

Muddy boots, golden light, and kids who won't stop grinning.

9 easy day trips from Berowra and Brooklyn that your family will actually remember!

With bonus printable scavenger hunt!

Here's something I've noticed after photographing hundreds of families in the great outdoors: the best moments never happen on cue. They happen when a four-year-old finds a lizard, when someone slips and everyone laughs too hard, when the light falls and creates the most beautiful soft colours.

Those moments are out there, so close to your front door. You don't need a big trip or a perfect plan. You need **snacks**, **sensible shoes**, and a **willingness** to let the afternoon run long.

"The best family memories rarely happen at theme parks. They happen when you stop the car, ditch the plan, and let the kids lead you somewhere muddy."

Winter is the best time for this. The air is clean and cold, the tracks are quiet, and the low winter sun slants sideways through the bush all day long instead of blasting down from overhead. Mornings often start misty over the creeks and mangroves, burning off to those crisp, still, blue-sky days the Hawkesbury is known for.

These 9 spots are some of my favourites – ones I've photographed at and keep coming back to.



1. Kangaroo Point Boardwalk, Brooklyn

2 km return · Easy · All ages

Pram-friendly · Parking at Tom Richmond Oval · [Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

Opened in 2025, this 1km elevated boardwalk is almost entirely flat and 3m wide – perfect for prams, toddlers, and anyone who just wants an easy, beautiful walk. It winds through mangroves and saltmarsh right on the Hawkesbury, with river views the whole way. There's even a hidden Aboriginal carving near the bridge end worth seeking out. From Kangaroo Point you can continue the shared path 3km into Brooklyn village and catch the ferry to Dangar Island for more playground time.

Estuary Kiosk · Wed–Sun 7am–2pm

1420 Pacific Hwy, Kangaroo Point

Sit on the viewing platform with Hawkesbury River and bridge views while the kids run on the grass. Casual kiosk menu, great coffee, limited food options.

[Map ↗](#) | [Menu ↗](#)



2. Parsley Bay to McKell Park loop

~1.5 km loop · Easy · Ages 2+

Pram-friendly (if you skip the stairs to McKell Park) · Timed parking at Parsley Bay · [Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

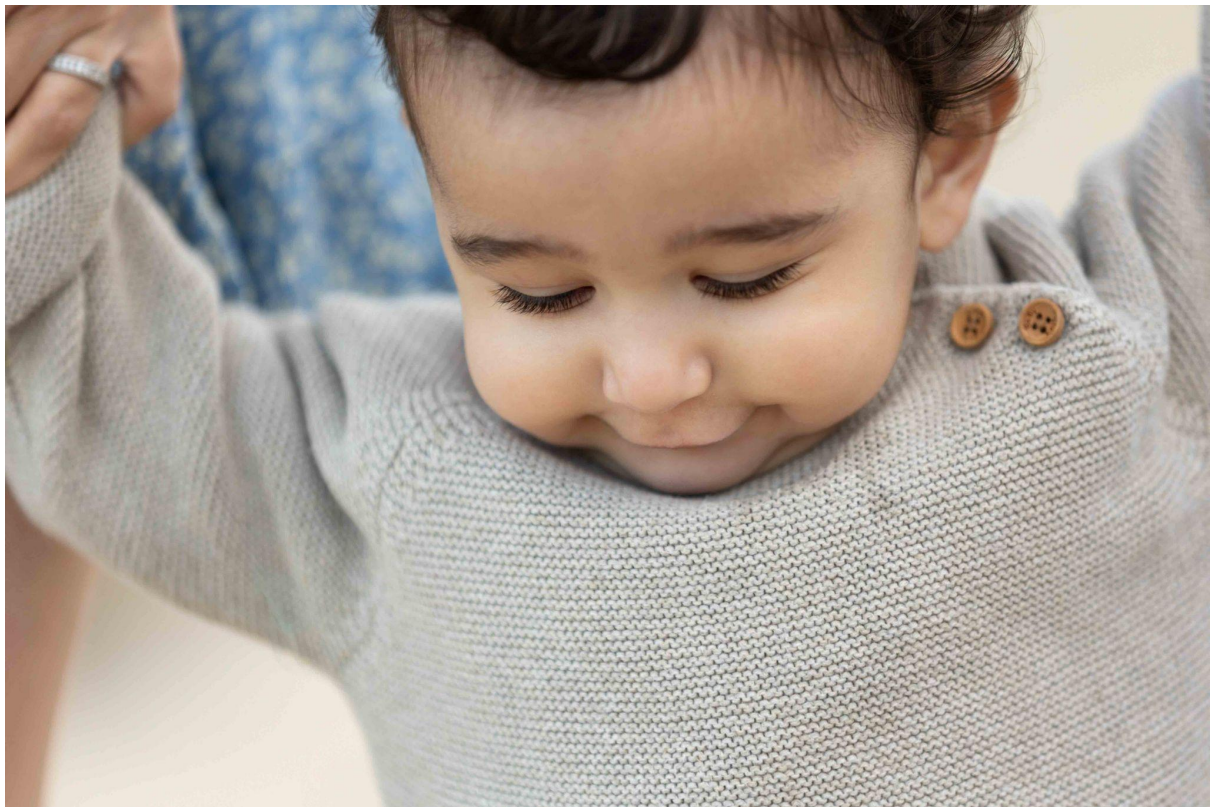
Brooklyn's best-kept secret for little legs. Walk the shoreline path from Parsley Bay, and up the stairs to McKell Park's sweeping harbour views, then wind back down to Brooklyn's Corner or the Marina for a refreshing drink. Winter light on the water here is something else. There is also a playground by the water to have some fun.

