www.warrumbunglenationalpark.com.au

WARRUMBUNGLE NATIONAL PARK · UNOFFICIAL FREE PLANNER

Practical day-walk & dark-sky planner

Packing · Fans Horizon vs Breadknife · fee split (vehicle vs camping vs permits) · PLB / limited reception · Camp Blackman / Dark Sky · official links. From **warrumbunglenationalpark.com.au** — print this page or save as PDF (no email required).

Verify everything officially. Track status, camping, fire bans, heat and closures change. Always check NSW National Parks — Warrumbungle National Park, local park alerts and park alerts. This planner is independent and unofficial — not NPWS or the NSW Government. Official campgrounds book via NPWS only. Emergencies: **000**.

Fees (three separate systems — never merge): A. Vehicle day entry $8 per vehicle per day as published (re-checked 15 Aug 2026) — [VERIFY] live. Pedestrians / cyclists free. Annual passes cover *vehicle entry only*, never camping. **B. Camping** is a separate NPWS booking (Camp Blackman, Wambelong, walk-in sites). Do not hard-code camping dollars. Some remote sites may have a booking fee only (e.g. Burbie — [VERIFY]). **C. Day walks** (including Breadknife & Grand High Tops): no extra walk permit. Trip Intention Form recommended. Free PLB hire at the Visitor Centre.

Do not visit 6–12 September 2026. NPWS upcoming (snapshot 15 Aug 2026): the **whole park is closed** 3pm Sunday 6 September to 9am Saturday 12 September 2026 for pest control (aerial and ground). Breadknife, Fans Horizon, Whitegum, Camp Blackman and the Visitor Centre are listed. Verify live on local alerts — this dated note goes stale.

One named walk per day. This is not a Sydney day trip. Allow a long drive from Sydney (often six hours-plus each way — [VERIFY]) or overnight in Coonabarabran / Dubbo. Do not stack Breadknife + Bluff Mountain + Mount Exmouth. Heat (record 42.6 °C), scarce track water, post-2013 tree-fall and **limited mobile reception** (official NPWS) are the park-true hazards — no tides, no crocs. Tara Cave viewing platform is closed for repair (walk open only as far as the platform — snapshot 15 Aug 2026).

1. Before you leave home

Status, roads & weather

- ☐ NPWS park page + local alerts checked this morning
- ☐ BOM forecast for **Coonabarabran / inland heat**, not only a Sydney tile
- ☐ RFS fire danger / total fire ban if any flame
- ☐ One walk chosen (Fans Horizon / Breadknife / easy lookout) — not three
- ☐ Plan B named (Whitegum + picnic if heat or fitness fails)
- ☐ Vehicle entry paid or annual pass valid ([VERIFY] $8/day)
- ☐ Camping booked via NPWS only (if overnight)
- ☐ Someone has your Trip Intention / return window
- ☐ Screenshot alerts + map while you still have town reception
- ☐ Emergency+ installed; consider free PLB hire at the Visitor Centre

Packing (day pack / dark-sky night)

- ☐ Water 2–3+ L per person (no drinking water on Breadknife)
- ☐ Snacks / simple lunch
- ☐ Hat + SPF + sun/wind layer (summer heat vs winter frost to −9 °C)
- ☐ Sturdy trail shoes (steps, rock, heat)
- ☐ Phone + offline map / GeoTours / NPWS app pack
- ☐ Headlamp (dark-sky nights; late finishes)
- ☐ Red-light option if stargazing
- ☐ Basic first aid / blister kit
- ☐ Electrolytes on hot Grade 4 days
- ☐ Optional: own PLB / satellite messenger for remote parties

2. Pick ONE day shape

First visit — Fans Horizon

- Same Pincham carpark as Breadknife
- Official: 3.6 km return, Grade 3, 1.5–2.5 hrs, 1000+ steps
- Views of Breadknife, Belougery Spire, Crater Bluff
- Best first / mixed-ability walk — not a Grade 4 default

Fit day — Breadknife & Grand High Tops

- Official: 14.5 km loop, Grade 4, 5–6 hrs
- Shorter 12.5 km return via Dagda Shortcut
- Start/finish Pincham; toilets at carpark
- No water on track; Trip Intention + PLB recommended

Easy / photos / heat Plan B

- Whitegum Lookout (sealed, often wheelchair-friendly — [VERIFY]) + Visitor Centre + Canyon picnic / Wambelong Nature Track
- Do not start Breadknife at 2pm after a late arrival from Dubbo or Sydney

3. Half-day / full-day shapes (pick one)

Fans Horizon day

- **Night before** — name Plan A (Fans Horizon) and Plan B (Whitegum).
- **Coonabarabran** — fuel and water in town. No useful public transport to the park.
- **Visitor Centre** — 4261 John Renshaw Parkway; entry; map; PLB chat if you later want Breadknife.
- **Walk** — Pincham start; return the same way. Not a loop into Grand High Tops.
- **Do not** add Breadknife "just to see the start."

Breadknife day (fit only)

- **Night before** — fitness honesty + heat check. Switch to Fans Horizon if unsure.
- **Early VC** — Trip Intention + free PLB hire (hours typically 9am–4pm, closed Christmas Day — [VERIFY]).
- **Day shape** — Spirey Creek → steep Spirey Ramp past Breadknife → Belougery Spire / Crater Bluff → Balor Hut rest → Grand High Tops → Western High Tops / Ogma → Dows → West Spirey return.
- **Bail-outs** — reverse same way; Dagda Shortcut (12.5 km); or turn around.
- **Do not** add Bluff Mountain the same afternoon.

