

FERNTREE GULLY





HISTORY

The Ferntree Gully Reserve was created in 1994 to conserve the special plant community which exists in and around the gully. A trust consisting of nine persons was appointed to administer the Reserve.

For many years prior to this, schools in the area had been using the Reserve for environmental studies and the Trust felt an expansion of this use should be one of its highest priorities. It was decided to upgrade the access track so that small (21 seat) school buses could more easily reach the picnic area.

A series of grants allowed the Trust to upgrade facilities, including a mud brick toilet, improvements to the existing steps accessing the gully and a new track along the rim of the gully with two platforms (Norm King Lookout, named after an early local environmentalist, and Flat Rock Lookout) to show the wonderful scenery which borders the gully itself. This track provides a round trip returning to the picnic area.

These improvements have been made possible with a Forest Eco Tourism Grant, the assistance of the LEAP Scheme, the then Rylstone Shire and the members of the Trust.

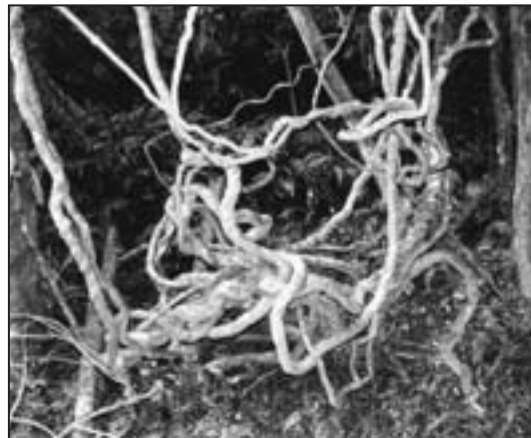
The Wheelbarrow Track is named for the wheelbarrows that were used to haul half sleepers to the site of the steps during construction. The track was made on the route that least affected the sensitive plants of the area, and now provides an alternative entry to the gully.

A boardwalk was also constructed in the sensitive rainforest area at the base of the gully to minimise damage to the soft rainforest floor while allowing visitor access.

These improvements have made it much easier to appreciate the range of habitats which exist at the Ferntree Gully Reserve, an important part of the natural heritage of the shire.



Above: The boardwalk constructed by the Ferntree Gully Trust
Left: Rock orchids, Sapling Creek



Pandora pandoreana roots, exit gully

FAUNA

Bird species in the gully include the lyre bird, the rare powerful owl, scrub turkey, glossy black cockatoo as well as pigeons, parrots and owls.

Most animals in the Reserve, such as grey kangaroos, wallabies, wombats, as well as several species of gliders and possums, are nocturnal and so are rarely seen. Echidnas, marsupial mice and several species of snakes are also found in the Reserve.