King Tide Cafe King Tide: daily 8am–3pm

Shop 14, 9 Dangar Rd (Hawkesbury River Marina)

Perfect post-walk stop — grab a coffee while the kids watch the boats. King Tide sits right on the marina jetty with Hawkesbury River views, seafood, and a something-for-everyone menu. Dogs welcome on a lead.

[Map ↗](#) | [Menu ↗](#)



3. Bobbin Head Mangrove Boardwalk, Ku-ring-gai Chase

~1.5 km return · Easy · All ages

Pram-friendly · Parking at Bobbin Head picnic area · [Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

One of the most rewarding short walks in the area, and surprisingly overlooked. Starting from the southern end of the Bobbin Head picnic area, the path crosses a bridge over Cockle Creek with lovely water views before descending onto the boardwalk through dense mangroves. Information signs explain what's living beneath you – crabs, small fish, the whole ecosystem – which keeps curious four-year-olds genuinely engaged. Total elevation change is almost nothing, making it an easy win on little legs.

Bobbin Head suits every age group – the flat paths around the picnic area work for prams and toddlers, while longer loops up to Apple Tree Bay give older kids a proper workout. Paddle boats for hire on weekends; a fenced playground; and Cowan Creek to swim in when the weather allows. The still winter water throws back mirror-sharp reflections of the bush, and on a clear day the low sun makes the whole creek glow gold by mid-afternoon – the kind of thing you want framed on your wall.

Bobbin Inn Café · Mon, Wed–Fri 10am–3:30pm · Sat–Sun 9:30am–4pm · Closed Tues
Bobbin Head, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

Great kids' menu, ice cream, hot chips, full meals. Paddle boats for hire on weekends. Wheelchair accessible ramps.

[Map ↗](#) | [Menu ↗](#)



BIGGER ADVENTURES – FOR FAMILIES READY TO EXPLORE

4. Brooklyn Dam walk

6 km return · Moderate · Ages 7+

Not pram-friendly · Park on William St, Brooklyn · [Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

A proper bush adventure for families with older or more confident kids. The trail climbs steeply out of Brooklyn – warn your legs in advance – then opens into a beautiful, undulating bush track through Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. The reward is the dam itself: a heritage-listed sheet of still water set in unspoilt bushland, built in the 1890s to supply water for steam trains. Wallabies, wildflowers (from late winter), water lilies (mainly from early spring) and birdlife throughout. Turn back at the dam or continue on the Great North Walk. Allow around two hours return. No dogs on this trail.

King Tide Café · Daily 8am–3pm

Shop 14, 9 Dangar Rd, Brooklyn · on the Hawkesbury River Marina jetty

Breakfast, lunch and seafood right on the water. Casual and no-frills with great river views – the house smoked salmon is a favourite. Dogs welcome on a lead.

[Map ↗](#) | [Menu ↗](#)

Brooklyn's Corner: 6am–2pm daily

Shop 1/1 Bridge St, Brooklyn

A relaxed local option is a short stroll from the marina – good for a coffee and a sit-down after the climb back down from the dam.

