

## **Walk:**

# **Wollemi National Park: Tenacity Falls via Wheeny Walls**

## **Leader**

Yuri Bolotin

## **Maps, etc.**

Mountain Lagoon, Kurrajong. GPS setting WGS84.

## **Description**

Park at the corner of Old Coach House Road and Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Heights. Walk north on the ridge along the fire trail to GR 803 920. Traverse east under the cliffs till GR 814 925, then descend to Wheeny Creek and climb a short distance up M-Gully to the waterfall at GR 815 930. Return via a ravine to the south of Wheeny Creek and spot height 537 m. Mostly exploratory. Scrambling and exposure. About 14 km, around 5 km on trail.

## **Rating**

5M. M333E

## **Gear Issues**

2 litres of water, GPS, PLB, appropriate head and footwear, electrolytes, maps, compass, first aid kit, tape (leader only). Change of gear for afterwards.

## **Date walked**

26 January 2026.

## **The Party**

Yuri Bolotin (leader), Bernard Lo, Calogero Panvino, Irina Sorokina, Avi Sanjoyo, Barth Wahlen, Yidan Saladine, 7.

## **The Weather**

A cool, mostly cloudy day with high humidity and no wind, except for the last hour or so, when a strong southerly breeze came in. Brief sunny periods, which became longer in the late morning-early afternoon. Temperature range 18 to 25 degrees C.

## **Background Notes**

This walk was born from two people's curiosity and quest for exploration.

Bernard Lo had first identified a likely significant waterfall on a remote tributary of Wheeny Creek in October 2024 and had two unsuccessful attempts to reach it since then. I was with him during the second trip. Bernard's story of his quest can be found at the end of these Track Notes.

Ever since visiting Thunderstorm Cave in April 2025, I had it on my 'to-do' list to traverse the north-facing cliffs to the east of it, both to see if we would come across any other evidence of Matthew Everingham's journey of 1795 and to explore the geological features I was hoping to find there.

Both above destinations could be visited during one long and fairly demanding day. We waited for the right weather and some significant rainfall to have happened before deciding on the date for this trip. Dear readers, please note that when setting off we had no certainty that we would be able to reach either of these features, nor did we know if anything of interest would be found there, but we were very keen to give it a try.

## Track Notes

Note: time references in the text relate to Grid References in the table at the end of these Track Notes.

Cars were parked on Old Coach House Road, Kurrajong Heights, and at 0735, our adventure began. The first couple of hundred metres along the busy Bells Line of Road, with hardly any shoulders, were arguably the most dangerous part of the trip, presenting a harsh dissonance to the remote wilderness experience we came here to seek, but such is the nature of the country here – it is only a few short steps from the comforts of ‘civilisation’ to the pristine natural landscapes of the Wollemi.

Keeping just to the west of the private property boundary, we made our way through a forest of stunning orange Angophoras to the top of a long north-trending ridge and a wide maintenance trail put there by the NPWS. At 0807. After some pleasant but uneventful walking along the made road for 32 minutes, we reached the end of it, which coincidentally corresponded with my planned take-off point.



