



# Lower Big River Recreation and Camping Guide

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## Big River State Forest

Situated about 2½ hours drive north east of Melbourne, south east of Eildon, Big River State forest provides excellent opportunities for camping, bushwalking, picnicking, fishing and kayaking. The heritage classified Big River is at the scenic heart of the forested valley.

Lower Big River has eight separate camping areas and a number of day visitor areas scattered along Eildon-Jamieson Rd and Big River Rd (see map overleaf).

## Location and Access

From the Maroondah Hwy, turn right to Thornton and turn onto the Goulburn Valley Highway, then right onto Eildon-Jamieson Rd. Big River Road is 30 kilometres from the Highway. Camping and day visitor areas are scattered along Eildon Jamieson Rd before and after Big River Rd and along Big River Rd itself. The camping areas can also be accessed from the south via Marysville and Woods Point Rd. Access this way requires a 4WD as Big River Rd between Enochs Point and 25 Mile Creek is not suitable for 2WD vehicles.

## History

The Big River State forest is the traditional land of the Kulin nation. The Taungurung tribe looked after the land in the north and the Wurundjeri tribe looked after land in the south. Stone artefacts identified along the Big River highlight the area was frequently visited and used for camping.

In the 1850's large groups of prospectors were attracted to the Big River when rich alluvial deposits of gold were discovered. By the early 1860's, companies were mining quartz reefs, although good alluvial gold was still being found into the 1880's. The population along the Big River peaked at about 1,000 in the mid 1860's, with main settlements at Darlingford and Enochs Point. By 1867 the population had diminished to a couple of hundred.

Mining continued into the 1900's, and evidence remains through the Big River State Forest of widespread alluvial and quartz mining.

The Old Coach Rd from Darlingford (now under Lake Eildon) to Enochs Point was constructed by pick and shovel to allow horse and coach traffic to travel to this remote area. Parts of this track (now closed to vehicles) are popular for walkers and nature enthusiasts. A variety of wildlife can be observed along the way.

## What facilities are provided?

A number of camping areas are located throughout Big River State Forest, with day visitor areas located at 'The Rapids' and 'Enoch Falls.' Toilet facilities, fireplaces and picnic tables are provided at designated sites (see map overleaf).

## Campfire Guidelines

- **Campfire safety** – All solid fuel fires must be in a properly constructed fireplace or in a trench at least 30 cm deep, with the ground and airspace within 3m of the outer perimeter of the fire clear of flammable material. All liquid, gas or chemical solid fuel fires must keep the ground and airspace within 1.5m of the outer perimeter of the fire clear of flammable material. Fires must be attended at all times by a person with the capacity and means to extinguish it. Ensure the fire is extinguished with water before leaving. **If it's cool to touch it is safe to leave.**
- **Campfires are prohibited on days of Total Fire Ban.** This ban does not apply to a person preparing meals on a gas or electric appliance that has been designed and commercially manufactured exclusively for cooking provided:
  - the ground and airspace within 3m of the appliance is clear of flammable material
  - when in use and alight, the appliance at all times is in a stable position and attended by an adult who has the capacity and means (minimum of 10 litres of water on hand) to extinguish the fire.

Lower Big River camping areas are located on the boundary of the North East Total Fire Ban (TFB) district and the North Central TFB district. Taponga and Jimmy Bullocks are within North Central TFB district, while Burnt Bridge, Bulldog Flats, The Pines, Horseshoe Bend, the Rapids, Old Coach, Chaffe Creek, Railway Creek and Enoch Point are within North East TFB district.

**It is your responsibility to know if a Total Fire Ban is declared. If in doubt, do not light a campfire.**

## Forest Use Guidelines

### RUBBISH

There are no rubbish collection facilities available. Please take your rubbish with you and ensure the area is clean for future visitors. Do not bury or burn rubbish in

fires. This includes bottles and cans. It is an offence to burn rubbish and those doing so will be fined.

### **TRAIL BIKES and VEHICLES**

Trail bikes and vehicles must be registered. Unlicensed persons are not permitted to ride trail bikes or drive vehicles. Trail bikes and vehicles must not be ridden off formed roads, on walking tracks or around the campground. The surrounding road network is available to licenced and registered riders.

### **FIREARMS**

Normal firearm laws apply in State Forests.

- A licence is required
- It is prohibited to shoot on, from or across roads
- Use of firearms in camping areas is prohibited.

All native birds and animals are protected by law. Big River is a popular recreation area. Take special care with firearms.

### **CAMPING – minimal impact**

To protect the delicate environments of the forest, we need to 'tread lightly' in the bush to minimise our impact on the natural environment.

