

Q&A's - Defence Road Upgrade



Why is Parks Victoria doing these works?

Sections of Defence Road have significantly deteriorated in many places making it unsafe for pedestrians, cyclists, shuttle bus and authorised vehicles. Critical major works are required to minimise the risk of further deterioration and bring it up to a sustainable and trafficable standard that is consistent with the rest of the park. These works will also 'future proof' the park to support the implementation of the Point Nepean Master Plan and reduce the need for ad hoc and costly temporary repairs.

How much are the works costing?

The total value of the project is \$1 million. The works are part of the State Government's commitment towards activating the Point Nepean Master Plan that was released in January this year.

When will the works commence and how long will they take?

The works will commence on Monday 28 May at 7am, and expected to take 9 weeks, weather permitting.

What will the works include?

The works will include: -

- Drainage improvements
- Levelling, partial and/ or total road reconstruction and sealing
- Road widening
- Line marking
- Minor trimming of vegetation regrowth

Is the entire length of Defence Road being closed?

No, the first 1.2km section of Defence Road from the front entrance gate to the Danson Drive intersection (right hand turn point into the Quarantine Station) will remain open. A 3.6km section of the road from Danson Drive intersection) to Fort Nepean will be closed for the estimated 9-week period.

How will these works benefit the park visitors?

The works will provide a safer and smoother surface that is more user friendly to cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles. It will also provide a more accessible surface for people using wheelchairs or similar assisted transport modes making it easier to reach more remote areas of the park such as the Forts.

The road between Danson Drive and Gunners Cottage will be widened bringing it in line with Road Safety guidelines and provide a safer route for vehicles to pass cyclists and pedestrians, and oncoming traffic without needing to move onto the road verge as is the current situation.

Who is undertaking the works?

Local contractor Maw Civil Pty Ltd will be undertaking the works having been awarded the contract following a recent competitive tender process.

Why will the works take so long?

The scale of the project is such that it requires mobilisation of heavy machinery, materials and many staff. For safety reasons works can only occur during daylight hours limiting the hours of operation. The works

have been scheduled during the off-peak season to minimise disruption to visitors. This means the project is more prone to weather delays which has been factored into the timeframes.

Are the works likely to be extended, and therefore, the road closure extended?

Parks Victoria will be working closely with the contractor to ensure the project is completed within the allocated timeframe. Site complexities and external influences out of the control of the contractor and Parks Victoria, such as weather, can also affect timeframes. Parks Victoria is committed to completing this major upgrade during the off-peak season to minimise disruptions to access, and will communicate any foreseeable delays should they arise.

What is still open in the park?

The areas that will remain open to the public include the Quarantine Station, Wilsons Folly Walking Track, the Bay Beach Walking Track and Coles Track between the Quarantine Station and Observatory Point.

What is closed in the park?

Access is closed to Fort Nepean, Fort Pearce, Eagles Nest, Pearce Barracks, the Harold Holt Memorial, Cheviot Hill, the Range Area, Gunners Cottage, the Point Nepean Cemetery, the Walter Pisterman Walking Track and the western section of Coles Track between Observatory Point and Cheviot Hill.

Will the works affect the quality of my visit to the park?

The works are being undertaken in a more remote area of the park and not nearby to the 'open' areas within the park. Visitors should not be impacted by the works (noise or visual amenity) at any stage. Visitors may notice increased truck movement on arrival to the park.

What happens if I enter the no access / closed areas?

Any persons trespassing in the construction area without appropriate authorisation will be asked to leave the site immediately. The Contractor is responsible for securing the site for public safety.

Can I use the road outside contractor working hours?

No, the road will be closed 24/7 during the 9-week period. The section of closed road will effectively become a 'construction zone' for the entire period and therefore, no members of the public are permitted to enter the site without appropriate authorisation from the contractor.

While the contractors will make the site as safe as possible when they are not on site, visitor safety cannot be guaranteed, especially when unsupervised. There will be heavy vehicles, earthworks, uneven surfaces or other hazards which could pose a major safety risk.

