

State Forest of the Bruthen Area

State Forest extends to the north, east and west of Bruthen, a delightful Gippsland historic village situated on the Tambo River approximately 300km east of Melbourne.

Recreation opportunities include a series of walking trails that have recently been developed to the north of Bruthen, the East Gippsland Rail Trail, Fairy Dell and the Little Dick Tower. You can enjoy a pleasant day picnicking in town; swim, canoe or fish on the beautiful Tambo River; or visit sites located in the surrounding State forest to walk, cycle, horseride or explore.

Getting there

The State Forest of the Bruthen District is accessible via the Great Alpine Road (GAR), approximately 15 minutes car travel from Bairnsdale.

Indigenous history

The Gunai are the Indigenous people of Gippsland. The tribe consists of five clans: Krowatungalooong, Brayakalooong, Tatungalooong, Brabiralooong and Bratowalooong. The Bruthen area comes under the traditional lands of the Brabiralooong Tribe, who covered the plains and hills north of Bairnsdale and the surrounding area.

Today, many Aboriginal sites and stories are still present within this rich landscape. These sites consist of scar trees, stone artefact manufacturing sites, ceremonial grounds, campsites and travelling routes.

'Bruthen' is derived from the Aboriginal name of one of the headmen for that area, *Brewdthan Mungie*. The Aboriginal name for 'Mossiface' (a tiny settlement 2.5km west of Bruthen), is *marlung-dum*, meaning mussel shell. The Aboriginal word for 'Ramrod' Creek (the local watering hole) is *bung warl*, meaning camp spear.

European history

The first pastoralists used the Tambo Valley as a route from the Monaro to the Gippsland Plains in the 1840s. By 1858, a hotel, store and blacksmith catered to the drovers using the stock routes and also to travelling packers and miners. In 1859 the town was laid out at the junction of these two main routes, beside the river crossing.

Settlers quickly took up the Tambo Valley in the 1860s, the Land Acts making selection possible. Wheat, oats, and potatoes were grown on the fertile river flats. By the 1880s maize and hops had become important crops. Sheep and cattle grazed the foothills and many settlers stripped wattle bark and split rails to support their living.

The lower Tambo River provided transport for steamboats to transport produce and a busy port named Batten's Landing operated at Mossiface. Extensive timber resources led to two factories being established in the 1940s making axe handles and tools, which were supported by a number of sawmills in the area.

Reminders of the past include Calvert's hop kilns, built in 1888 and listed in the Victorian Heritage Register, and a giant maize crib, both located at Mossiface.

Significant flora

The most significant vegetation in the Bruthen State Forest occurs in areas dominated by Box Ironbark forest with a grassy, open understorey and along gullies, creeklines and rivers. Warm Temperate Rainforest stands occur in the fire-protected gullies at Fairy Dell, in the Tambo River Gorge and in the Ramrod Creek catchment north of Bruthen. These rare stands contain many threatened species including: Yellow Milk-vine (*Marsdenia flavescens*), Prickly Tree-fern (*Cyathea leichhardtiana*), Wallaby-bush (*Beyeria lasiocarpa*), Yellow-wood (*Acronychia oblongifolia*), Pinkwood (*Beyeria viscosa*).

Red Ironbark (*Eucalyptus tricarpa*) is an important winter food source for nectar-feeding birds, mammals and insects. An endangered grass, Bushy Hedgehog-grass (*Echinopogon caespitosus*), and many orchids and herbs occur in the open grassy areas close to the Bruthen township. Manna Gum (*E. viminalis*) provides important habitat for Koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) that have been translocated to the area.

Significant fauna

This area of State Forest provides important habitat for the endangered Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) – Australia's largest owl. Two other threatened large owls, the Masked Owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) and Sooty Owl (*Tyto tenebricosa*), have also been recorded. These owls require large home ranges (500-800ha), large hollow bearing nest trees for breeding and sufficient density of possums and gliders to prey upon. Other threatened species include the Giant Burrowing Frog (*Heleioporus australiacus*), White-footed Dunnart (*Sminthopsis leucopus*) and Martin's Toadlet (*Uperoleia*



martini). Woodland-dependent summer migrants visit the rainshadow areas along the Tambo River from the north, such as Rainbow Bee-eaters (*Merops ornatus*) and Dollarbirds (*Eurystomus orientalis*).

