

Arltunga Historical Reserve



The Joker Gorge Self Guided Walk

Use this leaflet as your guide to explore the excellent wildlife viewing opportunities and fascinating mining history of this scenic gorge.

The distance and level of difficulty of your walk is up to you. A walk to the historic buildings is 15 minutes return. From there you may choose to climb the hill to the mines (1 hour return to carpark) or continue into the gorge.

1. Stone Buildings

After you cross the creek, the remains of a variety of buildings can be seen. All of these have used local stone as the primary building material with either mud mortar or no mortar in the walls. Also associated with many of the buildings were stone forges. These were set away from the house to help keep the house cool and were used to sharpen the mining tools daily. Of particular interest is a circular construction known as the roundhouse. The purpose of this design is unknown. If you take a close look at the walls you can see that a lot of time was spent on its construction and hence it survives well today.

2. Joker Mine

From the buildings, you can take the steep 150m walk up the hill through the spinifex and Blue Mallee to the Joker Mine. Walk towards the mullock heap on the edge of the gully. Here you will find an adit (horizontal drive), which up until 1905 had yielded

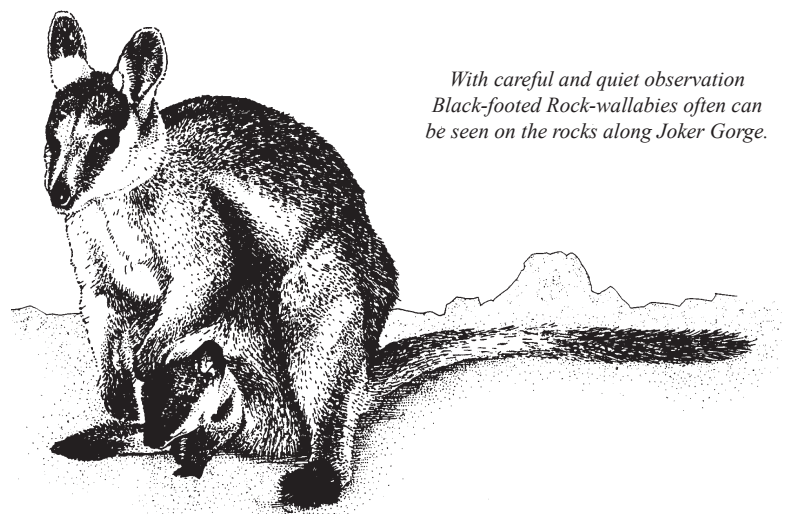
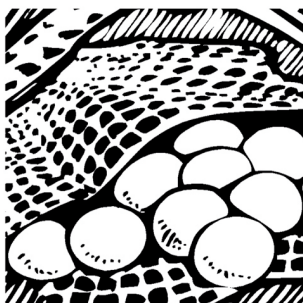
12-oz. (400g.) of gold from 20 tons of ore treated. A little further up the hill is a stone forge. Follow the range along to the west and you will find a vertical shaft covered by a steel grate. By 1905 the shaft had reached a depth of 70 feet, passing through small seams of quartz that were of little or no value.

The first recorded production from Joker Mine was in 1899. From then until 1908, 27-oz. (840g.) of gold were produced from 63 tons of ore, a yield of 0.42 oz./ton. In a 1902 report by government geologist, H.Y.L. Brown, it is stated that Joker Gorge is abandoned and that *"this is worth working. It is situated in a more favourable location for carting ore to the battery than are the other mines on White Range, and its prospects are most encouraging"*. The lease was owned by Arthur Evans

who in evidence given in 1917 was described as *"an absolute waster"*, a *"drinking man"* who *"for years past has not been able to support himself."*

3. Joker Gorge

Joker Gorge rewards the walker with some stunning scenery. It is also home to some of Arltunga's most interesting wildlife. This gorge contains the only source of semipermanent surface water within the reserve, and hence wildlife is more concentrated here. The large rocks, overhangs, and steep cliffs provide ideal habitat for Black-footed Rock-wallabies. If you are quiet you will be able to spot them here at any time of the day. You may be able to see droppings of Dingoes and Echidnas. Spinifex Pigeons, Crested Pigeons, Zebra Finches, and Honeyeaters are common here.



With careful and quiet observation Black-footed Rock-wallabies often can be seen on the rocks along Joker Gorge.

Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

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