

## Walking the Lake

### Avondale Adventure 1 – Sandy Creek Walk

Correct as at 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2019

#### Overview and Track Information

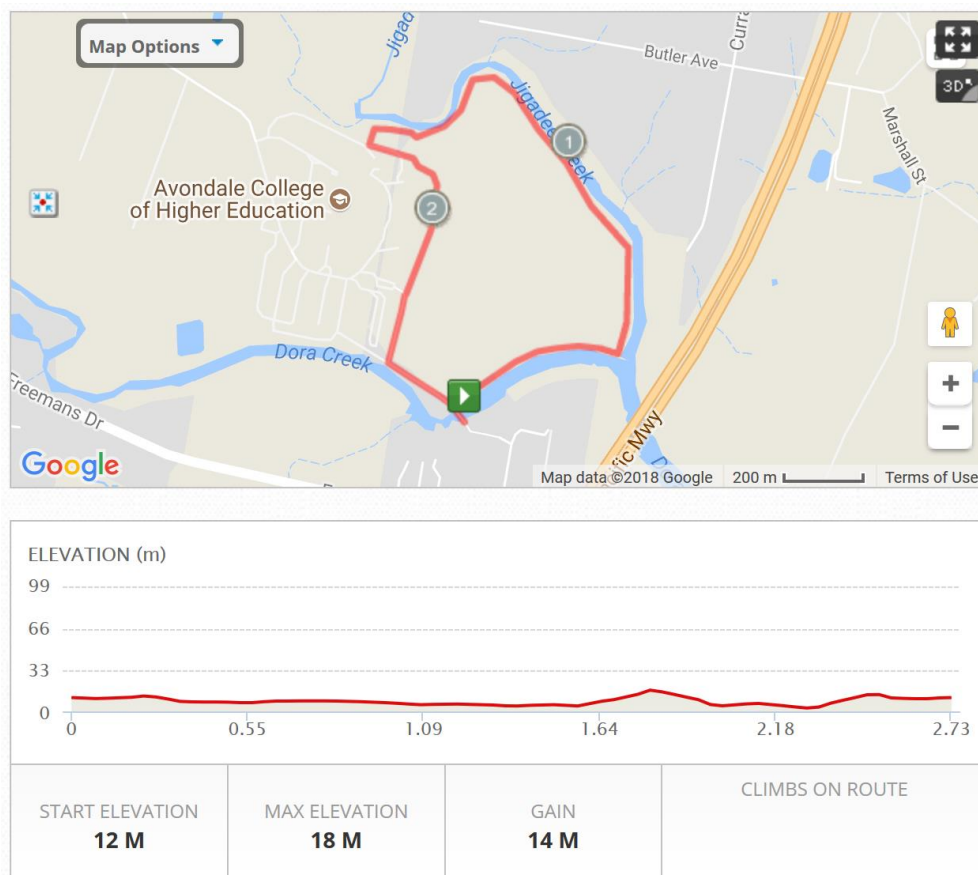
This flat, easy 3km circuit follows Avondale College's Sandy Creek walk along Dora and Jigadee Creeks, starting and ending at the historic swing bridge. The bridge was designed and built by Harry Tempest, first manager of the Sanitarium Plant Development Division, in 1934.

#### Meeting Point & Getting There

The meeting point is the swing bridge. Park near the bottom of Victory St, Cooranbong. There is a cul-de-sac to the left at the end of Victory St where a concreted right-of-way goes between the houses (directly west for those that are not directionally challenged). Once you pass the houses on the right, you will see the swing bridge.

#### Map and Elevation Profile

The walk begins and ends by crossing the swing bridge, just below the green square on the map.



#### Background Information

Sandy Creek Walk was opened in May 2009 by Drs Darren and Jason Morton, brothers and lecturers at the College.

Darren, a senior health and exercise science lecturer in the Faculty of Education, wanted a new running track, and Jason, a lecturer in the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, wanted to fence and weed the route to help protect biological diversity.

The project was the result of a \$20,000 grant from the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority to conserve and regenerate native vegetation, to project the creek banks and to control weeds. It took about 10 months to build almost three kilometres of fencing and to clear lantana.

## Track notes

After crossing the swing bridge turn right down onto the flat beside the creek. Follow the foot track away from the bridge. In about 50m you will pass a sign for the Sandy Creek Walk.

The track continues alongside the creek to a creek junction. A wooden seat faces out over the junction towards the freeway.

This is the junction of Sandy/Jigadee Creek, coming in from your left, and Dora Creek, flowing away under the M1 road bridge. Across Sandy Creek is the turnaround point for the *Sandy Creek Saunter*. The water at this junction is 11m deep and this was once a popular swimming spot for the students of Avondale college.

The track turns left here and follows Sandy Creek/Jigadee Creek. It crosses two low-lying wooden bridges and, after a couple of hundred metres, comes to another wooden seat, a higher wooden bridge and a sign that says, "Short cut to campus". It's a nice spot to spend a few quiet contemplative moments.

Keep following the track (don't take the shortcut). In about 100m you pass the one kilometre mark as the track breaks out of the trees and runs alongside a paddock.

There's another wooden seat where the track swings hard left with the fence line, then it swings right again as it briefly re-enters the trees.

As you pass an AstroTurf boat ramp on the bank to your right there is a small lawn area to your left. You will see a white footbridge a short distance in front of you. It's worth the walk down to this bridge which links the Sandy Creek Walk with the Girls' Walk.

Turn back from the bridge and follow the trees up the small grassy hill to the asphalt road. Turn left.

Follow the asphalt road past a bocce field to where it forks. A gravel road goes straight on and the asphalt goes uphill to the Avondale College gymnasium on the high ground to your right. Follow the gravel road.

Just around the corner you will see some large sandstone blocks lining the side of the road towards a white traffic gate. On your left is a locked chain across a gateway. Leave the track past the locked chain and drop down onto the grass. Soon on your right you'll see an AFL field.

Turn right and walk past the cricket nets and along the AFL field. Keep going towards the tennis courts.

Walk behind the tennis courts on the side away from the car park and keep walking in that direction to join the gravel footpath in front of you.

The cream brick buildings behind the tennis courts and to your right on the footpath are the Sanitarium factory. Sanitarium products were initially made in Melbourne in 1898 but relocated to the new site at Cooranbong in 1899. The site had been acquired to build the seminary that would ultimately become Avondale College and the factory was built on an old sawmill on the site. The current buildings date from 1937. The factory here closed at the end of 2018.

Follow the gravel footpath between the fences and at the T-junction turn left onto the wider asphalt path flanked by date palms. Follow this path to the swing bridge.