

WHITE ROCKS



DSCN2175

BASIC INFORMATION

Description:	Varied climbing on cracks, slabs and walls
Location:	Overlooking the Queanbeyan River
Access:	Wickerslack Lane or Doeberl Place, Karabar
Orientation:	East, usually in shade after 3pm
Rock:	Limestone, sloping at 75 degrees
Height:	15 metres, dries quickly after rain
Climbing:	Top roping and trad climbing
Child Friendly:	>8 years, all children must be supervised
Number of Climbs:	20, plus many variations
Grades:	6-19
Co-ordinates	Lat: -35.381825° Long: 149.247483°



CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Location Map	4
Access	5
Fixed Anchors	6
Crag Topo	7
Climbs – Left Side of Central Gully	8
Climbs – Right Side of Central Gully	11
Group Leader's Notes	13
Grade Statistics and Climb Index	15
Climbing Accident – Emergency Response	16

**PLEASE DO NOT ADD OR REMOVE BOLTS BEFORE DISCUSSING
YOUR PLANS WITH THE CANBERRA CLIMBERS ASSOCIATION
IF BOLTS NEED MAINTENANCE PLEASE CONTACT THE CANBERRA
CLIMBERS ASSOCIATION**

I am grateful for the input of my friends Armando Corvini and Robert Douglas who assisted with field work and provided useful comments and edits to this guide.

Comments and corrections can be sent to brianmattick@homemail.com.au

Unless otherwise noted all photos by Brian Mattick.

Please remove all rubbish including that of careless others

Respect native vegetation and minimise off-track activities

LEAVE NO TRACE

There is an on-going need for cliff gardening, usually removing weeds, grass, blackberries and a thorny briar. All climbers can assist with the task of keeping the climbs vegetation free. Your peers will thank you.

White Rocks 2021, 2nd edition

Previous edition 2018

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White Rocks

It's small, but what a gem! Close to town, overlooking the Queanbeyan river, good rock, easy gear placement and moderately graded climbs. A wonderful crag to learn the basics of traditional climbing. Many people have had their first experience of abseiling and outdoor rock climbing at this easily accessible crag.

Originally called Wickerslack Crag No 1 Buttress because access was from Wickerslack Lane, this limestone crag fell out of favour when climbers started exploring (in the 70s) the granite boulders and crags in the Brindabellas. But in the 90s it made a comeback with a new name, White Rocks, and easier access from the new subdivision around Barracks Flat Drive. In 2020 the new Ellerton Drive Extension cut off access and climbers once again are walking in from Wickerslack Lane.

Also in 2020 the wild fires in the Brindabellas closed most of the crags in the National Park and visitations to White Rocks dramatically increased.

These days you will find someone there most weekends, climbing or abseiling, and often after work during the daylight saving months.

Remember, you are totally responsible for your safety at the crag.

There is nothing in this guide that changes your responsibility to make a level headed assessment of the difficulty and risk of the chosen climb.

You alone know your capabilities as a climber.

If you are an inexperienced trad climber please seek expert instruction. The Canberra Climbers Association or our advertisers in this guide are a good place to start learning the skills of a traditional climber.