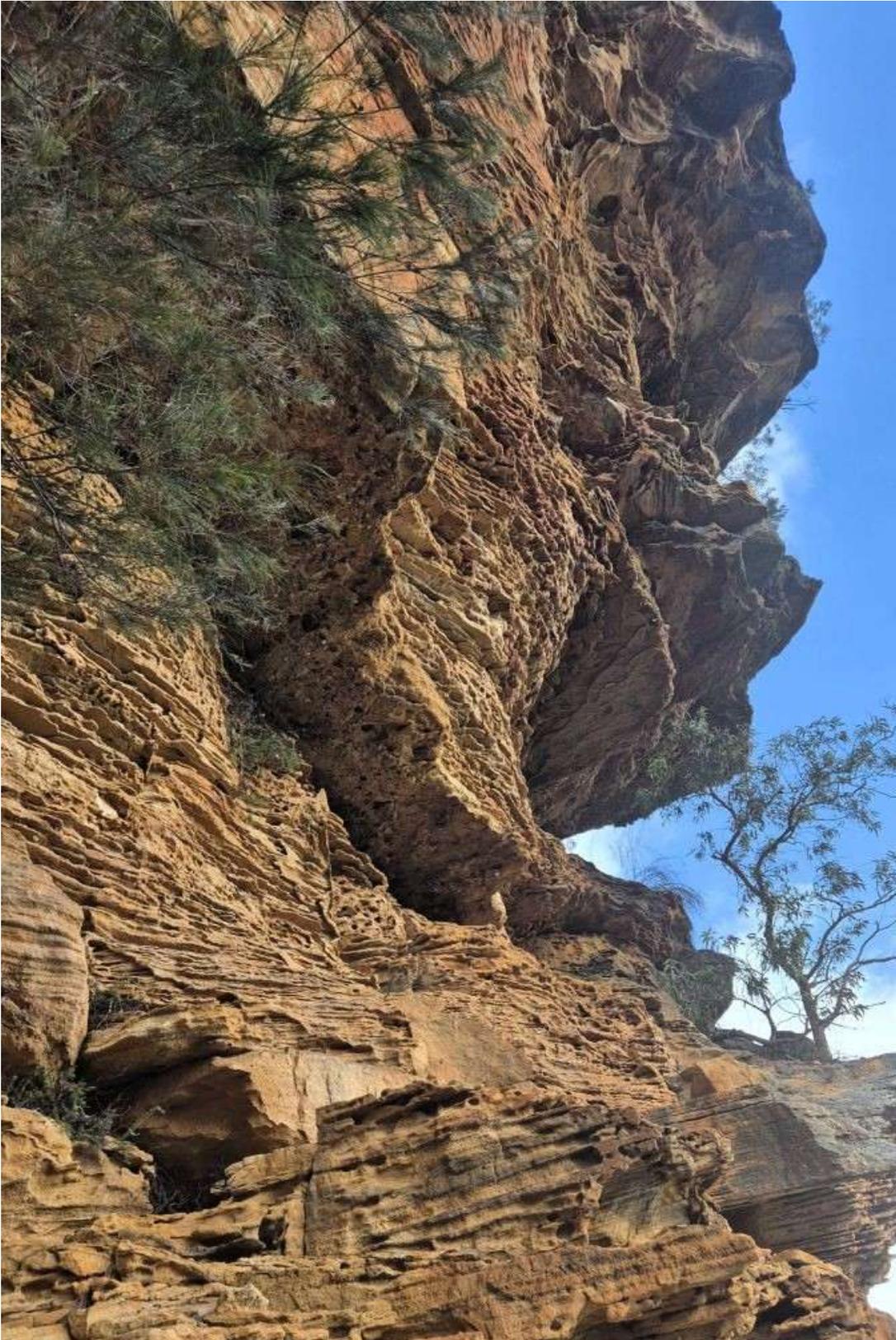
Angophora forest. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

In retrospect, we could have left the road a bit earlier as we ended up walking back and parallel to it for a short distance in order to avoid the worst of scrub, before heading down and westwards into a gully, which was start of the planned undercliff traverse.

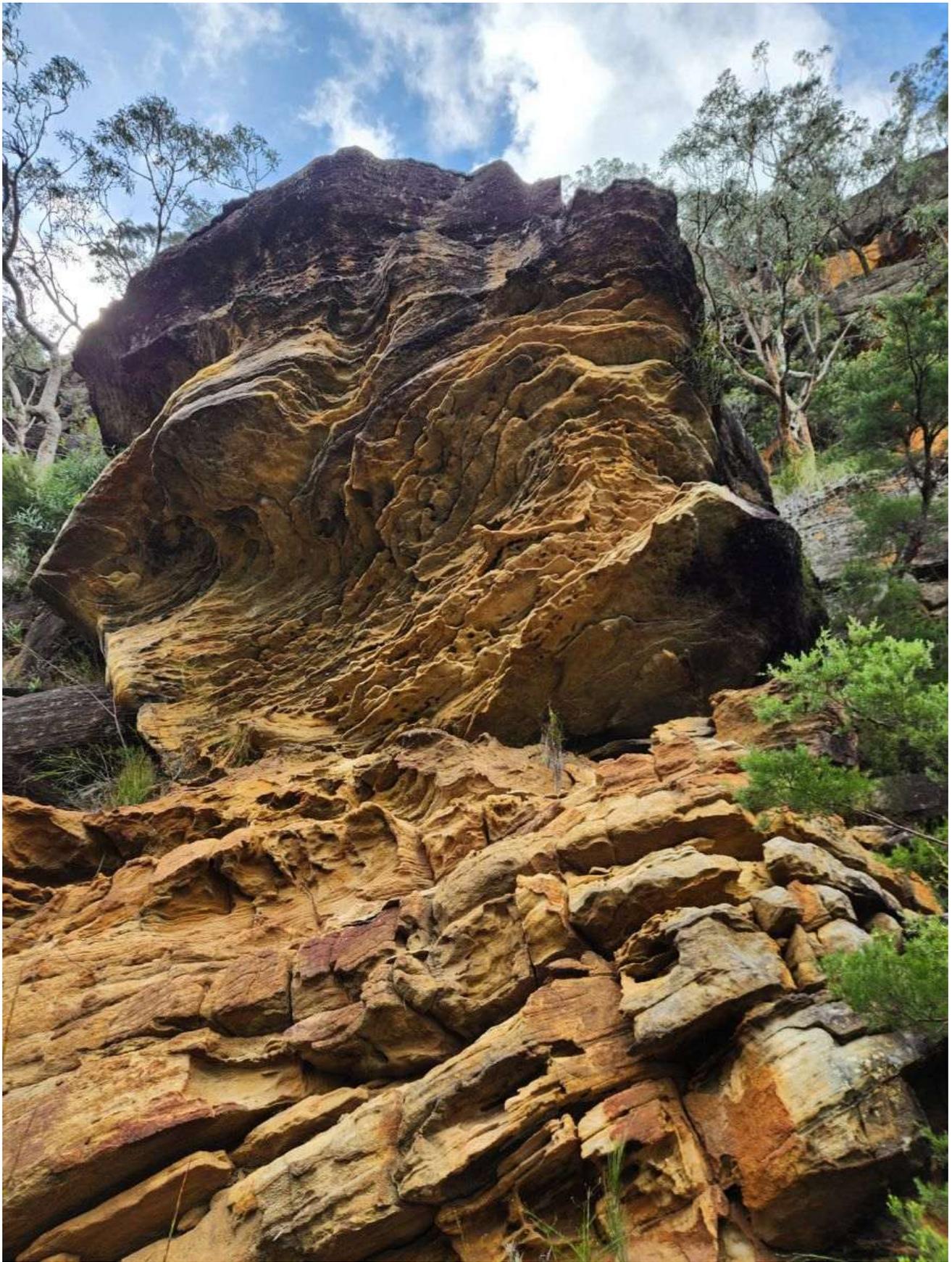
By 0920, the group made it to the bouldery creek bed, with some flowing water. GR 8066 9172, 480 m. Our descent continued from there. A small two-storey cave with flat floors was examined next, but it was only big enough to accommodate one or two people. A couple of waterfalls had to be negotiated in quick succession, the last one was a bit tricky and required a short detour on the left-hand side.

