The Avon Crossings 4WD touring route runs between the Avon – Mt Hedrick Scenic Reserve and State Forest that joins the Avon Wilderness and the Alpine National Park to the north. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) manage the area. The Avon River has its headwaters on the southern slopes of Mt Wellington with the tour crossing the Avon River at both Huggetts Crossing and Wombat Crossing.

**4WD Touring Route – Getting started**

**Grade:** Easy to Medium 28 km half day

Track grade applies to dry conditions. Will become more difficult in wet weather.

From Newry, head northeast towards the football ground and golf course. Turn left (west) at the football ground onto Three Chain Road. Turn onto Kentucky Road, crossing a main irrigation channel. Follow the map to get to the points of interest.

**Caution:** The route is not subject to seasonal closures however the Avon River is known for sudden significant rises in water level. Both Huggetts and Wombat Crossing can be extremely dangerous during these events. The roads and tracks used in this route can be slippery if wet.

**Points of Interest (PoI)**

**PoI 1: Nicholson Rocks**

Nicholson Rocks, previously Nicholson Gorge, was a popular spot for horse riding groups and picnic parties in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The creek is frequently dry but is spectacular after rainfall. There is a short walk to Nicholson Rocks (see below).

**Nicholson Rocks Walk**

Return 1.5km | 30 mins

Short steep hills | Formed track, some obstacles

Sign posted | Occasional steps

Some bushwalking experience recommended

The walk begins opposite the picnic area and meanders through the bush to large outcrops of boulders and along the top of the gorge. A side track leads down into the narrow gorge.

**PoI 2: Green Hill Lookout**

At Green Hill Lookout there is a small car park and picnic area. Looking north from lookout’s rocky outcrop there is a view into the Avon River valley and the sandy area that is part of Huggetts crossing. From this point the route is graded as medium difficulty.

**PoI 3: Huggetts Lookout**

Huggetts Lookout is a rock shelf outcrop that offers stunning views to the mountains and hills to the west. There is a picnic table and often a wide variety of wild flowers in bloom.

**PoI 4: Huggetts Crossing**

Along the banks of the Avon River at Huggetts Crossing there are some excellent small camping areas, with a toilet on the northern edge of the large camping area. Bollards and large rocks have closed off informal tracks that were creating erosion issues along the river. Upstream from the camping areas there is an excellent deep swimming hole with a rock wall backdrop. Large goannas often wander through the camping area.

There are two crossing points of the Avon, and both have firm and rocky bases. Directly across Huggetts Crossing is the deeper option and a short distance downstream there is a shallow crossing over some red rocks. Watch for large rocks that may be concealed under the water.

**PoI 5: Helipad**

From the helipad, enjoy views into the mountains or over dairy farming country with the town of Maffra in the distance.
**PoI 6: Wombat Crossing**

This crossing has a firm river rocky base. There are two options for crossing, with one deeper than the other. Enjoy a swim as there are several good swimming spots near this crossing.

**Leaving the forest** After exiting Wombat Crossing take O’Keefe Road which becomes Back Wombat Road to Luckmans Lane and onto bitumen and to the small township of Boisdale. From Boisdale various routes can be taken through to Newry and Heyfield or to Maffra then Sale or Stratford and the Princes Highway.

**4WD Touring**

Here’s some information to help you ‘tread lightly’ in the bush and to help us keep tracks open for your enjoyment.

**Vehicles may only be driven on open formed roads and vehicle tracks.**

**Stay on the track.** Drive your vehicle only on roads that are open to the public. Never “bush bash” or drive on closed roads. Off-road driving is a major cause of erosion and vegetation loss. Off-road driving is illegal and some roads may be closed seasonally for reasons of safety, weather, or to minimise erosion. They are usually signposted or enforced by barriers.

**Drivers must be licensed and vehicles must be road registered and roadworthy.**

**Remove fallen trees or limbs from roads or report the obstruction to DELWP – don’t create a new track by driving around it.**

**Forest use guidelines**

- There is no rubbish collection service so please take your rubbish home.
- 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.
- Use toilets where provided. At some sites hand washing facilities and toilet paper may not be supplied. Come prepared.
- **Campfire safety** – Use fireplaces where provided. The fire must be attended at all times by a person with the capacity and means to extinguish it. For solid fuel fires, the ground and airspace within 3m of the outer perimeter of the fire must be clear of flammable material. Ensure the fire is extinguished with water before leaving. If it’s cool to touch it is safe to leave. It is your responsibility to know if a Total Fire Ban is declared. If in doubt, do not light a campfire.

**Safety information**

- 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.
- 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.

**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. Contact DELWP for information on road closures.

**Join a 4WD club**

The Land Rover Owners’ Club of Gippsland is a four wheel drive touring group with an emphasis on family participation. Based in Morwell the club is ideally situated to explore some of the best four wheel drive destinations in Australia and club trips make the most of both the locality and local knowledge. They support the aims of Four Wheel Drive Victoria [www.fwdvictoria.org.au](http://www.fwdvictoria.org.au) and the Four Wheel Drive Victoria Code of Ethics. For further information about the club please call 1800 357 628.

**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](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au)

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