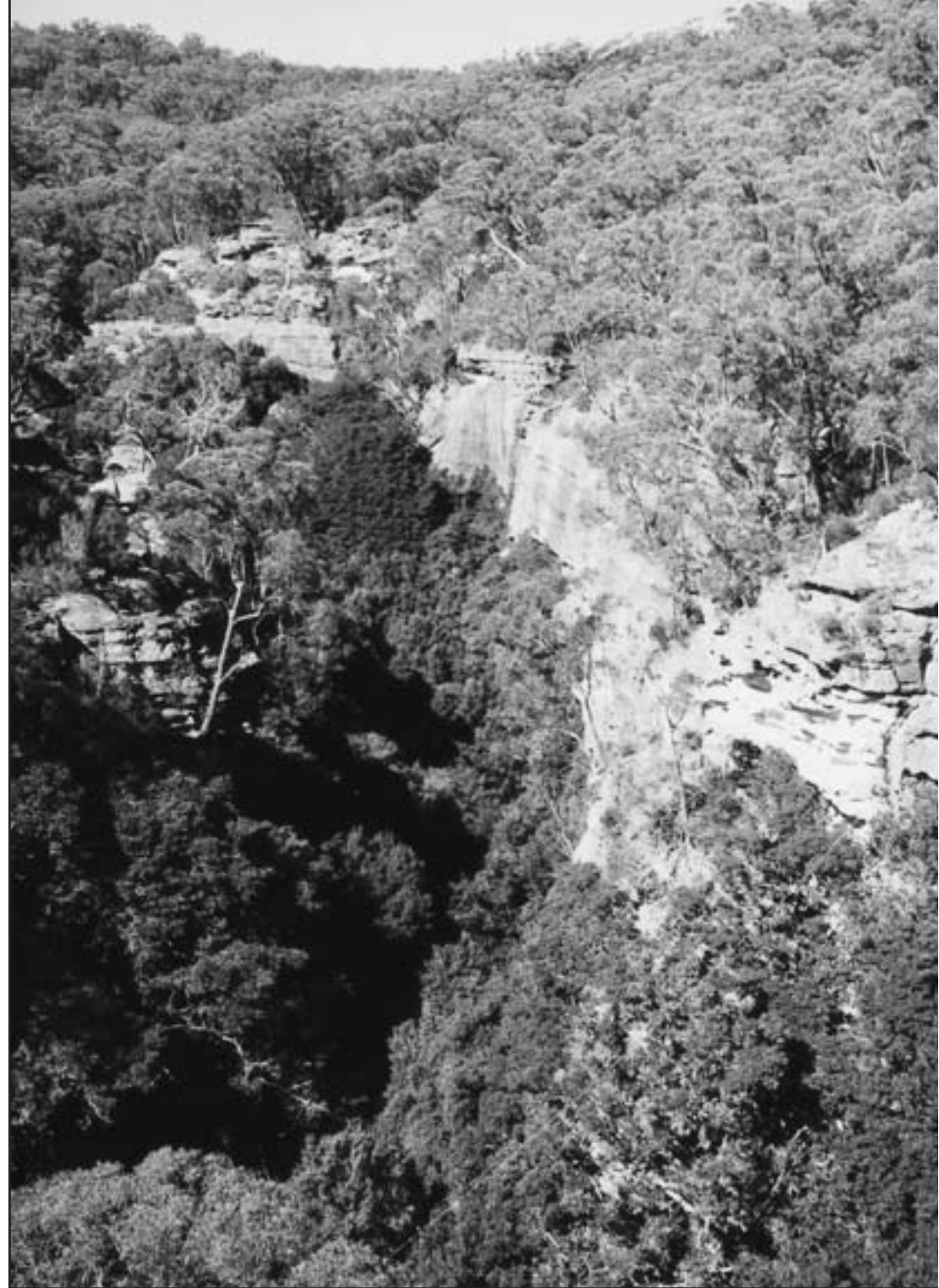


FLORA

Interesting plantlife is abundant along the walking tracks – there is much to spot and examine closely! Plants to look out for include large fig trees and the *Pandora pandoreana* with its entangled maze of roots. In the gully itself there are many species of ferns and other rainforest plants including rock orchids, some of which are unique to the area.



