

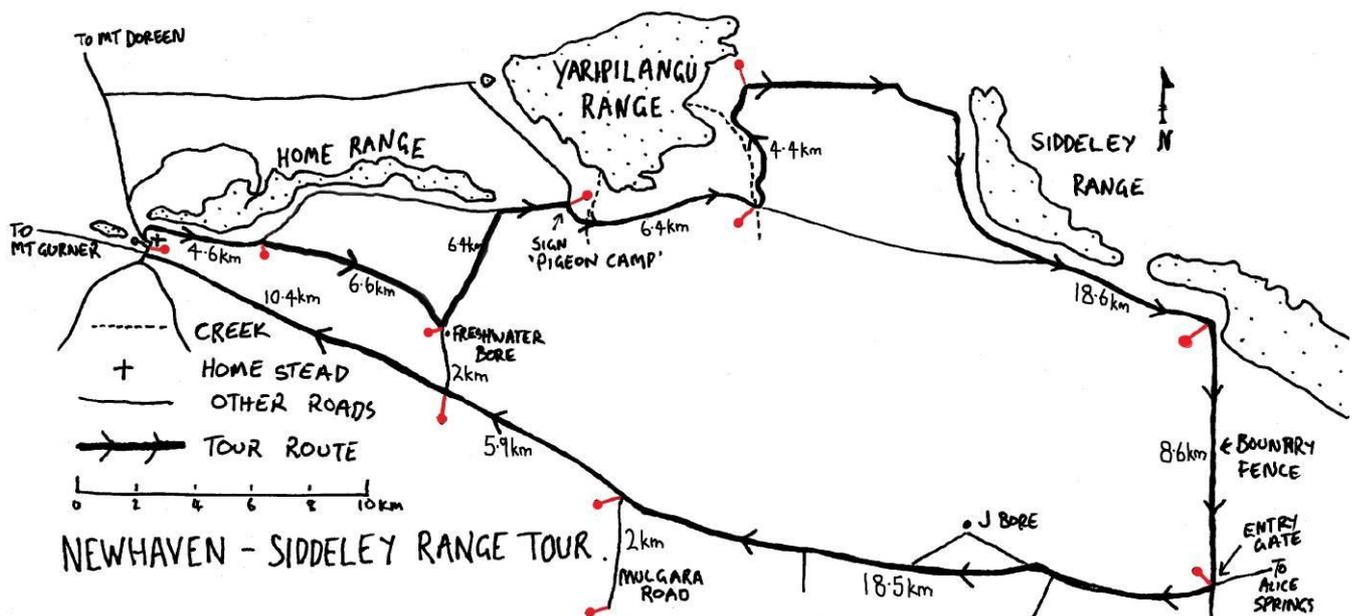
# Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary Siddeley Range Tour

**Please Note:** Newhaven Sanctuary has a vast number of tracks and firebreaks—not all these are open to the public. For safety please keep to designated tracks set out in the map showing all the Newhaven self-guided tours. These tracks include the six coloured tour routes, and the solid black roads marked “open” in the map legend. Always carry spare food and plenty of drinking water (20 litres per vehicle, with an additional 10 litres for every person above two). Whilst on Newhaven UHF channel 3 (duplex) can be used to contact others however this must not be relied on for emergency communications.

## Siddeley Range Tour Summary

This tour goes to the Siddeley Range on the eastern boundary of Newhaven Sanctuary. The total distance is about 90 km. With several walks possible, allow 4-6 hours to complete it.

For those visitors interested in plants and/or bird watching, this tour includes deep sand non-spinifex communities, old growth mulga and several larger watercourses and run-on areas. This tour takes you to one of the remote corners of the Sanctuary. To ensure you have enough time for exploratory walks, it is best to travel clockwise. That way, the last leg along the main road can be completed with headlights if required.



## Siddeley Range Tour Notes

### **0.0 km - Bird Box; S22°43.472' E131°10.044':**

This Tour begins at, and is distance-referenced from, the Registration/Information Shelter ('Bird Box'). Start from here after noting the odometer or resetting the trip meter (Note: odometer readings vary slightly between vehicles and you may need to make allowances for this).

Head west towards western campground, then take the first signposted turnoff to the right at 200m, following the **FRESHWATER BORE** signs. At 500m you will come to a T intersection.



