

# Thurra River Dunes

## Croajingolong National Park

The spectacular Thurra River Dunes, near the Point Hicks Lightstation in the Croajingolong National Park, tower 30 metres above the Thurra River.



### Croajingolong National Park

Croajingolong National Park sweeps along the far south-east corner of the Victorian coast, just south of the New South Wales border.

Named after the Aboriginal people of the area, the park is a haven for campers, hikers and fishermen with its remote, sandy beaches, rocky coastal headlands and granite peaks, rambling heathland, lush rainforests, towering eucalypts and vast inland sand dunes.

Undoubtedly one of Australia's most spectacular parks, Croajingolong's landscapes and ecosystems are so valuable that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has designated it as a World Biosphere Reserve.

### Getting there

Croajingolong National Park is located approximately 450 kms east of Melbourne and 500kms south of Sydney in far East Gippsland. The best way to get there from Melbourne is via the Princes freeway all the way to Cann River. To reach the Point Hicks Lightstation and the Thurra River sand dunes, turn right down Tamboon Road for 16km, continue 5.1km on

Cape Everard Road, turn left onto Old Everard Road and drive 14.5km to Thurra River. The last 40 minutes of this drive are on a dirt road.

### Things to see and do

Croajingolong National Park is great for hiking and walking, water sports such as surfing and freshwater fishing, swimming, diving, snorkeling and sea kayaking, and for touring by 4WD or mountain bikes. It is also a photographer's paradise with countless opportunities to capture images of untouched nature.

### Walks around Thurra River and Point Hicks

#### Thurra River Dunes Walk

The Thurra River Sand Dunes are a highlight of Croajingolong National Park. To explore this unique landscape the Thurra River Dunes Walk (2hrs, 4km return) starts from the Thurra River Campground, near campsite 14, and winds through coastal banksias and heathland before opening out into a network of sandy trails through the dunes.

Once you reach the top of the dunes, walkers are treated to spectacular views both inland and out to sea. Remember to

take plenty of water, as the walk up the steep dunes can be strenuous. It is important to be aware that there are no walking track markers once on the dune fields, due to the constantly shifting sands, so take careful note of your return route.

### **Beach Walk to Mueller Inlet**

The coastal beaches in Croajingolong National Park are pristine and granite rock formations provide a stunning contrast to the beautiful blue water. Many hours can be spent combing the beaches, rocks and dunes.

From the Thurra Campground, the pleasant 1.5 hour, 4.5km return walk to Mueller Inlet follows this remote beach east towards the inlet and returns along the beach. Alternatively, return by follow the western shoreline to the Mueller Inlet Campground and the vehicle access track back to the Thurra River Campground, increasing the walk to 2 hours, 5.5km return.

### **Point Hicks Lightstation**

Experience pristine natural beauty of the park and immerse yourself in history on the walk to the Point Hicks Lightstation. This easy 1.5 hours, 4.5km return walk starts 3km past the Thurra Campground at the gate to the Lightstation Reserve. Once at the Lightstation Car Park, a track leads down to the monument and another leads to the base of the light tower.

### **Saros Track**

Enjoy magnificent views of the coast as you follow the path on this 45 min, 1.5km return walk to view the shipwreck of the SS Saros that ran ashore during heavy fog on its way to Sydney in 1937. The track departs from the Lightstation.

### **Sledge and West Beach Tracks**

Sledge Track was the original supply route on which goods were carted by horse and sled from the jetty to the Lightstation. The track for this 1 hour, 1.5km return walk departs from the Point Hicks Lightstation and leads to the remnants of the old jetty where you can explore the nearby rock pools. From here the track continues on to join up with the West Beach Track which will take you back to the Lightstation.

### **Mt Everard**

Enjoy spectacular views of the surrounding forests and heathlands as well as Point Hicks and the dunes from a large sloping rock face on Mt Everard. The track for this 1 hour, 1.5km return walk commences from the car park on the Mt Everard Track. To access the track turn off the Point Hicks Rd onto Cicada Trail, 6km north of Thurra River Campground.

## **Visit Point Hicks and the Lightstation**

The historic Point Hicks Lightstation, set deep within Croajingolong National Park, is an imposing white concrete tower that has been in operation since 1890.

Point Hicks was named by Captain James Cook after Lieutenant Zachariah Hicks, who first spotted the point. This was their first sighting of land on the continent. In his journal on the Endeavour on 19 April 1770, he wrote, “...With the first daylight this morn the land was seen, it made in sloping

*hill covered in part with trees and bushes, but interspersed with large tracts of sand ... I have named it Point Hicks because Lieutenant (Zachariah) Hicks was the first to discover this land...”* April 19th 1770.

Tours of the lighthouse are available. Climb the 162 steps of the elegant, cast iron spiral staircase to the top to see spectacular views of the ocean and the park. At all other times, visitors are asked not to go beyond the Lightstation’s stone walls.

### **Where to stay?**

The Thurra River Campground is a fantastic campground with 46 sites, located in coastal woodland between the river and the ocean, near Point Hicks. It is a popular spot for families. Campsites must be booked.

If camping is not your thing, visitors can also book the Point Hicks Light House Cottages. The campsites and cottages are very popular and advance bookings are recommended. Bookings and payment can be made direct to the Point Hicks Lighthouse on (03) 5158 4268 or by visiting [www.pointhicks.com.au](http://www.pointhicks.com.au).

For more information about Croajingolong National Park, please visit: <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/croajingolong-national-park>

### **Be prepared and stay safe**

Croajingolong National Park is in the East Gippsland Total Fire Ban District. Be aware of forecast Fire Danger Ratings for this fire district. No fires may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban.

On days of Code Red Fire Danger this park will be closed for public safety. Closure signs will be erected and rangers will patrol when possible, however you may not receive a personal warning that the park is closed. Check the latest conditions by calling **13 1963** or visiting [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)