Below: Figtree roots, main gully. Top right: Gang-gang cockatoo

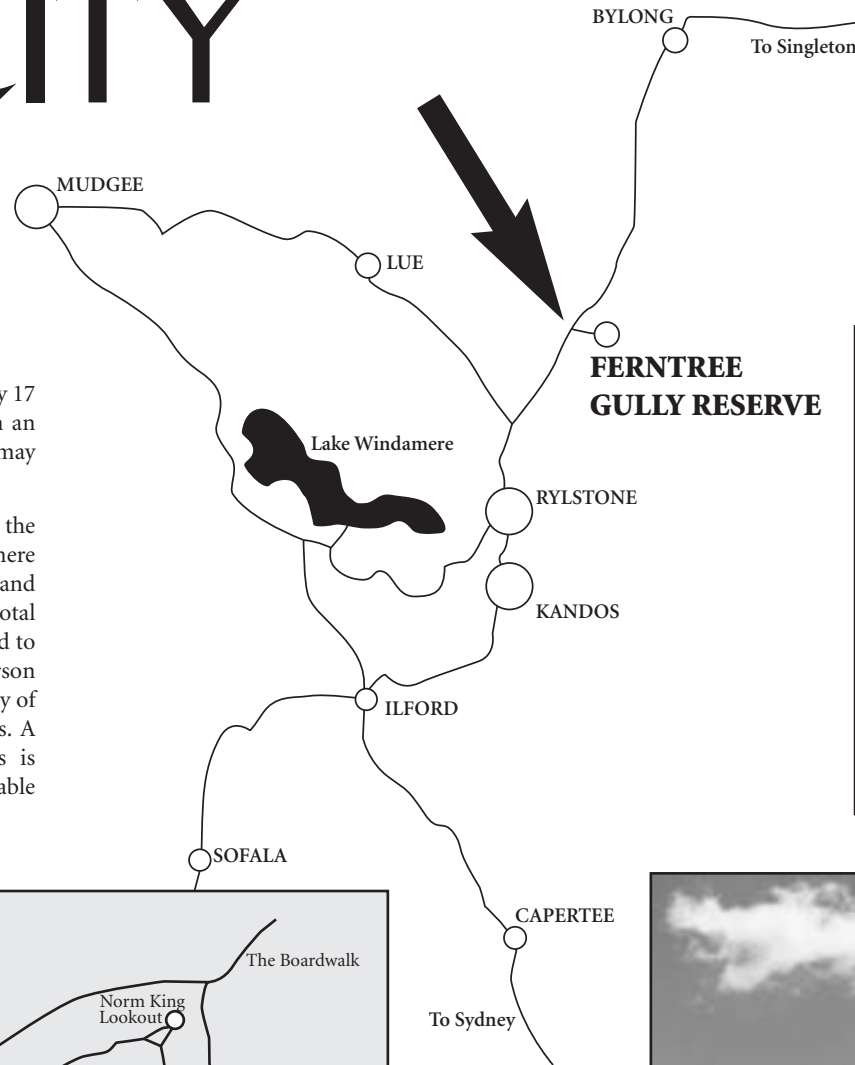


Exit gully, view of Flat Rock lookout

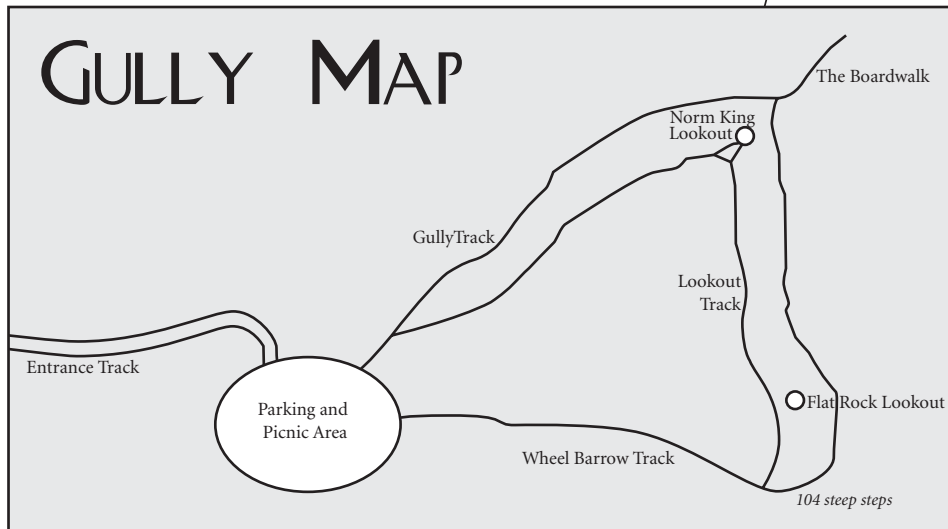
LOCALITY MAP

The track to Ferntree Gully turns off from Bylong Valley Way 17 kilometres from Rylstone. It is a further 2.3 kilometres on an unsealed track to the picnic area from which the gully itself may be accessed. Please refer to the locality map.

It should be noted the walk through the gully, returning via the top track system, requires a reasonable degree of fitness. There is some scrambling over rocks and some quite steep ascents and descents on the steps leading into and out of the gully. The total length of this walk is about 2.5 kilometres – the time needed to complete it will vary with the intent of the walker. A fit person could finish it in about half an hour, while a walk with plenty of stops to admire the flora could easily extend to two hours. A damp section of the gully containing many tree ferns is accessible via a short boardwalk which allows comfortable access while protecting this sensitive part of the Reserve.



Rocks, northern end of Reserve





THE FERNTREE GULLY TRUST

The Ferntree Gully Environmental Reserve was gazetted in 1994 to protect the very special plant community which exists in its sheltered environment.

The Reserve is managed by a trust of volunteers who regularly inspect and service the facilities which include two wood fired barbeques, tables and chairs, a pit toilet and the walking tracks. There is no water available at the picnic area and a visitors book is available. Comments are welcomed by the Trust to assist in the management of the area.

To facilitate the management and conservation of the Reserve, visitors are requested to carry out any rubbish generated by their visit; not to bring pets with them; and to treat the area with respect to avoid damage.



FERNTREE GULLY RESERVE
Bylong Valley Way, Rylstone

Looking east from Norm King Lookout

The Reserve is Department of Lands property, managed by the Trust.