### **0.5 km - T intersection; S22°43.292' E131°09.876':**

Turn right and follow signs to **FRESHWATER BORE**.

The first leg of this tour takes you to Freshwater Bore along the southern face of Home Range.

### **1.0 km:**

As you begin to travel east along Home Range you will likely notice the effects of fire as they impact across different vegetation communities (eg. slopes and plains), or as they impact across fire management zones (eg either side of the road). Low intensity controlled fire is used in this area to protect the Homestead precinct, and occasional wildlife comes through with higher intensity.

Mulgas are a particularly fire-sensitive species as can be seen by the large dead trees on the right. They regenerate after fire from seed. Whereas the hillside community featuring ghost gums on the left are more fire tolerant.

### **4.6 km - Y Intersection; S22°43.505' E131°12.078':**

Take the right fork to Freshwater Bore. The left fork provides access down a 1.3km track to Lookout Rock. This feature is covered in the notes for the Hillside Tour, and is best visited on a separate trip due to the time constraints of the Siddeley Range Tour.

### **11.2 km - FRESHWATER BORE Intersection; S22°45.034' E131°15.114':**

The Siddeley Range Tour continues with a hard left turn onto the track heading north. To visit Freshwater Bore before continuing north (and to stay consistent with the odometer distances for this tour), continue straight ahead for approx. 100m as signposted and then turn left to circle around the tank and windmill, returning to this intersection.

There is an abundance and variety of birds to be found at Freshwater Bore, and much else of interest to explore. Points of interest on Freshwater Bore and environs are included in the notes for the Hillside Tour.

Once you have returned to **FRESHWATER BORE Intersection**, continue on the right-hand track heading north.

**17.8 km - Pigeon Camp sign; S22°42.784' E131°17.284':**

Turn right here as signposted. This (pink) leg of the tour skirts the southern edge of the Yaripilangu Range. On the left the crests of the hills get gradually lower. Their impermeable surfaces shed water that is funnelled into drainage lines and carried out onto the sandplain. You can trace these intermittent watercourses by tracing lines of vegetation that are distinct from the vegetation of the surrounding sand plain.

**20.1 km - A walk in the dunes:**

At about this distance, the road is passing through a sandy plain which has a sparse scattering of longitudinal dunes. A pair of parallel dunes is within easy walking distance on the southern side of the road. This type of country is dominated by feathertop spinifex (*Triodia schinzii*) which is a common grass found within spinifex dunefields. Here there is a scattered over-story of dogwood (*Acacia coriacea*) and black gidgee (*Acacia pruinocarpa*).

As you approach the dunes, note the diversity of plants, the type and abundance of animal tracks, scats, and diggings.

Some plant species are more common on or near the bare sandy crest; others on the mid-slope, and some grow only on the swale. This plant pattern is a response to the redistribution of rainfall, whether it is runoff down the dune slopes, or water, which has infiltrated the dune soil. Depending on the rainfall preceding your visit, desert heath myrtle (*Aluta maisonneuvei*) one of the mid-height shrubs may be in flower, and the focus of attention of the nectar eating birds and insects in the area. desert heath myrtle dominates non-spinifex dune slopes. desert heath myrtle is considerably less flammable than spinifex and will only carry fire in extreme conditions.



Depending on time since the last fire, you may see patches of the same vegetation at different stages of maturity. You may also notice the patchiness of many fires in terms of burnt and unburnt vegetation, and in terms of stages of maturity. Look for different fire recovery strategies such as sprouting from the base of burnt shrubs, or starting afresh from seed.

While on the dune, keep an eye out for the tracks of the marsupial mole. These tracks are characterised by the regular waving of the dragging tail, often described as a 'sine wave' like marking. Sometimes a depression in the sand can be seen with tracks leading out of it. This is the 'pop hole' where the mole has come to the surface. Another sign is a little 'puddle' of sand at the end of some tracks. This is where the mole has dug back into the sand. This photo shows where the little mole popped out in the top left wiggled for sixty centimetres then dug back into the ground in the bottom right.

The dune also affords 360° views of Home Range to the west, Yaripilangu to the north, Siddeley Range to the east and Mount Liebig in the far south.