[Map ↗](#) | [Menu ↗](#)



5. Blue Gum Walk, Hornsby

4.5 km circuit · Easy–Moderate · Ages 5+

Not pram-friendly · Start at Rosemead Road Picnic Area, Hornsby · [Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

One of Sydney's best-kept secrets. This loop descends through a forest of towering Sydney Blue Gums, past fern valleys, honeycomb sandstone overhangs, and the Fishponds waterholes. The trail is well-signposted and varied enough that kids stay genuinely interested the whole way. One honest caveat: leeches are a real presence after rain, so tuck those pants into socks on wet days. The payoff at the end is Brewhaha – the best coffee in Hornsby, motorcycle memorabilia on every wall, and house-made cakes that will feel very well earned.

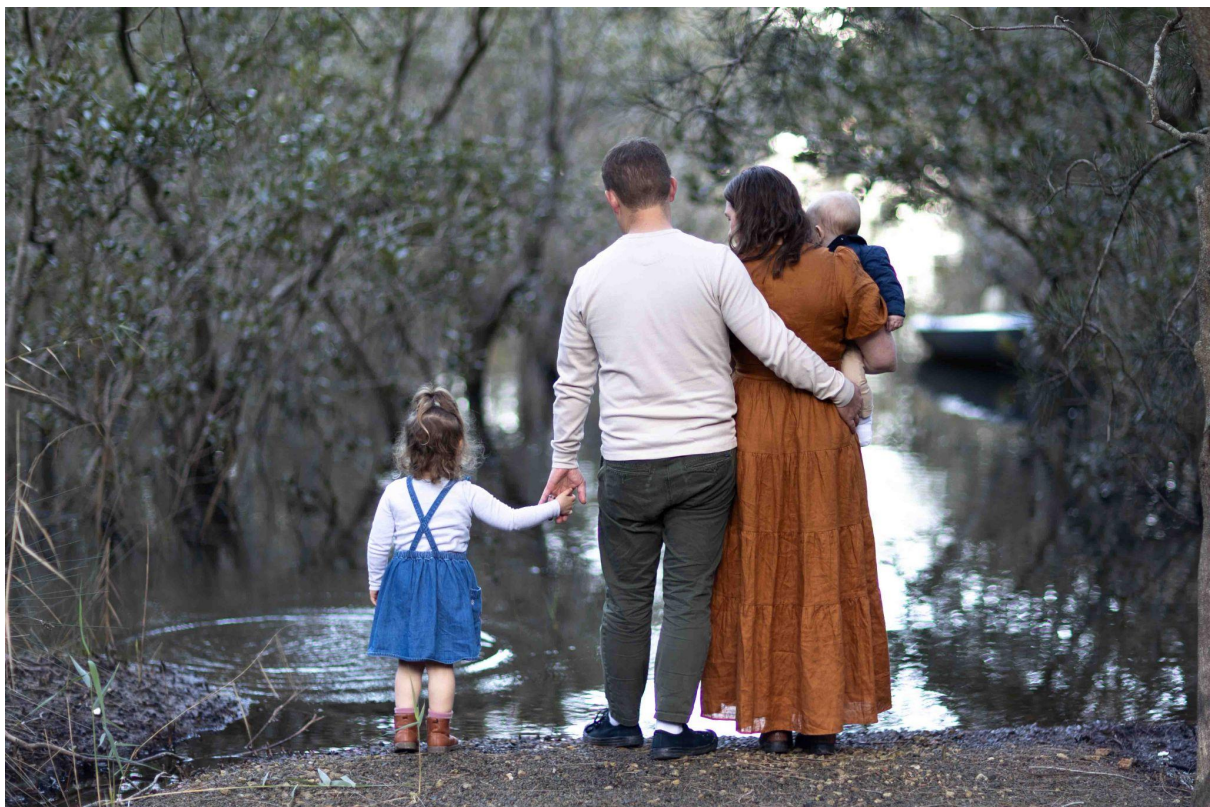
Fact: Blue Gum High Forest is critically endangered and much of what remains is in Hornsby Shire. Only about 5% remains and Hornsby Shire contains 40% of the world's Blue Gum High Forest.