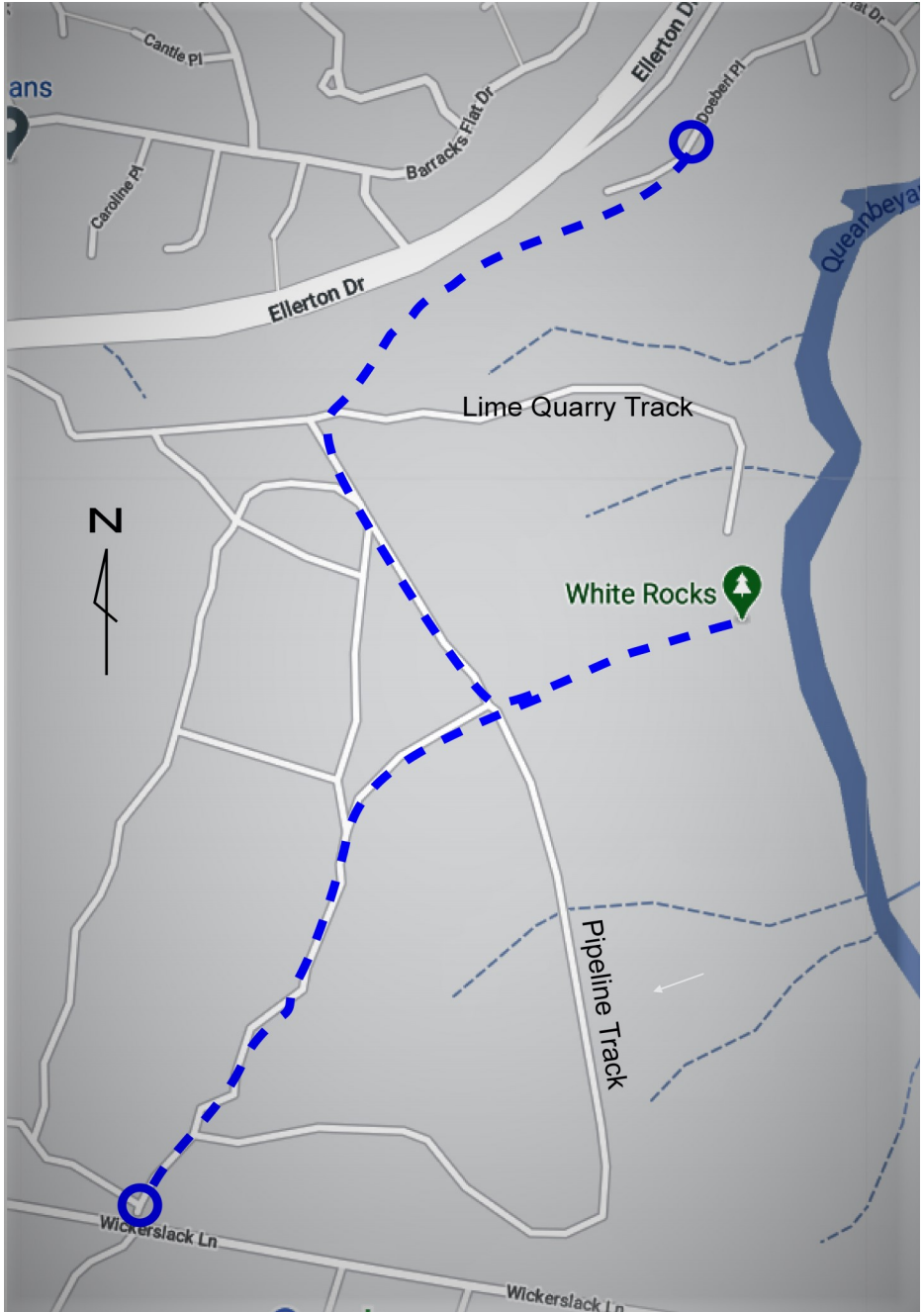
In the early 2000s the YMCA arranged for five sets of double ring bolts to be placed at the top of the crag, making it easier to set up suitable anchors for top-roping and with the added benefit of reducing damage to trees that had previously been used for this purpose.

A few years later anchor bolts were placed on **Cave Climb** and in 2019 anchor bolts were placed for **Florin** and **Tiny Tower**.

In 2020 the increased traffic at White Rocks highlighted the need for crag maintenance and the 'track fairies' and 'bolting fairies' got busy on bush and crag restoration. Steps were constructed to direct foot traffic around the crag, slope stabilisation at the base of the crag was undertaken and anchor bolts for top-rope climbing were placed above all climbs.

White Rocks

Location Plan



Background map from GOOGLE MAPS

ACCESS

Access is available from Wickerslack Lane on the south side and Doeberl Place on the north side of the crag. Doeberl Place has limited parking sufficient for two or three cars. Wickerslack Lane has parking for a bus and multiple cars and is therefore the preferred access point to the crag.