As the road continues east, honey grevillea (*Grevillea eriostachya*) becomes more frequent. If it is in flower, it cannot be overlooked. The flower heads of this grevillea often drip with sweet nectar. When full of nectar the flowers are soaked in water by Aboriginal people to make a sweet drink. The flowers are also just sucked, while still on the bush, to get a mouthful of the sweet nectar.

**21.4 km - Steep Gully**

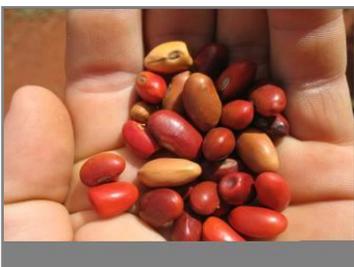
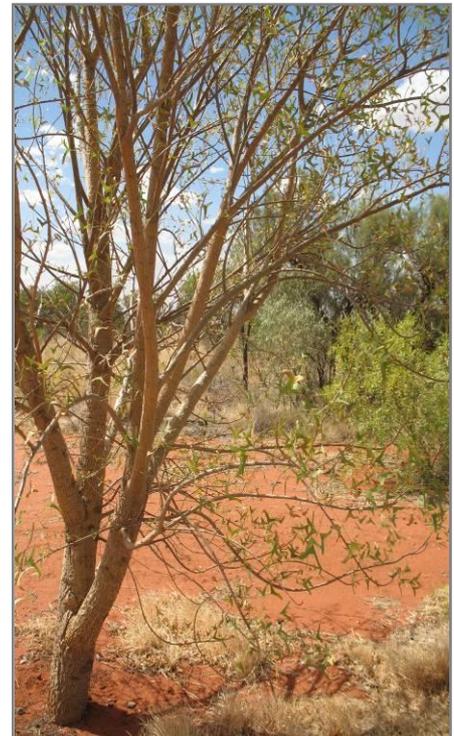
**23.9 km - Creek Crossing:**

This drainage line is the largest on Newhaven Sanctuary. Its origin is the middle of the eastern side of the Yaripilangu Range. It first flows east and then south. To reach this point, the water will

have flowed some 8 km, mostly over sandy country. Its surface flow is obviously intermittent. Subsurface flow, however, continues for a longer period. Where a drainage line has a coarse sand bed, water (very slowly) flows through the sand above a deeper rock basement.



This creek is of particular interest due to the abundance of the batwing coral bean tree (*Erythrina vespertilio*). Bean trees grow in areas where underground water is accessible. They are often leafless during the winter and spring and flower in early summer. Their seeds are bright red beans that are sought after due to their ornamental value for making necklaces. The wood from the bean tree is very light and was important for Aboriginal people as one of the tools for making fire as well as being used for shields. The bean tree is highly favoured by camels as a food source and is therefore threatened due to the rising number of wild camels in central Australia.



**24.2 km - Unmarked side track; S22°42.647' E131°20.660':**

Ignore the side track on the right and continue straight ahead. The road turns north and roughly follows the drainage line, which you will see on your left. Between here and the next point of interest, the sand depth increases. Along this sandy stretch you pass through a grove of beefwood (*Grevillia striata*), medium sized trees with long grey strap like leaves.

**28.6 km - Newhaven boundary; S22°40.587' E131°20.425':**

The road turns due east to follow Newhaven's northern boundary for approx. 4.5km. On both sides of the road, the sand is deep. You will pass through a relatively dense stand of desert heath myrtle. With good timing, you will see their flowers and their animal visitors.

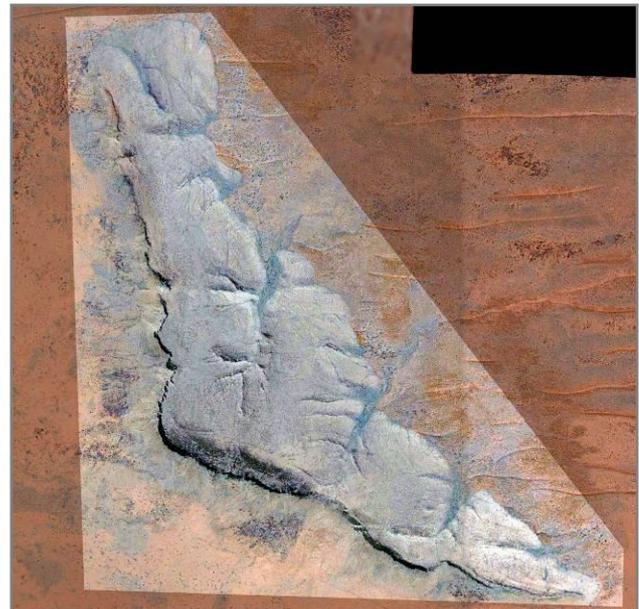
Along this boundary section, look on the right hand side of the road for a small concrete survey post and stake marking portion boundaries.

