

Pyrete Range Lerderderg State Park



Visitor guide

The Pyrete Range is between Mount Bullengarook and Mount Gisborne and forms a substantial part of the Lake Merrimu Water Supply Catchment. The Range covers an extensive area of relatively undisturbed old growth forest in steep and rugged terrain. An incredibly special place it supports flora and fauna communities of State significance and is a site of regional geological and geomorphologic significance.

Exploring the Pyretes

With high natural values, the park is managed primarily for conservation and catchment purposes. While visitor facilities, access and activities are restricted to preserve these values, the park does provide great opportunities for passive recreational activities in a semi remote environment.

Bushwalking and mountain bike riding are permitted on management vehicle tracks and are a fantastic way to explore the Pyrete Range.

Visitors are encouraged to be self sufficient and carry maps, navigation gear and ample food and water on their visit. There are no visitor facilities with the Pyretes section and camping and campfires are not permitted. Visitation is not recommended on days of high fire danger due to the wildfire risk.

As the area is a significant water catchment and has fragile, highly erodible soils; horse riding, motorcycling, four wheel driving and firearms are not permitted in the park.

A haven for wildlife

The Pyretes are one of the few areas that support fauna communities common to both eastern and northern Victoria. It is home to the threatened Brush-tailed Phascogale and is a birdwatchers paradise with over 130 species found in the park including the Swift Parrot, Great Egret and the Powerful and Masked Owls.

A wealth of flora

The vegetation communities of the Pyretes are of State significance with Heathy Dry Forest communities found in the northern aspect and vulnerable Box Ironbark communities found in the dryer, southern aspect.

Over 370 native plant species have been recorded in the park and magnificent wildflower displays can be seen in late winter and spring.

Cinnamon fungus - a serious threat

The presence of Cinnamon Fungus poses a serious threat to flora and fauna of the park. This microscopic pathogen attacks plant root systems causing dieback. Patches of dead or dying vegetation can indicate the presence of the fungus and grass trees are particularly susceptible. The disease is spread through the movement of contaminated soil and gravel and there is no known cure.

Help us to minimise the spread of this disease through the park by remaining on formed tracks at all times. All soil should be removed from footwear prior to entering and leaving the Park using a 70% methylated spirits/water solution and a sturdy brush.

Pyrete Range Reference Area

The Pyrete Range has remained relatively unchanged since European settlement and a 329ha reference area has been set aside for research and reference purposes. Public access to this area is strictly prohibited.

Location and Access

The Pyrete Range is 55 km North West of Melbourne and can be accessed via the Western or Calder Highways.

Formerly the Pyrete State Forest, the Pyrete Range was added to Lerderderg State Park in 2005. Located in the eastern aspect of the park, it covers an area of 5930 ha.

Draper's Lode Antimony Mine

After unsuccessful attempts were made to find gold in the Pyretes, Antimony was discovered in 1891 and mined in the range from the 1890s to the 1940s.

Commonly used today as a flame retardant and to increase the strength and hardness of lead, Antimony was particularly valuable during the War years as a bronze alloy.

The remains of the Draper's Lode antimony mine can be found on the Antimony Mine Road. Care should be taken as there are still deep tunnels and shafts in the park.