At 0928, the party clocked it at the first overhang in the cliff line we wanted to explore. Very soon we realised that what we were traversing was not a sequence of individual caves but continuous deeply sculpted walls of gargantuan proportions, 60-100 metres in height, coloured in orange, brown and yellow. In a few places, it was possible to scramble from the ledge to get a better appreciation of the fine details of the weatherings, which included honeycomb panels. A number of large to medium size trees clinging to rock faces in places added splashes of soft green to the otherwise barren stone surfaces. Turning our heads away from the walls, we looked in awe at the expansive views of Wheeny Creek gorge more than 250 metres

below us. Due west, the tight bowl of Wheeny Gap and the Lagoon Creek ravine were clearly visible, and further on, we could see the Mountain Lagoon Range on the horizon. I felt deeply awed and humbled by the nature's grandeur during this entire traverse experience.



Wheeny Walls. Photo: Irina Sorokina.



Wheeny Walls. Photo: Bernard Lo.



Wheeny Walls detail. Photo: Avi Sanjoyo.



Wheeny Walls detail. Photo: Irina Sorokina.



The view towards Wheeny Gap and beyond. Photo: Yidan Saladine.



Wheeny Walls. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Morning tea on the ledge, from 1000 till 1012, was a chance to recover from this continuous visual onslaught, to direct our attention from macro to micro, and to cleanse our visual palate, ready for more natural wonders.

Immediately after resuming, we required all the mental focus we could gather as the ledge narrowed to under one metre; it was also inclined towards a precipice and covered with loose rubble. *The next 15 metres*

*is on-your-bum territory*, I yelled to the guys following me as I was settling down onto the ground to lead by example. Luckily, this narrow tightrope-like crawl-way became a bit wider soon after.

For the next section of the traverse, the cliff line stepped away to a level about 50 metres above, and I decided not to follow it in the interest of time, especially as the map indicated it should come back down after about 200 metres. When the walls returned to our level, they were less eroded, and the ledge became tricky due to its sharp slant and slippery leaves cover.



Yuri at the narrow section of the ledge. Photo: Bernard Lo.



Irina, Avi, Cal and Barth at the narrow section of the ledge. Photo: Bernard Lo.

We still had a big agenda for the rest of the day, so at 1105, I decided to stop following the cliff line and begin our descent towards Wheeny Creek. Reflecting on the experience of the last 1.5 hours, I wish to call these cliffs Wheeny Walls. Their western extent is GR 8061 9191; in the easterly direction, we explored them till GR 8144 9248 (the last couple of hundred metres, during the walk of 19/04/25), making their known length over one kilometre. Judging by the Lidar map, these walls are likely to continue east for another kilometre, which will be a subject of a separate investigation. Another addition to my bottomless ‘to-do’ list.

Coming down through moderate scrub, at 1120, we reached a cliff line that had given us quite a bit of trouble on 19/04/25, but this time, being a bit further to the west made all the difference. As soon as we

came underneath it, we experienced a change of vegetation from dry sclerophyll forest to a wetter environment inhabited by rainforest species, Ferns and creepers, including Lawyer Vine, which was delightfully combined with extremely prickly Wild Raspberry in one short section.

