

Lachlan River Map

Wyangala Dam to Forbes

Canoeing, Kayaking & Tubing

April trip with Paul - Nanami - 0.75m 500ML

Steve Howard

Latest Updates: May 2017

Note: Major flooding in Winter 2016 has made changes along the river that are not yet reflected on maps downstream of Merriganowry Bridge – see the last date paddled at the top right of each map to see if it has been surveyed since the floods.

From the sections of the river I have travelled since the flood, some snags & blockages have been washed away, while others have been moved or added in different places. Lots of sand has been moved about, with new beaches and sandbars being created. Most beaches and sandbars are larger, while a few have eroded.

Key:

★ - distance in kilometres from Wyangala Dam Wall
B - big beach b - small beach H - hammock trees
G - grassy flat 🏠 - House

Road Acc: GPS Coordinates of turn off from nearest road, or entrance to reserve
River Acc: GPS Coordinates of best access point on the river.

Lachlan River Paddling Maps

The Lachlan River collects water from almost as far East as Goulburn and Oberon, travelling over 1400 km across the plains to end in the Great Cumbung Swamp near Balranald, occasionally entering the Murrumbidgee in a big flood event.

This canoe/ kayak guide deals with the section of the Lachlan downstream of Wyangala Dam for 220 km, through Darbys Falls, Cowra and Gooloogong to Forbes. The river has been fully mapped between Darbys Falls and Paytens Bridge, with each section being paddled at least twice, some others much more. The section from Wyangala to Clearview Road and from Paytens Bridge to Forbes are sketch maps only - they have not been surveyed on the water so lack important details shown on the other maps. I have travelled Wyangala to Clearview Road many times but over ten years ago, but this was before I started mapping the river. If not for putting a hole in the bottom of my kayak in January 2016 I would have been able to able to fully map the sections between Paytens Bridge and Forbes!

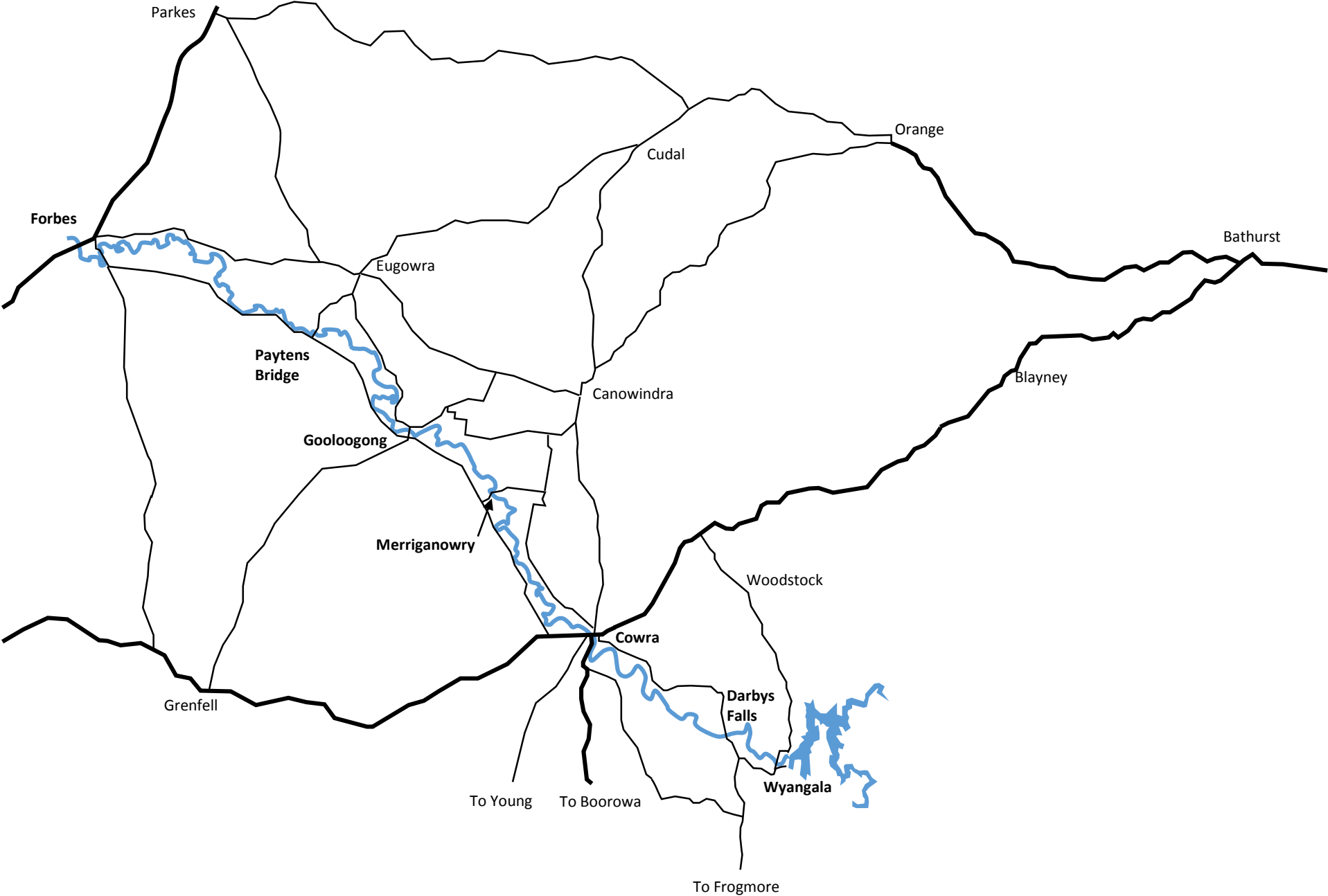
The flat sections of river from Darbys Falls to Forbes have a good water flow most summers as water is released for irrigation, making for reliable paddling. The exceptions are after wet winters when little water is needed. The river downstream from Merriganowry to Forbes has lots more snags so needs more water for pleasurable paddling.

The river from Wyangala to Paytens Bridge can be considered in three sections:

Wyangala to Clearview Road (Darbys Falls): small rapids, lots of islands, plenty of snags, rocks etc. A very scenic but potentially dangerous section of river - great fun for the prepared. I used to do this section with a mate and sometimes others at least four times each year, but a few close calls when others came with us really opened my eyes. This section will be mapped in greater detail sometime down the track, but it is best avoided unless everyone in the party is extremely capable in inland fast flowing rivers.

Clearview Road (Darbys Falls) to Merriganowry: flat water, varying between sections full of willows to more natural river red gum/ casuarina lined banks. Generally flows at about 4 km/h, although slightly faster closer to Darbys Falls. Lots of sandy beaches and relatively few snags.

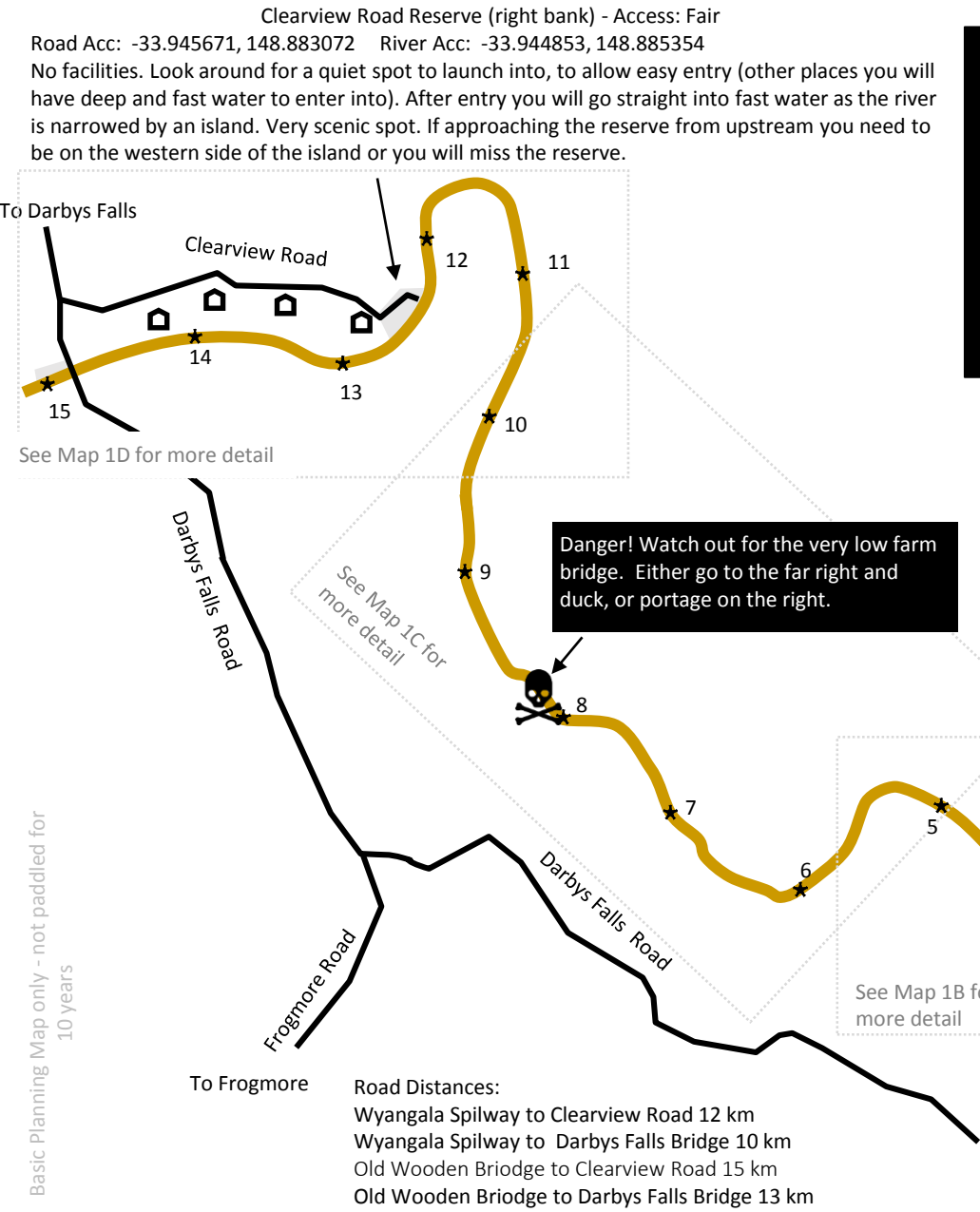
Merriganowry to Forbes: The river reaches the plains, meandering more and slowing, with river red gums lining the often dusty banks. Lots of red gum snags makes for better fishing but also more obstacles on some reaches. There are few beaches, so landings are generally on muddy banks, although with care old snags on the banks make clean stops. The speed of the river is generally about 3 km/h, although on some of the deeper wider reaches it can slow to 2 km/h, so any headwind can send you back upstream. Due to the large number of red gum snags from Merriganowry down, those sections of river are best paddled when the release is at least 2000 ML per day to reduce portages, although 1500 ML will do but expect portages.



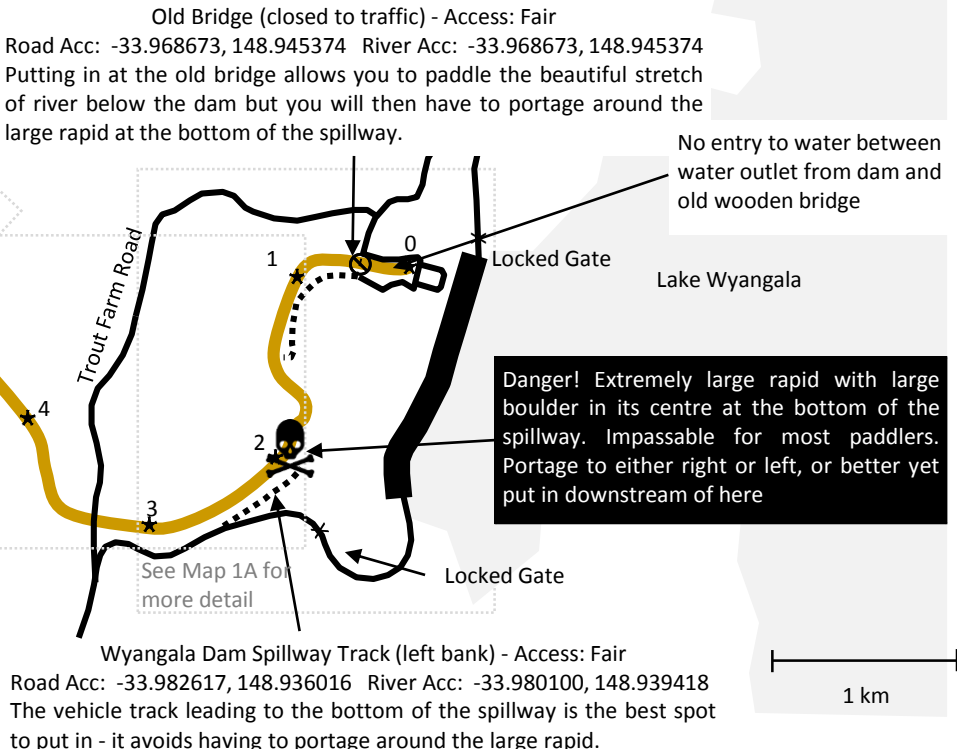
Map 1: Wyangala Dam to Clearview Road (10 km - 2 hour 30 mins)

(Add 2 km and 1 hr 15 min if starting at old bridge)

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Last Paddled 10 years ago!



