

Mappers Notes – Nerang National Park – June 2022

Mark Roberts

Bring your climbing legs, gaiters, full body cover and strong shoes.

I created the new Nerang National Park map from scratch; the old map did not help, except for showing me where to find old tracks, and there are a heck of a lot of them. I did most of the work in August-October 2021, then filled in the gaps and scanned for changes during May-June 2022. I visited the area 40+ times and walked 200+km; the tracks alone were 45km of walking.

The map benefits from incredibly accurate LIDAR contours and 1m accuracy GPS, which tempted me into mapping minor point features, because I could. Stumps are reliably large, but knolls and pits can be fairly small; we have avoided the minor ones for this event.

I have not surveyed the entire area of the map you will receive, but rest assured that the lower areas used by your course have been reasonably well surveyed. Look at the steeper or more remote areas, and if you see a lack of point features or green in the gullies, that area has not been surveyed. However those steeper areas are generally very "runnable" and featureless; the contours from LIDAR are close to perfect, and the watercourses fairly reliable.

Runnability has been a mapping challenge; this bushland is infinitely variable, so please do not use runnability to navigate, it is just a suggestion of what I thought the last time I was there. Areas marked as Walk I generally did not enter, because life is too short, and you may well find Fight in there. This includes most of the low-lying creeks, so don't expect accurate alignment of them in the jungle.

We have enjoyed what feels like continuous rain since late 2021 and indeed the year previous. There is now long grass in many areas of the forest, and some areas have seen strong growth of lantana and the like. *The map generally does not show this with green stripes.* QPWS thoroughly burned much of Happy Valley (the western main valley) in late 2021; runnability seems not to have changed much in that area, but the map's greens may be a little darker than they should be.

In the last six months QPWS also systematically erased a bunch of MTB trails, mostly in Happy Valley. You can see where they went if you look carefully on the ground, but they are no longer on the map because they are not runnable and are easily missed. Likewise there are many kilometres of ancient trails all over the map which are visible if you look for them, but are not on the map for the same reasons. Some are shown as indistinct tracks because they are visible and runnable.

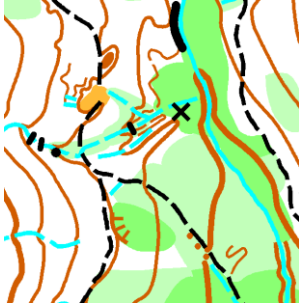
This is very rocky / gravelly terrain; some of the MTB trails are nasty underfoot. Rocky / stony ground is sometimes mapped, but should utterly not be relied upon for any purpose, it's all stony / gravelly to some extent.

The high winds of last week means that there are now chunks of tree everywhere.

Beware of MTBers on the trails, **this is their country, not yours**, and some of the trails are designated "downhill" so they are in a hurry. They probably won't hit you - MTBs have very good brakes and tyres and they don't want to get hurt either - but please be ready to give way by standing off the trail. Remember they come in twos and threes; you can hear the first one coming, but not the next two, and the followers aren't paying as much attention as the lead rider.

The low lying trails are currently very muddy and many others were cut up badly by a major MTB event a couple of weeks ago.

Finally, if you look carefully at the terrain, you can see the evidence that the Eastern valley North of the velodrome was a rifle range 60 years ago. All that vegetation is regrowth.



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