Wickerslack Lane Lat: -35.387249°, Long: 149.239765°

1. Drive down Wickerslack Lane for about 0.5 kilometres and park in the layby on the left (opposite approx. address 44 Wickerslack Lane).
2. Walk north-east along a trail bike/BMX track which swings right (downhill) to the Pipeline Track.
3. Cross the Pipeline Track and continue along the rough track to the crag.
4. Time to walk from the car to the crag is about 20 minutes.

Doeberl Place Lat: -35.376630°, Long: 149.247032°

1. Drive down Barracks Flat Drive for about two kilometres then turn right into Doeberl Place and park at the end of the cul-de-sac.
2. Climb over the gate and walk south-west along a rough vehicle track to a gravel road (Lime Quarry Track).
3. Cross the road, avoid the logs, keep walking south on a rough track to join another gravel road beside the Googong Water Main (Pipeline Track).
4. Walk south-east along the Pipeline Track past the small pumping station then up a small rise, turn left and follow the rough track to the crag.
5. Time to walk from the car to the crag is about 25 minutes.

Access

The bushland south of the Ellerton Drive Extension between the Queanbeyan River and Cooma Rd is known as the Gale Precinct. It's the only crown land traversed by the new road and an important recreational area for the residents of the Barracks Flat Subdivision who walk or ride mountain bikes on the many trails that criss-cross the precinct. During community consultation (2017) about the new road, residents' concerns about safe pedestrian crossing points and access were dismissed by the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council who replied that "the Gale Precinct is Crown Land under a Native Title Claim" and "council will not actively encourage the public to enter these bushlands".

A disappointing response for an important public resource!

FIXED ANCHORS

**All climbs have anchor bolts for top-roping the climbs.
Please use quick draws on the ring bolts to minimise
wear and tear to the hardware.**

In this guide we refer to anchor bolts, ground anchors, safety bolts and fixed runners and these are defined below.

Anchor Bolts, are a pair of bolts at the top of the climb that are used for creating an anchor for top-rope climbing using a bottom belay.

Ground Anchor, is a single bolt at the base of a climb that the belayer may choose to belay from when belaying a climber.

Safety Bolt, is a bolt at the top of the crag that is used by the guide as a temporary belay when setting up the top-rope anchor. Not all climbs need or require a safety bolt.

Fixed Runner, refers to a bolt that is used as a runner on a climb.

Most anchor bolts can be reached, with a bit of a stretch, from the top of the crag. Simply lie on the rock and reach over to clip the anchor bolt.

Even though there are a few bolts (fixed runners) on some climbs such as **The Slab** and **The Roof**, this is a traditional crag and if you plan on leading any of the routes you will need a standard trad rack. In general the anchor bolts are not positioned or intended as top belays for the climbs. They were placed for top-roping the climbs.

Minimum Trad Rack (BD or equivalent)

- ◆ Black Diamond stoppers, size #1 to #13
- ◆ Black Diamond cams, size #0.3 to #2.0
- ◆ 8 quick draws
- ◆ 2 x 60cm slings with carabineers



