

Walking the Lake

Hawke Mount Hike

Correct as 12th December, 2018

Overview and Track Information

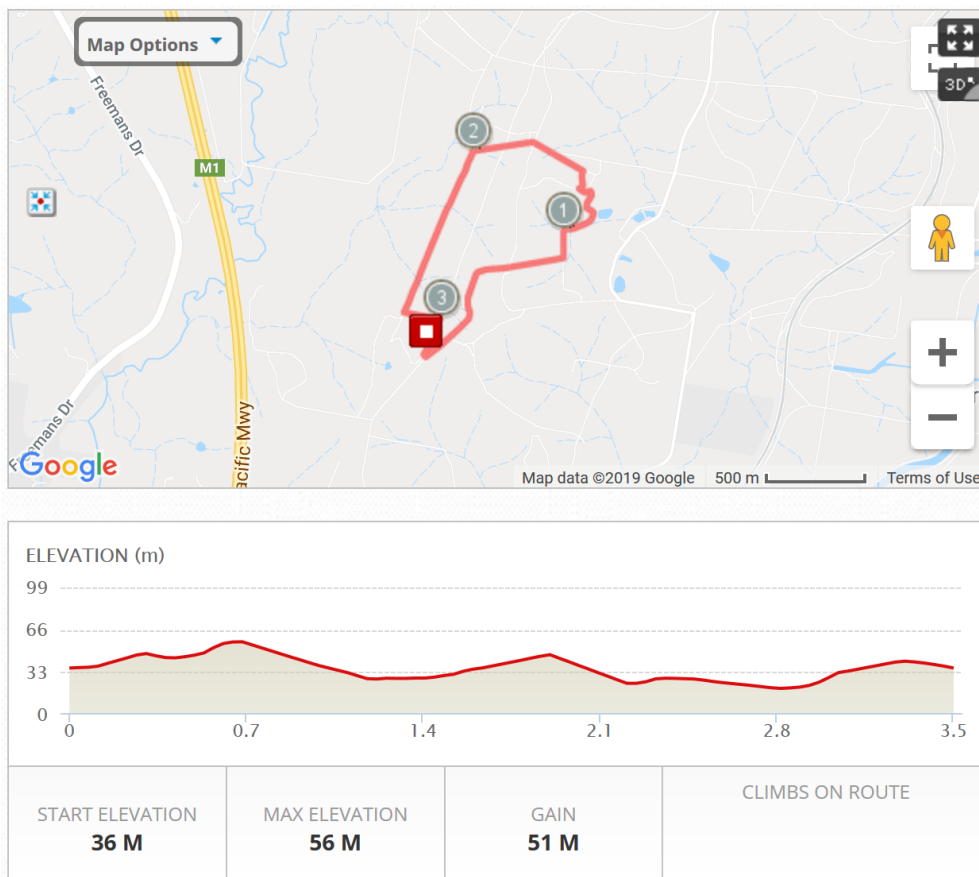
This is an easy 3.5km circuit walk that investigates the scrub on the western side of the Eraring Power Station, including a look at the coal stockpile that keeps the station running. Most of the route is along fire trails or well-defined foot tracks, with an optional 400m cross-country side trip through open bushland to investigate a hidden swamp. It is a walk best undertaken in good walking shoes or boots.

Meeting Point & Getting There

The meeting point is on Hawke Mount Road, Dora Creek, 2.4km from Newport Road. The road is a good gravel surface most of the way, and becomes asphalt at a farm house just before the meeting point, which is a gate on the left-hand side of the road 100m after the farm house.

Map and Elevation Profile

The walk begins and ends at the meeting point, shown by red square on the map.



Background

Eraring Power Station burns up to 6.5 million tonnes of coal per year, provided by five local mines. In mid-2017 a coal supply squeeze led the power station to run down stockpiles to "historic lows". In November 2017 Origin's share price jumped to a 25-month high when the company lifted the forecast output from Eraring by more than 10% based on an "optimised" supply chain, including an upgraded rail delivery network to the plant. The increased stockpile is part of that supply chain.

Eraring is Australia's largest power station.

Track Notes

From the meeting point continue downhill on Hawke Mount Road away from the farm house (northeast). The track winds left then right and after about 600m enters a crossroad.

It's easy to miss this junction. The well-used main track turns sharply left. To your right is a partially overgrown fire trail behind a locked gate, which is actually the continuation of Hawke Mount Road. To your front the track is very indistinct as it goes past a dirt hump that has been used as a jump by trail bike riders. Go straight on along the indistinct track.

Cross the small patch of grass then follow the track into the scrub, where it becomes much more obvious. The track soon drops down a short, steep incline as the low scrub gives way to open forest. Ignore the track on your left; continue straight ahead over the fallen log. After a little while you come to a T-junction with a much more obvious track. Turn left (north) onto the new track; this is the one kilometre mark.

After about 75m the track takes a sharp right turn and slowly descends towards a cyclone wire fence. When you reach the locked gates in the fence turn left and uphill onto the foot track that parallels the fence. Follow the foot track around the right hand bend at the corner of the fence.

Behind this cyclone wire fence is the Earing Power Station reserve coal stockpile, with the coal elevator feeding the overhead gantry. The main stockpile is further east, closer to the power station. There is an open space about 20m after the corner of the fence which gives a good view.

At the open space turn left, away from the fence and towards the large dirt mounds with bike tracks over them. Cross the first mound and on the other side follow the track which winds uphill towards the left. Follow this track uphill for about 400m to a T-junction with a much larger track. Ignore the heavily used trail bike track on your right about 200m up the hill.

Turn right onto the major track and follow it the short distance to where it emerges from the trees into the electricity trunk clearing. Look right for a unique view of Earing, Australia's largest power station.

Turn left (northwest) onto the dirt service track that runs between the electricity pylons and the treeline. Follow this track over the hill for about 400m to a T-junction. This is the two kilometre mark.

At this T-junction there is a large pylon directly in front of you that feeds lines left and right, and a treeline to your left that angles away from you. Depending on how recently it was mown you may see tyre tracks through the grass. Leave the service tracks and walk parallel to the treeline towards the large pylon. Pass the pylon on the left and soon you will come to another vehicle track running across your front. Turn left (southwest) onto the track.

Optional side trip

About 250m after the large pylon you will come to a pair of old wooden gate posts. Turn right off the track and walk cross country to the trees on the other side of the clearing. Keep walking in that direction until you come to a small swamp hidden behind the tree line. It's about 100m from the track to the treeline and about the same from the treeline to the swamp. After exploring return to the track.

Follow the track over two small ridges until it comes to a T-junction facing a locked gate. This is the three kilometre mark. Turn left.

Follow the track into the trees and, after about 60m, onto another clearing below two lines of electricity poles. Turn right onto the track that runs alongside the poles and walk uphill.

After about 75m you will be facing a fence with a gap in it on your left. Go through the gap, turn right onto the fire trail and return to the cars.