

**5.4** This small creekline forms the boundary between an outcrop of whitish Rawnsley Quartzite to the south-west (right) and Balcanoona Formation dolomite to the north-east (left).

Between them is a blue-black, iron and manganese-rich deposit – **Geosite 4 Ironstone**: it results from faulting which allowed the movement of mineralising fluids.

**5.0** A scree of quartzite cobbles provides ideal growing conditions for Black Oak. Many of these shallow rooted trees have died in drought.

**Corkbark** (*Hakea ednieana*) spring flowers have much nectar.



**4.8** This is near **Geosite 5 Three Formations**: there is a good view into Italowie Creek and Gorge, of the three main rock types – (1) buff dolomite below your feet and to the left (2) dark tillite ahead (3) quartzite to the right. Descend gradually down a steep Cypress-pine clad slope.

*At the foot of the slope continue along the side of the creek to find . . .*

**4.4 Checkpoint K4**—near a copse of River Red Gums; a sheer rock face comes down to creek-level

*Walk downstream (to your right). The markers are close to one or other bank of the creek.*

**4.2** *Cross from west to east.* Dried up pools may contain fragile white shells of the mollusc *Isidorella*—a very widespread water snail whose eggs are spread on the feet of water birds.

**3.6** *Creek crossing from east to west.*

**3.4** Long creek crossing from west to east; on a pebble bar in the middle of the creek there are two types of tea tree; the commonest, with greyish leaves and seen throughout the north Flinders, is the White Tea-tree (Desert Paper-bark); the other with greener leaves is smaller and is known only as *Melaleuca dissitiflora* ('green tea-tree').

**3.2 Geosite 6 Bolla Bollana Tillite**: Slope of tillite with pebbles embedded in the rock .

**3.0** *Start of a long creek crossing from the east; some walking will be on an 'island' in the middle of the creek . . .*

**2.8** . . . reach the 'island' amongst tea tree.

**2.0** *The last creek crossing from west to east; then . . . walk at the foot of the tillite slope through woodland and tea tree copses.*



Bolla Bollana tillite around **Geosite 6**.

**0.8** *Turn to cross the now wider creek where Italowie Creek has been joined by Doctor Chewings creek.*

In the 1860s John Chewings held pastoral leases east of the ranges at Teetulpa and Paratoo. His son, Dr Charles Chewings, was a geologist and anthropologist who worked mostly in the Northern Territory but also in the northern Flinders Ranges in the early years of the twentieth century.

*By bearing south (right) on the trail you go back to your parked car.*

**0.6** The cobbles on the track indicate that this used to be part of the pebbly bed of Doctor Chewings Creek—now only flooded occasionally. It has become silted up and carries a shrubland of the somewhat prickly shrub, Elegant Wattle, drab for most of the year but flowering prolifically in October.

**~0.1 Geosite 7 Paralana Fault**: location of this significant, but not visible, feature.

**0.0 Italowie Gap Trailhead, Checkpoint K5**—park information shelter.



Flinders  
Ranges  
Walks



## Italowie



McKinlay Bluff with Mt McKinlay beyond, across the Gibber Plain.

*In the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park, the open rolling hills around Grindell hut and south to Mt McKinlay Spring have had a history of grazing by sheep and cattle—the low hills were easy to muster and would have had a good cover of herbage. Now herds of feral goats may be seen here.*

*The walk also exposes us to the effects of a glaciation which began about 700 million years ago, giving rise to a great depth of Bolla Bollana tillite, a rock containing fragments of material picked up by glaciers and later dropped into soft sediments when the ice melted. All then turned into rock.*

*The first part of the walk to Mt McKinlay Spring lies across open, rolling country of Ulupa Formation shales and siltstones, providing good views to the wilderness of the high Gammon Ranges. The walk from the spring to Italowie Gap follows Italowie Creek downstream through the tillite walls of the Balcanoona Range. White Tea-tree and large River Red Gums occupy the wide, shingly creek bed.*

*There are seven Geosite posts with information about the variety of rocks along the way.*



Flinders Ranges Walks have been established in protected areas to provide visitors with experiences of the Ranges.

Trail maintenance and servicing of these trailhead leaflets is provided by the voluntary Walking Trails Support Group.

For downloads and further information please visit:  
[www.walkingtrailssupportgroup.org.au](http://www.walkingtrailssupportgroup.org.au)

Read *Explore the Flinders Ranges* a definitive guidebook by the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia  
Or download our FREE Flinders Ranges Walks App!



# Italowie

**Distance and time:** 15.8 km linear walk; allow 8 hours one way.

**Altitude range:** 290 m (Italowie Gap) to 400 m (saddle near Mt McKinlay Spring).

**Access:** The walk can be started from either trailhead:

**Grindell Trailhead, Checkpoint B6;** below Grindell hut; turn off the Arkaroola Road at 8.2 km from the finger post at Balcanoona. The hut is a further 18.3 km along this 4WD track.

**Italowie Gap Trailhead, Checkpoint K5;** there is a park information bay on the Copley road 15 km from the finger post at Balcanoona. The Italowie Gap Trailhead is by the Park signboard.

**Track:** Easy grade on formed walking track; some rough road walking and creek bed

You will need two cars, one parked at each Trailhead. The road distance between the two is 41 km. Driving can be reduced if the group splits into two parties, one starting at each end and swapping cars for the return journey.

## For your safety;

- This is an AS2156 Class 3 walk in a natural area; beware of inherent hazards, including fire.
- Advise a reliable person of where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Wear strong comfortable boots and take adequate food and clothing.
- Take at least 2 litres of water per person, more if it is hot.
- Protect yourself from the sun and carry a small First Aid kit.

