

## Deptford

The Deptford Picnic Area is located in the area that once was a small gold mining village situated on the Nicholson River. It is 34km north of Bairnsdale and approximately 300km east of Melbourne.

There are opportunities for both day visitors and campers, with good access to the Nicholson River, plenty of spots for a picnic and a pleasant walk that meanders through the surrounding bush incorporating some of the local history along the way. This walk includes the site of the township cemetery, 'Baker's Oven' and Houghton's Diversion Tunnel.

## Getting there

There is four-wheel drive access to the Deptford Picnic Area via the Deptford Road. The Deptford Road turns off to the left of the Great Alpine Road, approximately 7.7km from the Bairnsdale Post Office on the way to Bruthen. Follow the Deptford Road for 11.7km (passing through the Clifton Creek locality) to the State forest boundary. Continue into the State forest along the winding gravel road for another 14.3km. The main camping area is located on the other side of the Nicholson River and access by vehicles involves a potentially deep river crossing.

The Deptford Picnic Area can also be accessed with two-wheel drives off the Great Alpine Road. Travel north along the Great Alpine Road from Bruthen for 2.7km and turn left onto Engineers Road. Follow Engineers Road for approximately 20.5km. The Deptford Road turns off Engineers Road to the left. Follow Deptford Road for approximately 4.8km to reach the main camping areas.

## Camping

Camping is permitted at Deptford. All camping sites must be at least 20 metres from waterways.

## Picnic site and facilities

Picnic facilities, car parking and public toilets are available at the Deptford picnic area.

Vehicle access, parking and picnic facilities are available at Stanton's Place, at the southern, downstream end of Slaughter walking track.

## Walks



### Slaughter Walking Track

Grade of Walk <sup>1</sup> :	Grade 3
Distance:	Return 9.0km
Time:	3 hours
Gradient:	Gentle hills
Quality of Path:	Formed track, some obstacles
Quality of Markings:	Sign posted
Steps:	Occasional steps
Experience required:	Some bushwalking experience recommended

This walk commences at Deptford Picnic Area and traverses the slopes above the Nicholson River. The track passes through the forest over usually dry creek beds and provides views down to the Nicholson River. The track crosses Store Creek shortly before reaching Stanton's Place Picnic Area. Retrace your steps to return back to Deptford Picnic Area.

The name Slaughter Track originated from its use as an access track for drovers moving cattle up the river from the open country at Waterholes. At each settlement a beast was slaughtered to provide meat for that community. The track was also used as a goods route taking vegetables grown at The Farm (down stream) up to the settlements, and the local children at Deptford used the track to walk to school at The Farm when the Deptford School fell into disrepair.

## Flora and Fauna

The State forest surrounding the Deptford Picnic Area is home to many different species of flora and fauna, some of which are rare in this area. On your travels, you may notice signs of wombats, possums and lyrebirds, see goannas, echidnas and maybe a wallaby or an emu, and if staying overnight, you might hear the call of a powerful owl or see some of the tiny forest bats that roost in nearby mine shafts.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on how walks are graded, visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/walking](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/walking)

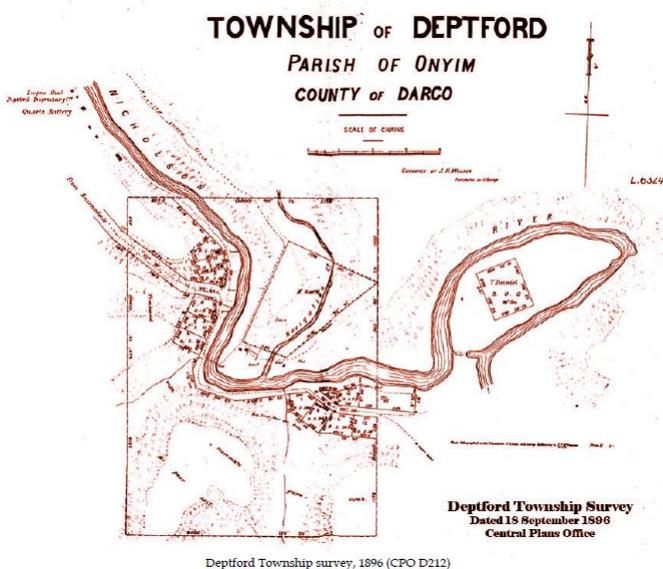


## History

The Nicholson River was one of the early sites for gold mining in Gippsland, with the first gold discovery registered in 1852. In 1854, the river was proven auriferous and by 1856, the Nicholson River Goldfields were well known.

The Deptford Township was officially gazetted and named in 1866 and consisted of a hotel, post office, general store, school, blacksmith's shop, chemist and bakery. In its' heyday, Deptford had a population close to 300 people. However, there were only ever three timber houses and all other buildings, apart from the hotel and store, were simple bush structures of spars and bark.

Residence remained in the district through to the early 1900's with the school closing in 1928.



## Indigenous past use of area

Indigenous people of the Gunai/Kurnai used the Deptford area for the hunting and gathering of food.

They hunted large animals including kangaroos and wombats as a source of meat and could carve

their bones into tools such as sewing needles and spears. Possums were also caught and eaten, and their fur was kept and sewn together, using the bone needle, to make rugs.

From the river they would hunt fish using bone spears or fishing nets woven from bark off the Messmate Stringybark tree and Kangaroo Grass.

