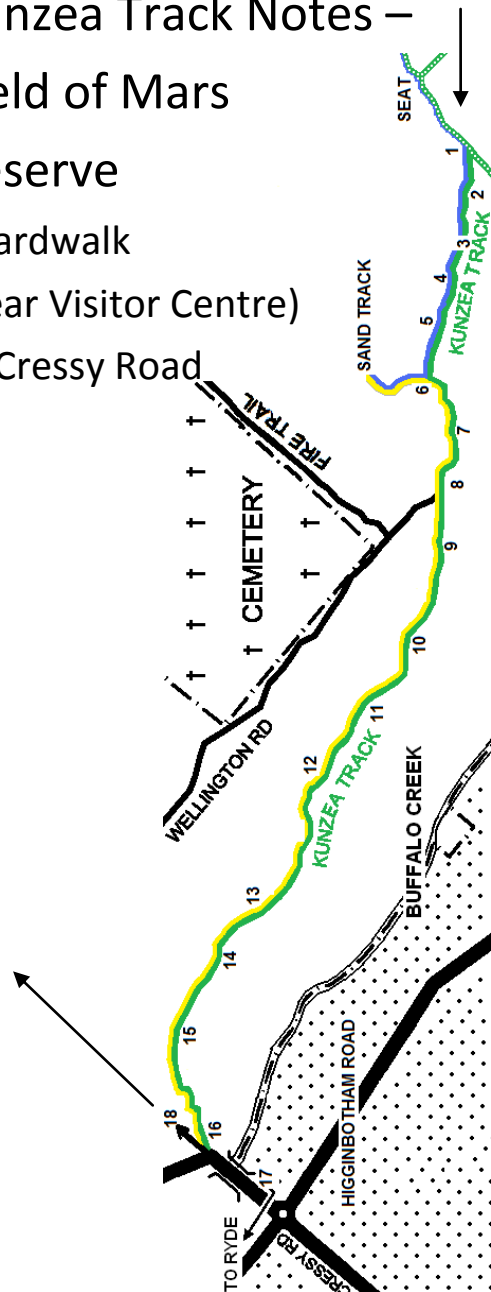


# Kunzea Track Notes – Field of Mars Reserve Boardwalk (near Visitor Centre) to Cressy Road



Starting from the visitor information centre, follow the board walk. See “Field of Mars Reserve Track Notes – Boardwalk Loop” for this section. Go towards Monash Rd and turn right 50m after the seat.

1. As the track rises you can see the transition of plants from wet to dry sclerophyll forest. It starts with water gums [*Tristaniopsis laurina*], native daphne [*pittosporum undulatum*] and bracken ferns [*Pteridium esculentum*].
2. Main plants are zieria [*Zieria smithii*] with their 3-lobed leaves and tiny white flowers, hakeas [*Hakea spp.*], prickly Moses [*Acacia ulicifolia*], purple coral pea vines [*Hardenbergia violacea*] and Sydney red gums [*Angophora costata*].
3. Track marker post.
4. The track crosses a small creek which runs down the hill from the cemetery. Because of the sandy nature of the soil, there is seldom any water in it. Look for black wattles [*Callicoma serratifolia*] and heath bush [*Phyllota phyllicoides*].
5. A rocky climb brings you into dry sclerophyll forest near the hill top.
6. Turn left. During spring and summer the kunzea bushes [*Kunzea ambigua*] have white flowers with a rich sweet smell.

7. As the track bends to the right you are leaving the unspoiled bushland and approaching a formerly settled area.
8. On your right is the end of Wellington Rd which was once trafficable from Cressy Rd near Pidding Park but is now a walking track along the outside of the Field of Mars Cemetery. The grassy clearing to your left was privately owned land with a house and garden, from which introduced plants and grasses have spread into the natural bushland. Go west through this clearing and look for the track guide bollard.
9. As you re-enter the natural bushland you will notice a low stone wall which was built on the property boundary.
10. Another section of dry sclerophyll forest.
11. This area was farmland until the 1940s. The soil is very shallow on top of the sandstone rock, but large shrubs are gradually colonising. These are mostly wattles [*Acacia spp.*], tea trees [*Leptospermum spp.*] and kunzeas.
12. The timber boardwalk traverses a small creek and freshwater marshland. It is overgrown with privet, lantana, cassia and blackberry weeds, but vestiges of the original native vegetation remain in areas not visible from the track.

13. Warning signs beside the track refer to the bushland uphill and off the track. It contains debris including asbestos (fibro) from when there was a small factory up the hill from here. It closed in 1970 and later became a council works depot before all buildings were demolished.
14. Until around 1950 there was a logging road from the Cressy Rd bridge into the eastern parts of the Field of Mars Reserve, and the track now follows this. You will notice the edging stones and, growing nearby, native bonnet orchids [*Cryptostylis erecta*].
15. Here is another small tract of dry sclerophyll forest as the track takes you on a gentle sloping route to the reserve boundary at Cressy and Pidding Roads.
16. The timber sign directs walkers up the Kunzea Track but there was another track leading downhill from here. This local track led to the "Cascades", a waterfall which can be quite spectacular after rain. The boundary for most properties along Higginbotham Road is the creek, so unfortunately much of the natural beauty of this area has been lost.
17. As you exit the reserve, you may cross the stone road bridge over Buffalo Creek and then turn right into Robinson Street to follow the Canon Track along Buffalo Creek all the way to Ryde Park. The

bridge was built as an unemployment relief project. Its sandstone was quarried out of the hill between Field of Mars and Pidding Park, forming a cutting for the intended extension of Cressy Road. This cutting was filled in when it was used as a landfill site in the late 1960s.

18. Alternatively, you may turn right and climb 200 metres up the hill to the former junction of Cressy Road and Wellington Road. At this point a fenced-in area shows where the East Ryde Girl Guide Hall used to stand. It now forms a safe habitat area for small native birds.

If you turn right before the cemetery as you go through the green gate, you may follow the old Wellington Road back to point 8 on the map.

Walkers following the "Kunzea Loop" should continue directly ahead. Another 150 metres up the hill will bring you to the cemetery entrance where an old bus shelter shed is now the flower stall.

Keep going north through the green gate into Tyrell Park. After another 250 metres, beyond the end of the gas substation and cemetery, turn right through another green gate to re-enter the Field of Mars Reserve. Then turn left to follow the Sand Track.

Here is an area of Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest ("STIF"), a critically endangered ecological community. The trees are mostly turpentine [*Syncarpia glomulifera*] and grey gum [*Eucalyptus paniculata*], but there are also Sydney red gums [*Angophora costata*], white mahoganies [*Eucalyptus acmenoides*] and blue gums [*Eucalyptus saligna*]. Understorey includes zierias [*Zieria smithii*], hop bush [*Dodonaea triquetra*], coffee bush [*Breynia oblongifolia*], blackthorn [*Bursaria spinosa*] and wattles [*Acacia spp.*]

The track descends to a short boardwalk over another small creek ("Cemetery Creek 3") which features tree ferns [*Cyathea australis*] in this freshwater marshland. After the creek is point 13 on **Warada & Strangers Creek Loop Track Notes**; see them for the rest of this walk.

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