



# kakadu™

NATIONAL PARK

ART  
SITE

WALKS

## Barrk

Enjoy spectacular views, experience a variety of habitats and see the Nanguluwur art site along this rugged 12 km loop walk over and around Burrunggui (Nourlangie).

Burrunggui is a large sandstone outlier – an island standing above the surrounding woodland. As you walk over and around Burrunggui you will pass through habitats typical of Kakadu's stone country.

Plant and animal species surviving this hot, dry sandstone habitat have adapted in isolation over a long period of time. Consequently many species are endemic (unique) to the sandstone habitats.



1

View of Burrunggui from the top of the rocky valley above Gunwarde-warde lookout.

2

The Nanguluwurr Gallery has an interesting range of paintings including depictions of spirits, animals, ships and people.

3

Dryander's grevillea (*Grevillea dryandri*) flowers well into the dry season on Burrunggui.

## BARRK

Barrk is the Bininj name for the male black wallaroo, *Macropus bernardus*, a stocky dark-coloured member of the kangaroo family. Djukerre, the female, is smaller and lighter in colour.

They live in the heavily-dissected and inaccessible stone country of Kakadu and western and central Arnhem Land.

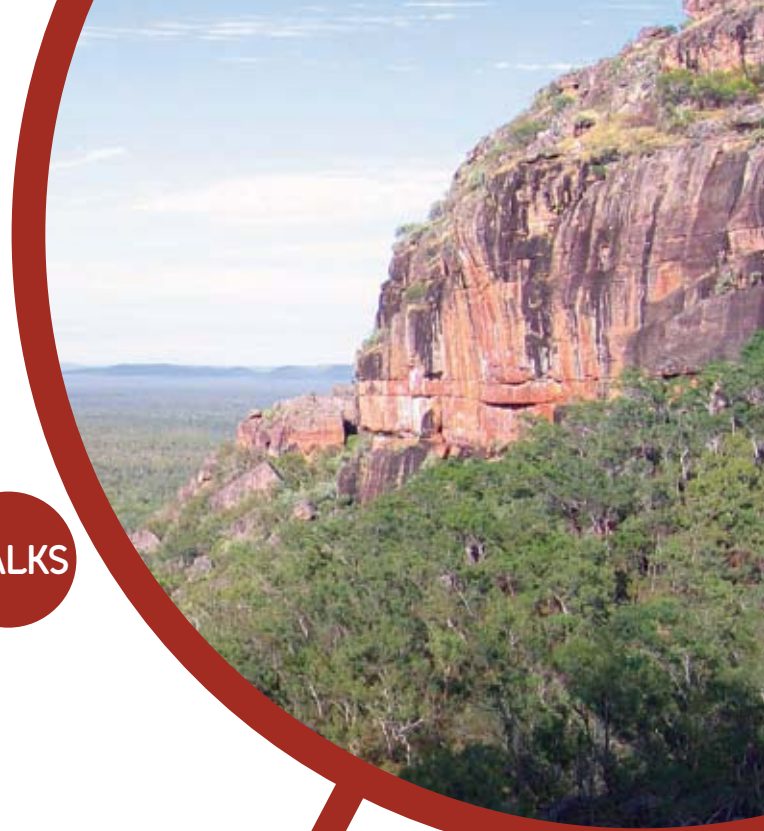
The powerful and swift Barrk is completely adapted to its environment and blends in superbly with the deep shadows created by the jagged rocks and vegetation of the plateau. Little is known of its biology and it is probably one of the least sighted members of the kangaroo family.