Danger: Experienced and capable paddlers only. The river is very different in this section compared with everywhere downstream. The river varies in character - long deep pools with gentle paddling quickly change to braided channels through islands (from 100 m to 1km in length), with small fast rapids, and live or dead trees in or overhanging the water. Paddlers need to be able to make quick decisions on direction and be able to change direction quickly and accurately, and get themselves out of fast flowing water without help. Your kayak may get damaged or stuck in debris and you will then have to walk out. You can expect to fall in, possibly being caught underwater. There is no mobile reception. There are two specific dangers - the large rapid near the spillway and the low farm bridge - but any of the rapids or islands can be dangerous - there have been many close calls. This makes the section from Wyangala Dam to Clearview Road beautiful and highly enjoyable, but potentially dangerous, especially for the inexperienced/ underprepared. See more detailed maps on the next four pages. This section has not been mapped in recent years.



Basic Planning Map only - not paddled for 10 years

Old Bridge to Rapid 1 (old Spillway): Flatwater for 1200m on a gentle left hand bend. A very beautiful stretch of river - sheoaks, red gums, reeds and water weed. Ends at the large round pool where the old spillway enters from the left (look for the rocky gorge) - the river exits from the right of the pool.

Rapid 1 (100m long): The river bends left around the old breakwater (there is a billabong within it). Two sets of small rapids in a narrow channel, ending into the second large round pool.

Between Rapids 1 and 2: Flatwater for 100m as the river enters the second round pool. This pool is caused by the northern branch of the new spillway. ***Danger:*** it is now time to move to the right hand bank and prepare to portage - the dangerous rapid is around the corner - you should be able to hear it.

Rapid 2 New Spillway (100m long) - PORTAGE

REQUIRED: Leaving the second pool the river is again forced around a breakwater - this is the larger one for the new spillway. The river is forced through a narrow channel with a few rocks, then is squeezed further and drops about 5 feet in a short distance, with large boulders in the flow. Most paddlers will need to portage around this rapid.

Between Rapids 2 and 3: Flatwater for 800m.

Entrance from the track at the bottom of the spillway is the best put in place if you wish to avoid portaging around Rapid 2.

Rapid 3 Wyangala Bridge (250m long): Lots of small rapids between rocks, with an island in the middle as the river approaches the new bridge - the left hand channel is the easier run.

Between Rapids 3 and 4: Flatwater for 400m on a right hand bend.

Rapid 4 Trout Farm (250m long): Similar to Rapid 3, but with a bit more space - easier run on the right.

Between Rapids 4 and 5: Flatwater for 1500m - a nice long reach, and time to catch your breath before the first of the long rapids to come. At the end of the reach there is a beach on the left with a cabin above it - a good spot to rest (the beach, not the cabin).

Rapid 5 Chute (950m long): After the beach the river starts into the head of a long section of rapids and narrow channel. The river jinks right over the first rapid then quickly left, then after a short pool another two small rapids lead into a long fast chute of water. Once you are through this the river continues for several hundred metres in a narrow channel with more small rapids - two-thirds of the way down you can change to the right hand channel (the left channel is easier).

Between Rapids 5 and 6: Flatwater for 400m - plenty of rocks in the river but they can be avoided easily.

Rapid 6 (350m long): An island followed closely by two side by side splits the river into two channels then three - easier run is on the right both times. There is a beach on the downstream side on the right which makes a good spot for a break if you haven't had one by now.

Between Rapids 6 and 7: Flatwater for 200m.

Rapid 7 Riverslea (100m long): An island close to the left bank leaves a choice between a wider but rocky right hand channel, or a narrower run on the left - the right is the easier run.

Between Rapids 7 and 8: Flatwater for 250m on a gentle left hand bend - plenty of rocks but they can be avoided.

Rapid 8 Bridge (650m long): The river moves left to avoid bedrock on the right, splitting into two short channels around a small island. It then gently twists through some rocks and small islands before (DANGER) a very low farm bridge almost blocks the river - there are actually two bridges (old train chassis) leading from one bank over a flood channel to an island then across the main channel. If the water level is not too high you can squeeze under on the right hand side (watch out for the agpipe hanging on the far side of the bridge), otherwise portage on the right. The channel then bends sharply left then right after the island.

Between Rapids 8 and 9: Flatwater for 200m

Rapid 9 (100m long): A small island in the river divides the flow into a narrow rocky channel on the left or a wider bend with a couple of small rocks on the right - the right hand run is easier.

Between Rapids 9 and 10: Flatwater for 450m

Rapid 10 (150m long): An island splits the river into two equal flows. Either side is suitable, no rapids.

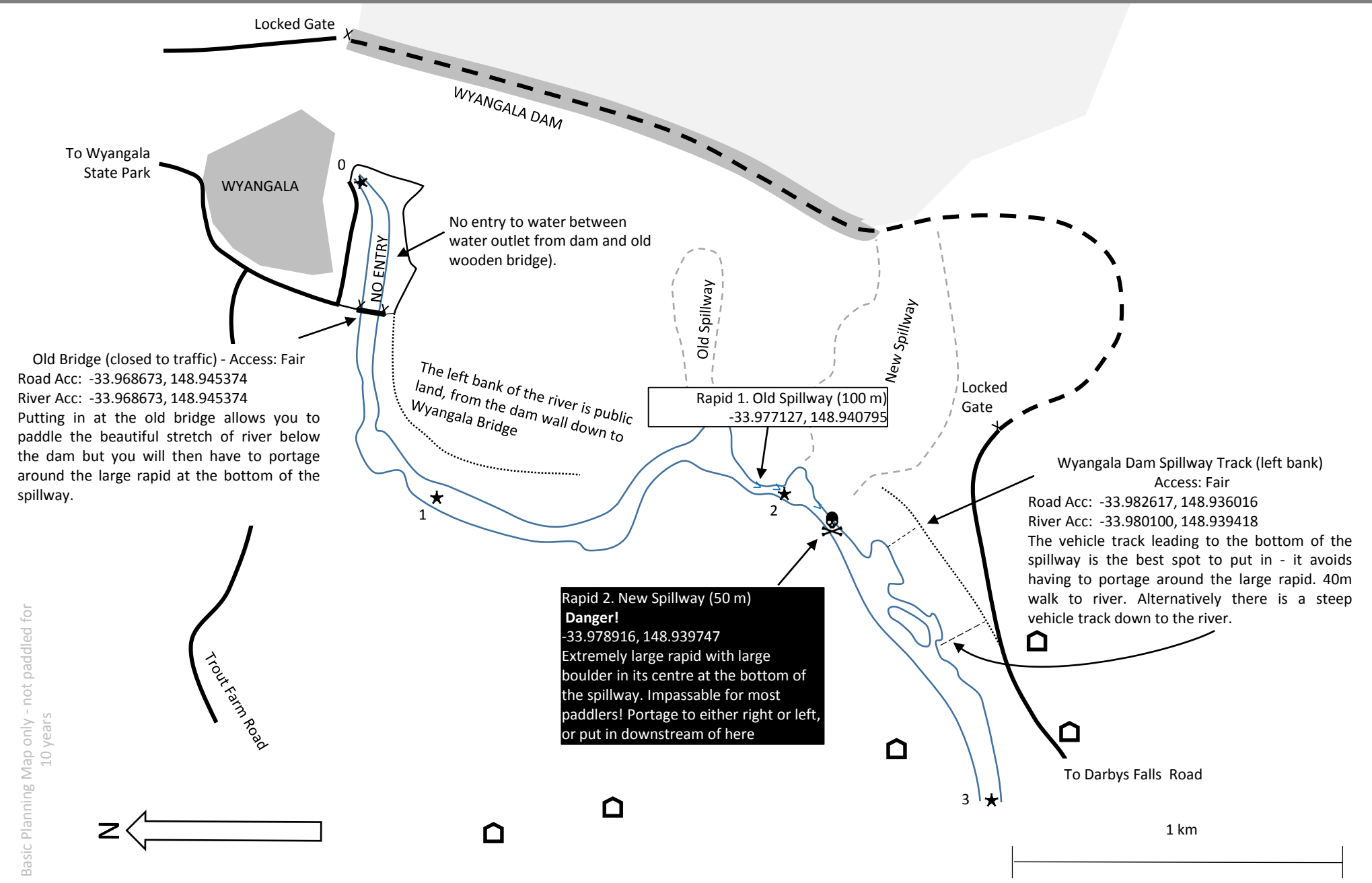
Between Rapids 10 and 11: Flatwater for 450m.

Rapid 11 Long Island (850m long): A long thin island divides the river for hundreds of metres. The left hand channel is the easier run, avoiding a small drop at the start of the right channel. There is a small zigzag through the island, dropping over a rapid, two thirds of the way along, or continue to the end of the left channel where small channels lead back into the main river through sandbars.

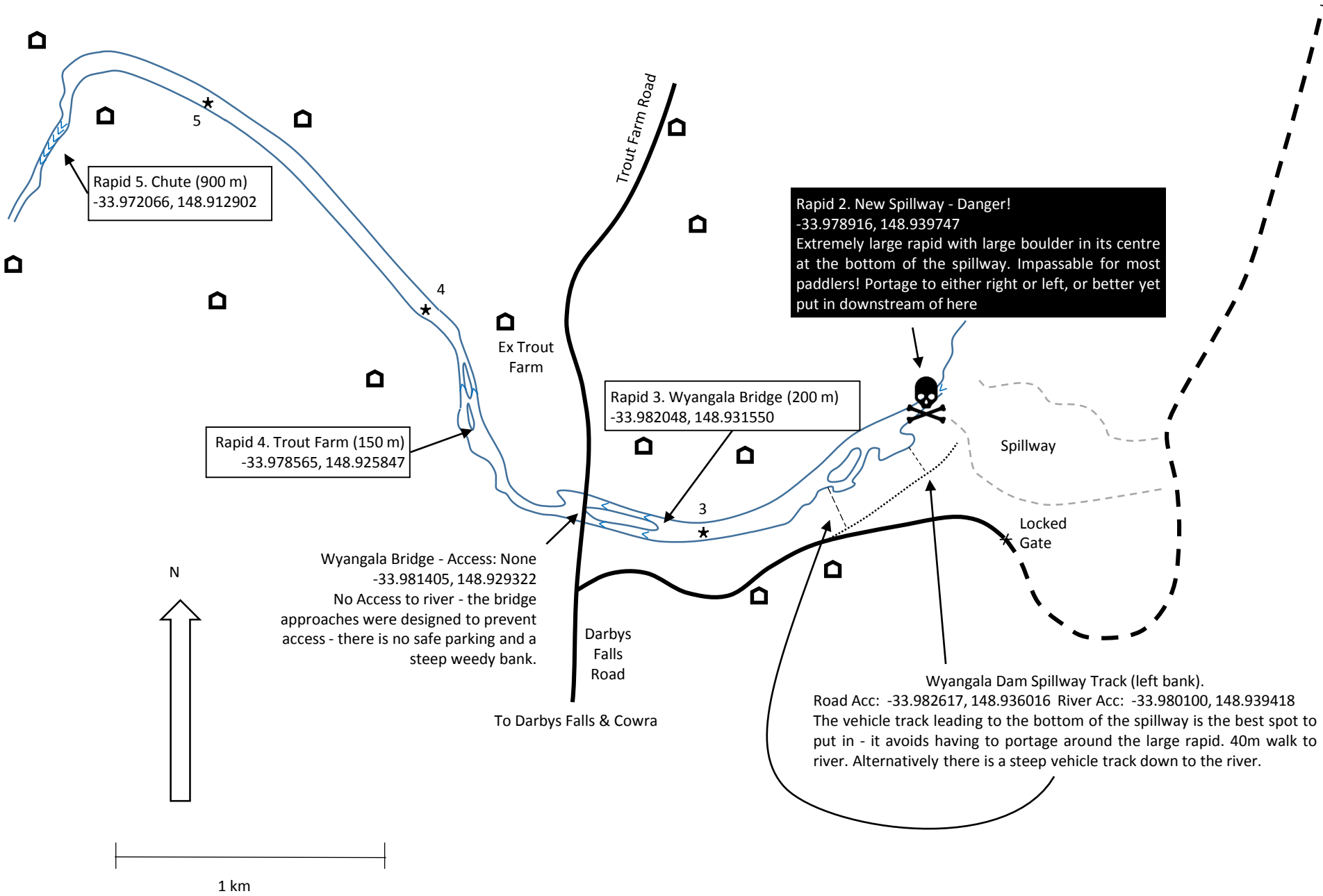
Between Rapids 11 and 12: Flatwater for 750m. Another long reach, ending with a beach on the left just before the left hand bend - Milburn Creek joins the river from the right bank here.

Rapid 12 Clearview Road (1300m long): The river enters a long narrow tree shaded channel as it rounds the sharp bend after Milburn Creek. There is a distinct main channel which should be followed, though in high water the flood channel on the right soon after the bend can be taken - there is a small rapid part way along, and the flood channel can be blocked by snags. Towards the end of the run the river splits around an island - if exiting at Clearview Road then you need to take the right hand channel, then look for an eddy in which to get to the bank away from the fast water. Paddlers should spread out as they approach this exit point, as it would be easy to be swept down river while the first paddlers get out of their craft.

