

Wednesday Walkers enjoyed perfect walking weather for the trip to the lower and mid slopes of Mount Ainslie on 15th May 2019.

We started on Kellaway Street before following the disused part of Phillip Avenue and then commencing a sharp climb on the Old Tip Summit Access Trail. After about 400 metres from the crossing of Old Tip Summit Access Trail and a major power line trail, a minor footpad is located on the right if you look well. After another 40 metres there is the Labyrinth. We continued on this undulating footpad across the slope, stopping to admire long distance but hazy views, until it met another main trail. We followed this downhill before turning northwards to get back to the car park.

The lower areas contain woodland with *Eucalyptus melliodora* and *E. blakelyi* as the main overstorey species while prickly *Acacia paradoxa* lined the road. As we climbed, we passed through dry forest dominated by *E. rossii* and *E. polyanthemos* before finally entering *Allocasuarina verticillata* woodland. There are massive old eucalypts in the Mount Ainslie Nature Park too wide for two people to hug at the same time and have their hands touch.

The understorey was dry and few plants were in flower. Nevertheless, we enjoyed the different vegetation types and the artistic as well as the old man-made structures that we found scattered in several places. We had morning tea at the Labyrinth and lunch near an old weir, found a geocache site in a burnt out *E. rossii* stump and wondered at the strange igloo structure made from branches that had a smaller structure attached housing a dead cockatoo. Hmmm....

Eleven plants were added to the list – one advantage of going in a dry season with limited flowers is that the focus is shared between all of the plants still standing. It's surprising what you can find when you look.

Kris Nash



Geocache in a *E. rossii* hollow



Hibbertia obtusifolia



E. blakelyi buds



Unusual structures



The Labyrinth



Chrysocephalum semipapposum sheltering under a log



Bark of *Allocasuarina verticillata*