BAD



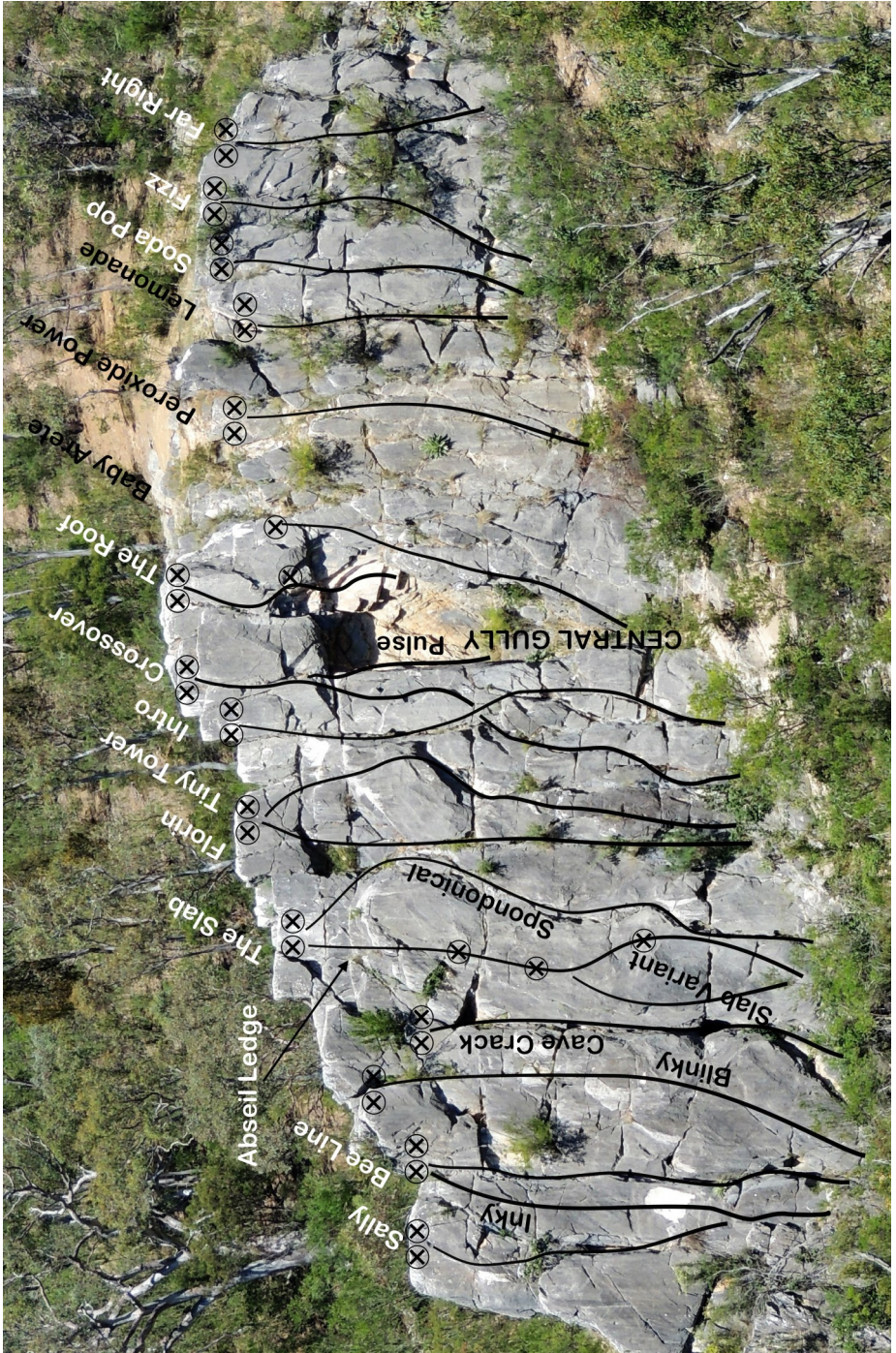
BETTER
but kinks the rope



PERFECT



PERFECT



Crag Photo

Climbs are described to the left and right of Central Gully, which is the obvious gully capped by an overhang in the middle of the crag. When you walk down the steps and onto the cleared area at the base of the crag you are at Central Gully.

CLIMBS ON THE LEFT SIDE OF CENTRAL GULLY

Pulse, 11, 9m

Scramble up **Central Gully** for about 9m until you are below the roof then ascend the steep left hand corner exiting left under the roof to join **Crossover** at the committing step into the groove. Don't make the mistake of trying to directly climb the roof.

Intro, 9, 17m

The most popular climb at White Rocks. Start about 3m left of the gully. Climb cracks and ledges to the wide right facing corner at about half height. Ascend the corner to the anchor bolts.

A variation for **Intro** is to finish up **Crossover**.

Crossover, 12, 17m

Start on the right side of the tiny tower and about 2m left of **Intro**. Steep and fingery climbing up cracks and corners to cross **Intro** at about half height at the base of the wide right facing corner. Then climb flakes and edges to an awkward and committing step right into the groove below the anchor bolts. Climb the groove to the anchors.