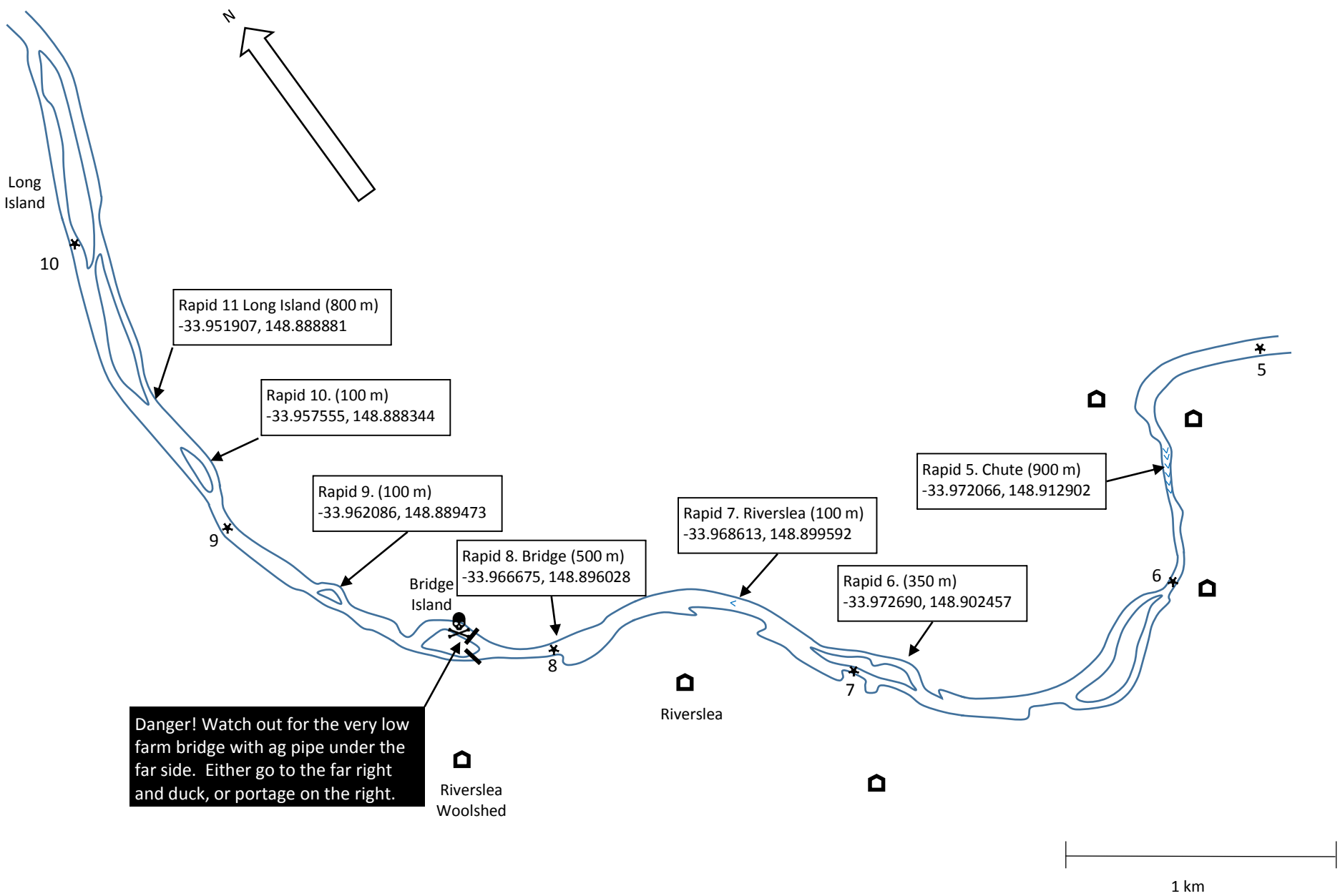
Between Rapid 12 and Darbys Falls Reserve: Flatwater for 2200 m to the bridge over the river at Darbys Falls - an easier exit point without the worry about getting into the correct channel.

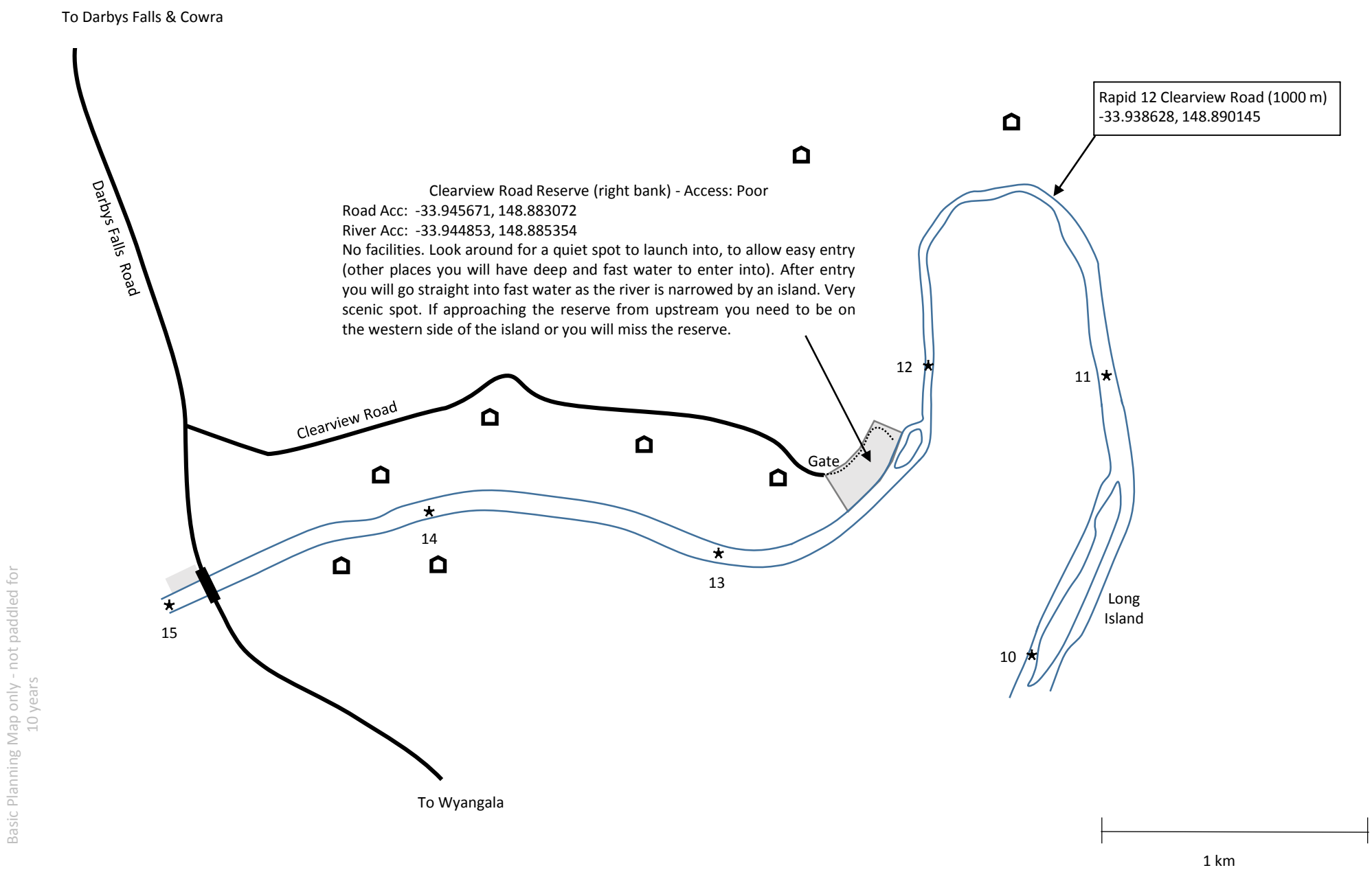


Basic Planning Map only - not paddled for 10 years



Basic Planning Map only - not paddled for 10 years

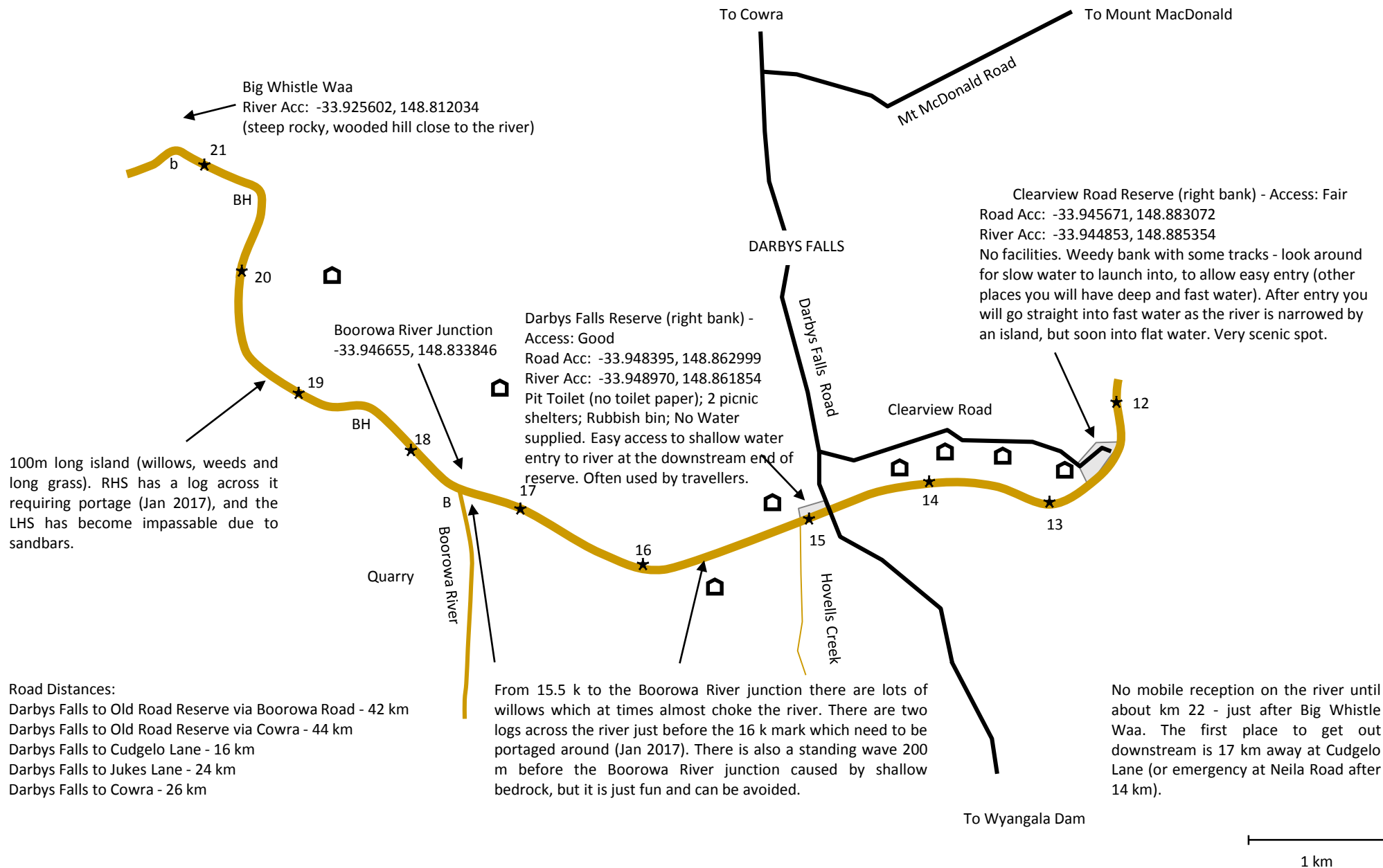




Map 2: Clearview Road (Darbys Falls) to Big Whistle Waa (8.5 km - 2 hour 15 mins)