Brewhaha · Mon–Sat 7am–3pm · Sun 8am–3pm

286A Peats Ferry Road, Hornsby

Modern Australian cuisine, house-made cakes, and a quirky vintage motorcycle theme. Going since 2003 – a Hornsby institution.

[Map ↗](#) | [Menu ↗](#)



6. Mooney Mooney Creek & the Big Bridge walk

~4 km return · Easy–Moderate · Ages 5+

Not pram-friendly · Park at Old Pacific Hwy trackhead, Mooney Mooney · [Open in Google Maps](#)

Few walks in the region have this kind of drama. The trail drops from the Old Pacific Highway down alongside Mooney Mooney Creek, winding through mangroves and native bush until the Mooney Mooney Bridge – one of the tallest in Australia – looms overhead in a way that stops everyone in their tracks. Walk out to Flat Rock Crossing at the creek and turn back from there, which keeps the distance manageable and the terrain largely gentle. Bring insect repellent. Allow around two hours return.

The Old Road Café · Open daily from 7am

170 Pacific Highway, Mount White

Stop in on the way back – good burgers, great coffee, and a wonderfully eclectic interior full of old posters and biking memorabilia. A well-earned sit-down after the creek.

[Map ↗](#) | [Menu ↗](#)



7. Somersby Falls, Brisbane Water National Park

780m return (lower falls) · 3 km return with boulder extension · Moderate · Ages 5+ · boulder extension ages 8+

Not pram-friendly · Somersby Falls Picnic Area, end of Somersby Falls Rd · \$8 per vehicle · [Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

For the families who want to earn it. The main walk winds down through gorgeous Central Coast rainforest – past two lookout points – to the bottom of Somersby Falls, where the water cascades down the cliff face through mossy boulders onto a wide rock platform. Stunning after rain, peaceful at any time. Water dragons, goannas, frogs, and kookaburras are regulars along the track.

Keep going past the lower falls along the creek toward the cave falls. The maintained track gives way to a rougher scramble over huge boulders, a rock chute, and sections of off-track walking through the gorge. It's genuinely adventurous – the kind of thing older kids will love. Allow around two hours for the full extension. Steep and slippery in places so save this one for a dry day and wear shoes with grip.

At the trailhead

Gas BBQs, picnic tables, and toilets right at the picnic area. Pack your own lunch and make a full day of it.



8. Hornsby Park – Crusher Plant Precinct

Flexible – explore at your own pace · Easy · All ages

Pram-friendly · Free parking off Quarry Road, Hornsby · Or 10 min walk from Hornsby Station ·

[Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

Brand new and already worth the trip. The Crusher Plant Precinct is the first stage of the long-awaited Hornsby Park – 60 hectares of former volcanic quarry being transformed into one of Sydney's most dramatic public spaces. Right now you can walk paved paths through the site, take in the Southern Lookout with its sweeping views straight down into the ancient quarry crater and surrounding bushland, and let the kids run on the big open lawns. The industrial history of the site is woven into the layout and signage, and the scale of the old quarry – all volcanic rock and sheer drops – is genuinely jaw-dropping.

Access via the historic Heritage Steps (from behind Hornsby Aquatic and Leisure Centre) makes for a steep but scenic entry, and the steps connect directly to the Blue Gum Walk – so you can combine both in one big day out if the legs are willing. Free electric BBQ and picnic shelters on site, toilets, and water refill stations. More stages are coming, but what's open now already delivers.

Combine with Walk 5

The Heritage Steps link the Crusher Precinct directly to the Blue Gum Walk. Do both and finish at Brewhaha on Peats Ferry Road – a genuinely great full day out.



9. Berowra Waters & the Great North Walk

5.7 km one-way · Moderate · Ages 5+

Not pram-friendly · Parking at Berowra Station · [Open in Google Maps ↗](#)

The Great North Walk from Berowra Station down to Berowra Waters is one of the most rewarding family walks in the area – ridge views, creek gullies, mangroves, and a river ferry at the end. It takes around 2 hrs 45 min one-way with some solid climbs and rocky sections, so best for kids 5+ who are comfortable on bush tracks. The free car-ferry across the river is a highlight for little ones in itself. Kayak hire available locally for those who want to explore the hidden beaches.

Pre-plan a ride back up the hill by parking a car down near the ferry.