A variation for **Crossover** is to finish up **Intro**.

ROCK CLIMBING, ABSEILING AND CAVING





Tiny Tower, 15, 15m

Climbs the face of the precarious tower then trend right to surmount the slab and up to the anchor bolts. Don't forget to stand on top of the tower. The crux is getting onto the slab above the tower.

A variation is to start at **Crossover** and climb the corner crack right of the tiny tower to join the route at the top of the tower.

Florin, 13, 16m

Named after the late Florin Tepes who, with Armando, spent many happy hours here introducing youngsters to the wonderful world of climbing.

Climb the corner crack left of the tiny tower. Crux move is at the level of the top of the tower and requires a big reach to good holds and a foot jam. Slightly easier to climb up the wall on

the left but you can't avoid the foot jam. BD #3 and #4 cams are useful on this wide crack.

Spondonical, 10, 17m

Starts about 3m left of the tiny tower leaning against the crag. Climb the right veering crack then back left to the abseil ledge and anchor bolts. The abseil or lower-off from the ledge is 15m.

There are two cruxes, one at the start and the other near the top of the climb. The bottom crux can be avoided on the right near the start to **Florin**.

The Slab, 18, 15m

A slippery slab. Start about 1m left of **Spondonical**. Up the slab passing three bolts (fixed runners) to the anchor bolts on the abseil ledge. The crux is at the first bolt and the difficulty is trying to avoid using the crack.



*Mont Adventure
Equipment store offer a
20% discount to CCA
members.*

The Slab Variation, 19, 15m

Another slippery slab climb. Start about 1m left of **Spondonical**. More left up the slab to join the regular slab route at the second bolt (fixed runner) and continue to the abseil ledge. You will need a cam in the horizontal crack to protect the crux, but this may not be enough to avoid a ground fall. Probably best as a top-rope problem.

Cave Crack, 13, 13m

The next crack, about 3m left of **Spondonical**. Climb the crack to the anchor bolts. A good exercise in bridging.

When the crack steepens at the cave it is possible to move left up the wall to the anchors. One hard move then easy climbing.

Blinky, 14, 13m

Starts between **Cave Crack** and **Bee Line** and climbs the slab heading towards a wide crack right of the fixed anchors. Crux is the first 5m of climbing. A companion route to **Inky**.

Bee Line, 14, 13m

Bee Line is the next crack left of **Cave Crack**. Watch out for the bees in the horizontal crack right of the 'Pac Man' monster. Climb the crack and surmount the small overhang (crux), usually on the left. The bee hive is small, and the bees are not permanent residents although there are always a few hanging around.

Inky, 15, 13m

Start at **Bee Line**. Climb the blocks on the left then straight up the slab between **Sally** and **Bee Line** placing runners in **Bee Line** when needed. Above the small overhang move left or right to the fixed anchors. The white rock looks like a 'Pac Man' monster, hence the name.

Sally, 9, 13m

Everyone knows Armando. This climb is named after his daughter.

The obvious crack at the left end of the crag. Start up **Inky** and move left into the crack near the white rock. Pleasant steep climbing up the crack with great jugs and one hard move near the top.

CLIMBS ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF CENTRAL GULLY

The Roof, 18, 12m

It's strenuous hanging under the roof, but it's only one move to surmount the overhang. Surprisingly the fixed anchor is above the crux, hard to clip and probably useless. (A lower bolt has been chopped so obviously this climb has generated a bit of passion). Maybe best to treat it as a top-rope test piece.

Scramble up **Central Gully** for 6m then climb the slippery yellow slab on the right to below the roof. Make the move over the roof then follow the crack left and up to the anchor bolts.

There are two alternatives to tackle the roof:

1. The less strenuous version. Start up **Baby Arete** then step left onto the yellow slab below the roof to finish the climb.
2. The similarly strenuous version. Up the gully then climb the wall left of the yellow slab, swinging onto the yellow slab to join the route beneath the overhang.

