

Avon – Mt Hedrick Scenic Reserve

The Avon - Mt Hedrick Scenic Reserve is situated north west of Maffra in the foothills of the Victorian Alps, about 200 km from Melbourne. The Avon River winds majestically through the 5700 ha. reserve, over time sculpting beautiful gorges from the surrounding landscape. Complementing this is dry open forest with a diversity of wildflowers as well as rocky escarpments and several high peaks with sweeping views of the surrounding area.

The Channel is the centrepiece of the reserve; a magnificent gorge created by the Avon River carving its way through the silt and sandstone over millennia. The steep sides of the gorge are covered in native vegetation, with shady Casuarinas in abundance. Crags punctuate the riverbed, creating a system of pools and rapids that provide important habitat for aquatic life.



The Channel

The reserve provides for a variety of activities including picnicking, camping, walking, sightseeing, horse-riding, fishing, swimming and car touring.

Getting There

The reserve can be best accessed from the town of Maffra.

From Melbourne

Drive along the Princes Highway turning left, after Rosedale, at the Maffra exit.

From Maffra

Take the Maffra Briagolong Road out of Maffra towards Boisdale. Continue through Boisdale towards Valencia Creek. Turn left onto Luckmans Road (3km beyond Boisdale) and finally right into Warrigal-Tom Rd. From here follow the signs to the Channel. See the locality map for further information.

Flora and Fauna

The reserve is composed of dry open forest that varies with altitude, fire history, aspect (direction it faces), past logging practices and geology.

Common eucalypts found within the reserve include Red Ironbark, Red and Yellow Box, Silvertop Ash, and Red Stringybark. A number of rare species can also be found, including the mint bush *Prostanthera saxicola*.

In spring fine displays of colourful local wildflowers can be seen throughout the reserve. These include the White and Blue Daisybush, Pink Fringe Myrtle, Heath Myrtle, Golden Grevillea, Pincushion Orchids and Derwents Speedwill.

The forests of the reserve house a variety of native wildlife. Common mammals include the Grey Kangaroo, Swamp Wallaby, Wombat and the Sugar Glider. There is also an array reptile species, including Goannas, small Skinks, Water Dragons, and the Copperhead, Red Bellied Black and Tiger Snakes.

Birdlife is abundant with White Winged Choughs, Emus, Lyrebirds and the Satin Bowerbirds being prominent. Lucky visitors may see the Tawny Frogmouths and Boobook Owls. An endangered fish, the Australian Grayling, is found in the waters of the Avon River.

Picnic spots

For visitors seeking a picnic with a view, Huggett and Green Hill lookouts afford panoramic views of the forest region. They can both be accessed by vehicle along Huggett Track. Pearson Point offers basic picnic facilities as well as spectacular views of the surrounding farmland. The Channel Overlook also offers basic picnic facilities and a full view of the gorge and the river far below. Access to The Channel and the Avon River is via a walking track starting from the car park. During warm weather Wombat Crossing & Huggets Crossing provide shadey picnic areas with easy access to the Avon River.

Camping

Huggett's Crossing and Dermody's Camp are on the Avon River and offer visitors basic camping sites, picnic facilities, and swimming holes. They also provide access to the Avon River Trail. Both sites are flat and provide reasonable access for visitors with disabilities. Huggett's Crossing is the only site within the reserve with a toilet.

Walking Tracks

The reserve has a range of walks (detailed below) ranging from 40 minutes to two days in duration. The walks are all marked and easy to follow. A map showing their location can be found on the opposite page.

Note: Access roads to camping and picnic facilities are 2WD except to Huggetts Crossing which is rough 2WD. 4WD only tracks are clearly marked on the map.

1. Avon River Trail

Skill level¹: Moderate Fitness level: Average
9km 4-5 hours (one way)

This walk meanders along the Avon River, encompassing a number of swimming holes and The Channel. The walk is best completed over two days, retracing your route on the second day. Visitors in 2WD vehicles are advised to start the walk from Dermody's Camp. The walk can be shortened by accessing the trail from the Channel Overlook carpark if desired.

2. Mount Hedrick Trail

Skill level: Moderate Fitness level: Average
3.5km 1.5-2 hours (one way)

Beginning north of Bulldog Junction, this walk gently climbs through stands of mixed forest towards the peak of Mt Hedrick (459m.) Walkers are rewarded for their climb with breathtaking views of Mt Margaret and the picturesque valley below. To return, retrace your footsteps back to the car park or continue the full walk on to Huggett Lookout for more spectacular views. There is also the option of continuing on to Huggetts Crossing and the Avon River Trail.

3. Nicholson's Rocks

Skill level: Moderate Fitness level: Average
1.5km 40 minutes (return)

Nicholson Rocks has been a popular picnic area since the late 1800's when local settlers regularly visited it. The walk starts from just inside the reserve's southern boundary along the Kentucky Road entrance. The track descends into a moist gorge surrounded by towering boulders, tree ferns and Blackwoods. After heavy rain the gorge comes alive as the mostly dry creek tumbles its way through the gully.

History

The original inhabitants of the area were the Braiakaulung people who lived on the river flats of the Avon River. For thousands of years they gathered fish and shellfish from the nearby coastal waters and used the timber and game from these forests as a source of food and building materials for shelters, canoes and various tools. They were one of five tribes that composed the major nation of the Central Gippsland region, the Gunai-Kurnai.

The early European explorers relied heavily on Koori guides during the exploration that was responsible for the opening up of the region. Evidence of Aboriginal

occupation can still be found today throughout the area with the recording of many archaeological sites including scarred trees, shell middens and artefact scatters.