Australian Government



## PARK NOTE





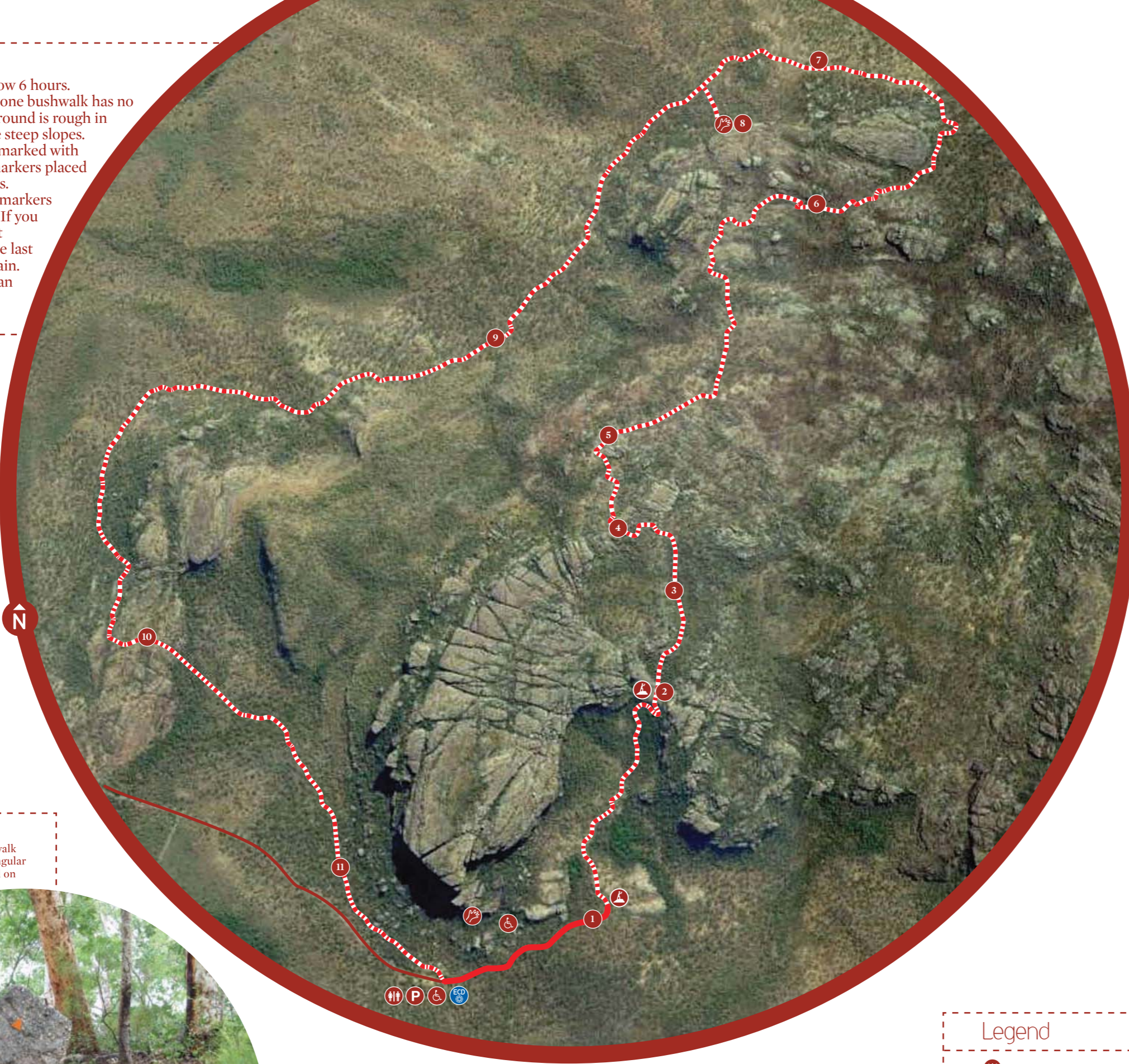
## THE TRACK

12km Circuit. Allow 6 hours.

The Barrk sandstone bushwalk has no formed path. The ground is rough in places and there are steep slopes.

The bushwalk is marked with orange triangular markers placed in trees and on rocks.

Keep the orange markers in sight at all times. If you cannot find the next marker, return to the last marker and look again. Sometimes plants can obscure them.



4 The Barrk sandstone bushwalk is marked with orange triangular markers placed in trees and on rocks.



The Barrk sandstone bushwalk is only for the fit and well prepared. Solo walkers should not attempt this walk.

## THE BARRK SANDSTONE BUSHWALK

This description is for an anti-clockwise circuit beginning at the Gunwarde-warde Lookout and ending at the car park. You may do the walk in the reverse direction.

The Barrk bushwalk will take you from Anbangbang Gallery to the top of Burrunggui (Nourlangie), across the top then down a gully to the woodland at the base. From the woodland section it is a short detour to the Nanguluwur art site. The walk continues around the base and meanders over a rocky ridge before finishing back at the carpark.

This walk covers difficult terrain and you may be subject to high temperatures. Do not underestimate the difficult nature of this walk.

There are no numbers on the track. The following numbers are for this park note only.