Walking Trails

The Bruthen Walking Trails are a unique product of a 2005 health sector initiative to encourage more members of the community to increase their exercise as an illness preventative measure.

There are six trails in total, with distances ranging from 2km-7km; trail grade ranges from easy to hard.

McLeans Carpark provides the trailhead for the six Bruthen Walking Trails. The Trails' brochure is available for download from the website:

www.vicnet.net.au/~bruthen/bruthen_trails.html

Rail Trail

The East Gippsland Rail Trail is a recreation trail for cyclists, walkers and horse riders.

The 97km trail follows the former Bairnsdale to Orbost railway line. It passes through rural landscapes with views of the Gippsland Lakes, and through peaceful forest settings. The trail passes through the townships of Nicholson, Bruthen and Nowa Nowa.

More information about this long and varied trail can be found at the website: www.eastgippslandrailtrail.com

Gippsland Lakes Discovery Trail

The Gippsland Lakes Discovery Trail (GLDT) is a purpose built bicycle and walking trail that intimately winds through the forest, providing a unique experience not found elsewhere in Victoria. Passing through the Colquhoun State Forest, this trail runs from the East Gippsland Rail Trail at Seaton Track (11km from Bruthen) 25km to Lakes Entrance. Horses are not permitted on the GLDT.

The GLDT Forests Note provides more information about this track and is available at DSE's website:

www.dse.vic.gov.au/forests

Picnic sites

Picnic facilities and public toilets are available in the Bruthen town. Facilities within forest locations include:

- Fairy Dell – ample car parking, toilets, picnic tables, barbecues, walking trail interpretive material.
- McLeans Carpark – ample car parking, picnic table, walking trails' interpretive material and trailhead for the six Bruthen Walking Trails.

Fairy Dell

Fairy Dell Flora Reserve is a Nature Conservation Reserve of special significance to the local area. At 80ha in size, it protects an important area of Warm Temperate Rainforest. Dogs and firewood cutting are not permitted within the reserve. On the outskirts of Bruthen, this reserve is a lovely spot to visit, with a picnic area and walking trail. This area is managed by Parks Victoria, and further information can be obtained by calling the Parks Victoria Information Centre on ☎ 131 963. See attached map.

Little Dick Tower

In response to the massive devastation from bushfires in 1939, the then Forests Commission rapidly upgraded and expanded the State's fire detection system. Mt. Little Dick Firetower was built in 1940, from timber hewn by hand with broadaxes and adzes. The 19m high tower was constructed by well known Forest Commission identities, including Cecil Cross and Charlie Wain.



The tower is located 4.5km up Mount Little Dick Range Road, which runs off the GAR 3km north of Bruthen. Access up the structure is prohibited but the site can be visited to see the tower and views of the Tambo River flats south of Bruthen.

Looking after our 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 kept 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 rather than create your own. Never leave fires unattended. Ensure fires are safe and that they are completely extinguished when you leave.
- Only light fires in fireplaces or 30cm deep trenches. Fires must be less than 1m square and at least 3m clear of burnable material.
- Minor forest (unsealed) roads can be boggy in winter. Stay on the major (sealed) roads in wet weather.
- Motor vehicles including motorcycles must not be driven off formed roads.
- Make sure you tell someone where you are going, when you expect to return, and when you are back.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability & Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact DSE's Bairnsdale office on ☎ (03) 5152 0600 or the Department's Customer Service Centre on ☎ 136 186 or visit the website at:

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/forests>

Acknowledgements: This brochure was written by DSE staff in conjunction with the Bruthen Walking Trails Committee.