- Camping is not permitted outside of designated areas or within 20 metres of any river, stream or lake.
- Be careful of camping under trees. Trees can drop their limbs at any time (particularly during high winds).
- Do not dig trenches around tents. With modern tents, this is unnecessary, particularly if you choose a well-drained or raised site.
- Use toilets where provided. At some sites hand washing facilities and toilet paper may not be supplied. Come prepared.
- All native plants and animals are protected.
- Dogs are allowed in State Forest but 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.
- Protect water quality – wash up at least 50 metres away from the river and avoid using soap (use gritty sand and a scourer instead)
- Leave campsites tidy

### **Things to see and do**

The surrounding forest provides excellent opportunities for fishing, camping, bushwalking, mountain bike riding, horse riding and canoeing.

#### **Enoch Falls Walk**



Return 1.5km		40 mins
Gentle hills		Formed track, some obstacles
Sign posted		Occasional steps
No experience required		

This gentle walk follows the banks of Big River through forests of Peppermint and opens to a picturesque cascading waterfalls.

Only a short drive away are some other places worth visiting, including:

- Enoch Point
- Mt Torbreck
- Snobs Creek Falls
- Mt Terrible Lookout
- Lake Eildon National Park
- The township of Jamieson.

A number of camping areas exist further south on Big River Rd, known as Upper Big River camping areas, accessible via Big River Rd from the north (4WD only) or Marysville from the south (see 'Upper Big River State Forest' Forest Note).

### **Safety – Please read**

- On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days, parks and State Forest are closed to the public. Do not enter parks or forests on Code Red Days. If you are already there when a Code Red day is announced, you should leave the night before or early in the morning. For more information contact DELWP (see below).
- Be responsible for your own safety. Be aware of extreme weather events, carry your own first aid kit and let someone know before you go.
- When on forest roads, be prepared for the unexpected. Timber trucks, 4WD's, hikers, horse riders, trail bike riders, cyclists and native animals may also be using your chosen track. Drive as if you are expecting a vehicle to come around the next bend.

### **Seasonal Road Closures**

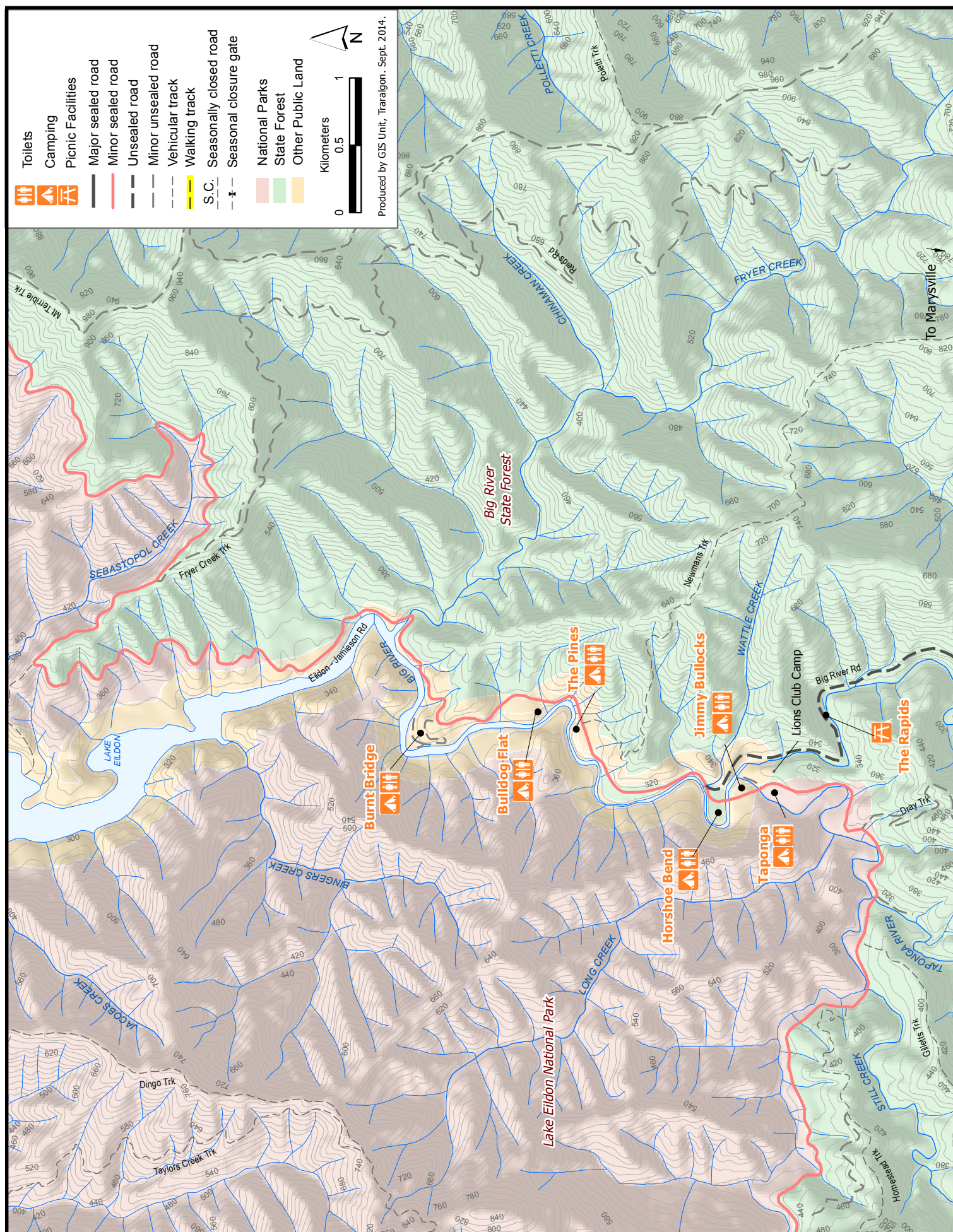
Some roads within the forest are seasonally closed each year from the Thursday after the Queen's Birthday holiday through to the Thursday before Melbourne Cup. This is to protect track surfaces and the environment, and for public safety. Road closures may be extended beyond these dates, depending on weather conditions. These closures are enforced by a gate or sign. Contact DELWP for more information on road closures.