Baby Arete, 6, 18m

The easiest climb at White Rocks. Start about 2m right of the gully. Climb the arete generally on the right side. The climbing finishes after about 11m on a ledge below a fixed runner that gives a great view of climbers struggling on **The Roof**.

The top-rope setup on this climb uses the anchors bolts above **The Roof** with one strand of the rope threaded through a quick draw on the fixed runner. The top-rope climb finishes at the fixed runner.



The rock right of the Peroxide Power has been overlooked in the past. The exposure (height) is not as great as elsewhere at the crag but the angle is slightly steeper and there are many cracks and edges for really enjoyable climbing. Also, the number and variety of cracks make this an excellent place to develop skills building redundant anchors and placing and removing traditional climbing gear.

Peroxide Power, 14, 13m

Start about 5m right of **Baby Arete** at the twin shallow cracks. Climb the steep wall to the anchors bolts. Technical and sustained for 10m.

Lemonade, 12, 11m

Start about 3m right of **Peroxide Power**. Climb the shallow chimney, then cracks and groves.

Soda Pop, 15, 11m

Start about 1m right of **Lemonade**. Straight up the crack. The crux is getting into the wide crack at the start and is poorly protected. A BD #3 cam may help if you can place it otherwise a ground fall is likely, so its probably better to top-rope this one.

An alternative start, to avoid the crux, is to start up **Fizz** then step left into the wide crack.

Fizz, 11, 11m

Start about 1m right of **Soda Pop**. Climb the left facing corner for a couple of metres then straight up the cracks. Wonderful climbing to the anchor bolts.



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Logan Ganas from Melrose High top-rope belaying at the start of **Intro**

Far Right, 10, 8m

Start about 4m right of Fizz. Enjoyable climbing up cracks and ledges to the anchor bolts.

GROUP LEADER'S NOTES

White Rocks is the best 'nursery crag' in the Canberra Queanbeyan region and is visited by many user groups. During the week, it's mostly school groups from both the public and private sector and on the weekends it's mostly families, friends, work colleagues and youth groups. This popularity does cause problems as noted below.

Crowding

Unfortunately, White Rocks is a small crag and in the past large groups have caused problems when they act as if they own the crag. It is too easy to set up a rope on a climb and claim it as your sole right. The recent bolting and gardening are an attempt to open up more of the crag for everyone to enjoy. Our experience is that more than thirty people, either in one group or multiple groups will cause over-crowding and multiple groups totalling more than twenty people will only work if all parties are prepared to co-operate and sometimes share equipment so that everyone has an opportunity to climb or abseil. This can be difficult when there is a mixture of guides and their clients and recreational users, as the responsibilities are different. But it's not insurmountable if all groups exercise goodwill.

Top-Rope Setup

All climbs have been equipped with anchor bolts. Conveniently, erosion has created a rock wall barrier so that many top-rope setups can be undertaken by safely leaning over the edge to fix the anchors and thread the rope. This setup takes approximately five minutes at each climb.

The anchor bolts for **Cave Climb** can be reached by a short abseil or down climb from Abseil Ledge. See Abseil Setup for information on accessing Abseil Ledge.

Two safety bolts have been installed for setting up top-ropes on **Peroxide Power, Lemonade and Soda Pop**. The anchor bolts for **Lemonade** and **Soda Pop** are close to the top of the cliff but the anchor bolts on **Peroxide Power** and the fixed runner on **Baby Arete** require a short scramble down the cliff to set up these climbs. A 5m safety rope is needed for these setups, which take between ten and fifteen minutes at each climb.

At other climbs such as **Sally**, **Bee Line**, **Blinky** and **Intro** a BD #0.5 or #0.75 Camalot can be used for a quick temporary safety anchor while the top rope is rigged. This setup will take five to ten minutes for each climb.

Abseil Setup

Abseil Ledge is the preferred abseil setup site because it is quick and easy to rig and the anchor point is above the abseilers waist, which is beneficial for novice abseilers. We encourage students/clients to climb **Spondonical** (with a top belay) and abseil off, thereby keeping the group at the base of the crag.