1. The walk begins with a steep climb up a rocky valley. It crosses a small wet season creek and passes pockets of sandstone pandanus (*Pandanus basedowii*), various ferns and a small monsoon forest at the base of wet season waterfalls.
2. At the top are views of magnificent contrasts between lowlands and escarpment.  
This is a good place to turn around if you do not wish to do the full 12 km bushwalk.
3. The country flattens out into plateau heathland with sandy soil. It is criss-crossed by wet season stream channels and dominated by trees familiar from the lowlands - Darwin woollybutt (*Eucalyptus miniata*) and fern-leaved grevillea (*Grevillea pteridifolia*).
4. Now the stone country surrounds you. There are layered sandstone pillars and some conglomerate rocks with larger stones cemented in sandstone.
5. After passing between two massive boulders and following a narrow ridge, you follow a small creek to descend into a shallow valley. On the far side of the valley, the walk climbs up a series of rock slabs to a stand of native cypress pines, *Callitris intratropica*. This species is renowned for its termite resistance. Watch for a fine view of Mirrai and the surrounding lowlands.
6. Follow the markers carefully and watch your step. A sloping high rock platform will lead you to the descent to the valley floor. The descent is rugged with large rocks and loose stones.
7. When you reach the bottom you will find the open woodland to the Nanguluwur Gallery easy walking. Depending on the time of year, you may be walking through tall spear grass.
8. With paintings depicting spirits, animals, ships and people, the Nanguluwur Gallery is well worth taking time to appreciate. Imagine what story the artist told as he painted the sailing ship.
9. As you leave Nanguluwur you will pass through a transitional zone of sandstone outcrops and open woodland. You may notice more birds here because of the overlapping habitats.
10. You will wind your way through boulders, rock slabs and prickly spinifex as you go over a low rocky ridge.
11. The final stretch along the woodland floor offers spectacular views of Burrunggui's western cliffs.

## Legend

- Toilets
- Carpark
- Lookout
- Aboriginal Rock Art
- Disabled
- Emergency Call Devise



## ANIMALS

On the Barrk sandstone bushwalk you may see some bird species not seen in the lowlands.

Lavender-flanked wrens flit around the shrubs and trees while peregrine falcons hunt from the thermals created by hot air rising from the rocks. Chestnut-quilled rock-pigeons unique to the stone country of Kakadu and Arnhem Land, are common here. These birds never stray far from the rocks and are conspicuous by the loud clapping of their wings.

The sandstone (helmeted) friarbird is often seen and easily recognised by the small casque on the top of its beak. While the white-lined honeyeater is difficult to see, its distinctive call is often heard in the forested gullies and gorges of the stone country.

Some small creatures may catch your attention, like butterflies and the yellow and black banded sandstone grasshopper. Species vary with habitat and the flowering cycle of plants that provide their food supply.

## PLANTS

The stone country has its own distinct plant species mixed with more widespread species. Plant communities are dynamic, changing with the seasons. There is always something flowering or fruiting on Burrunggui.

You can see the pink to scarlet flowers of Dryander's grevillea, *Grevillea dryandri*, well into the dry season. If the bright red berries of *Alyxia ruscifolia* catch your attention, look for the banded pigeon, *Ptilinopus cinctus*.

## ANCIENT LANDSCAPES

Geologists estimate that between 1400 and 1800 million years ago vast sheets of coarse sand were deposited under long since vanished seas and lakes in this area. Since being exposed the sandstone that formed from this, the Kombolgie sandstone formation, has slowly worn away.

Faults in the 400 metre thick Kombolgie sandstone have eroded into crevices, gullies, caves and gorges. During the age of the dinosaurs (140 million years ago) shallow seas spread across the area, eroding the sandstone into sea cliffs (now the Arnhem Land escarpment) and islands (outliers). Burrunggui (Nourlangie Rock) is at the southern tip of the Mt Brockman outlier.

While parts of the stone country are bare of soil and plants, patches of vegetation grow where sand has collected in cracks and gullies.

Conditions change around the scree slopes below stone country. Growing in these lowlands is savannah grassland and open woodland.

## CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

When Ludwig Leichhardt passed through Kakadu in 1845 there were many more Aboriginal people living here than there are today. Leichhardt was struck by the number and physical size of the Alligator Rivers people. They treated his party well so Leichhardt remained in the area longer than planned.

The people Leichhardt met spoke their own languages but also knew some English words from the Victoria Settlement on Coburg Peninsula. From Burrunggui there would have been many signs of human occupation. Smoke from cooking and hunting fires would announce the locations and movement of different clans.

At the time of Leichhardt's visit local Aboriginal people would have hunted galkberd (euro), djorrkkun (rock possum), barrk (black wallaroo) and badbong (short-eared rock wallaby). These animals are still common here today.



5

Djugerre, female black wallaroo

6

Views of Burrunggui from western section of Barrk sandstone bushwalk.



### What to wear

Sturdy footwear  
Loose, light clothing to protect you from the sun and prickly spinifex  
A hat and sunscreen

### Carry a day pack with

4 – 6 litres of water per person  
Energy foods - fruit and nuts  
First Aid Kit

### Take care

Advise a responsible adult when you start and finish your walk  
Start early in the morning (no later than 10 am)  
Walk slowly and rest often  
Keep a safe distance from snakes and other animals

For more information contact:

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