The terrain became a lot more agreeable once we reached the bottom of the gully seventeen minutes later. No more scrub but a flowing stream and a sequence of flat rocky platforms and boulders, all easily negotiable<sup>1</sup>. A lesson was learnt for the way back – stick to the watercourses in this area, it is so much faster and more enjoyable.

The rest of the journey down was an absolute delight, and at 1157, Wheeny Creek greeted our arrival with its smooth brown boulders, gently gurgling cascades and deep yellow-green pools. The sun was out of the clouds just then, and the cool water looked very alluring, but Bernard and I had to go on and get to the waterfall first, as now we were so close to it.



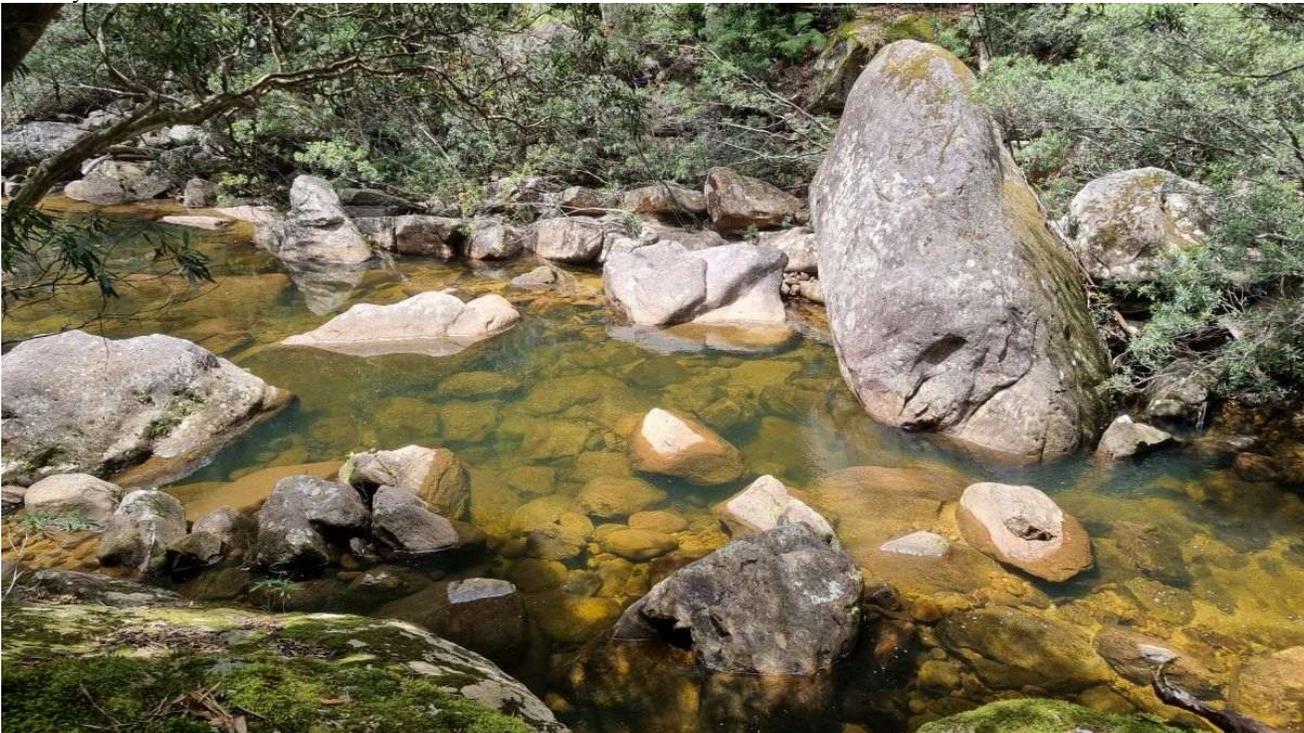
In the descent gully. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

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<sup>1</sup> Checking with the topographic map after the walk at home showed that the gully we followed is indicated incorrectly in its lower part. Its true course is about 50 metres further to the west.



Wheeny Creek. Photo: Yidan Saladine.



Wheeny Creek. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Crossing Wheeny Creek. Photo: Irina Sorokina.

Luckily, the next part was very quick and easy. We crossed Wheeny Creek and, within less than 50 metres, entered a tributary ravine, which we had explored from the top on 06/09/25, calling it M-Gully. A few hurried, impatient scrambles up the gully, and there it was. A sweeping, arc-shaped amphitheatre clothed on both sides in thick emerald rainforest canopy and Ferns, and in the middle of it, a grand waterfall, with the main upper section being 60 metres high and the two lower ones 13 metres high, the total of 73 metres, leaping down via 20 tiers of dark brown rock, over 20 metres wide, with the first tier platform, around 40 metres across, accessible from the bottom.

