

Mt Emerald

Mt Emerald is one of a number of high points of the Walsh River catchment west of Tolga and Atherton. It's generally open, rocky country with interesting and diverse flora and great views from many vantage points. Access in to this country is a bit limited with the main points being Mt Wallum to the north and the track up to Mt Emerald.

Mt Emerald may have been overlooked as a destination to many until it was brought into repute following a tragic aircraft disaster in May 1990 when a small jet aircraft crashed into the mountain killing all 11 people on board. Debris was scattered all over the mountainside where a lot of it still remains.

It's a relatively easy work with mostly easy grades and views most of the way. Between Walkamin and Tolga there is a mar memorial and roadside camping area at Rocky Creek. Opposite this area Fraser Road heads south and becomes Marnane Road. Follow this road for about 5 kms then turn left into Anderson Rd. It's just over a km to a "road ends" sign and a carpark of sorts. You might consider parking here as the road that continues up the hill can be a bit rough to the crest of a ridge about another km away. From this ridge a rough road follows a fence line uphill to the west. This road starts rough and gets rougher and is only suitable for 4WDs. At about 1.3kms there is a bit of a carpark at the bottom of a steep rocky pinch. If you have driven this far I would recommend leaving your car here as turning around beyond here could be tricky. However, at about 930m you have got a lot of altitude out of the way. A couple of short, steep sections and around 30 mins later you will see a track heading off to the left. Continuing straight ahead takes you to some good views, but the left hand track takes you to Mt Emerald. It passes a great lookout toward Mt Emerald before descending into a saddle at the base of the last steep climb. At this saddle avoid the track to the left and head straight up the mountain. It's only 10 mins of effort to a hilltop to the south of Mt Emerald. There is a bit of a campsite here and the trail heads SSW out to a rocky slab overlooking Mt Emerald. Follow the cairns or tape down and to the right to pick up the easy trail to the summit, passing a memorial cairn to the crash victims on the way. I don't think it is appropriate to souvenir any of the aircraft remains that you will see scattered around the hillsides.

Depending on where you park it can be only a 3 hour return walk to the summit but the scenery is very distracting. This can be a hot walk in summer so bring plenty of water.

