

GIBBERGUNYAH – Reserve No.89310

Background – “Gibbergunyah” (believed to be an amalgamation of two Aboriginal words meaning stone and house), took its name from Gibbergunyah Creek. In earlier times known as the 460 acre also as the 90 Acre, the reserve covers 186 hectares (just over 460 acres), a square with a corner cut out. Its highest point is 814 metres above sea level. Eastward its water drain into Gibbergunyah Creek and westward it looks to the Dividing Range.



In 1939 the area was a scene of raging bushfire which swept into Mittagong. More recently it was controlled by the Soil Conservation Service and used as a practice area by bushfire brigades.

Officially “a Reserve for public recreation and the preservation of native flora and fauna” it was gazetted November 1974 with the Council of Mittagong, the original Trustee. Since amalgamation of the regions three local governments, Reserve control and administration has passed to the Wingecarribee Shire Council, and its on-site management to an appointed public committee.

In 1990 a grant from the Lands Department made possible the first steps for its protection, and development for public recreation.

Since responsibility passed to a public committee in June 1994 significant progress has been made.

- A lookout and Direction Cairn have been erected.
- New Walking tracks have been constructed.
- Signboards and signposts have been installed or updated.
- Rest Areas provided in different sections of the reserve.
- Access from Bowral has been organised, via a stile.
- A professional Visitor’s map drafted and printed.
- Minor plantings of waratah, hakea and eucalyptus species.
- Vehicles and motorbikes have been excluded to speed recovery.

At present the Reserve does give indications of its earlier neglect, but on the achievements to date it should ultimately prove a haven of enjoyment and relaxation to a large urban community.

VEGETATION OF GIBBERGUNYAH

No attempt to list the full flora of the Reserve is possible in the space of this pamphlet, however it is that typical of sandstone, but with many noticeable omissions. In time these species may re-appear or be re-established as the area is under more gentle management.

The range of eucalypt types is very limited, though there are some notable specimens especially in the Glen Creek. Old Man banksia (*Banksia Serrata*) flourishes along the eastern slopes. Acacias (wattles) of a broad leaf type are fighting to re-establish. A feature of the area adjacent to the Gang Gang –Goanna Junction is the profusion of woody pear (*xylomelum*), its foliage in early growth resembling the waratah to which it is related.

Some of the lesser flora types noted especially in Spring include:

- *Banksia spinulosa* (hair-pin banksia)
- Black-eyed Susan (*tetralochea*)
- Geebung (broad and fine-leafed) – yellow flower
- Golden, and White everlasting daisies (*hellchrysum*)
- Native Holly (*oxylobium*) – yellow pea flower
- Pimelea (buttons) – white flowers
- Pomaderris – yellow flowers
- Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia discolor*) – feathery leaves
- Trigger Plant (*stylidium*)
- Various small Orchards (but no rock orchids)
- Wild Iris Lily (*patersonia*)
- Wild Parsley (*lomatia*) – white flowers



FAUNA

The kangaroo, wombat and echidna have often been seen. A night excursion gave sightings of the greater glider, brushtailed and ringtailed possum. Otherwise, on-the-spot observation and study (day & night) are needed. Cockatoos (sulphur crested, gang gang, galah, black yellowtail, glossy black) have been observed, and three parrot types, also the satin bower bird & whip bird. Other birds are representative of those generally present on the Highlands, with the notable presence of the Powerful owl. Birdlife is probably restricted due to diminished flora. Glen Creek Gully could be a splendid habitat for lyre birds and may be again.

