BRISBANE WATER NATIONAL PARK · UNOFFICIAL FREE PLANNER

Day planner

Somersby Falls vs Girrakool · picnic lock times · $8 vehicle fee · packing ticks · limited reception · official NSW National Parks links. From **brisbanewaternationalpark.com.au** — print this page or save as PDF (no email required).

Verify before you go. Fees, picnic lock times, alerts and closures change. Always check NSW National Parks — Brisbane Water and park alerts the morning you travel. This planner is independent and unofficial — not NPWS, not the NSW Government. Emergency: **000** (needs mobile reception).

Snapshot checked 22 August 2026 (not live). Official visitor info listed a **$8 per vehicle per day** entry (machines / Park'nPay / NSW Parks Pass). Girrakool and Somersby Falls picnic areas: **7am–8pm daylight saving / 7am–6pm otherwise** — car parks lock at close. Limited mobile reception in parts of the park. Re-check official pages before you lock a plan. This site does not show live closures.

Picnic lock + slick steps + engraving respect are the real hazards here. Do not walk down Somersby Falls with 90 minutes to closing. Wet sandstone steps are not a city footpath. Stay on the viewing path at rock engravings — do not walk on, chalk, wet or rub the art. 000 needs reception: download Emergency+ before you leave signal.

1. Before you leave home

Status, fees & weather

- ☐ NSW National Parks Brisbane Water page checked this morning
- ☐ Park alerts checked
- ☐ BOM Gosford / Central Coast forecast — not only Sydney CBD
- ☐ Pay-method ready: card, Park'nPay, or Parks Pass
- ☐ Picnic lock time known (8pm DST / 6pm otherwise)
- ☐ Screenshots of track page, alerts and map PDF
- ☐ Someone knows your plan and return window
- ☐ Emergency+ installed while you still have reception

Packing (day pack)

- ☐ Grip shoes (wet sandstone steps — not smooth soles)
- ☐ Water 1 L+ each (more for Piles Creek / GNW)
- ☐ Sun hat + SPF (lookouts are exposed)
- ☐ Rain shell if showers / after-rain falls day
- ☐ Picnic food if using BBQs / tables
- ☐ Phone + offline map / NPWS app
- ☐ Basic first aid / blister kit
- ☐ This planner printed or saved offline

2. Fees — split systems, never one “park fee”

1. Vehicle day entry

- $8 per vehicle per day (verify live)
- Machines (card) or Park’nPay app
- Or display a valid NSW Parks Pass
- This site never takes commission on park fees

2. Camping

- Separate system if any formal sites exist for your date
- Day-use dominates this park
- Verify on NPWS only — never affiliated here

3. Other permits

- Standard day walks: no individual walk permit
- Weddings / commercial photography: permit required
- Organised groups may need authorisation

3. Pick one main walk

Somersby Falls

- Signature rainforest waterfall
- 0.8 km return · Grade 3 · many steps
- Picnic tables, BBQs, toilets, water at the top
- Car park locks at picnic close
- Best first visit if the group can do stairs

Girrakool Loop

- 2 km loop · Grade 3
- Engraving site (path only) + waterfall lookouts
- Do not walk on rock art
- Same picnic lock-time pattern
- Better family “circuit + lunch” day

Lookouts (Plan B)

- Staples Lookout — inland / highway-side views
- Warrah Lookout — Broken Bay / Barrenjoey
- Low-step days; edge discipline still applies
- Use when waterfall car parks are full or locked

Skip on a first short clock

- Piles Creek loop in heat after a late start
- Wondabyne–Patonga + Somersby on the same day
- Mt Wondabyne summit after a picnic linger
- Any “one more waterfall” after lock-time math fails

4. Picnic lock times (reverse clock)

Girrakool and Somersby Falls picnic areas: **7am–8pm daylight saving / 7am–6pm otherwise**. Car parks lock at close. Set a reverse clock before you walk down the falls. Other areas of the park may stay open, but they can still close for weather or fire danger — verify on NPWS. Do not assume a second waterfall car park is still open after picnic lock.

5. Half-day: Somersby Falls (on the ground)

Night before
Grip shoes, 1 L water each, pay-method ready. Screenshot the official Somersby Falls track page and alerts.

Arrive
Pay vehicle fee. Toilets / picnic at the top. Note lock time on a phone alarm.

Walk
Formed track with many steps through rainforest → lookouts you can reach → turn around before the track between Middle and Bottom Falls (NPWS: closed for storm damage from 27 Oct 2026, no firm end — still closed on the 14 Nov 2026 check). Official design figures: 0.8 km return, 30–36 minutes, Grade 3 — verify live. Those figures are not a statement the closed section is open. A flood safety warning runs to 17 Nov 2026, 8:59pm (estimated). Do not drive, ride or walk through floodwater.

After
Picnic / BBQ if lock time allows. Do not add Girrakool + Piles Creek + Mt Wondabyne on the same short clock.

6. Family day: Girrakool Loop

Start
Engraving site from the viewing path only. Wait if the platform is busy. Reset the group if anyone steps on the art.

Loop
About 2 km, Grade 3 — short, not flat. Illoura / Andamira lookouts. Same picnic lock as Somersby.

Do not add
Piles Creek after a late start if you still expect to beat lock time.

7. Reception & emergencies

- Official visitor info notes **limited mobile reception** in parts of the park.
- **000** needs reception. Download **Emergency+** before you visit (GPS for emergency services).
- Screenshot alerts and the official map PDF.
- Optional PLB / sat messenger is planning for longer Great North Walk days — not a Somersby picnic requirement.
- Do not invent carrier coverage maps.

8. Safety non-negotiables

- Steep waterfall steps, heat, fire danger, slippery rock, lookout edges.
- No pets. No open fires. Follow on-site signs.
- Darkinjung Country — do not leave the formed track for “better angles” on rock platforms.
- Wondabyne station has no road: train request-stop only; treat GNW as a real bushwalk.
- Sealed 2WD to standard visitor nodes — no 4WD requirement for picnic / lookout days.
- **Emergency: call 000.** This planner cannot help with rescue.

9. Official links

- **This guide:** https://www.brisbanewaternationalpark.com.au/ — visit, itineraries, trails, maps
- Park: https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/brisbane-water-national-park
- Visitor info: https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/brisbane-water-national-park/visitor-info
- Alerts: https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/brisbane-water-national-park/local-alerts
- Somersby Falls track: https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/walking-tracks/somersby-falls-walking-track
- Girrakool Loop: https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/walking-tracks/girrakool-loop-track
- Park’nPay: https://parknpay.nsw.gov.au/
- Emergency+: https://www.emergencyplus.com.au/
- BOM Gosford: https://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/forecasts/gosford.shtml

www.brisbanewaternationalpark.com.au

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