17 km stretch of river between access points!
No mobile reception until km 22

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Last Paddled January 2017



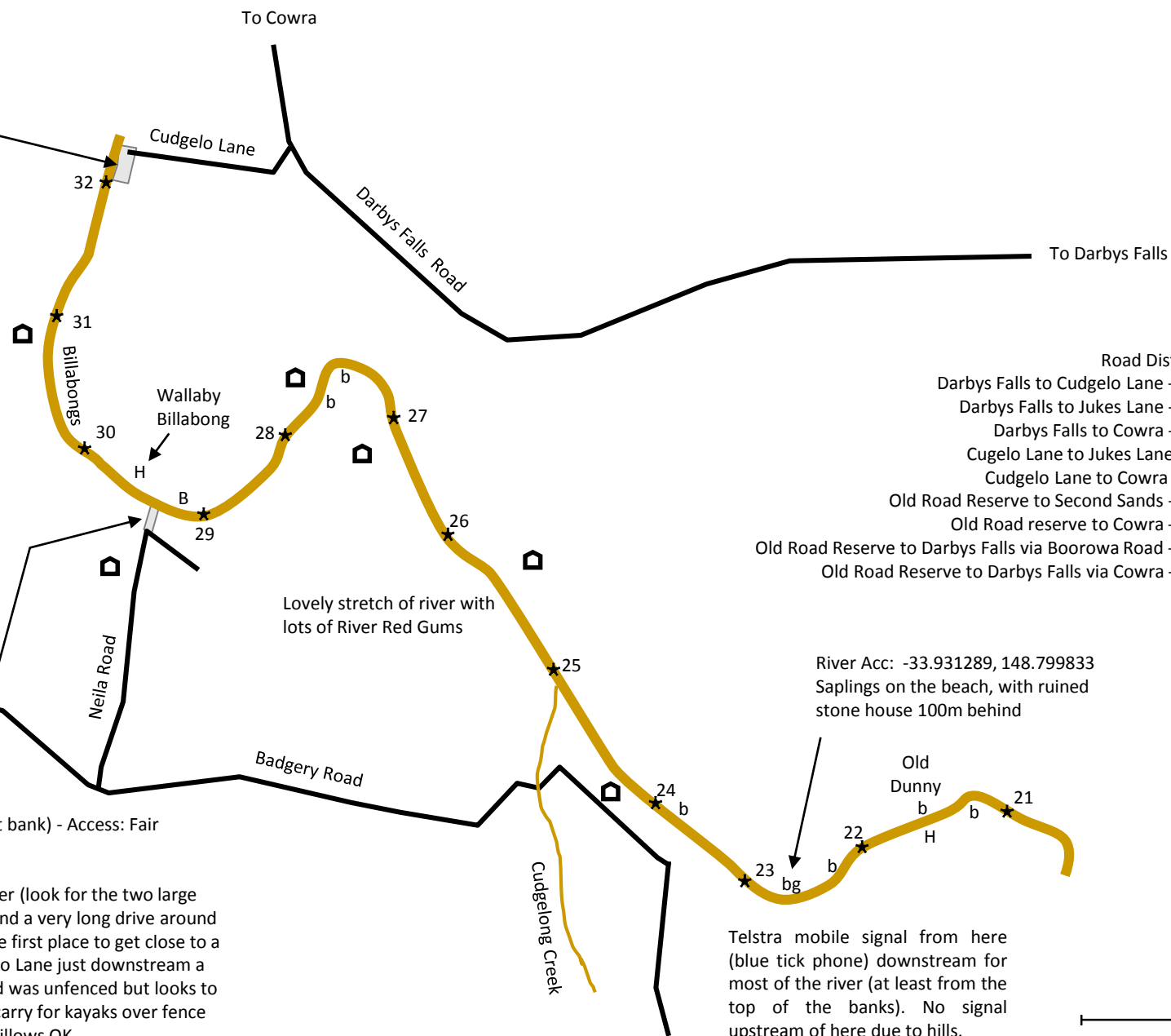
Map 3: Big Whistle Waa to Cudgelo Lane (11 km - 3 hours)

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Cudgelo Lane (right bank) - Access: Fair
Road Acc: -33.886568, 148.763689
River Acc: -33.886530, 148.751786
No facilities (except an old bin that does not get emptied). Steep bank to deep water entry at the most obvious spot, but flatter entry about 30m upstream amongst willows (down a longer weedy bank). Medium difficulty to see from the river. The reserve is three quarters of the way down a 1 km long straight, which points straight at a hill with two tanks on top. The river bank along the straight is well treed but with no trees behind - look for the line of planted gum trees 20m back from river and parallel at the back of the reserve. On the downstream side look for the vehicle track down to the water and the line of deciduous trees that goes perpendicular to the river.

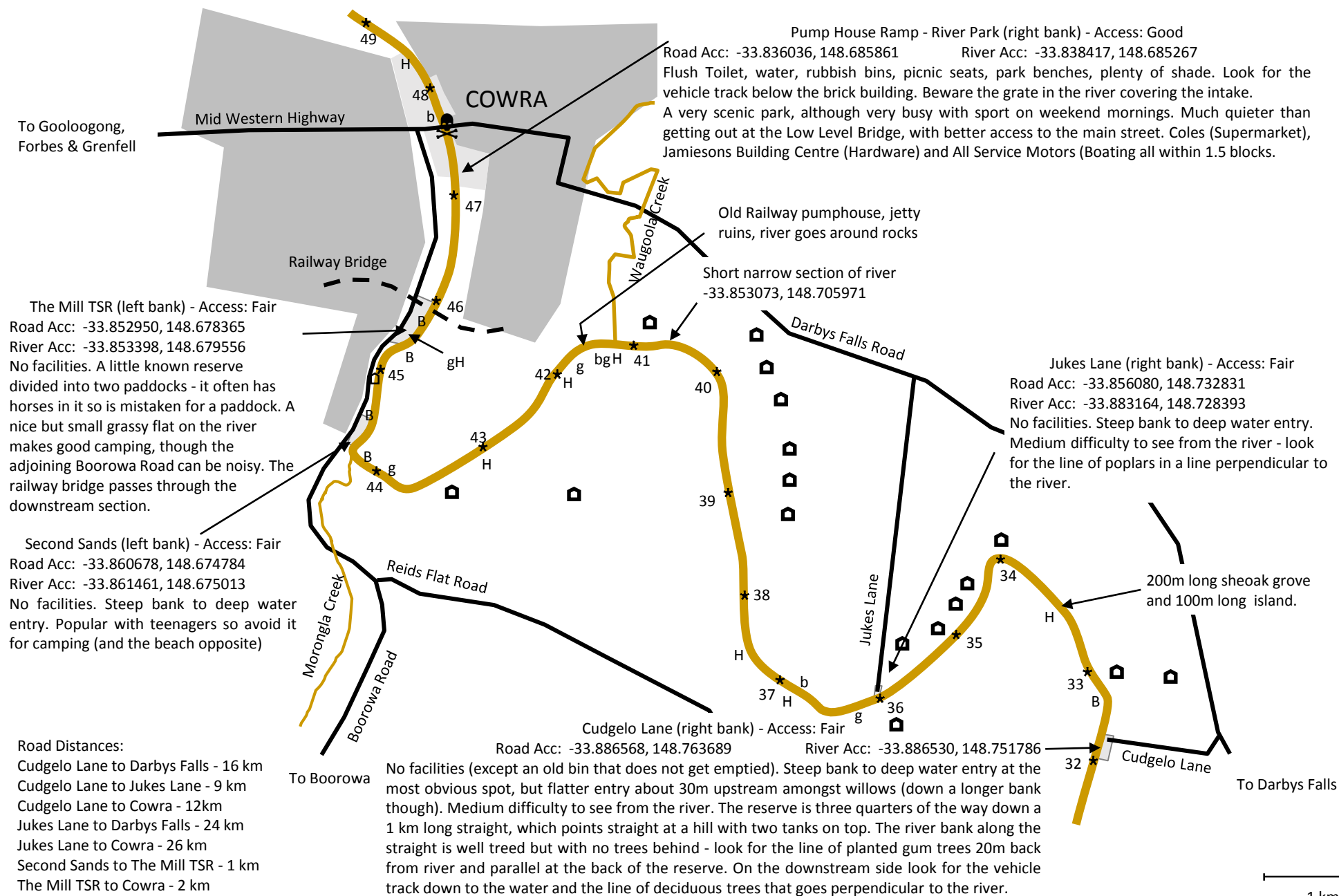
To Reids Flat Road
& Cowra

Neila Road - now private land?? (left bank) - Access: Fair
Road Acc: -33.925173, 148.750738
River Acc: -33.907903, 148.754562
No facilities. Very difficult to see from the river (look for the two large granite boulders in the river just upstream) and a very long drive around by car. Only use this in an emergency (it is the first place to get close to a car downstream of Darbys Falls), with Cudgelo Lane just downstream a better option. This used to be public land and was unfenced but looks to now be part of the paddock next door. 20m carry for kayaks over fence (no barb) from vehicle with entry between willows OK.

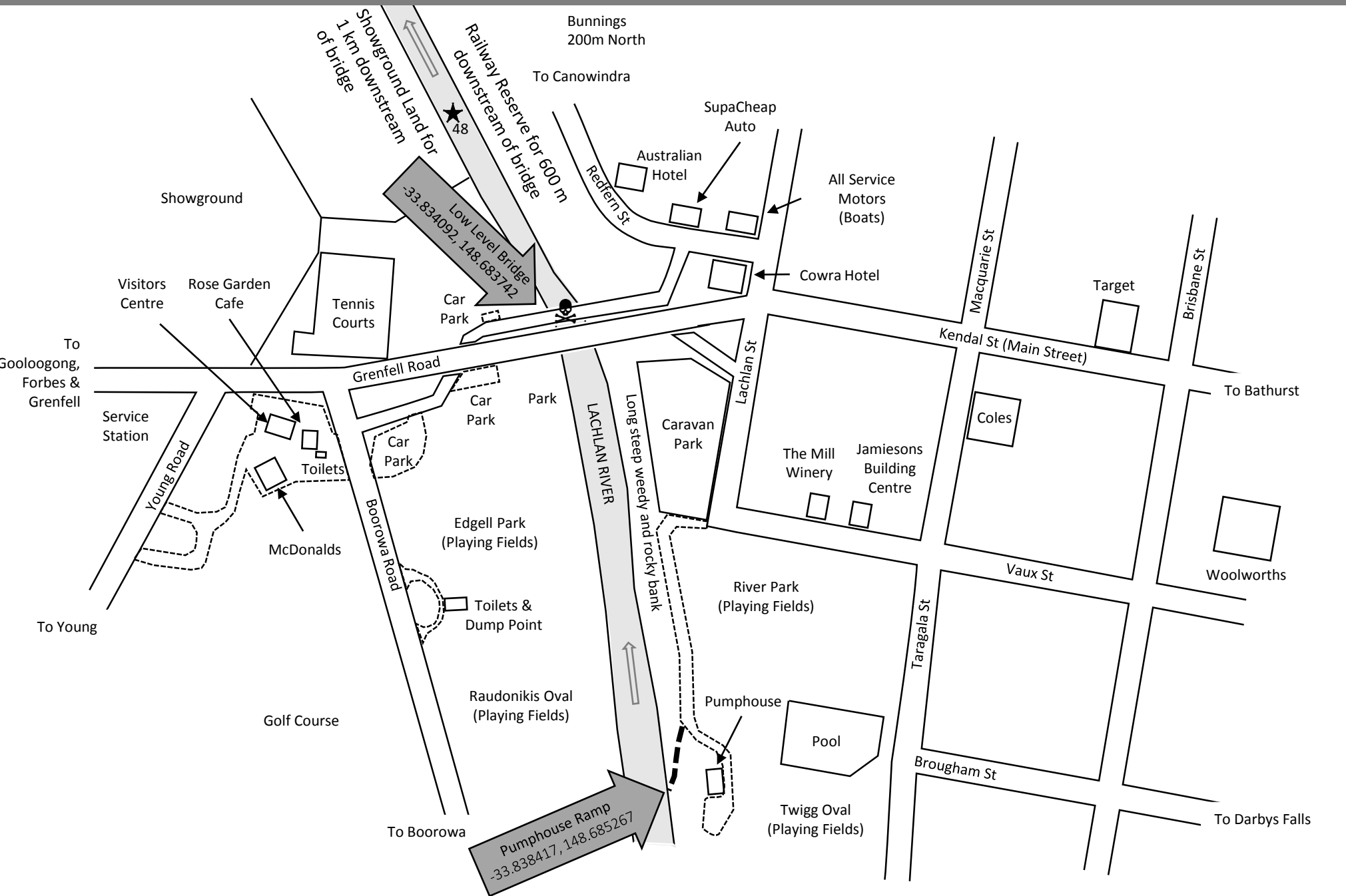


Road Distances:
Darbys Falls to Cudgelo Lane - 16 km
Darbys Falls to Jukes Lane - 24 km
Darbys Falls to Cowra - 26 km
Cugelo Lane to Jukes Lane - 9 km
Cudgelo Lane to Cowra - 12km
Old Road Reserve to Second Sands - 15 km
Old Road reserve to Cowra - 18 km
Old Road Reserve to Darbys Falls via Boorowa Road - 42 km
Old Road Reserve to Darbys Falls via Cowra - 44 km

