



TREKOORA

YOUR JOURNEY GUIDE

GREEN MOUNTAINS

Lamington National Park & O'Reilly's

High in an ancient rainforest, where lyrebirds sing and a mountain family's legend began.

Trekkoora acknowledges the Yugambeh people and their family groups, including the Wangerriburra, Traditional Custodians of the mountains known in the Yugambeh language as Woonoongoora, and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

At a glance

- Lamington National Park was declared in 1915. It covers 21,176 hectares along the McPherson Range.
- It is part of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area, first listed in 1986 and extended in 1994.
- Its two best-known areas are Green Mountains, home of O'Reilly's, and Binna Burra.
- About 130 km of formed walking tracks wind through the park.
- In 1937 Bernard O'Reilly found a lost airliner, and its survivors, deep in these ranges.

The land and its first people

In the Yugambeh language these mountains are Woonoongoora, places that are "sacred and spiritual, places to be nurtured and respected". The Yugambeh family groups include the Wanggerriburra, Birinburra, Gugingin, Migunberri, Mununjali, Bollongin, Minjungbal and Kombumerri. Near Binna Burra, Kweebani ("cooking") cave is evidence of their long presence. A traditional pathway is believed to have crossed the park's southern section, running from northern New South Wales to the Bunya Mountains. The park's great campaigner, Romeo Lahey, wanted to call it Woonoongoora.

The nature story

About 20 to 23 million years ago, the Tweed shield volcano shaped this country. Its erosion caldera, the vast bowl left as the volcano wore away, is the largest and best example of its age in the world. The World Heritage Area that Lamington belongs to holds the most extensive subtropical rainforests on Earth. Lamington also protects nearly all of the northernmost Antarctic beech cool temperate rainforest. These are living links to ancient Gondwana. UNESCO notes that old songbird families survive here, including lyrebirds, scrub-birds, treecreepers and bowerbirds.

What you will see

- **O'Reilly's, Green Mountains.** In 1911 eight O'Reilly men arrived on what was then called Green Mountains. At Easter 1926 they welcomed their first paying guests.
- **The Tree Top Walk.** Peter "Big Pete" O'Reilly created it in 1987, and O'Reilly's calls it Australia's first tree top walk. Nine suspension bridges stretch 180 metres, about 15 metres above the forest floor. A ladder climbs a strangler fig, and the highest deck stands about 30 metres up.
- **Binna Burra.** Romeo Lahey and Arthur Groom led the first camps here in 1933. In September 2019 bushfires destroyed all the cabins but one. When the road reopened on 31 August 2020, most of Binna Burra's rainforest trails reopened too.
- **Rainforest tracks and lookouts.** Named tracks include Morans Falls, Python Rock and the Border Track. From the lookouts you see the Gold Coast, south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales.

Wildlife and plants to look for

- Albert's lyrebird, often met in the cooler months. The male's song imitates sounds of the forest.
- The regent bowerbird, brilliant black and gold, often seen foraging.
- The crimson rosella, in vivid red and blue.

- Satin bowerbirds, rufous scrub-birds and eastern bristlebirds.
- Antarctic beech, hoop pine (one of the world's oldest conifers), and giant brush box trees.

A little history

Robert Collins began the campaign for a park here in 1878, after learning of Yellowstone. From 1911 Romeo Lahey lobbied, lectured and petitioned until the park was declared in 1915, named after Queensland

Governor Lord Lamington. On 19 February 1937 a Stinson airliner, the *City of Brisbane*, flying from Brisbane to Sydney, vanished in severe weather. Bernard O'Reilly used his knowledge of the ranges, and reports from the valley, to guide his search. Nine days after the crash he reached the wreckage and found two survivors, Joe Binstead and John Proud. A fellow passenger, James Westray, had died going for help. It remains one of Australia's great stories of bushcraft and courage.



Did you know?

- Some brush box trees here have been radiocarbon dated at 1,500 years, the oldest ever carbon-dated on mainland Australia.
- The park protects about 58 plants and more than 22 animals that are vulnerable, rare or threatened.
- Early guests took two days to reach O'Reilly's, by car, train and horseback.
- Lahey and Groom also founded the National Parks Association of Queensland in 1930.
- O'Reilly's sits about 930 metres above sea level.

Travel with care

- Woonoongoora is sacred to its Custodians. Walk gently and leave everything as you find it.
- Stay on marked tracks, and check park alerts before you walk.
- Mountain weather changes fast. Bring a warm layer and a rain jacket.
- Watch birds quietly, and never feed wildlife.
- O'Reilly's is about 90 minutes from the Gold Coast. Plan an unhurried day.



Read it online, with photos

Scan the code to open this story on your phone: <https://trekoora.com/stories/lamington/>

Questions before your day? WhatsApp us any time.

Sources: <https://parks.qld.gov.au/parks/lamington/about> · <https://parks.qld.gov.au/parks/lamington/about/culture> · <https://parks.qld.gov.au/parks/lamington/things-to-do> · <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/368/> · <https://oreillys.com.au/a-century-on-the-mountain-the-story-of-oreillys-rainforest-retreat/> · <https://oreillys.com.au/oreillys-rainforest-retreat/> · <https://oreillys.com.au/activity/treetop-walk/> · <https://www.visitscenicrim.com.au/canungra-and-beechmont/attraction/oreillys-tree-top-walk/> · <https://www.binnaburralodge.com.au/history/> · <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/90603>