Safety bolts have been installed to allow a safety rope (requiring at least 6m of rope) to be fixed for scrambling around to Abseil Ledge. The safety rope is clipped to a bolt on the Abseil Ledge side by lying on top of the crag and reaching over to clip the bolt. The other end of the safety rope is clipped to a bolt near the wide crack on the track side of the crag. The safety rope can also be used by students/clients who do not wish to climb. The abseil setup takes about fifteen minutes to rig.

Other abseil lines can be set up in the section between **Baby Arete** and **Peroxide Power** however the anchors are trees so the set up is more complex.

The anchor point is remote from the abseiler and at a low angle to their waist, which increases the difficulty for novice abseilers. Also, student/clients are at the top of the crag and require close supervision and it is more time consuming to rig. For these reasons abseil setups off trees at White Rocks are usually avoided.

Ground Anchors

With single pitch climbs it is common to use the belayers body weight for the anchor. A ground anchor gives extra security if the climber is heavier than the belayer.



Photo Sarah Plowman

IMG_1016

Grade Statistics



INDEX BY NAME

Name	Grade	Page
Baby Arete	6	11
Bee Line	14	10
Blinky	14	10
Cave Crack	13	10
Crossover	12	8
Far Right	10	12
Fizz	11	12
Florin	13	9
Inky	15	10
Intro	9	8
Lemonade	12	12
Peroxide Power	14	12
Pulse	11	8
Sally	9	10
Soda Pop	15	12
Spondonical	10	9
The Roof	18	11
The Slab	18	9
The Slab Variation	19	10
Tiny Tower	15	9

INDEX BY GRADE

Name	Grade	Page
Baby Arete	6	11
Intro	9	8
Sally	9	10
Far Right	10	12
Spondonical	10	9
Fizz	11	12
Pulse	11	8
Crossover	12	8
Lemonade	12	12
Florin	13	9
Bee Line	14	10
Blinky	14	10
Cave Crack	14	10
Peroxide Power	14	12
Tiny Tower	15	9
Inky	15	10
Soda Pop	15	12
The Roof	18	11
The Slab	18	9
The Slab Variation	19	10

Canberra Climbers Association

The Canberra Climbers Association was formed over twenty years ago as a special interest group to work with land managers on access and related issues affecting climbing in the ACT. You can assist with this important work by visiting our website at <https://canberraclimbers.org.au> and becoming a member.

CLIMBING ACCIDENT—EMERGENCY RESPONSE

When faced with an accident don't be afraid to call for assistance. In an emergency call triple zero (000). Stay calm and provide as much information as possible to assist emergency services in locating and responding to the incident.

Your response will depend on many factors. The following steps outlined below will help prioritize your response to the situation.

D **DANGER**
Ensure the area is safe for yourself, others and the casualty. Climbers must resist the temptation to take risks to reach the casualty.

R **RESPONSE**
Check for response by talking to and touching the casualty. Ask name—squeeze shoulders etc.

A **AIRWAYS**
Open mouth and check airways.

B **BREATHING**
Look, listen and feel for breathing.

C **CPR**
30 chest compressions : 2 breaths :
100 compressions pre minute;
continue until help arrives or casualty recovers.

Serious Bleeding

Apply direct pressure to reduce blood loss.
If embedded object apply indirect pressure

Important information for emergency services includes:

1. What happened.
2. Where you are.
3. Extent and nature of injuries.
4. Number of people in the group.
5. Weather conditions.

If casualty is responsive:

1. Reassure
2. Make comfortable but avoid unnecessary movement
3. Control bleeding by direct pressure
4. Examine carefully
5. Monitor vital signs

If airways blocked roll casualty on side (recovery position). Tilt head back and remove objects with fingers or drain any fluid.

Maintaining a clear airway has priority over concern about spinal injuries.

If casualty is breathing but unconscious:

1. Avoid unnecessary movement
2. Control bleeding by direct pressure
3. Examine carefully
4. Monitor vital signs
5. If you must leave casualty, roll into recovery position