### **For more information**

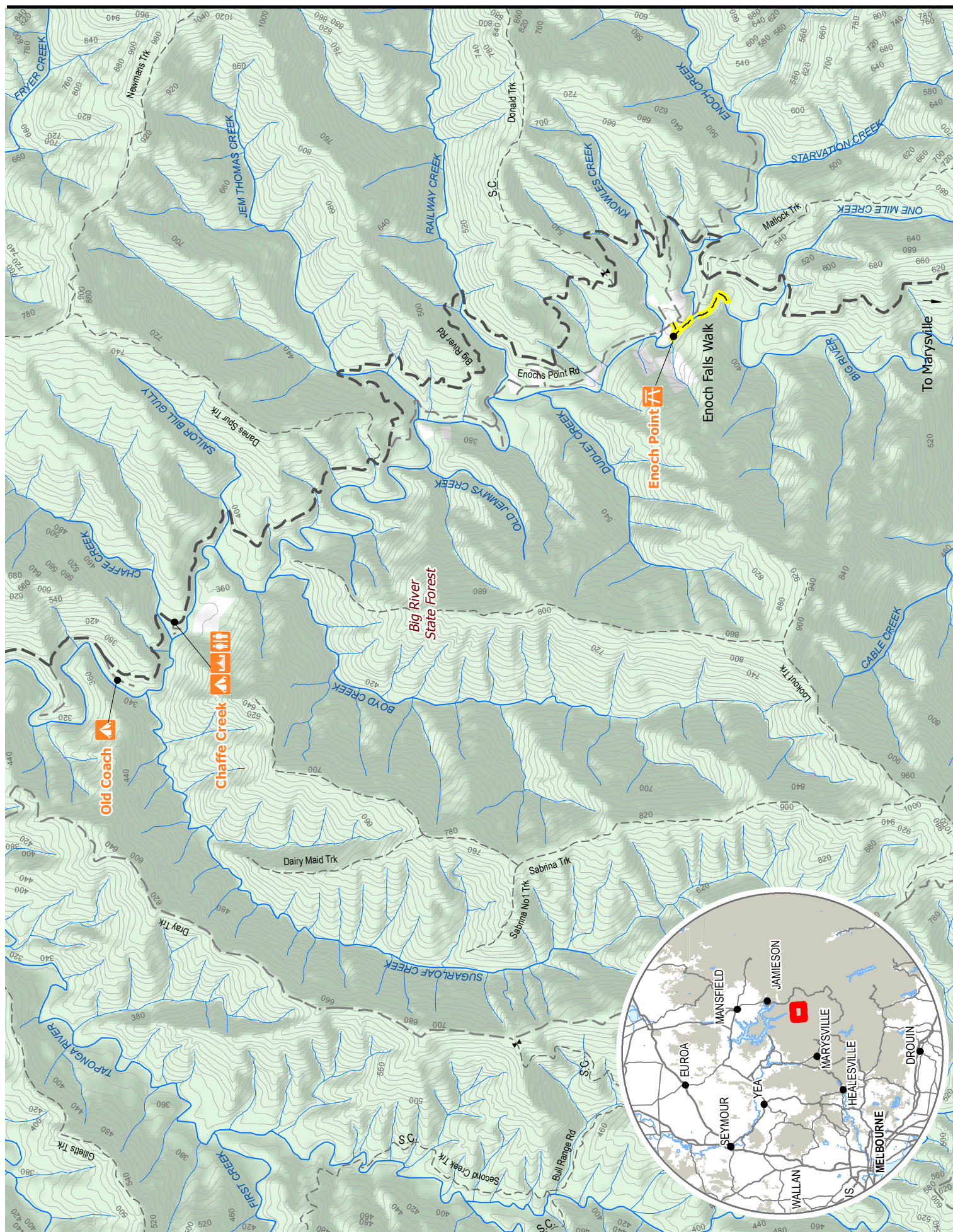
The Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact DELWP's Customer Service Centre ☎ 136 186 (TTY: 1800 555 667) or visit DELWP's website at <http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au>

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