Water Vista Café · Mon–Thu 8am–3pm · Fri 8am–8pm · Sat–Sun 8am–4pm

199 Bay Rd, Berowra Waters

Hop the free car-ferry and land right at the marina. Dog-friendly, casual, with a kids' menu, fish and chips, burgers, and a fenced playground next door.

[Map ↗](#) | [Menu ↗](#)



Ready to make it a day to remember?

First things first – grab the free Winter Adventure Scavenger Hunt. It's got tick-box challenges matched to exactly these locations, a points system for the kids, and enough bush knowledge to impress the little ones.

Check the weather before you go, and remember the days are short – aim to start by mid-morning so you're not racing the light home. Winter can bring sudden showers, but overcast skies give the softest, most flattering light for photos.

Want the real thing? I'm booking Destination Sessions at similar locations this Winter – I'll meet you out there, kids and chaos welcome, and we'll make something beautiful out of your ordinary Sunday.

Winter light doesn't wait.

With muddy boots and a full memory card,

Jacqueline Foley



Winter Adventure

SCAVENGER HUNT

Berowra & Brooklyn · 9 walks · Winter 2026

EXPLORER'S NAME	
DATE	
TODAY'S WALK	

How to play

- Tick the box ☐ each time you spot or do something on the list.
- Collect points as you go — add them up at the end of each walk.
- Use the blank box at the end of each page to draw what you see.

POINTS KEY		
+1pt · Spot it or do it	+2pts · Find or Photograph it	+3pts · Draw or describe it

“The best family memories rarely happen at theme parks. They happen when you stop the car, ditch the plan, and let the kids lead you somewhere muddy.”

— Jacqueline Foley



WALK 1 • KANGAROO POINT BOARDWALK, BROOKLYN

☐	Spot a mangrove tree — touch one of its breathing roots	+1pt
☐	Count how many boats you can see on the Hawkesbury River	+1pt
☐	Find the hidden Aboriginal carving near the bridge	+2pts
☐	Spot a bird perched on the boardwalk railing	+1pt
☐	Walk the full 1km boardwalk without stopping	+1pt
☐	Find something that washed up from the river	+1pt
☐	Take a photo of Peats Ferry bridge over the water	+2pts

DID YOU KNOW? *The Kangaroo Point Boardwalk is 3 metres wide — wide enough for two prams side by side!*

WALK 2 · PARSLEY BAY TO MCKELL PARK, BROOKLYN

☐	Walk the foreshore path from Parsley Bay to the marina	+1pt
☐	Spot a pelican on the water or a rock near the shore	+2pts
☐	Count the boats moored at Brooklyn marina	+1pt
☐	Climb up to McKell Park and find the Hawkesbury River views	+1pt
☐	Spot a water dragon sunning on a rock near the waterfront	+2pts
☐	Listen for a kookaburra in the bush above McKell Park	+1pt
☐	Find a feather on the path — what colour is it?	+1pt

DID YOU KNOW? McKell Park in Brooklyn overlooks the Hawkesbury River and the mouth of Berowra Creek — one of the best views on the river!

WALK 3 · BOBBIN HEAD MANGROVE BOARDWALK

☐	Spot a mud crab next to the boardwalk	+2pts
☐	Find a mangrove with breathing roots (pneumatophores)	+1pt
☐	Count the information signs along the boardwalk	+1pt
☐	Spot a fish in the water below	+2pts
☐	Touch the water carefully — is it salty?	+1pt
☐	Hear a whipbird's crack call in the bush	+2pts
☐	Find a feather on the path	+1pt
☐	Hire a paddle boat and spot wildlife from the water	+3pts

DID YOU KNOW? Mangrove roots breathe air! The little spiky roots poking up from the mud are called pneumatophores.

WALK 4 · BROOKLYN DAM WALK

☐	Reach the dam — give yourself a big tick!	+2pts
☐	Spot a wallaby on the trail	+2pts
☐	Find a wildflower and describe its colour	+1pt
☐	Count the number of steps in the steep section at the start	+1pt
☐	Find a scribbly gum with insect markings on the bark	+2pts
☐	Spot a water lily on the dam	+1pt
☐	Listen for bell birds — can you hear their ding?	+1pt
☐	Find a lizard sunbathing near the dam wall	+2pts

DID YOU KNOW? *The Brooklyn Dam was built in the 1890s to supply water to steam trains on the railway line!*