Dark-sky overnight

- Keep the daylight walk short (Whitegum or Fans Horizon) if the night is the product.
- Camp Blackman (booked NPWS) or a Coonabarabran bed. Red light; no white floods.
- Siding Spring Observatory is a nearby neighbour — not a walking-loop add-on. Operator hours (re-checked 15 Aug 2026): 8:30am–4:00pm daily; café/Exploratory closed Tuesdays; **not open at night**.
- Official NPWS "Explore the Dark Sky" still lists remaining 2026 evenings (21 Aug; then Sep/Oct — skip 6–12 Sep park closure). Walk on the Wild Side: 20 & 27 Aug then Sep/Oct afternoons. Prices and remaining dates [VERIFY] on the official tour pages.
- Winter often has the clearest skies and the coldest nights.

Distances, grades and surface notes are planning ranges only — verify on **nationalparks.nsw.gov.au** for your date.

4. Full-day rule (protect the day)

- **One** named walk maximum (plus a short lookout or picnic if energy remains).
- Do *not* treat Warrumbungle as a same-day return from Sydney after a full park day.
- If the hard walk is closed, too hot, or the group is not Grade 4-ready: Fans Horizon or Whitegum still counts as a successful park day.
- Overnight stays need **NPWS bookings** — this planner is not a booking channel or affiliate product.
- Park entry still applies on camping nights. Two fee systems, always.

5. Decision tree / order of stops

First-timer from Coonabarabran

Visitor Centre (tickets, map) → Pincham → Fans Horizon → reverse. Breadknife only if the group is already Grade 4-ready at the car.

Fit walkers with a full day

Early Visitor Centre (Trip Intention + PLB) → Pincham → Breadknife loop or Dagda Shortcut → reverse with daylight. No second summit.

> **Heatwave / mixed mobility / late arrival**
> Whitegum Lookout + Canyon picnic + Visitor Centre. Do not start the 14.5 km loop after lunch.

> **Dark-sky / Milky Way night**
> Short daylight walk → booked camp or Coonabarabran bed → red light. Official "Explore the Dark Sky" via NPWS only. Siding Spring is a day visit, not a night add-on. Do not visit 6–12 Sep 2026.

> **From Sydney or by air via Dubbo**
> Overnight. Dubbo is the flight / car-hire hub, not a trailhead. Build a real drive to John Renshaw Parkway.

> **Wind, fire danger, exhausted group**
> Shorten, switch Plan B, or cancel. Do not sit or camp under large post-2013 trees in wind.

6. Overnight extras (if camping or stargazing)

- ☐ Every night booked via official NPWS camping channels (Camp Blackman, Wambelong, Pincham, walk-in Balor / Ogma / Dows etc.)
- ☐ Vehicle entry still paid / pass valid on top of camping
- ☐ Site type matches vehicle (caravan / camper notes on the live product page)
- ☐ Do not camp under large trees or overhanging branches in wind (post-2013 fire impact — official safety note)
- ☐ Fuel stove preferred; generators not permitted — [VERIFY] current fire / stove rules
- ☐ Warm sleep system for winter (record −9 °C)
- ☐ Red-light etiquette; no white floods across ridgelines
- ☐ Do not feed kangaroos, wallaroos or emus
- ☐ Bail-out town agreed (Coonabarabran first)

7. Safety non-negotiables

- ☐ Heat / dehydration — summer often >30 °C; carry more water than optimism
- ☐ Steep rocky steps and ridge exposure on Fans Horizon and Breadknife
- ☐ No drinking water on the Breadknife track
- ☐ Post-2013 trees may fall or drop limbs — do not linger under large trees in wind
- ☐ Limited mobile reception (official NPWS) — you need reception to call 000
- ☐ Emergency+ downloaded before you leave town Wi-Fi
- ☐ Free PLB hire at Visitor Centre for longer walks
- ☐ Pets prohibited (except certified assistance animals)
- ☐ **Emergency: call 000.** This planner cannot help with rescue

8. Useful links (verify live)

- **This guide:** https://www.warrumbunglenationalpark.com.au/ — itineraries, trails, plan visit
- Official park: **NSW National Parks — Warrumbungle**
- Local alerts: **Warrumbungle local alerts**
- Park alerts hub: **alerts and closures**
- Breadknife & Grand High Tops: **official track page**
- Fans Horizon: **official track page**
- Whitegum lookout: **official track page**
- Dark Sky Parks: **official Dark Sky page**
- Camping (book NPWS only): **camping and accommodation**
- Passes & fees: **passes and fees**

- NSW GeoTours app: **Warrumbungle geotrails**
- BOM Coonabarabran: **bom.gov.au**
- Emergency+: **emergencyplus.com.au**
- Warrumbungle Visitor Centre: **02 6825 4364** · 9am–4pm daily, closed Christmas Day — [VERIFY] · 4261 John Renshaw Parkway, Warrumbungle NSW 2828
- National Parks Contact Centre: **1300 072 757** (7am–7pm daily — re-check)
- Coonabarabran Area office (tree / safety note on visitor info): **02 6842 1311**

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Unofficial operator's manual for Warrumbungle National Park · Independent of NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service · Farming Domains · Not for emergencies (call 000) · Free download — no email required · Reviewed for planning use 2026-08-15 — always re-check official sources before you go. This site does not publish a contact mailbox.