A sight to behold, and worth every effort of getting here. Any bushwalker would be proud to add such discovery to their CV. I called this feature Tenacity Falls to acknowledge Bernard Lo's tenacity in both pre-walk desk research and on-the-ground exploration<sup>2</sup>. Also, I think tenacity is needed for anyone wishing to visit these falls<sup>3</sup>. We spent from 1208 till 1226 here, taking many photographs, but none of them, in my opinion, are as good as the real thing.

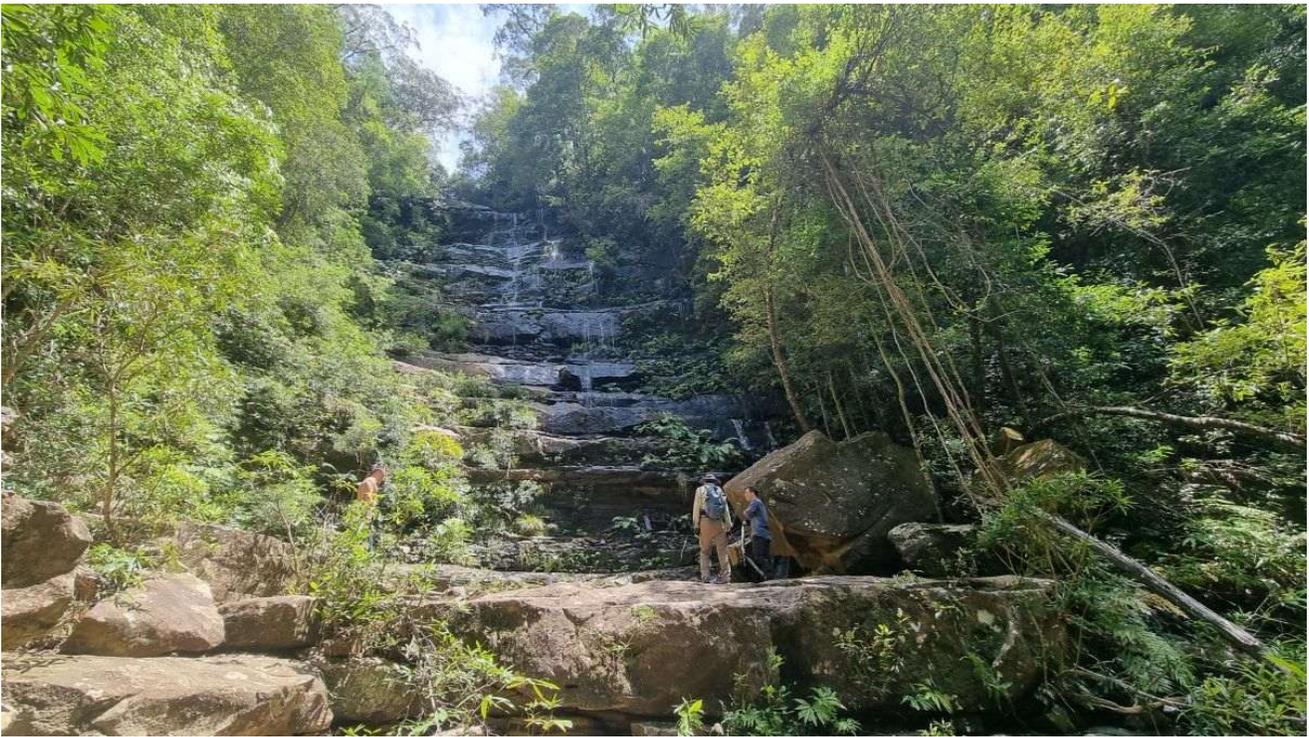
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<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lo's detailed account is at the end of these Track Notes.

<sup>3</sup> It is advisable to do so after some descent rains. The M-Gully these falls are situated on has a 2.5 km long catchment, which would provide a substantial flow at most times, but the falls would probably not look their best during dry spells.



Bernard at Tenacity Falls. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.



Tenacity Falls amphitheatre. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

Feeling elated may have been enough to sustain our energy, but I thought we better have lunch, swim and rest before undertaking an arduous climb of nearly 500 metres to get back to the cars. Tenacity Falls have a wide rocky platform at the bottom of the main tier, with only a shallow pool, so we headed back down to Wheeny Creek near our entry/exit tributary for our intermission. It took place from 1240 till 1313, including a very enjoyable dip.



Yuri, Avi and Barth enjoying a lunchtime dip. Photo: Yidan Saladine.