1 km

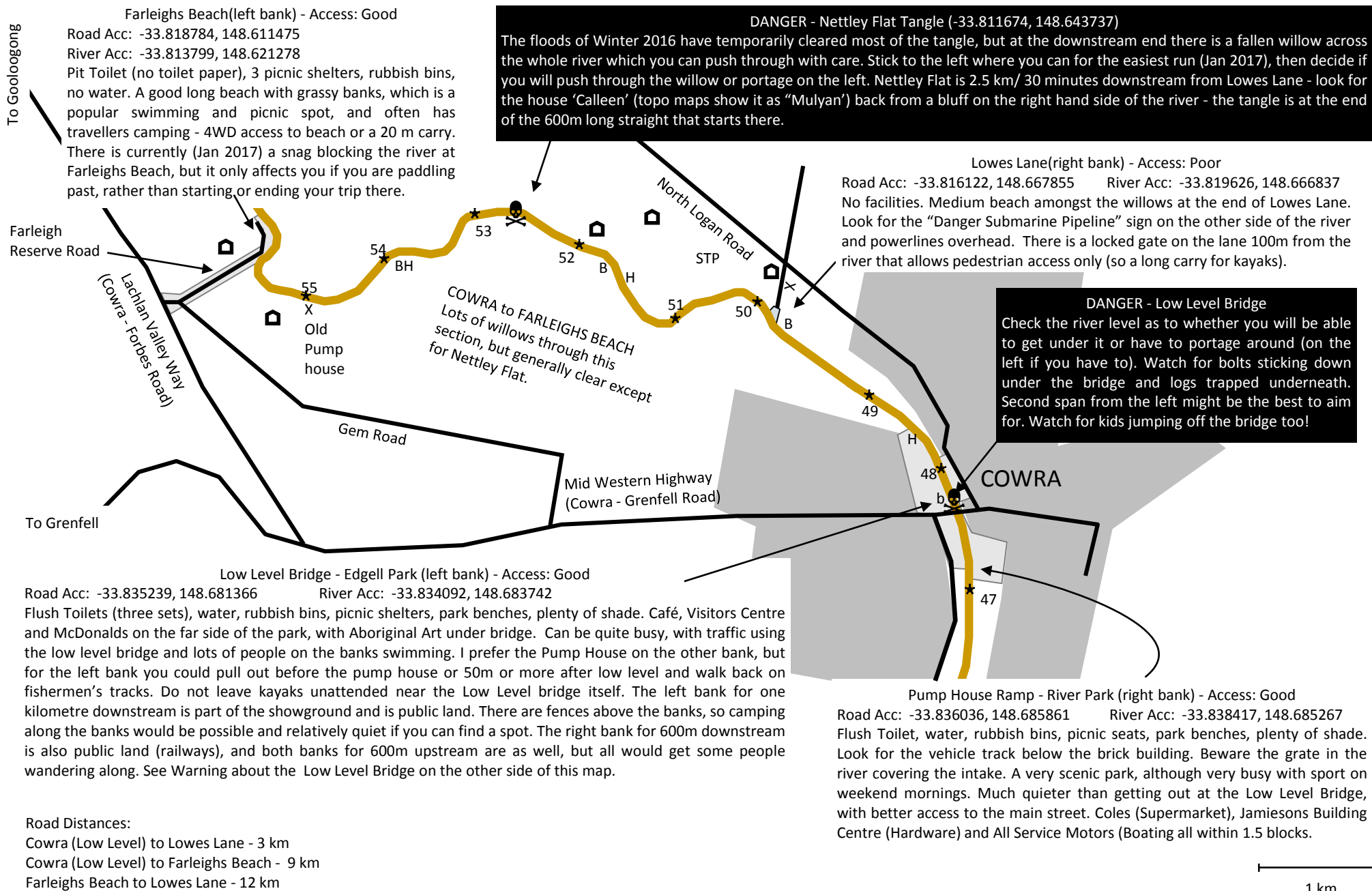


Map 4a: Cowra - Detailed Map

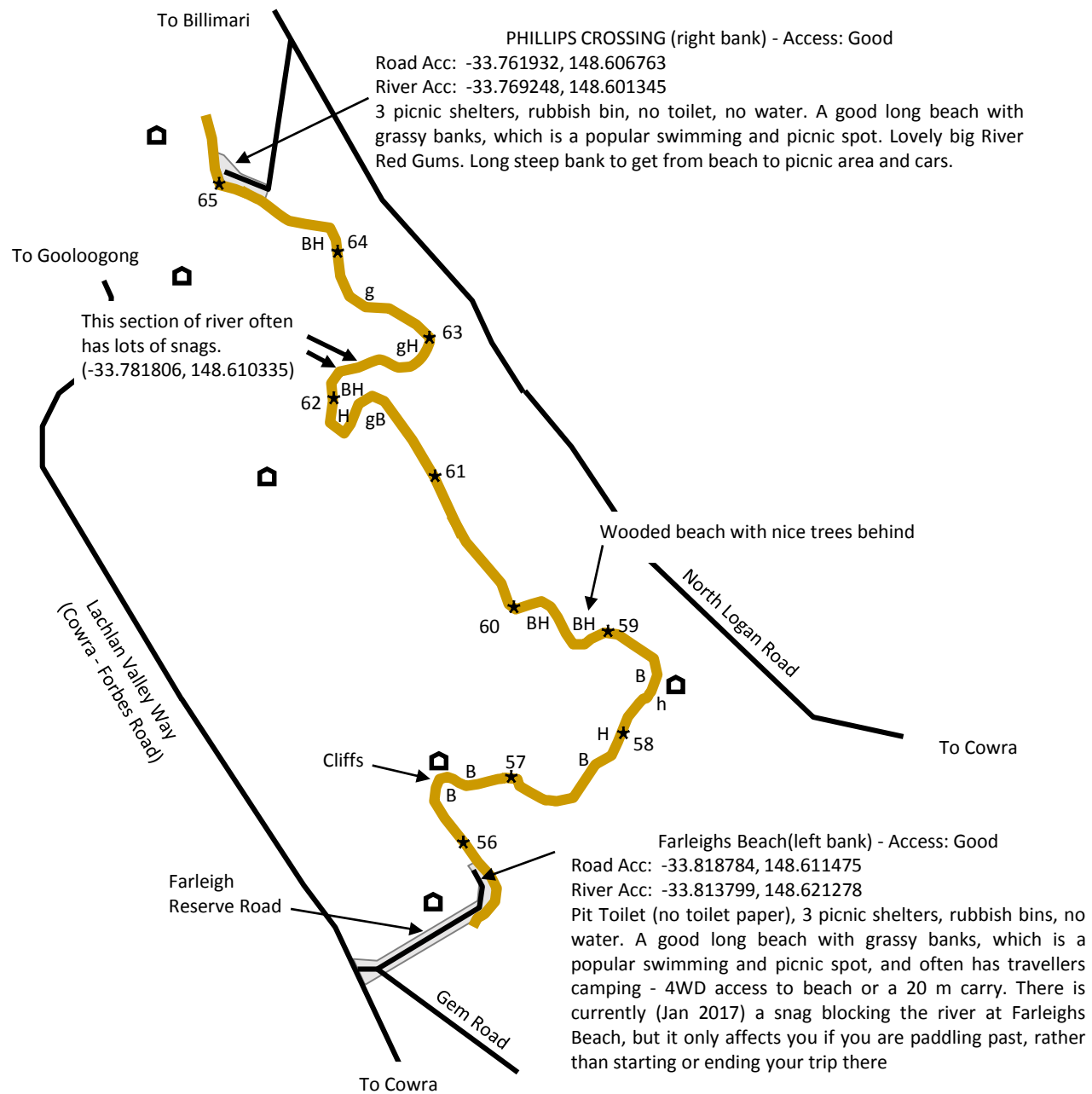


Map 5: Cowra to Farleighs Beach (8 km - 2 hours)

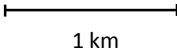
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Map 6: Farleighs Beach to Phillips Crossing (8.5 km - 2.5 hours)



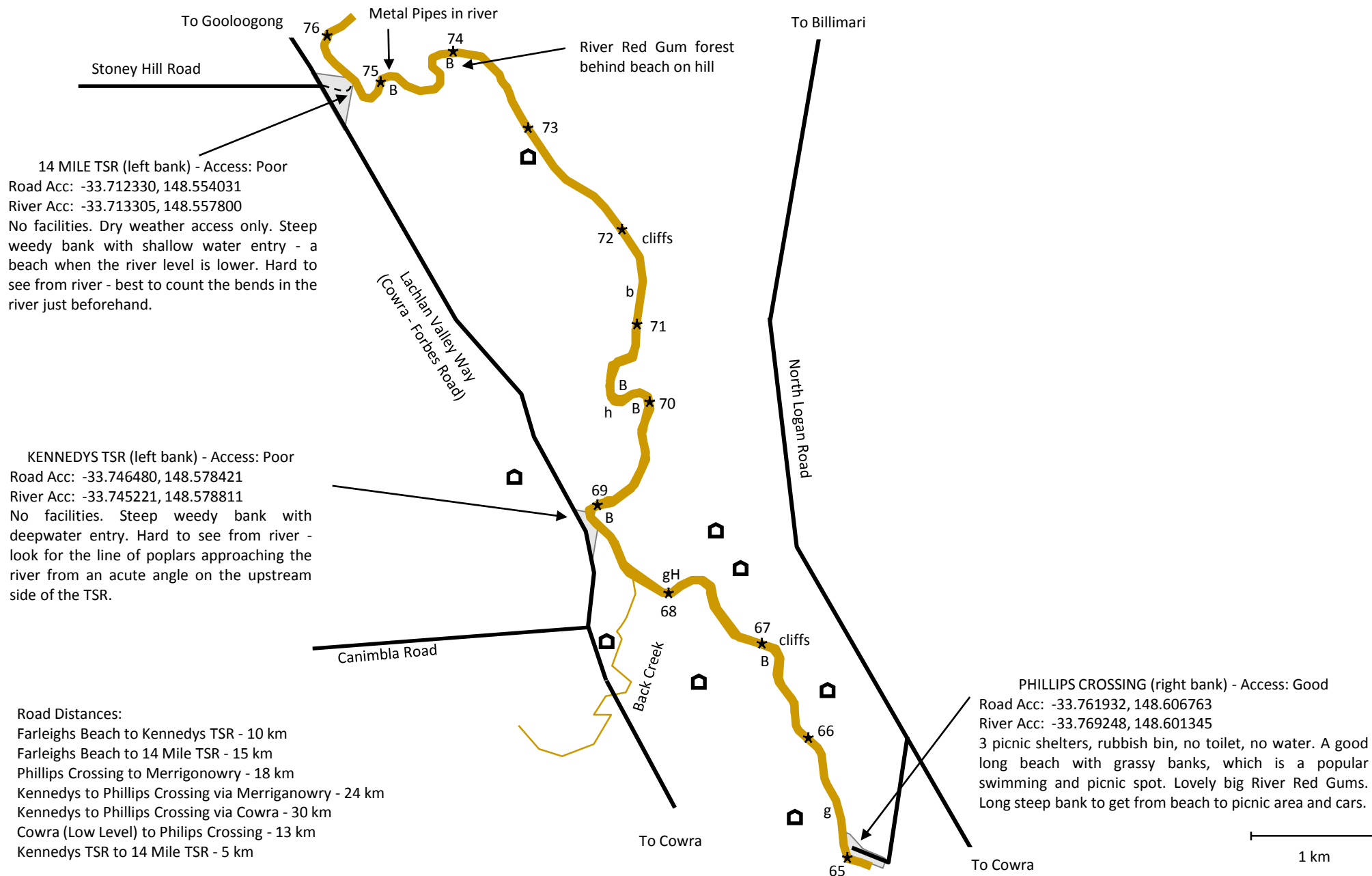
- Road Distances:
- Farleighs Beach to Kennedys TSR - 10 km
 - Farleighs Beach to 14 Mile TSR - 15 km
 - Cowra (Low Level) to Farleighs Beach - 9 km
 - Farleighs Beach to Lowes Lane - 12 km
 - Kennedys to Phillips Crossing via Merriganowry - 24 km
 - Farleighs Beach to Phillips Crossing via Cowra - 22 km
 - Cowra (Low Level) to Philips Crossing - 13 km



Map 7: Phillips Crossing to Kennedys TSR (4 km - 1 hour)

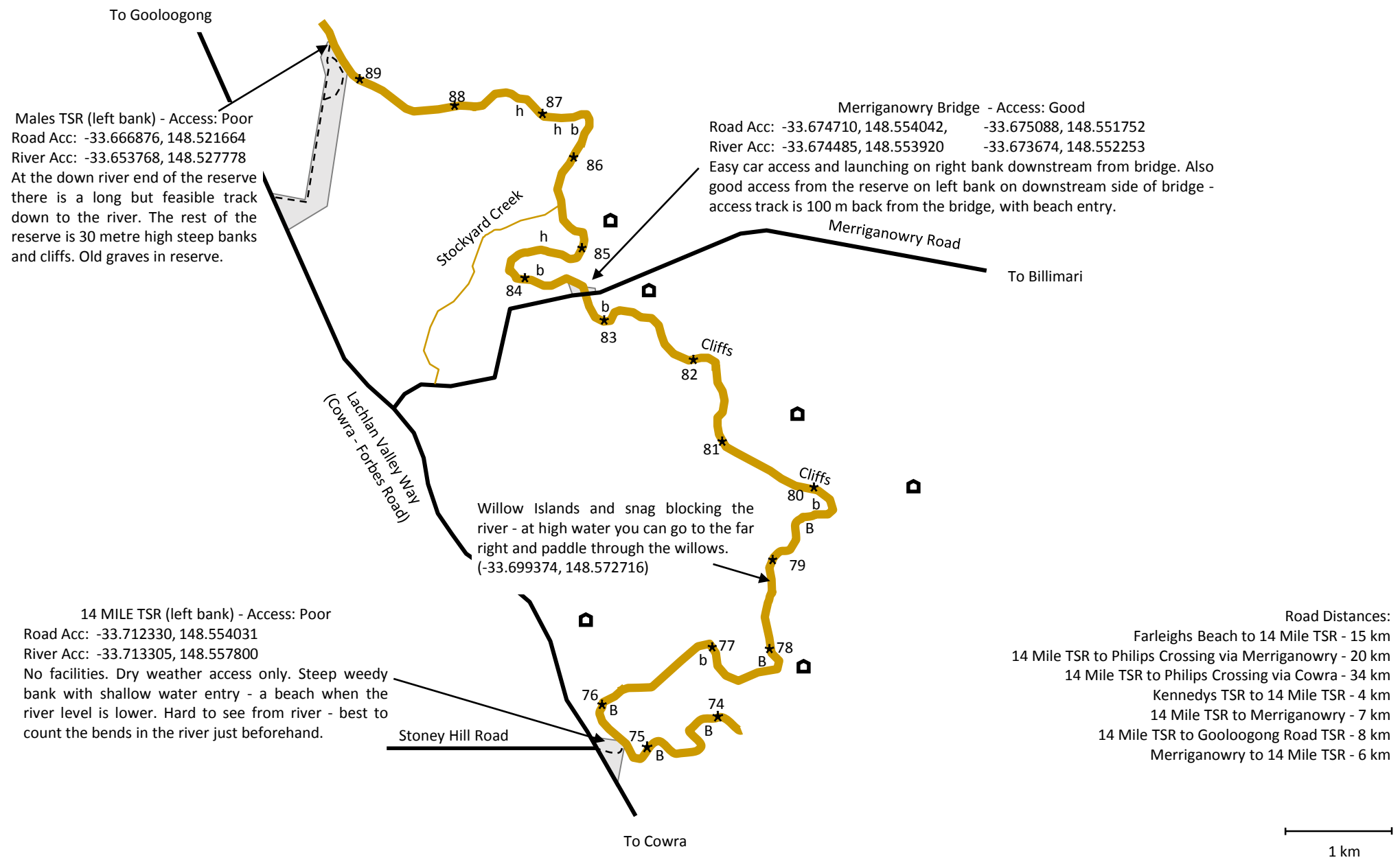
Kennedys TSR to 14 Mile TSR (6.7 km - 1hr 45 min)

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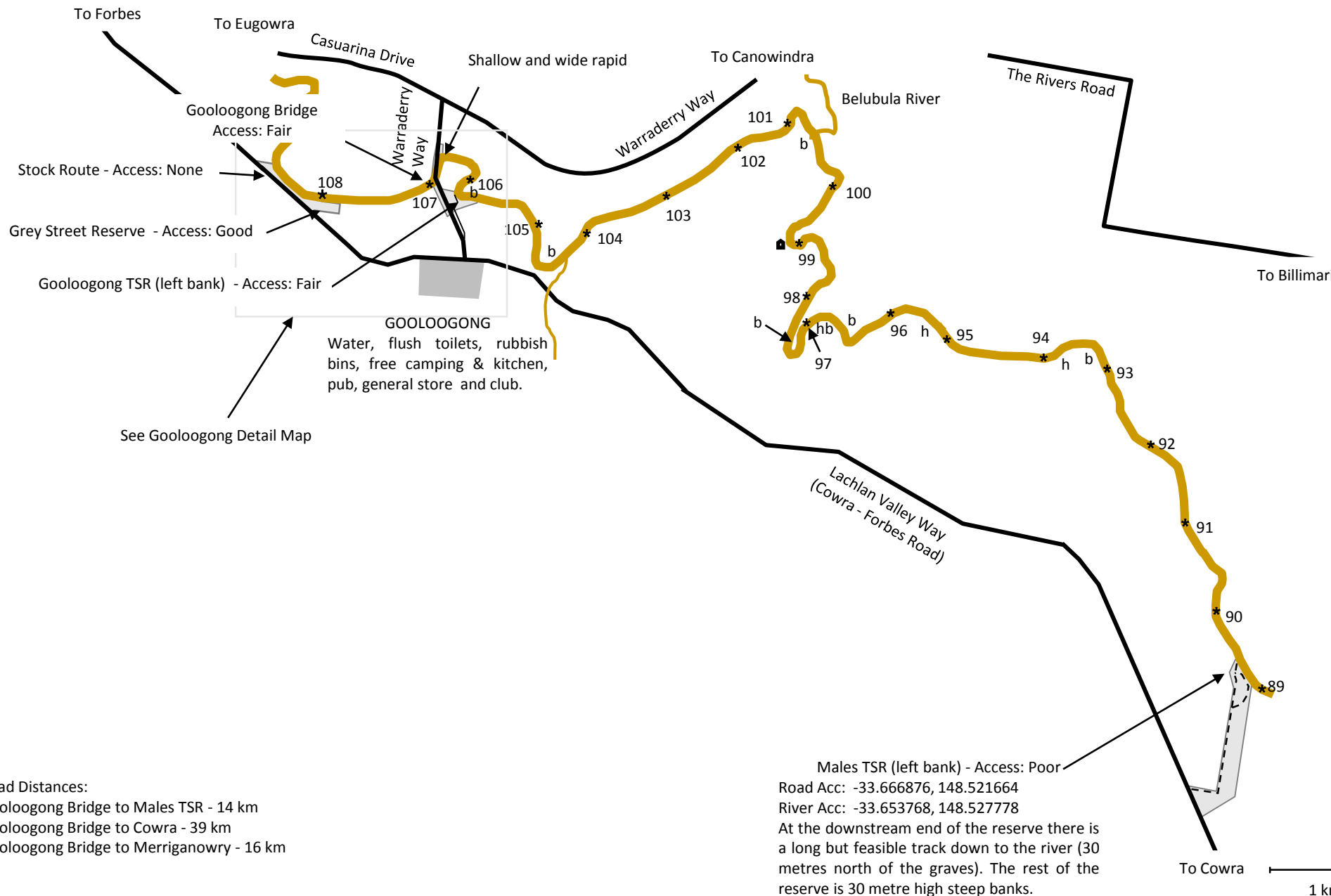
Map 8: 14 Mile TSR to Merriganowry (8 km - 2 hours)
Merriganowry to Males TSR (5.5 km - 1hr 30 min)

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Map 9: Males TSR to Gooloogong (17.5 km - 4hr 30 min)

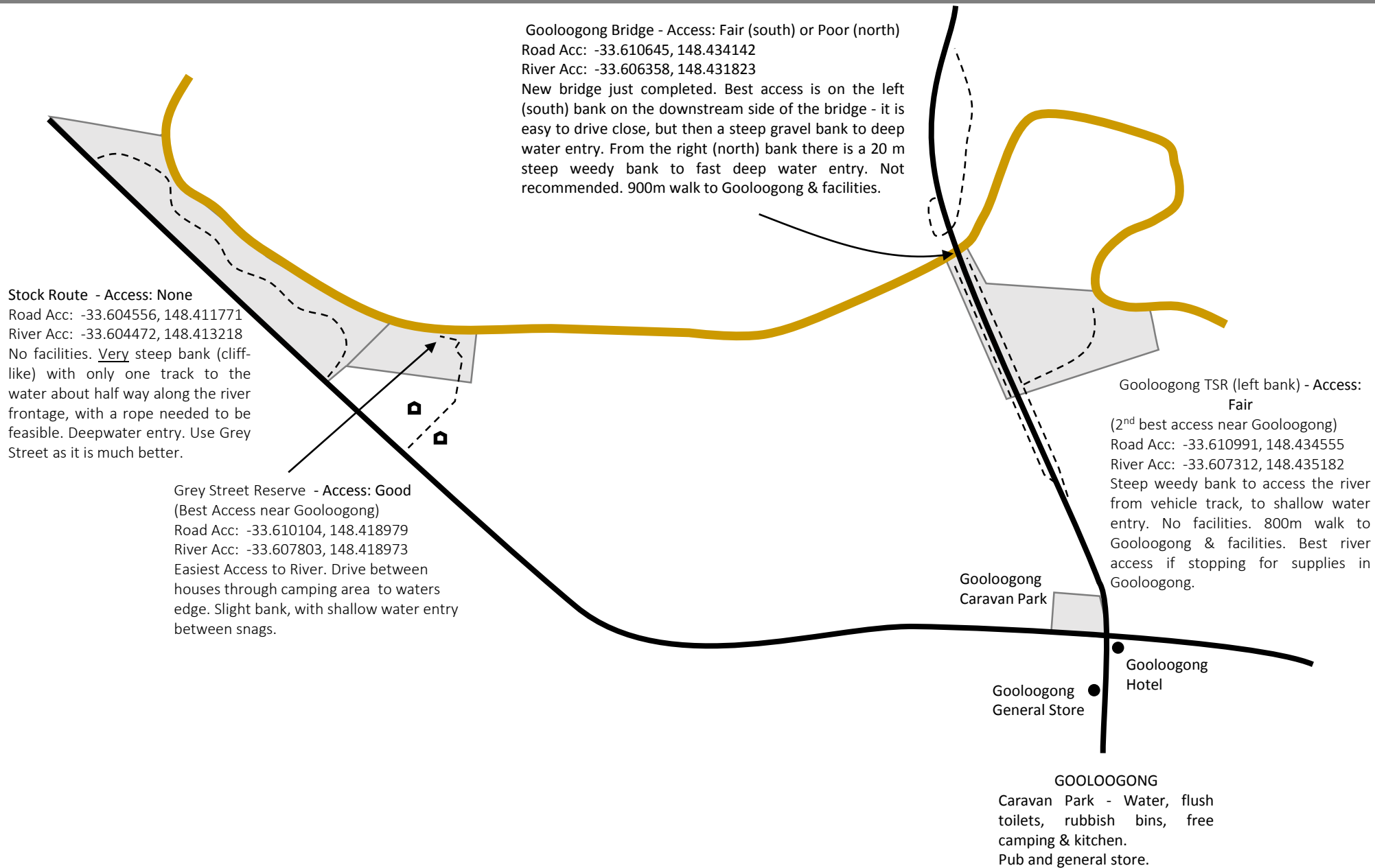
17 km stretch of river between access points!

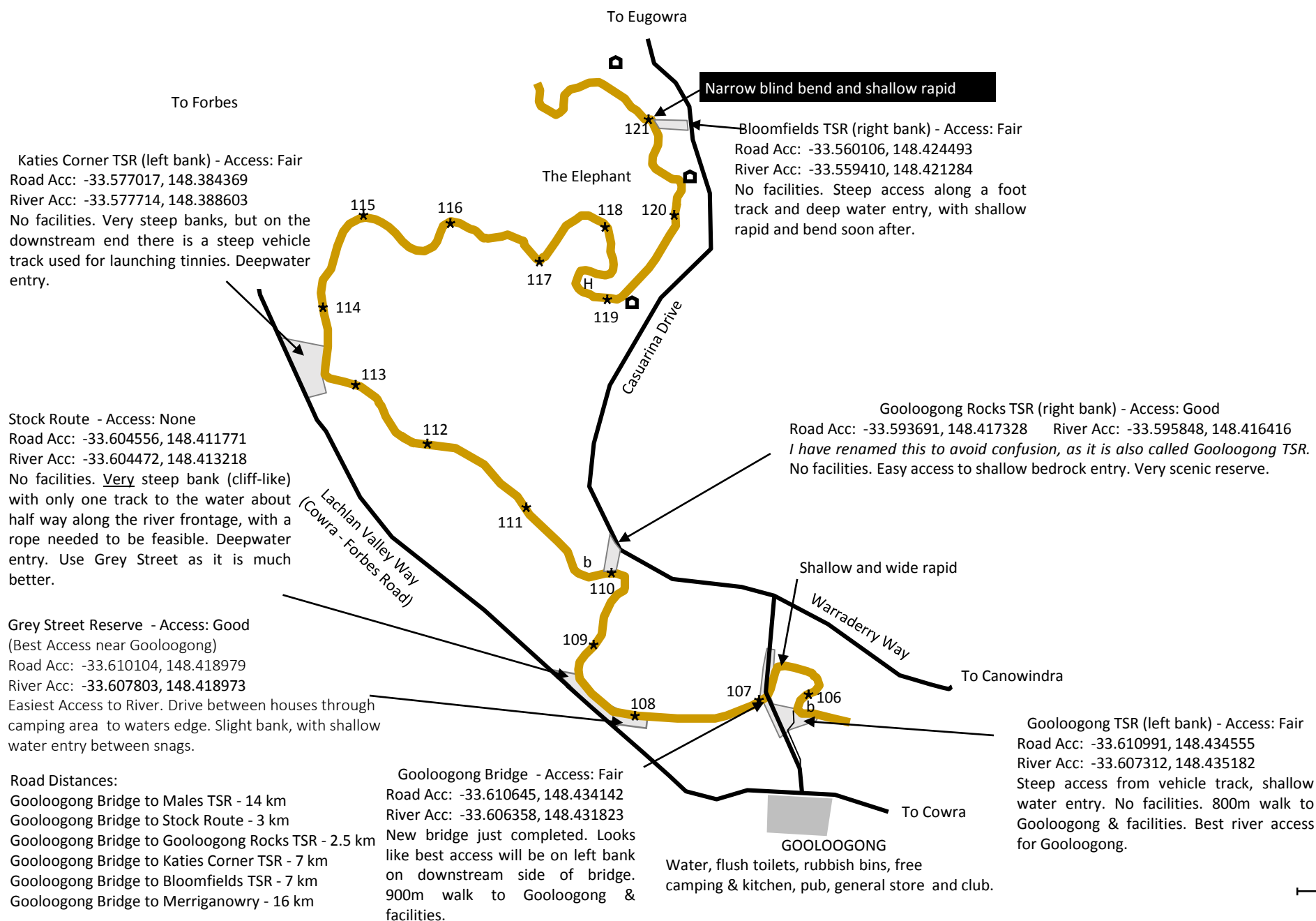


Road Distances:
Gooloogong Bridge to Males TSR - 14 km
Gooloogong Bridge to Cowra - 39 km
Gooloogong Bridge to Merriganowry - 16 km

Males TSR (left bank) - Access: Poor
Road Acc: -33.666876, 148.521664
River Acc: -33.653768, 148.527778
At the downstream end of the reserve there is a long but feasible track down to the river (30 metres north of the graves). The rest of the reserve is 30 metre high steep banks.