**33.1 km - Road departs Newhaven boundary; S22°40.589' E131°23.036':**

At this point the road leaves the boundary gradually turning towards the south. The mulga that you are now entering is the most significant patch of unburnt old growth mulga on Newhaven. When the mulga opens up you will be travelling south along the foot slope of the range. On the right you can see where the spinifex is so old and unburnt that it has nearly died out under the mulga. This is an important habitat that needs to remain untouched by fire to prevent the regression towards spinifex dominance.

The Siddeley Range is aligned NW-SE and its bluff faces are on the western side. Only the two northern-most outcrops of the range lie within Newhaven's boundaries. The geological structure and rock material here is the same as Mt Gurner, Home Range and Yaripilangu Range, that being the Vaughan Springs Quartzite formation. Consequently, it can be expected that the flora and fauna will also be similar. However, fire history, local geography and water availability all play a part in determining the flora and fauna of these ranges.

The road skirts the footslope of the highest bluff (800m, which is more than 200m above the sandplain). The bluff is a spectacular face of the capping rock, with many caves apparent. It can be seen from above in the adjacent aerial photo. If you wish to climb and examine the footslope and bluff face, then the only way is to walk in from this road. Choose your landmarks carefully and leave your vehicle on the road in a clearly visible spot for the return walk.



The road now bears south-east heading for the next bluff-faced outcrop about 7km away. You are still travelling in mixed acacia sand plains and the road moves through a number of different aged fire footprints.

**43.2 km - Unmarked side track; S22°44.104' E131°26.436':**

Continue straight ahead (southeast)

**47.2 km - The Sanctuary's eastern boundary; S22°44.948' E131°28.522':**

The track (red leg) now turns south for about 8km until it meets the main road. Even though the road is now ruler-straight, it is not without interest.

The presence of the outcropping Siddeley Ranges influences the distribution of soil types and runoff. The result is a mosaic of four different vegetation communities. At the turn south, you are in mixed acacia sandplain, followed by mulga woodland, then a patch of blue mallee sandplain. Just before the gate is a one kilometre-wide patch of desert oak.

**55.8 km - The Sanctuary's eastern entrance; S22°49.538' E131°28.522':**

Turn right along the main road (white leg) and continue 35km to the campground.

The main road through this part of Newhaven traverses prime brush-tailed mulgara (*Dasyurus blythi*) habitat. The brush-tail mulgara is a small carnivorous marsupial whose conservation status is recorded as vulnerable due to altered fire regimes, grazing pressure and introduced predators.

If you are lucky you may find evidence of them on your drive home. Brush-tail mulgara prefer to live in medium and mature aged spinifex grasslands, especially *Triodia basdowii* and *T. pungens* with more than 20% ground cover. Location of mulgara colonies may also be influenced by the presence of ancient drainage systems. This central eastern area of Newhaven is ideal brush-tail mulgara habitat and there appears to be a healthy population living here. Their tracks are commonly found on or near the road through this area. Mornings are the best time to find tracks as, like many small marsupials, the Mulgara is nocturnal and the wind of the day will often cover their tracks.



**74.3 km - Mulgara Road intersection; S22°47.745' E131°18.204:**

Continue straight (west) along the main road back to the campground or, if you have time, turn right and take a 4km detour down Mulgara Road. This track takes you to a small dune near a salt lake edge. Brush-tail mulgara tracks are almost guaranteed in the sand on this dune and the view from the dune to the south is well worth the detour.

**90.6 km - Homestead precinct intersection; S22°43.590' E131°09.977:**

Turn right into the Homestead precinct, then left at the Bird Box and return to the campground.

**We hope that you have enjoyed this tour.**

For more information about Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary, visit [www.australianwildlife.org](http://www.australianwildlife.org)