Our adventure then continued up the same gully we had used to come down. In its lower part, we noted many resplendent Stag horns, *Platyserium sp.* and Birds Nest Ferns, *Asplenium nidus*. Scrambling up the

multiple rocky balconies was easy and scrub-free. There was enough flowing water to make the landscape more picturesque, but not too much to compromise our safety. What a joy, and definitely the best way to negotiate this terrain. This is of course not always possible, or, more precisely, mostly impossible, due to frequent waterfalls and high cliffs likely to be present on other gullies.



Bernard, Irina, Avi and others climbing up the gully. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

At 1348, we came to one such waterfall, about 25 m high, which looked completely impregnable. On our first visit here, we found a way up to the west of it, which took a lot of time and effort. This time, I was hoping to find a better alternative. Today, there was a lot more current coming down in a shape of a 20 metre wide curtain. An interesting-looking cave could be seen behind the water veil.



The waterfall on our way. Photo: Irina Sorokina.

We climbed eastwards, stopping to take a look and photograph the arc-shaped 50 metre long overhang hiding behind the waterfall. My desire of walking along that level was shattered as we saw that part of the ledge has collapsed. Never mind, it was still a very impressive sight. From here, the party continued under the cliff line for a short distance (30 metres or so), where a ramp was found that led to the top. A giant boulder with a climbable slanted top provided a beautiful viewpoint down into the rainforest we had just left behind. The upper part of a massive smooth orange Angophora growing at the bottom of the cliffs was a striking addition to the vista. At 1415.



Bernard, Yuri and Avi in the long overhang below the waterfall. Photo: Irina Sorokina.



The view from the big boulder above the waterfall. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

So far, so good. During the last trip, we had quickly moved to the western side of the gully and exited up a very steep and scrubby slope. I thought, this time, why not continue up the ravine? The watercourse was at

first a little hard to find in the sea of Ferns and grasses, but only after a few minutes we managed to locate it, and within metres it changed into a very attractive, easy to follow rainforest ravine, with a well-flowing crystal-clear brook. A large Eastern Water Dragon, *Intelligama lesueurii*, disturbed by our footsteps, was seen scurrying away between the boulders. It did not seem to have ever seen people before, unlike the ones in many other canyons and rivers in the mountains. Soon after, we stopped near a three metre high monolith rock at the bottom of the ravine, to take photos.



Cal and Avi climbing up the ravine. Photo: Yidan Saladine.



Irina and Yidan near a monolith rock. Photo: Avi Sanjoyo.

As we were making our way up, I had a look at the map and realised we were now within a fairly short climb from the ridge to the east, which is supposed to have a fire trail on it. I was also keen to check it out. We therefore decided to change the planned return route and exit that way. The creek was still full of water, and the rainforest, scenic, but in the interest of time I thought it would be better to leave this idyllic environment and make our way up.

At 1513, the group began the climb, which was very straightforward, rather scrubby, and, mercifully, not too long. Twenty-five minutes later, we joined a wide, well-cleared service trail about 200 m south of its end. Feeling happy about this variation of the course, I nevertheless knew there was a fair amount of altitude still to gain. Walking at a steady pace, the party made it to the junction with the main trail we had taken this

morning by 1608. The top of the climb (625 m) was reached nine minutes later. It was mostly downhill all the way from there, through beautiful Angophora forest. We made it back at the cars at 1705.