1 km

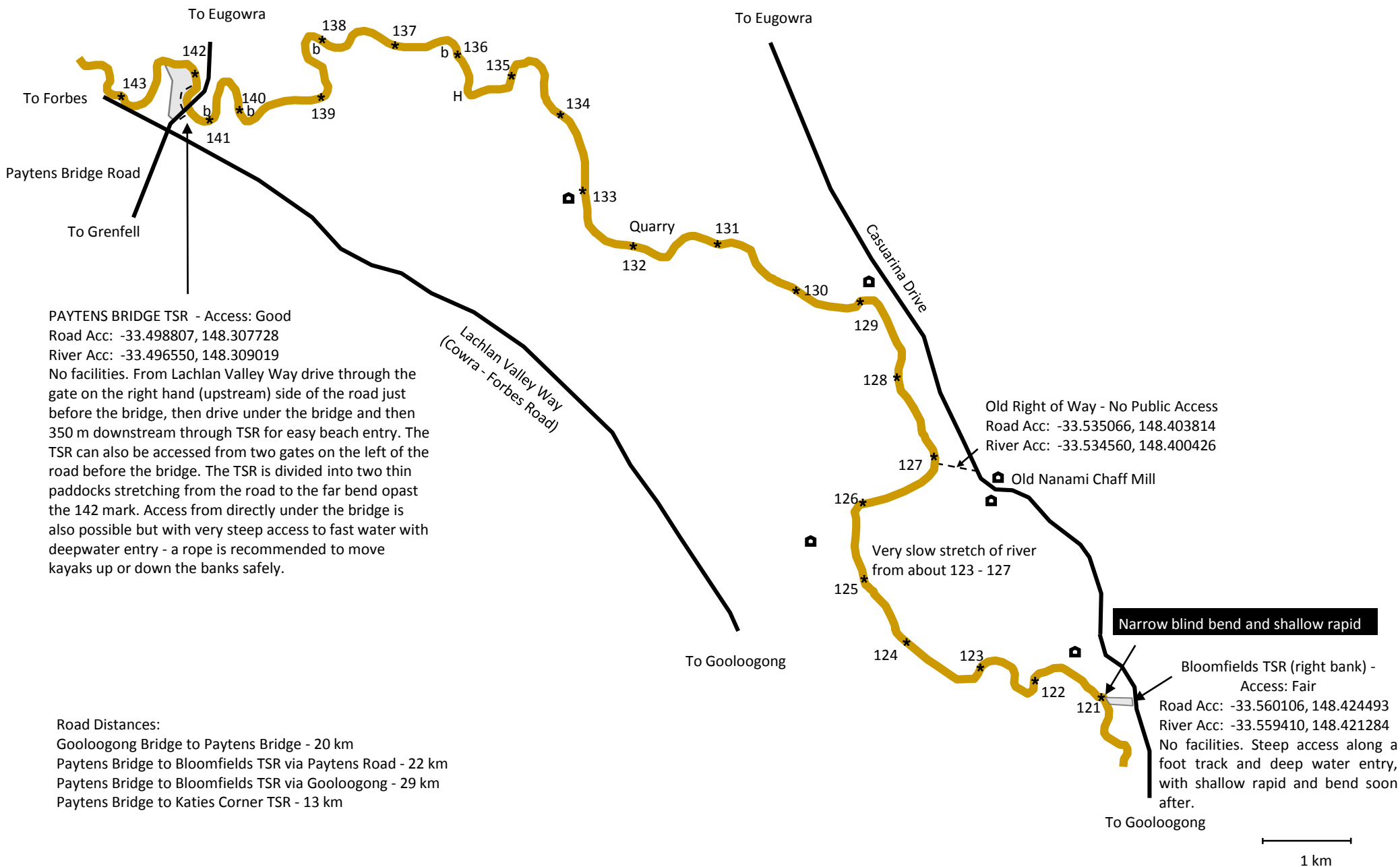


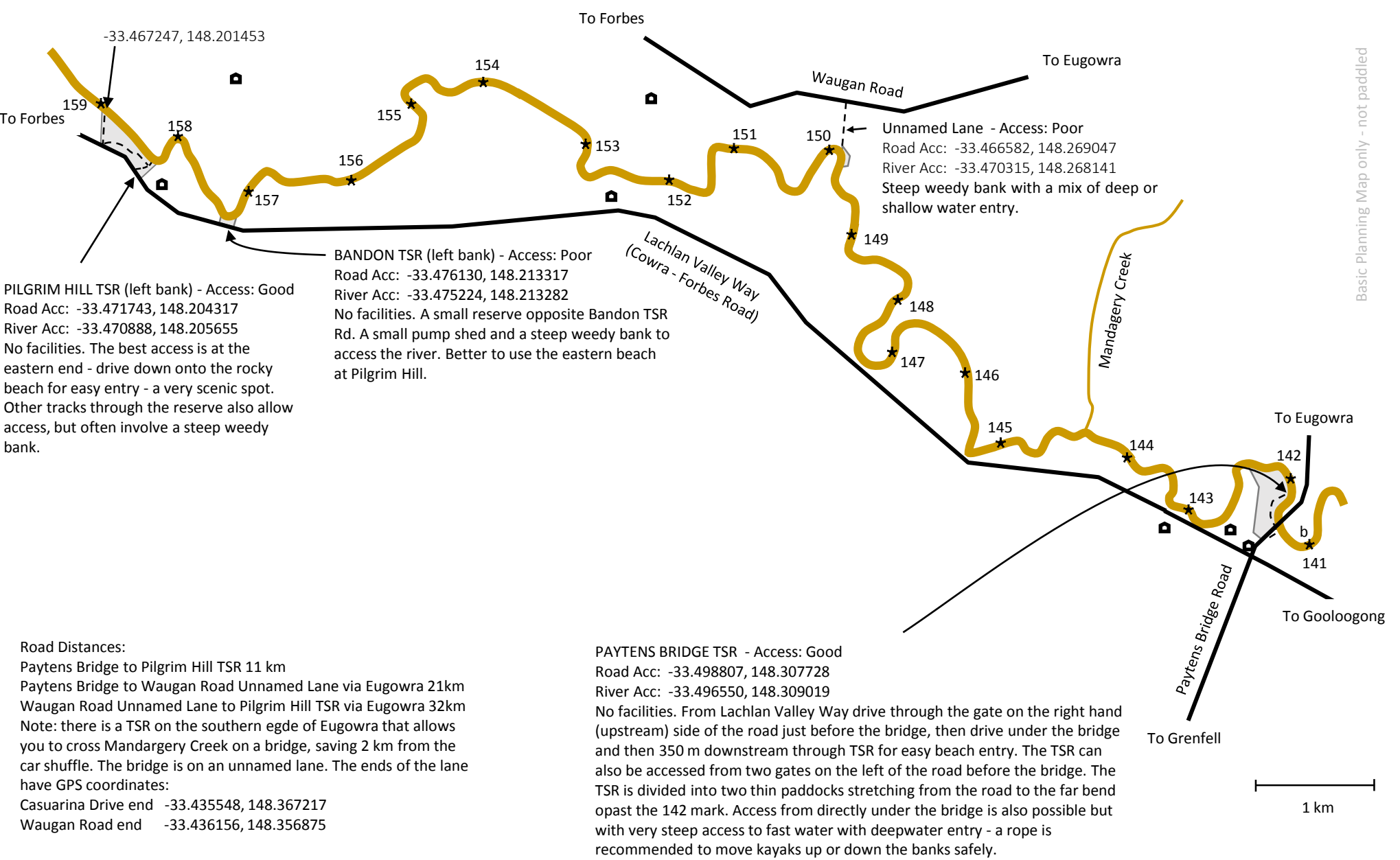


Map 11: Bloomfields TSR to Paytens Bridge (21 km - 6 hours)

20 km stretch of river between access points!

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Basic Planning Map only - not paddled

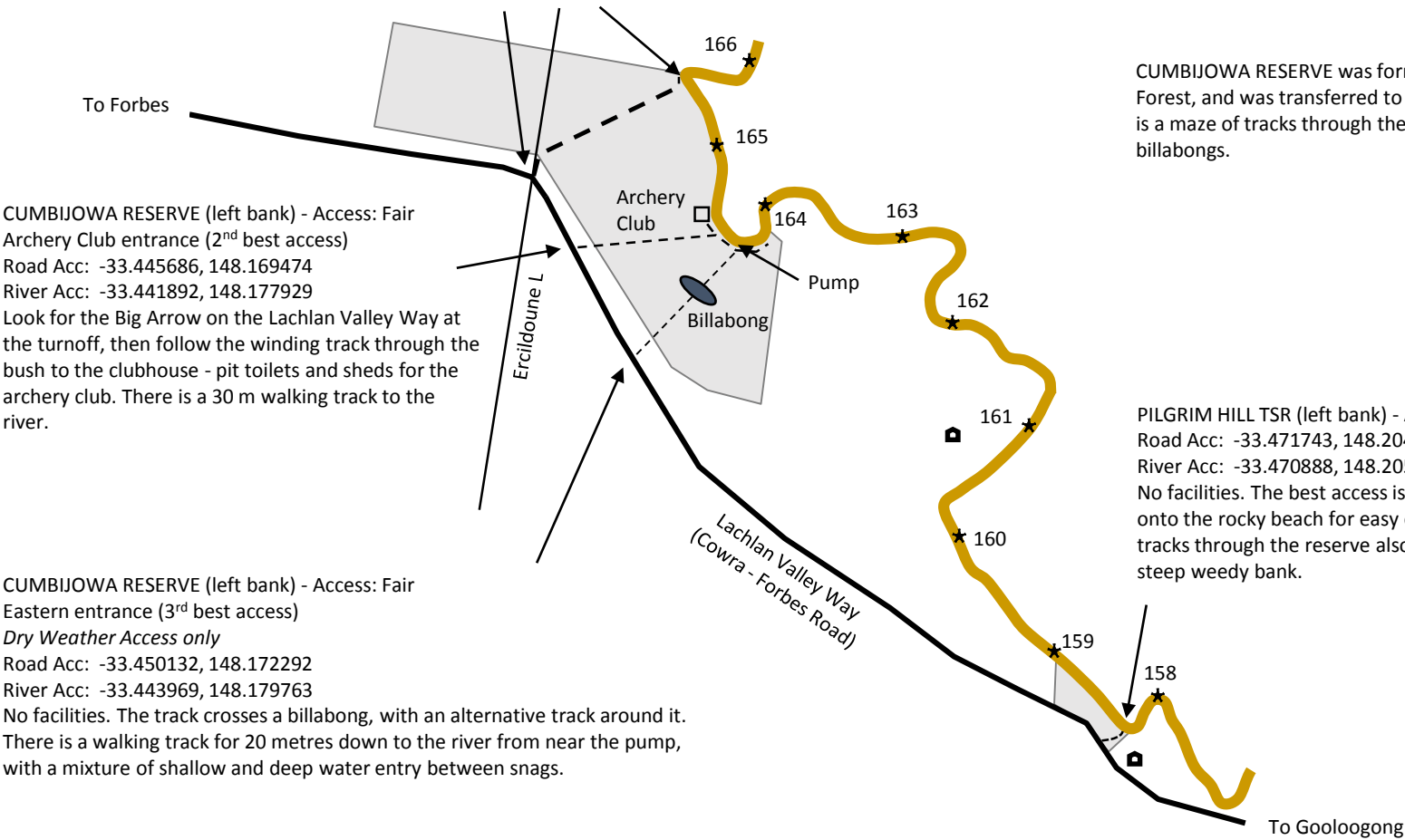
CUMBIJOWA RESERVE (left bank) - Access: Good
Ercildoune Lane entrance - (Best access) - easiest access to the river, and easiest navigation from Lachlan Valley Way through reserve.
Road Acc: -33.440504, 148.165688 River Acc: -33.435179, 148.176062
No facilities. After 200 m from Lachlan Valley Way on Ercildoune Lane North you enter the reserve - turn hard right and follow the irrigation channel for 1 km in a straight line to the river, then turn left for 70 m for a grassy park with easy access to shallow water entry to the river on a scenic bend.