Why does the shuttle bus need to stop operating for the entire nine-week period?

The section of road where the works are being carried out forms a key part of the shuttle bus route. Defence Road is the only road in and out of the park and there are no alternative route options for the bus to access to the Forts. A reduced service between the section of road where no works are being carried out would not provide a suitable or value for money experience.

In addition, much of the road used by the shuttle bus is single lane carriage, and close to fragile dunes, cliffs and culturally sensitive sites. This means it is not possible for the shuttle bus to safely pass workers and plant equipment along the road without impacting these sensitive zones.

Will the road be closed during the school holidays and the Queen’s Birthday weekend?

Yes, the road will be closed during the winter holidays as these dates fall within the road closure period. The road works will not shut down during school holidays.

Do the closures apply to Licensed Tour Operators?

Yes, Licensed Tour Operators will not be able to access the closed or no access areas at any time. Alternative tour options or variations will need to be arranged – please consider the Quarantine Station.

Can I still make a group booking?

Group bookings can be made at any time; however, there is a booking block out period from 28 May to 27 July. Bookings will not be accepted for group visits that occur within this period. Visitors are welcome to check with the park office from time to time to see if there have been any changes to the timelines.

I have an existing booking / planned visit. How will these works affect my visit?

If you have an existing booking or planned activity between 28 May – 27 July, that requires access to any of the closed or no access areas, alternative arrangements will need to be made. No exemptions or special arrangements can be made. Please contact the Park Office to discuss your alternative options.

Can I still hire a bike?

Yes, bike hire will still be available from the Point Nepean Information Centre. Hire fees will not be reduced during the works period. Half day hire fee options have been recently introduced and provide an ideal length of time to discover the Quarantine Station and nearby sections of the Coles Track that remain open.

Will I be able to drive to Gunners Cottage?

No, this visitor node will be closed and all facilities such as toilets will be temporarily closed. This area will be used as the Contractors Site Office and will not be accessible to the public.

Why can’t I ride my bike or walk on Defence Road while the works are underway (I can keep off the road)?

Defence Road is narrow in sections, and abutted by dense vegetation. The entire road and verge will be occupied by contractors and their construction equipment and will be zoned a ‘Construction Site’. There is insufficient space for cyclists or pedestrians to pass safely past the contractors at work. There may be heavy vehicles, earthworks, uneven surfaces or other hazards which could pose a major safety risk.

What else can I do in the park while this Forts area access is closed?

There is still plenty to see and do while in the park. The Quarantine Station precinct is open. Many easy to medium grade walking tracks are also open including Coles Track (a shared cyclist and pedestrian track) between the Quarantine Station and Observatory Point (1.2km) or the Bay Beach Walking Track (2.8km) (NOTE: The Bend Steps are closed due to storm damage so pedestrians need to return via the beach), or the Wilsons Folly Walking Track (1.8km) which links with London Bridge and the greater Mornington Peninsula National Park.

How will the culturally significant sites along Defence Road be protected?

Parks Victoria has consulted with the Traditional Owners during the planning phase of the project to take these issues into consideration, and representatives of the Traditional Owners will be on site periodically to monitor works ensure any culturally sensitive sites are not impacted by the works.

Why does the vegetation along the road need trimming back?

These works provide a timely opportunity to undertake some minor trimming of the vegetation regrowth along the road verge for works access and improved visitor safety. There will not be any large-scale removal of trees. Vegetation that will be trimmed will be primarily Ti Tree or Polygala. The tree trimming works will be carried out by a licensed contractor on weekdays prior to the major works commencing.

What if there is an emergency that requires access via Defence Road?

In the event of a genuine emergency that requires use of Defence Road approval for access must be sought from the Contractor. On arrival at the road closure, discuss your emergency with the Site Manager. The contractor will provide a vehicle escort access or approved access to the emergency location.