Fishing often occurred in the evening using burning torches, because the light attracted fish.

Plants were also a valuable source of food. This included the Kangaroo Grass seeds being ground into flour; the ripe red berries off the Kangaroo Apple Tree being picked and eaten; and tuberous roots cooked.

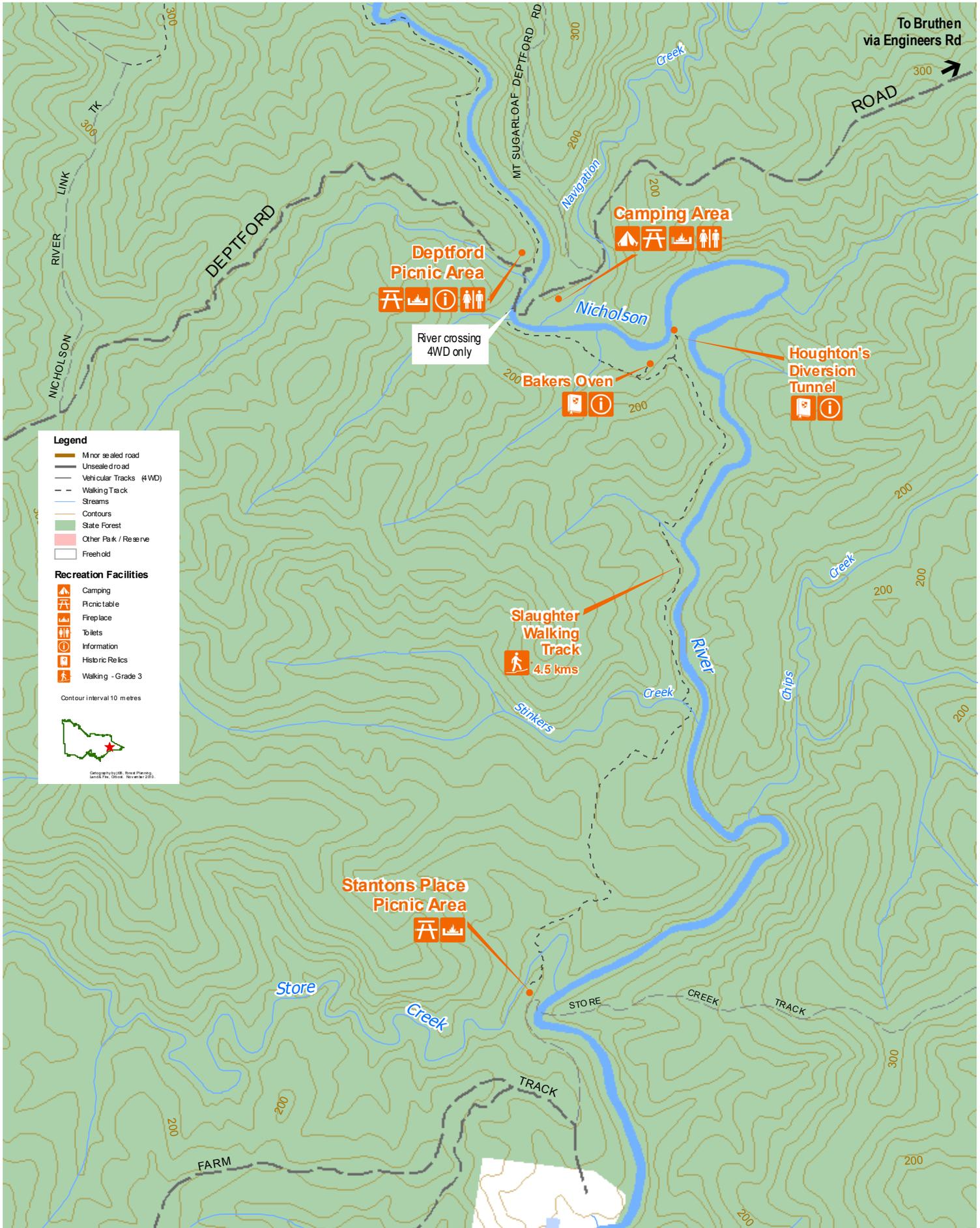
## Looking after forests

- Don't disturb native plants and animals
- There is no rubbish collection service, so please take your rubbish home. If you have the misfortune to come across other people's rubbish, do the bush a favour and take it out with you too.
- Dogs must be under direct control at all times and are expected to be on a leash in picnic and camping areas or when near other visitors.
- Take care with fire- observe all fire regulations and Total Fire Ban days. Use existing fireplaces and ensure fires are safe and that they are completely extinguished when you leave.
- Fires must be less than 1m square and at least 3m clear of burnable material.
- Make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return, and don't forget to let them know when you are back.
- Motor vehicles including motorcycles must not be driven off formed roads or on walking tracks. All vehicles must be registered and drivers licensed.

## For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact DSE's Customer Service Centre on 136 186 (TTY: 1800 122 969) or visit DSE's website at <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/forests>

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**Legend**

- Minor sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Vehicle Tracks (4WD)
- Walking Track
- Streams
- Contours
- State Forest
- Other Park / Reserve
- Freehold

**Recreation Facilities**

- Camping
- Picnic table
- Fire place
- Toilets
- Information
- Historic Relics
- Walking - Grade 3

Contour interval 10 metres

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