*Seasons come and go, and plants and animals mentioned in the notes may not always be there.*

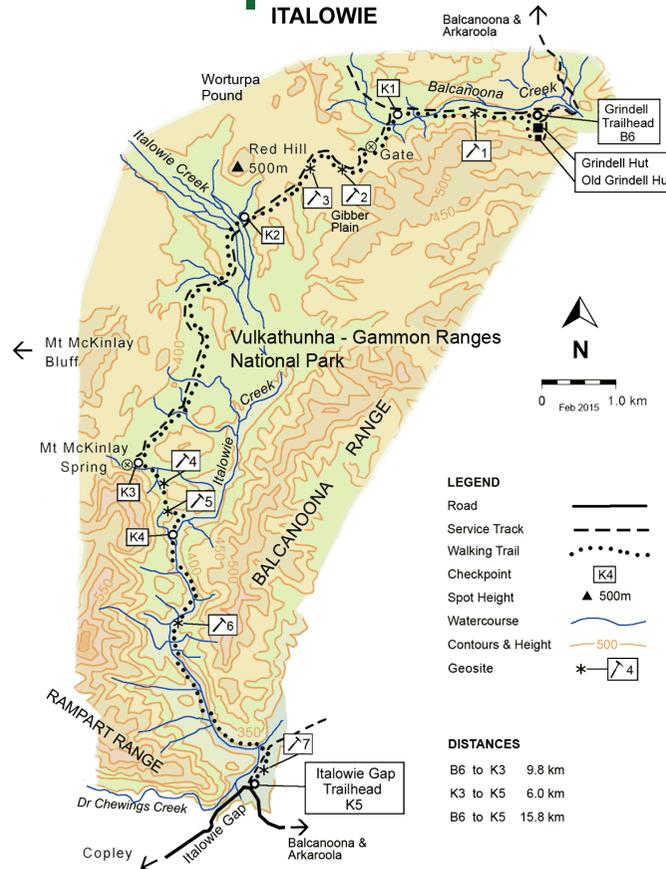


Notes read for a linear walk starting at Grindell Trailhead Checkpoint B6 with marked distances every 200 m decreasing as you proceed.

## 15.8 Grindell Trailhead, Checkpoint B6—below Grindell hut.

There are three buildings at Grindell hut. Two are solid modern structures built by the previous owners of Balcanoona Station (B H MacLachlan). The third, a small hut behind the main house, was the residence of John Grindell, who was suspected by his son-in-law and neighbour at Yankaninna, George Snell, of rustling Yankaninna cattle.

# Trail Map



When George Snell disappeared in August 1918, his brother became suspicious and Beltana police assisted by Aboriginal trackers eventually found a remote spot where Snell's body appeared to have been cremated.

The story (told clearly by Bailey in Cloud over the Gammon Range) relates how Grindell denied all knowledge but admitted the crime when drunk and was given a death sentence, later commuted to life imprisonment.

**15.6** The track follows Balcanoona Creek as it drains down from Loch Ness Well to Weetootla Gorge; Balcanoona Creek rises on the east slopes of Benbonyathe Hill picking up water from the Blue Range through steep gorges such as Bunyip Chasm.

**14.8 Geosite 1 Black Oak on Scree:** one of this tree's preferred habitats.

**14.4** A flat near the creek with Bullock Bush groves and Native Orange (Iga).

**14.2** Mt John Roberts visible ahead.

**13.6 Checkpoint K1—**junction of track to Mt McKinlay Spring (no vehicle access).

**13.2** Woodland of Gum-barked Coolibah and Corkbark.

**13.0** Vehicle barrier. Beyond here the track climbs.

**12.6** The pale-coloured soil is characteristic of the Balcanoona Formation dolomites, which form a range of hills to the east running parallel to the track as far as Mt McKinlay Spring.

**12.2 Geosite 2 Gibber Plain:** This is a Pleistocene river terrace derived from material eroded from the surrounding hills and subsequently dissected by more recent streams thus leaving an elevated terrace. Some surface stones appear to have been sand-blasted during arid periods, probably about 16 000 years ago.

**Geosite 3 Red Hill:** 1 km distant at 256° – a result of upward flow of a mass of broken rock (diapir).

**11.8** From here, there are some high points to recognise in the Gammon Range (all bearings are magnetic):

Mt McKinlay Bluff	6.0km	233°
and rock slide	5.5km	244°
Cleft Peak	6.5km	270°
Prow Point	10.0km	287°
Mt John Roberts	4.0km	304°
Benbonyathe Hill	8.0km	350°
Warden Hill	5.5km	31°

**11.2** Once off the gibber plain, the track crosses Ulupa Formation shales and siltstones. These rolling slopes carry Gum-barked Coolibah, with occasional Cypress-pines, Corkbarks and Mallees.

## 10.2 Checkpoint K2—mid-Italowie Creek.

This wide creek crossing carries shady red gums and pines; Italowie Creek rises deep in the Gammon escarpment, below Prow Point and Mt Changeweather. Large quartzite boulders here had their origins in the escarpment.

**8.0 to 7.8 A Geosite** marker identifies a relic of "Snowball Earth".

**6.4** Near to Mt McKinlay Spring, where the track crosses dolomites of the Nuccaleena and Balcanoona Formations, Curly Mallee appears—it generally occurs only on dolomites.

The spring lies in a tributary of Italowie Creek and the big River Red Gums benefit from its presence.

## 6.0 Checkpoint K3—Mt McKinlay Spring.

Follow the markers downstream through the pine and tea-tree to the right bank; continue 400 m downstream to the start of a small gully.

~ **5.5 Entrance to gully.** Walk up the gully by the blue-top post.