WALK 5 • BLUE GUM WALK, HORNSBY

☐	Find a Sydney Blue Gum — feel its smooth bark	+1pt
☐	Spot a Red-triangle Slug on a tree trunk	+3pts
☐	Cross the stepping stones at Fishponds	+1pt
☐	Find a sandstone overhang that looks like honeycomb	+1pt
☐	Collect a gum nut (keep it as a souvenir!)	+1pt
☐	Spot a water dragon near the creek	+2pts
☐	Count the ferns in one section of the path	+1pt

DID YOU KNOW? *Blue Gum High Forest is critically endangered. Hornsby Shire contains 40% of all that remains in the world!*

WALK 6 · MOONEY MOONEY CREEK & THE BIG BRIDGE

☐	Stand under the Mooney Mooney Bridge — look straight up!	+1pt
☐	Reach Flat Rock Crossing and touch the creek water	+1pt
☐	Spot a mangrove along the creek bank	+1pt
☐	Find a creature living in the creek (fish, yabby, frog)	+2pts
☐	Count how many seconds it takes a leaf to float past	+1pt
☐	Find evidence of a bird nest in the trees above	+2pts
☐	Smell the bush — write down what it smells like	+1pt
☐	Stay quiet for 60 seconds and list every sound you hear	+2pts

DID YOU KNOW? *The Mooney Mooney Bridge is 65 metres tall — about the same as a 20-storey building!*

WALK 7 · SOMERSBY FALLS

☐	Reach the lower falls — tick this one first!	+1pt
☐	Spot a water dragon on the rocks near the falls	+2pts
☐	Find a goanna track in the mud	+2pts
☐	Hear a kookaburra near the rainforest	+1pt
☐	Climb over at least three boulders — carefully!	+2pts
☐	Find a mossy rock — how many colours of moss can you see?	+1pt
☐	Spot a frog or hear one calling	+2pts
☐	Make it to the cave falls (boulder extension)	+3pts

DID YOU KNOW? Somersby Falls flows into Floods Creek, which eventually reaches the sea at Broken Bay!

WALK 8 · HORNSBY PARK — CRUSHER PRECINCT

☐	Stand at the Southern Lookout and look into the old quarry	+1pt
☐	Find out information about the quarry's industrial history	+1pt
☐	Spot a bird of prey soaring over the quarry	+2pts
☐	Walk the Heritage Steps all the way down	+2pts
☐	Find a piece of volcanic rock — feel how rough it is	+1pt
☐	Count the picnic shelters in the precinct	+1pt
☐	Use the free electric BBQ for lunch	+1pt
☐	Draw the view from the Southern Lookout in the box below	+3pts

DID YOU KNOW? *Hornsby Park sits on ancient volcanic rock — one of the only places in Sydney where you can see it!*

WALK 9 · BEROWRA WATERS — GREAT NORTH WALK

☐	Spot the first ridge view over Berowra Creek valley	+1pt
☐	Find a scribbly gum with wriggly patterns in the bark	+1pt
☐	Ride the free car-ferry across the river	+2pts
☐	Spot a kayak or canoe on the water	+1pt
☐	Find a mangrove at the water's edge near Berowra Waters	+1pt
☐	Count the boats moored at Berowra Waters marina	+1pt
☐	Spot a goanna or water dragon near the ferry landing	+2pts
☐	Find a hidden beach visible from the ridge	+2pts

DID YOU KNOW? *The Great North Walk stretches 250km from Sydney all the way to Newcastle!*

Score Tally

Add up your points from all 9 walks!

WALK	WALK NAME	MY SCORE
1	Kangaroo Point Boardwalk, Brooklyn	_____ / 9
2	Parsley Bay to McKell Park, Brooklyn	_____ / 9
3	Bobbin Head Mangrove Boardwalk	_____ / 13
4	Brooklyn Dam Walk	_____ / 12
5	Blue Gum Walk, Hornsby	_____ / 10
6	Mooney Mooney Creek & the Big Bridge	_____ / 11
7	Somersby Falls	_____ / 14
8	Hornsby Park — Crusher Precinct	_____ / 12
9	Berowra Waters — Great North Walk	_____ / 11
	GRAND TOTAL	_____ / 101

Your achievement level:

BUSH BEGINNER under 20 pts	NATURE DETECTIVE 21 – 49 pts	STAR EXPLORER 50+ pts
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Draw your favourite thing you have seen:

