuit (Class 3) - 3.6 km return, allow 1 hr 15 mins

This track leaves the rainforest circuit and crosses Palm Creek—named after the piccabeen palms *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* covering its steep banks. Look in the canopy for epiphytes growing on taller trees and birds feasting on palm tree fruits.

A short side track leads along a eucalypt forest ridge to a small sandstone overhang.

Buaraba Creek (Class 4) - 6.2 km return, allow 2 hrs

This pleasant walk starts in the rainforest, passes through eucalypt forest, and ends with a short descent into the cool and shady Buaraba Creek. Return along



Piccabeen palms and an abundance of vines, ferns and elkhorns thrive in the dappled light beneath the forest canopy. Photo: Karen Smith, Qld Govt.

the same track. Please take drinking water.

CAMPING

Camping is not allowed at Ravensbourne National Park.

ACCOMMODATION

Visitors can stay overnight at nearby Crows Nest National Park, at Lake Cressbrook or in holiday accommodation in and around Ravensbourne, Hampton, Crows Nest, Toowoomba or Esk.

PICNIC AND DAY USE AREAS

Enjoy a picnic in one of two day-use areas. Both have shelter sheds, picnic tables, pit toilets, water and wood barbecues. Blackbean day-use area at the entrance to the park is small, shaded and cool in summer.

Cedar Block day-use area is at the top of the range adjacent to Gus Buetel's Lookout. It is a large, open, grassy area suitable for large groups.

Bring your own drinking water, or boil or treat the water supplied on the park before drinking. Firewood is not provided, so bring your own clean, milled wood or a fuel stove—do not collect wood from the national park. No bins are provided, take rubbish away for appropriate disposal when you leave.

VIEWING WILDLIFE

Take home memories of fleeting rainforest birds, scurrying lizards and frogs calling from the creek.

At least 110 species of birds visit or live in this park including the black-breasted button-quail (which is threatened with extinction) fruit doves and six species of owls. Visitors might see satin bowerbirds, pigeons or red-backed fairy-wrens.

CULTURE AND HISTORY

For thousands of years, Jawowair and Jagera people welcomed others passing through their country on the way to bunya nut festivals at the Bunya Mountains. Aboriginal people camped and gathered food in the Ravensbourne area for generations. Evidence of an Aboriginal yam digging site can be seen within the park.

From the 1860s and 1870s, timber-getters arrived to log the forests. Red cedar was so plentiful that Ravensbourne was known as 'Cedar Scrubs' or 'The Cedars'. Pit sawyers cut huge cedar logs into timber of manageable size before it was carted to Toowoomba via bullock dray. But after steam mills were established in Toowoomba, and later at Ravensbourne, entire logs were carted directly to the mills.

As well as cedar, other rainforest softwood species such as blackbean and rosewood were logged for use in cabinet making, and eucalypt hardwoods were felled for structural timbers.

After the Ravensbourne district was opened up for selection in 1889, precious little of the scrubs were spared from axe or fire in the quest to farm potatoes, maize or dairy cows on the rich red soils.

With its splendid vantage points, palm and fern-filled gullies and prolific birdlife, Ravensbourne became a popular place to visit. Gus Beutel was granted a one hectare special lease in 1924 on which he felled trees to establish a picnic area and create a lookout that now bears his name. Today at the Cedar Block day-use area you can still see the levelled site where a community dance hall and tennis court once stood.

Thankfully for us, and for future generations, the Highfields Shire Council lobbied to have the area reserved for scenic and recreational purposes. This push, coupled with the realisation by the Government that forests were being severely depleted, resulted in 91 ha being declared as Ravensbourne National Park on 26 August 1922. Today the park is 687 ha in size.

