

## Walking the Lake

### Point Wolstoncroft Potter

Correct as at 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2018

#### Overview and Track Information

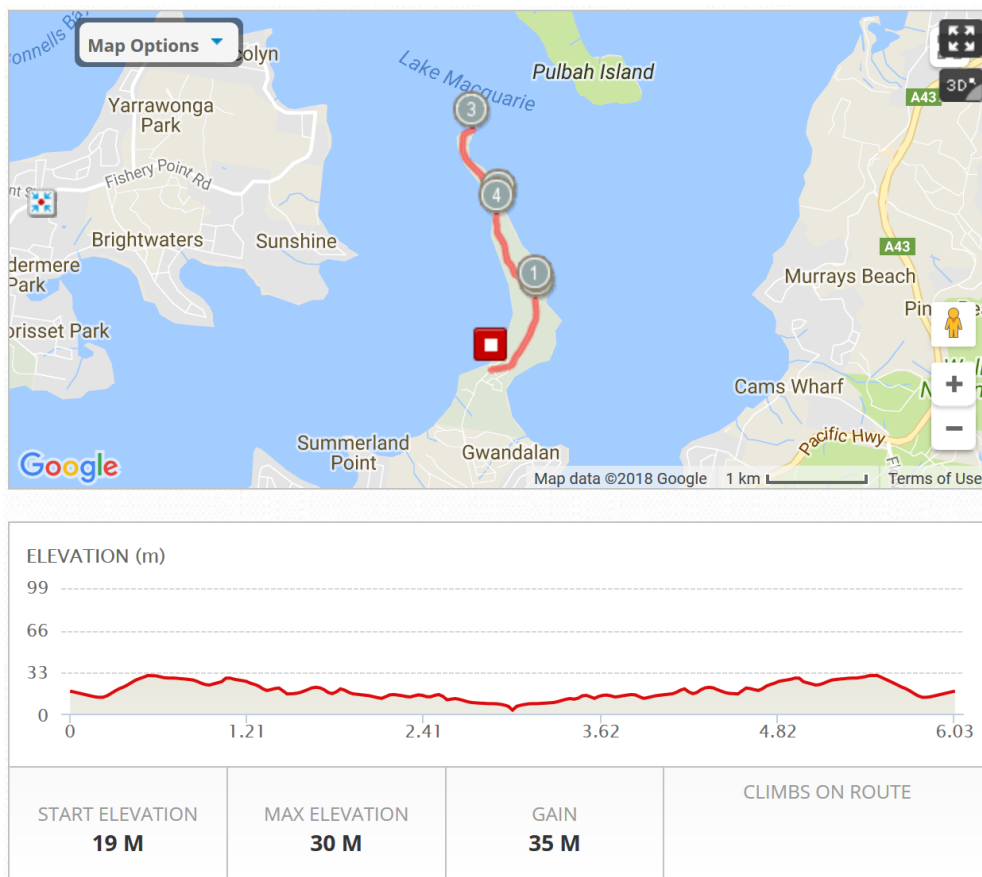
This is an easy 6km out-and-back walk along the curious promontory of Point Wolstoncroft. The tip of the point is the closest the lake shore gets to Pulbah Island, and the water between the point and the island is the deepest in the lake. The walk is along a well-maintained fire trail.

#### Meeting Point & Getting There

The meeting point is at the end of Kanangara Drive, Gwandalan, outside the Point Wolstoncroft Sport and Recreation Centre gate. Once we're gathered we'll enter the centre in convoy and park near the office, where we're required to sign in. There are public toilets near the car park.

#### Map and Elevation Profile

The walk begins and ends at the office car park, shown as the red square on the map.