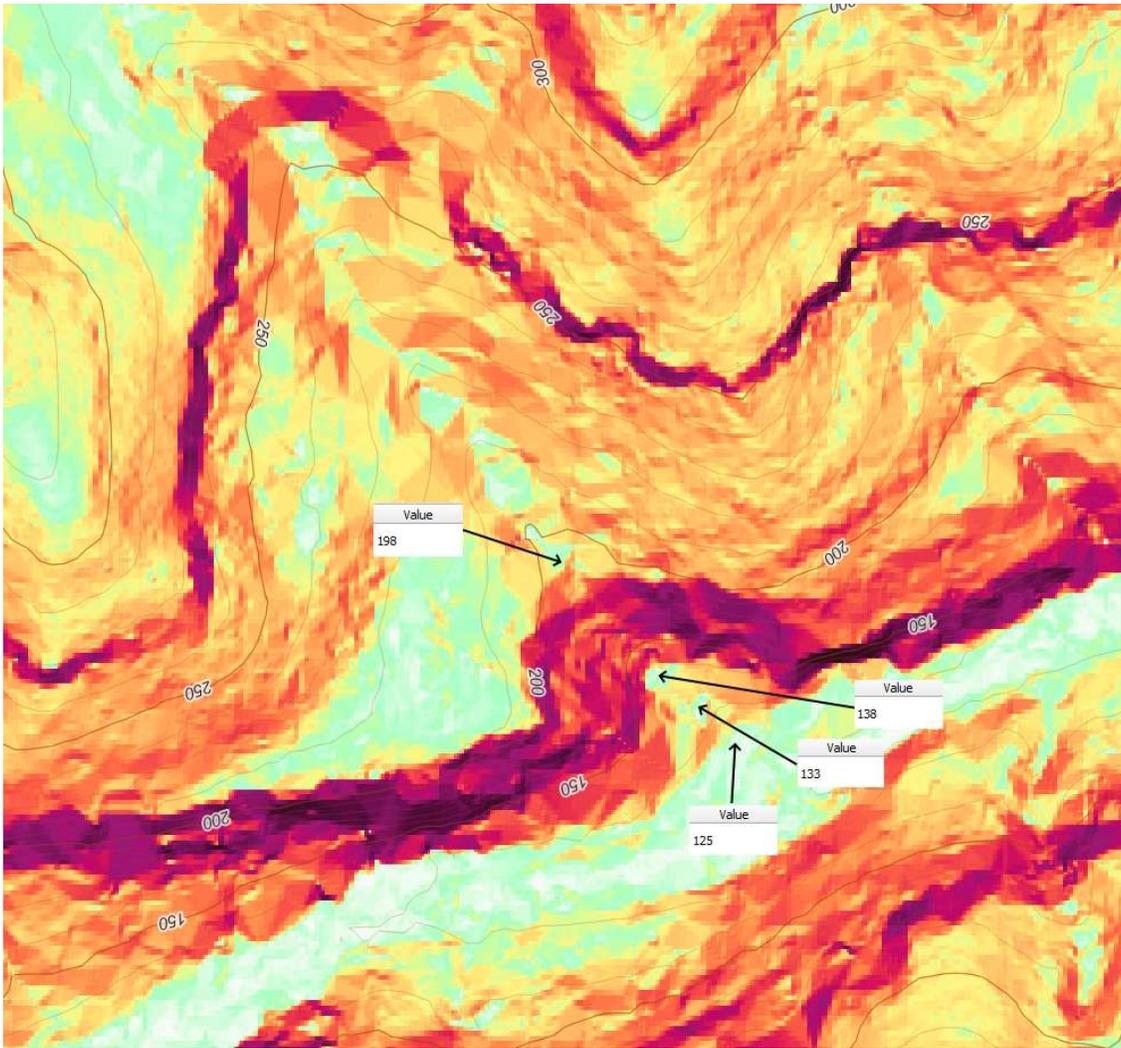


Angophora forest. Photo: Yuri Bolotin.

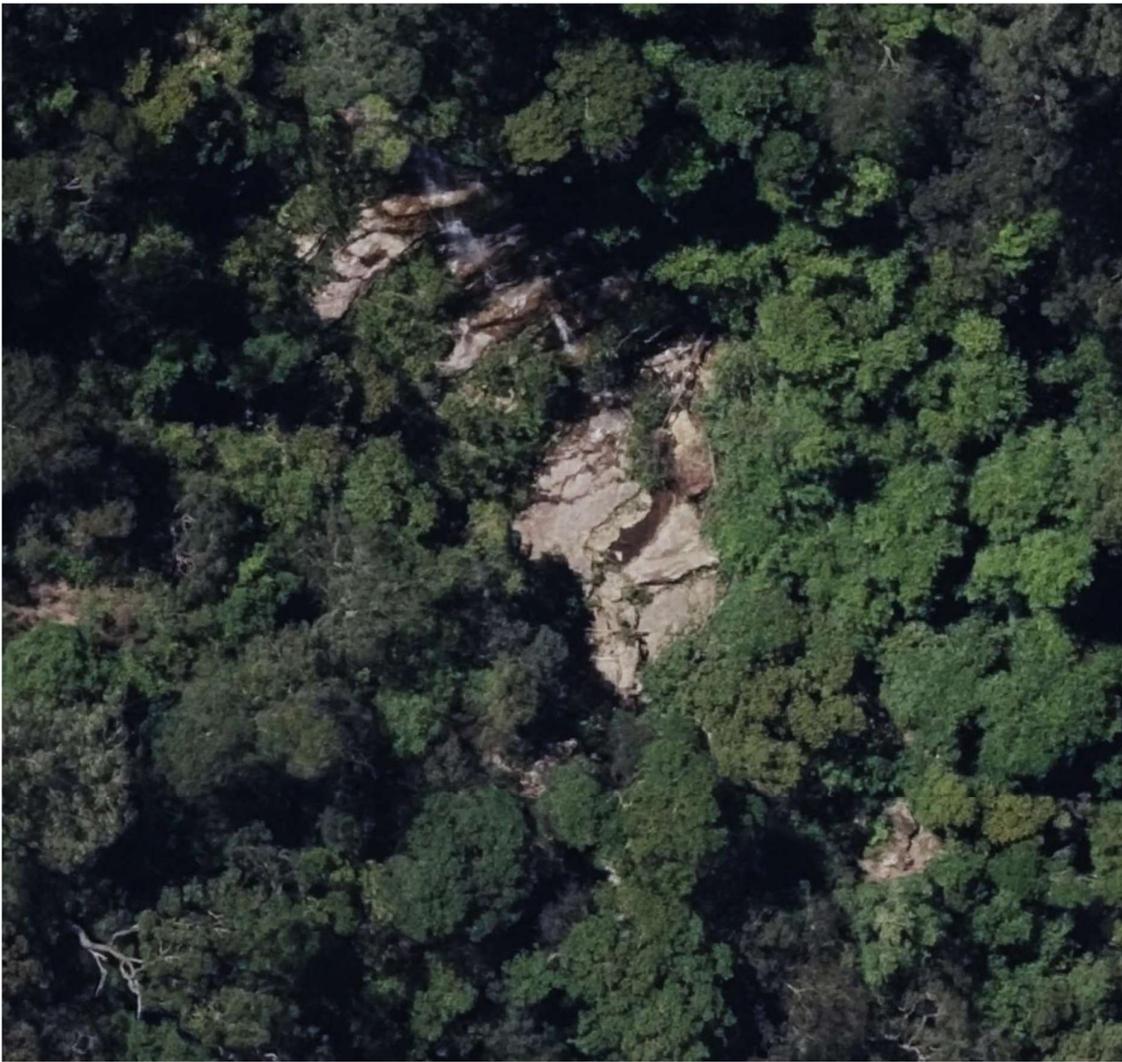
Trip statistics: total distance 14.1 km; total ascent 660 m.