During the late 1800's the Reserve was used as a holding area for cattle before they were driven up the Avon River to the alpine grazing plains. An extensive yarding area was located just across the river from Dermody's Camp. This site became a sustenance camp during the great depression in the 1930s. The occupants of the camp were given work cutting firewood and fence posts in return for food, shelter and a small wage.

Looking After The Area

- Road conditions change seasonally. For current road conditions contact the DSE at Heyfield.
- The reserve is fire prone due to the dry nature of the forest environment so please ensure that any campfires are lit in accordance with Fire Regulations; in a 30cm deep trench, less than 1m in diameter, at least 3m from vegetation and not on a day of Total Fire Ban. Please use existing fireplaces where possible.
- No rubbish disposal is provided; so please take your rubbish with you.
- All native plants and animals are protected
- Vehicles must not be driven off roads or tracks and all vehicles must be fully road registered.
- Avoid polluting streams with refuse, detergent and human wastes.
- Dogs must be kept under control at all times, especially in camping and picnic areas or near other visitors.

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 or DSE's Heyfield office ☎03 5139 7777.

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry".

The Avon – Mt Hedrick Scenic Reserve is managed primarily for the protection of the environment and provision of recreation. Other areas of the State Forest are managed for a wider range of uses including timber production, catchment protection, recreation and conservation. If you are interested in how State Forests are managed, the current Gippsland Management Plan can be viewed on the Department's website.

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry", then select "Publications".

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¹ To assist visitors in choosing walks, the walks are classified by skill level and fitness level. For a description of these classifications, refer to the Forests Note 'Bushwalking in State forest – FS0020'

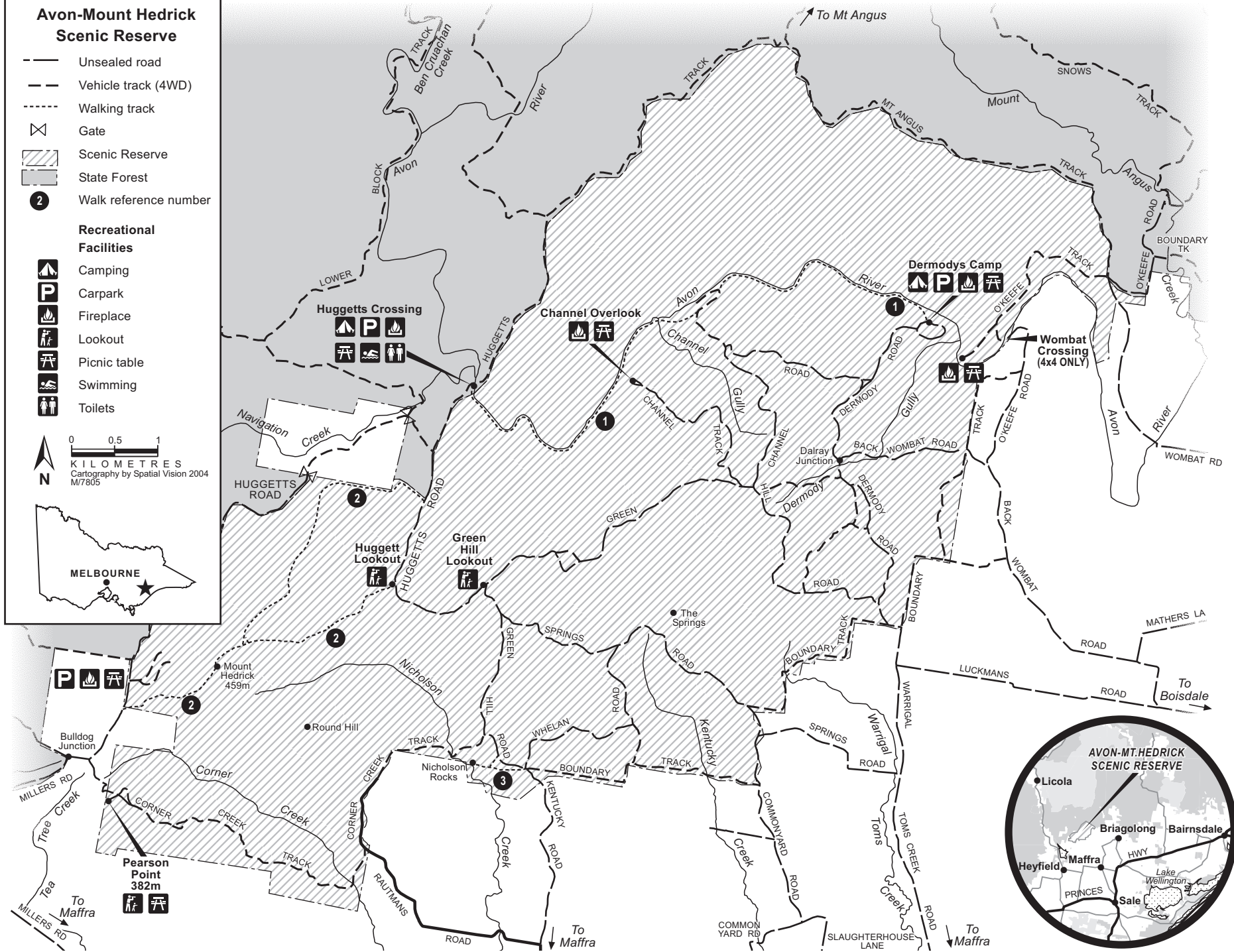
Avon-Mount Hedrick Scenic Reserve

- Unsealed road
- Vehicle track (4WD)
- Walking track
- Gate
- Scenic Reserve
- State Forest
- Walk reference number

Recreational Facilities

- Camping
- Carpark
- Fireplace
- Lookout
- Picnic table
- Swimming
- Toilets

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KILOMETRES
Cartography by Spatial Vision 2004
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