CUMBIJOWA RESERVE (left bank) - Access: Fair
Archery Club entrance (2nd best access)
Road Acc: -33.445686, 148.169474
River Acc: -33.441892, 148.177929
Look for the Big Arrow on the Lachlan Valley Way at the turnoff, then follow the winding track through the bush to the clubhouse - pit toilets and sheds for the archery club. There is a 30 m walking track to the river.

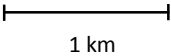
CUMBIJOWA RESERVE (left bank) - Access: Fair
Eastern entrance (3rd best access)
Dry Weather Access only
Road Acc: -33.450132, 148.172292
River Acc: -33.443969, 148.179763
No facilities. The track crosses a billabong, with an alternative track around it. There is a walking track for 20 metres down to the river from near the pump, with a mixture of shallow and deep water entry between snags.

CUMBIJOWA RESERVE was formerly Cumbijowa State Forest, and was transferred to Crown Lands in 2011. There is a maze of tracks through the river red gums and many billabongs.

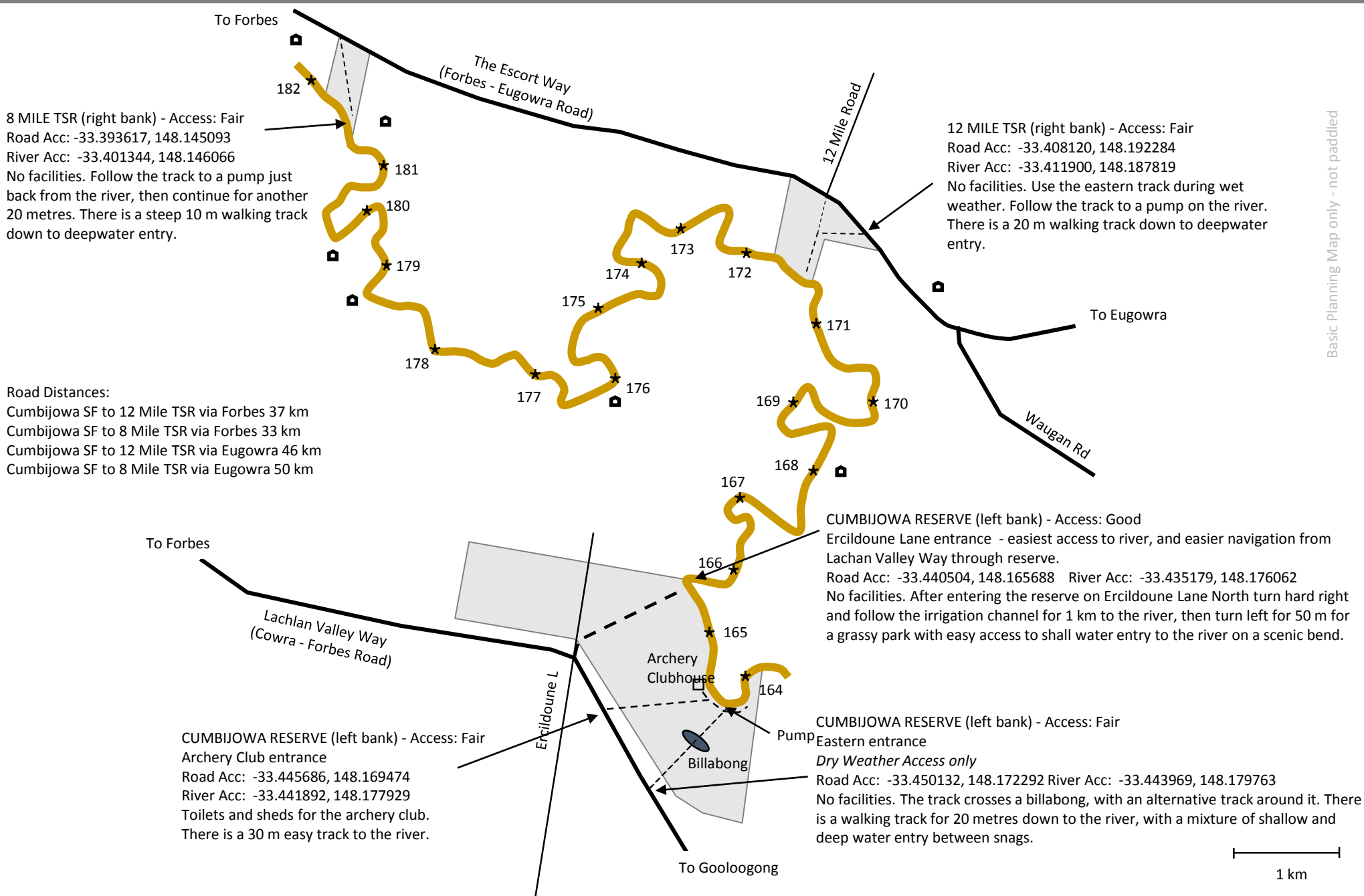
PILGRIM HILL TSR (left bank) - Access: Good
Road Acc: -33.471743, 148.204317
River Acc: -33.470888, 148.205655
No facilities. The best access is at the eastern end - drive down onto the rocky beach for easy entry - a very scenic spot. Other tracks through the reserve also allow access, but often involve a steep weedy bank.



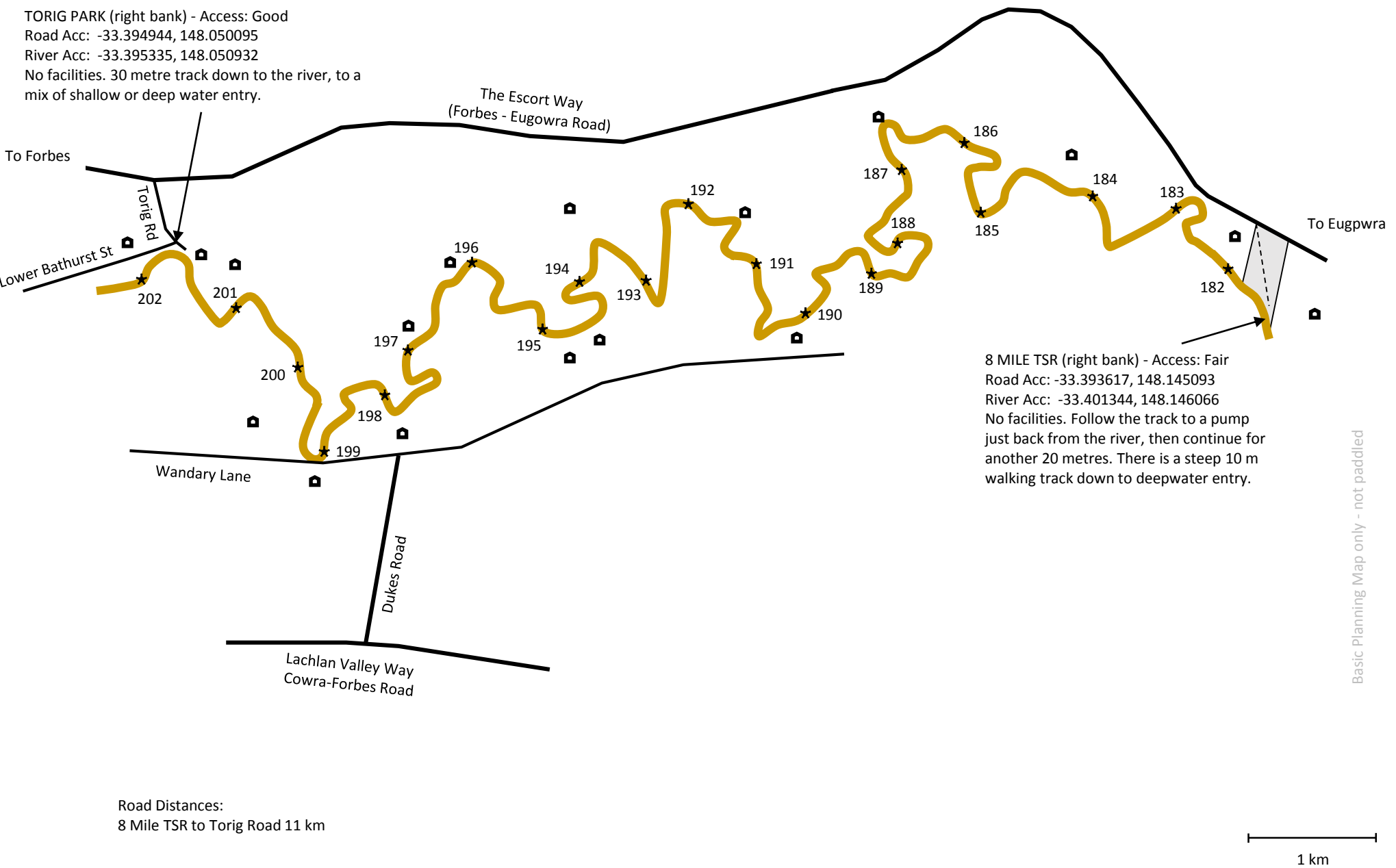
Road Distances:
Pilgrim Hill TSR to Cumbijowa SF Ercildoune Lane Access 7 km
Pilgrim Hill TSR to Cumbijowa SF Archery Club 6 km
Pilgrim Hill TSR to Cumbijowa SF Eastern Access 5 km

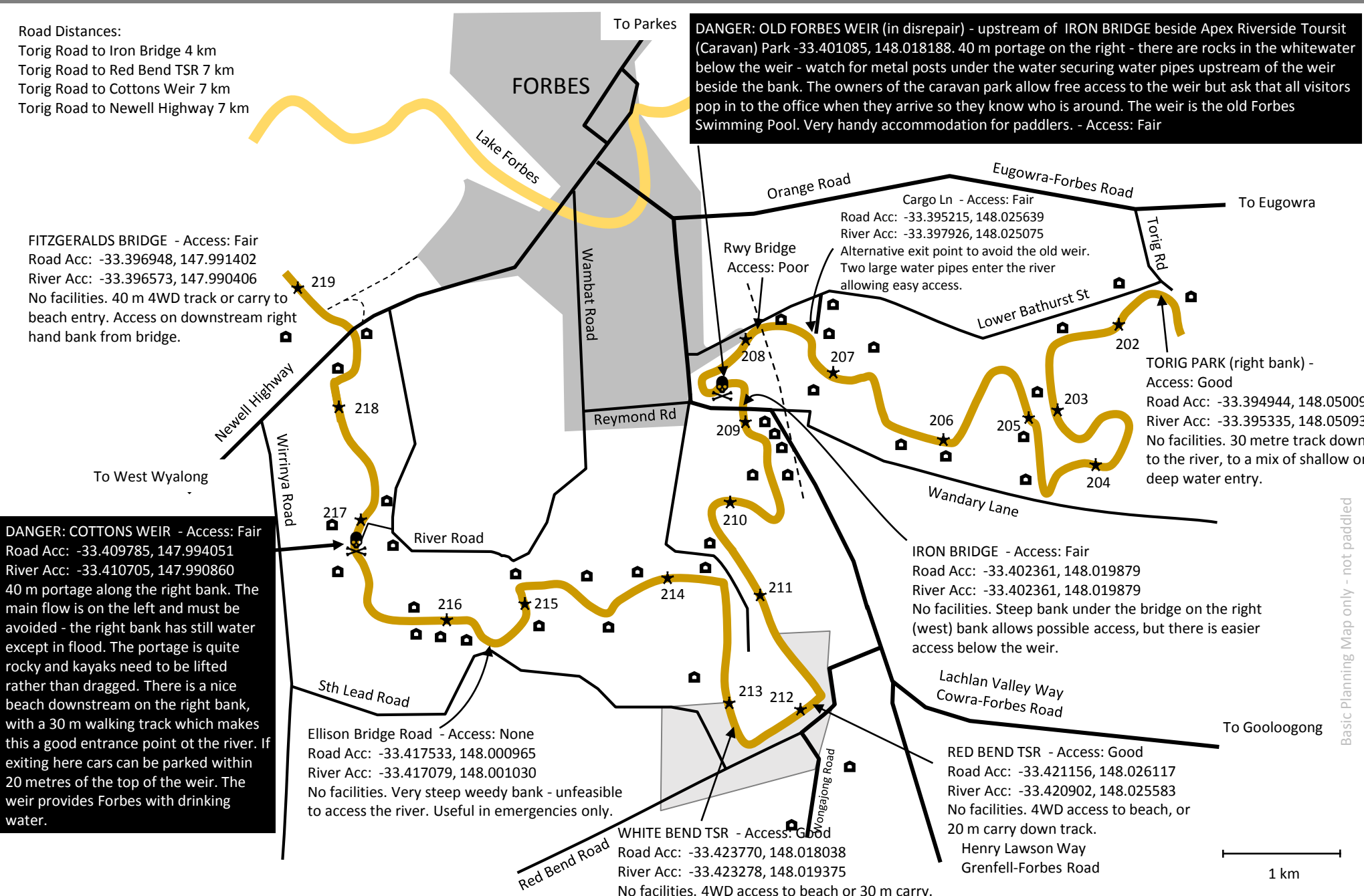


Map 14: Cumbijowa Reserve to 8 Mile TSR (17 km - 5 hours)



Basic Planning Map only - not paddled





Basic Planning Map only - not paddled