#### About Point Wolstoncroft

Point Wolstoncroft was first settled in about 1826 by Richard Cape, part of a family with land grants near Wyong Creek and in the Doralong Valley. After Cape was convicted of cattle stealing the property was acquired by William Forster, who called it 'Recovery', and somewhere around the 1850s by John Moore, who called it 'Chainbibber'. Bibber is believed to be an Aboriginal word meaning 'hill', so it's possible there's a name connection with Chain Valley. Point Wolstoncroft was also known as Little Wangi. Early settlers and fishermen used the word Wangi to name the peninsula and Point Wolstoncroft was called Little Wangi. The postcard on the next page is of a picnic there in 1900. When and why it became Point Wolstoncroft is unclear.

Point Wolstoncroft was one the NSW National Fitness Camps, administered by the Department of Education from 1961 to 1996. In 1996 it was separated into two: the camp facilities became the Point Wolstoncroft Sport and Recreation Centre, managed by the NSW Department of Sport, and the 108ha peninsular became part of the Lake Macquarie State Recreation Area.



Little Wangi, Lake Macquarie, N.S.W.

*Picnic party at Little Wangi c.1900.*  
Post Card. Hunter the Stationer, Newcastle.  
Courtesy of the Lake Macquarie City Library

## Track notes

From the meeting point follow the asphalt driveway past the BUS DROP OFF sign between the administration building and the tennis courts, then turn left across the grass after the tennis courts.

Cross the grass between the tennis courts and the giant chess boards (with the sandstone blocks around them). Angle right, away from the archery butts, towards the wooden frame in an exercise area. You'll see a chain gate in the row of bollards; walk past that and then follow the right hand boundary of the wooden frame exercise area onto the fire trail.

Follow the fire trail up the small hill into the wooded area and through the gate.

Continue to follow this fire trail as runs up the spine of the long peninsular over several small hills.

After about 100m you will pass a seat on the left of the track just before the top of a low rise. In another 100m, just after the crest of a small ridge, you'll pass an unsignposted track on your right that runs down to Long Beach. If you have the energy this short track is worth a look for views across to Cams Wharf, Point Morisset and Murrays Beach.

For the next 250m the track drops through some low ground and then climbs the highest hill on the walk, where there is a seat. Follow the track down the hill and in another 500m continue past the small white building. Note the signs of burning on the trees through this low ground, as well as the secondary growth filling the ground under the gaps in the canopy. This area was badly burnt in raging bushfires in October, 2013, when emergency services opened blocked roads and escorted four coaches to and from the Point Wolstoncroft camp to rescue 190 students and 11 staff trapped by the fires. from Jasper Road Public School at Baulkham Hills after escaping the raging fires near Lake Macquarie. The Year 10 to 12 rear old students, including four children with disabilities, two of them in wheelchairs, had been at the sport and recreation camp for a week.

It's much more peaceful now, and the bell birds you can hear so loudly here will sing to you through the rest of the walk.

The vegetation through here is classed as Lake Macquarie Ironbark Forest, which only occurs in exposed locations on narrow peninsulas on the shores of Lake Macquarie like Point Wolstoncroft. It is dominated by grey ironbark (*Eucalyptus paniculate*), northern grey ironbark (*Eucalyptus siderophloia*) and grey gum (*Eucalyptus punctate*), with occasional smooth-barked apple or Sydney red gum (*Angophora costata*). Understorey vegetation includes large mock-olive, narrow-leaved geebung, native blackthorn, Sydney golden wattle, common hop bush, and sickle wattle. The ground layer is rich in grasses and herbs, and includes basketgrass, kidney weed, blady grass, love creeper and small-leaved Poranthera.

Continue along the fire trail. After quite a while you pass a partially overgrown seat on your left, then a second seat on your left. About 500m after that you come to a seat on your right. From here the track curves to the right around a bay and follows a long slow descent to the point. As you swing around the bay you can see the tip of Point Wolstoncroft on your half right and, behind it, Pulbah Island.

As you get closer to the shoreline the trees thin out and the understorey dominates. Eventually the track emerges from the scrub onto an open shelly beach with almost 360° views. The Point Wolstoncroft sign provides a great photo opportunity.

Retrace your route to the cars.