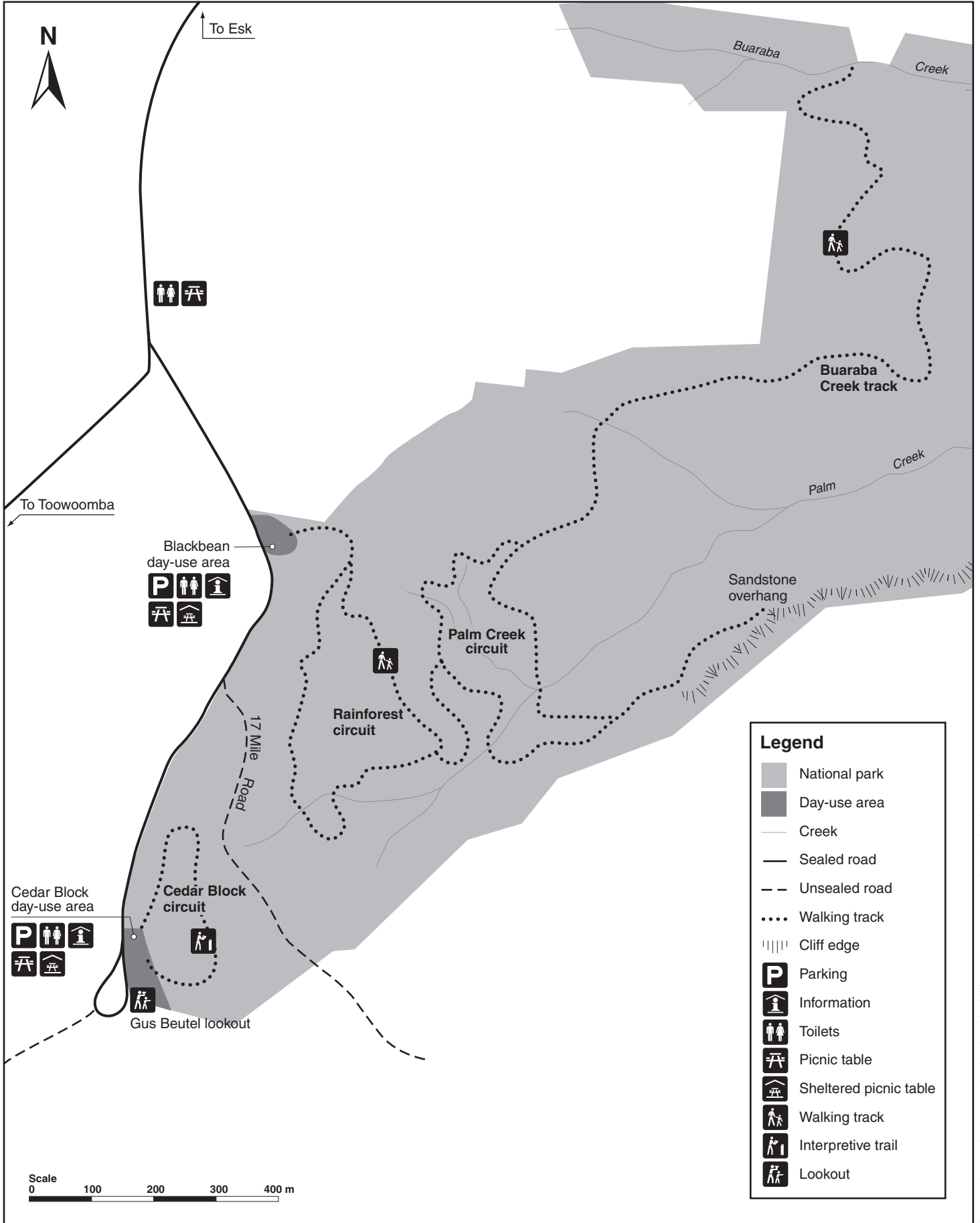
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Compiled by Hampton Visitor Information Centre , 07469 79066 | 1800 009 066 | June 2014



The Gus Beutel lookout is close to the Cedar Block day-use area. Photo Karen Smith, Qld Govt.

Ravensbourne National Park map



Legend

- National park
- Day-use area
- Creek
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Walking track
- Cliff edge
- Parking
- Information
- Toilets
- Picnic table
- Sheltered picnic table
- Walking track
- Interpretive trail
- Lookout

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