## **Bernard Lo's Account of the Quest for Tenacity Falls**

I first came across a unique looking cliff line off Wheeny Creek in October 2024 when starting out with LiDAR maps. The colours in the below diagram represent the slope of the terrain. I have not seen such a strange profile before or since. I did not pay it much attention until I learnt how to plot contours, precisely measure elevations, and interpret the slope data through real world experience. I realised then that this was a 73 m tall three-tiered waterfall. The strange cliff line (i.e., the upper fall) was 60 m in height, sloped back at a roughly 50-degree angle, and seemingly had many small platforms.



SIX Maps' imagery confirmed the existence of the upper fall rather than a dry gully/creek, with a strong flow noted over at least 6 platforms. The scale of the waterfall became apparent when zooming in further and seeing a large fallen tree being completely eclipsed by the rock platforms.



Getting to Tenacity Falls has not been easy and included first figuring out how to lead off track exploratory club walks then waiting for post-rain periods. The trickiest issue was finding a day walk route: Tenacity Falls is remote, surrounded by Wheeny Creek's cliffs, and situated between all the surrounding trailheads at Mountain Lagoon, North Wheeny, Kurrajong Heights, and East Kurrajong. The first scout was done in June 2025 from East Kurrajong as part of a walk to Sanctuary Ravine. That route included a few too many yo-yos to be enjoyable. The second walk attempted to reach the top of Tenacity Falls through the tip of the M Gully from Mountain Lagoon in September 2025. This would probably have required 10 hours; we ran out of daylight at 8.5 hours.

It was immensely rewarding to finally reach Tenacity Falls on the third attempt. I knew that it would be tall, but I was not expecting what I now believe to be one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the Blue Mountains possessing such exceptional character, with the upper fall including around 20 fern-covered rock platforms framed by an amphitheatre of large trees and with dozens of small streams.



Walk topographic map. Recorded by Yuri Bolotin and prepared by Bernard Lo.

## Table of Times, Locations and Grid References

Time	Location	Grid Reference	Elevation
0735	Cars parked and started walking	GR 7960 8871	570 m
0807	At the NPWS trail	GR 7965 8989	590 m
0839	End of the NPWS trail	GR 8040 9179	555 m
0902	In the creek	GR 8066 9172	480 m
0928	Start of Wheeny Walls	GR 8061 9191	420 m
1000-1012	Morning tea	GR 8077 9221	400 m
1105	Begin descending towards Wheeny Creek	GR 8122 9256	360 m
1120	Cliff line	GR 8131 9261	285 m
1137	Bottom of the gully	GR 8139 9274	210 m
1157	Wheeny Creek	GR 8139 9286	135 m
1208-1226	Tenacity Falls	GR 8148 9296	170 m
1240-1313	Wheeny Creek, lunch and swim	GR 8139 9286	135 m
1348	Waterfall	GR 8140 9264	256 m
1415	Above the waterfall, near the ravine	GR 8145 9262	285 m
1513	Exiting the ravine	GR 8148 9206	395 m
1538	On the trail	GR 8145 9174	475 m
1608	Trails intersection	GR 8047 9102	580 m
1617	Top of the climb	GR 7995 9058	625 m
1705	Back at cars	GR 7960 8871	570 m