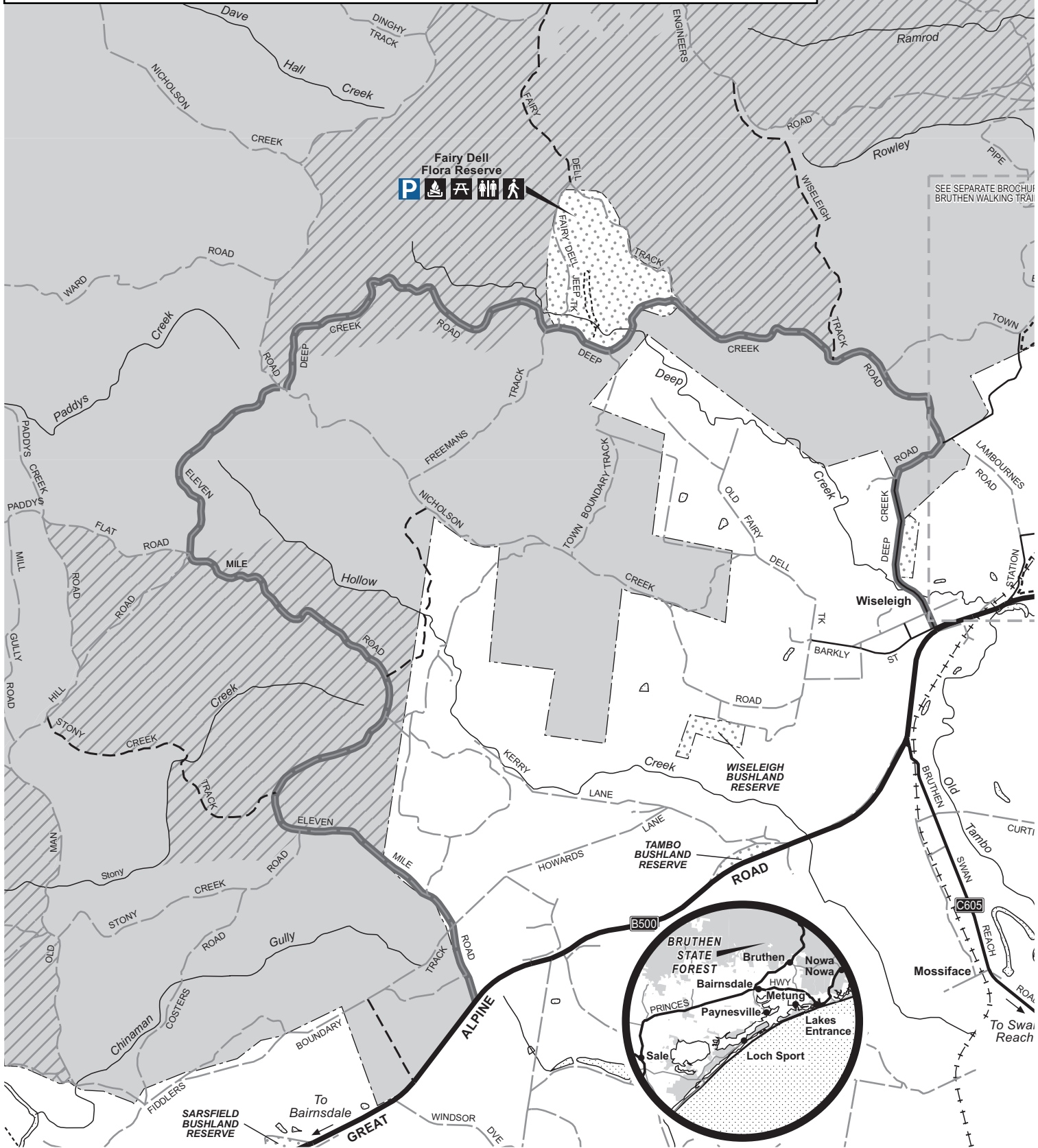
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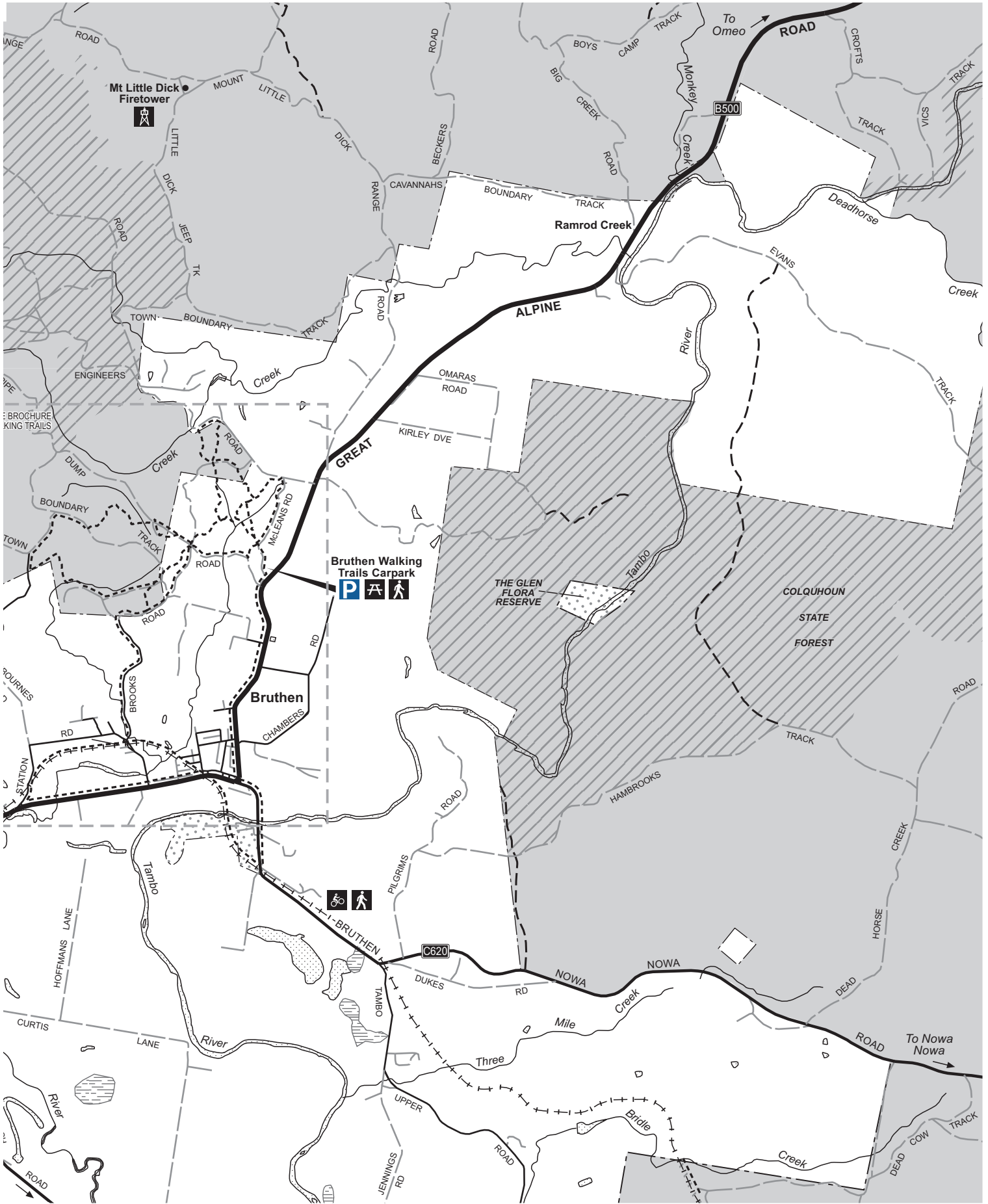
Recreational Facilities

- Highway
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Vehicle track (4WD)
- Forest Drive
- East Gippsland Rail Trail
- Walking track
- State Forest
- Park / Reserve
- Special Protection Zone (No firewood collection is permitted)
- Water body

- Cycling
- Carpark
- Fireplace
- Firetower / Lookout
- Picnic table
- Toilets
- Walking



SEE SEPARATE BROCHURE BRUTHEN WALKING TRAIL



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