

Dandenong Ranges National Park

Sherbrooke

Sherbrooke covers the southern area of the National Park from Selby in the south to Sherbrooke in the north. The largest section of Dandenong Ranges National Park, Sherbrooke occupies over 800 hectares of the park's total 3,215 hectares, with Fern Tree Gully, Doongalla, Olinda and Mt. Evelyn making up the remainder.

Enjoy the magnificent scenery of the Mountain Ash forests whilst driving through the park or spend some time in one of the picnic areas. Your rewards may include the thrilling song and perhaps a glimpse of the Superb Lyrebird.

Days gone by

In 1867 the bulk of the Dandenong forests were declared a timber reserve. For the next 60 years these forests supplied the timber needs for the booming city of Melbourne. By 1907, most of the reserved forest was considered cut out. As a result the land was released by the government for agriculture and settlement.

The first Forest Department formed in 1907 and renamed parts of the remaining forest Monbulk State Forest and Sherbrooke Forest.

In 1958 Sherbrooke Forest was declared a park and since 1987 has been part of the National Park.

What to see and do

A number of walking tracks, starting from the picnic grounds, enable you to discover some of the plants and animals of Sherbrooke.

Some suggested walks:

1. Sherbrooke Falls

2.4 km, 1 hour return. Grade: Easy to Moderate.

Tracks leading from Sherbrooke and O'Donohue Picnic Ground provide the easiest walk to the falls through the attractive landscape of tall Mountain Ash and tree ferns. The falls are most inspiring after rain when the swollen Sherbrooke Creek rushes over the rocks.

2. Hardy Gully Nature Walk

700m, 45 minute loop. Grade: Easy to Moderate.

This track, only a short distance from Grants Picnic Ground, has been set out as a self-guided nature walk. A Park Note describing features along the walk is available at the kiosk.

3. Margaret Lester Forest Walk

300m, 30 minute loop. Grade: Easy.

Located at Grants Picnic Ground, this hard-surfaced track has been especially designed for the disabled. The track follows a steady gradient weaving through spectacular Mountain Ash forest.

4. Eastern Sherbrooke Forest

7.1 km, 2 hour loop. Grade: Moderate to Difficult.

This is a round trip starting and finishing at Grants Picnic Ground. The route follows Lyrebird Walk, then Neumann Road, passing through cleared areas of bush created by the successive wildfires of the early 1900's. At Paddy Track Junction turn south and cross Hardy Creek before climbing Welch Track and following Coles Ridge Road back to the picnic ground.

Most of the walk is through Mountain Ash and Messmate Stringybark forest. There are steep sections on Paddy Road and Welch Track which may be slippery when wet.



Superb Lyrebird



Further information

Phone the Parks Victoria Information Line on **13 1963**

or visit our website at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Caring for the environment

Help us look after the park by remembering these guidelines:

Rubbish bins are not provided, please take your rubbish home.

Light fires only in fireplaces provided. Firewood is not supplied - please bring your own. No fires may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban.

Firearms are prohibited in the park.

Dogs and other pets are not permitted in the park.

All native plants and wildlife are protected by law. Please do not collect specimens.

Leave the park as you find it.

Animals of Sherbrooke

The Mountain Ash forests provide the perfect habitat for wildlife such as the Superb Lyrebird, Ring-tailed and Brush-tailed Possums.

Treecreepers, small birds that cling to the side of trees looking for a meal of grubs and insects can be seen foraging amongst the tree trunks. The beautiful and elusive Blue-winged Parrot has also been sighted in Sherbrooke Forest.

Monstrous Mountain Ash

A major feature of the national park is the magnificent Mountain Ash trees of Sherbrooke. Most of these trees grew after the severe forest fires of the 1920's. Mountain Ash are the worlds tallest flowering plants growing some 100 metres tall and live up to 500 years.

History of the Dandenong Ranges

"Corhanwarrabul" was the Aboriginal name for the Dandenong Ranges. It appears from historical accounts that the Bunurong (Western Port) and the Woiworong (Yarra Yarra) Aboriginal people used the Dandenongs as hunting grounds during the summer months.

European Settlement

The first recorded expedition into the Dandenong Ranges was made by botanist Daniel Bunce during the 1840s.

By the early 1850s, wholesale clearing began as settlers foraged further into the forests for agricultural land and timber resources. Timber splitters invaded the forest, felling giant eucalypts to be used for railways, piers, bridges and sailing ship masts. To protect the area from indiscriminate clearing a timber reserve, the Dandenong Woori Yallock State forest, was established in 1867.

By the end of the 19th century, only one fifth of the original timber reserve remained in public ownership. The push by settlers for land near Melbourne pressured the government into releasing 4,400 hectares in 1878. A further 4,900 hectares were released in the 1890s. From the later 1860s, Melbourne residents began to visit the area for recreation. At first the retreat of the wealthy, the area became a popular destination for the general population with the advent of the railway in the 1890s and later the motor car.

In 1882, land was reserved as a site for public recreation and extended to 227 hectares in 1927. This area was later declared the Fern Tree Gully National Park.

Early 20th Century

The area became a focal point for the arts and attracted painters, writers, poets and naturalists including Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Anneas Gunn and C.J. Dennis. Between the early 1900s to the mid 1920s, the beauty of the hills attracted a large number of holiday makers and weekenders. Land was cheap

and roads were pushed through unreserved forested areas where quarter acre blocks were developed for weekend shacks. During this time, many well known guest houses were built, most of which were destroyed in the bushfires of 1923 and 1926.

Visitors to the ranges in the early 1920s often returned home laden with ferns and flowers for their gardens and vases, indicating the conservation ethic of the time.

Post World War 2

Since the late 1940s, residential development has expanded steadily, altering the character of the ranges and making them almost a suburb of Melbourne. During the 1940s and 1950s, public debate was intense concerning development in the hills. Some residents, concerned about the rate and nature of land subdivision formed the "Save the Dandenongs League" in 1944. A Buy Back program was initiated, creating a corridor linking the Fern Tree gully and Sherbrooke sections of the Dandenong Ranges National Park. The government's purchase of Doongalla Estate in 1950 was the first example of this acquisition program.

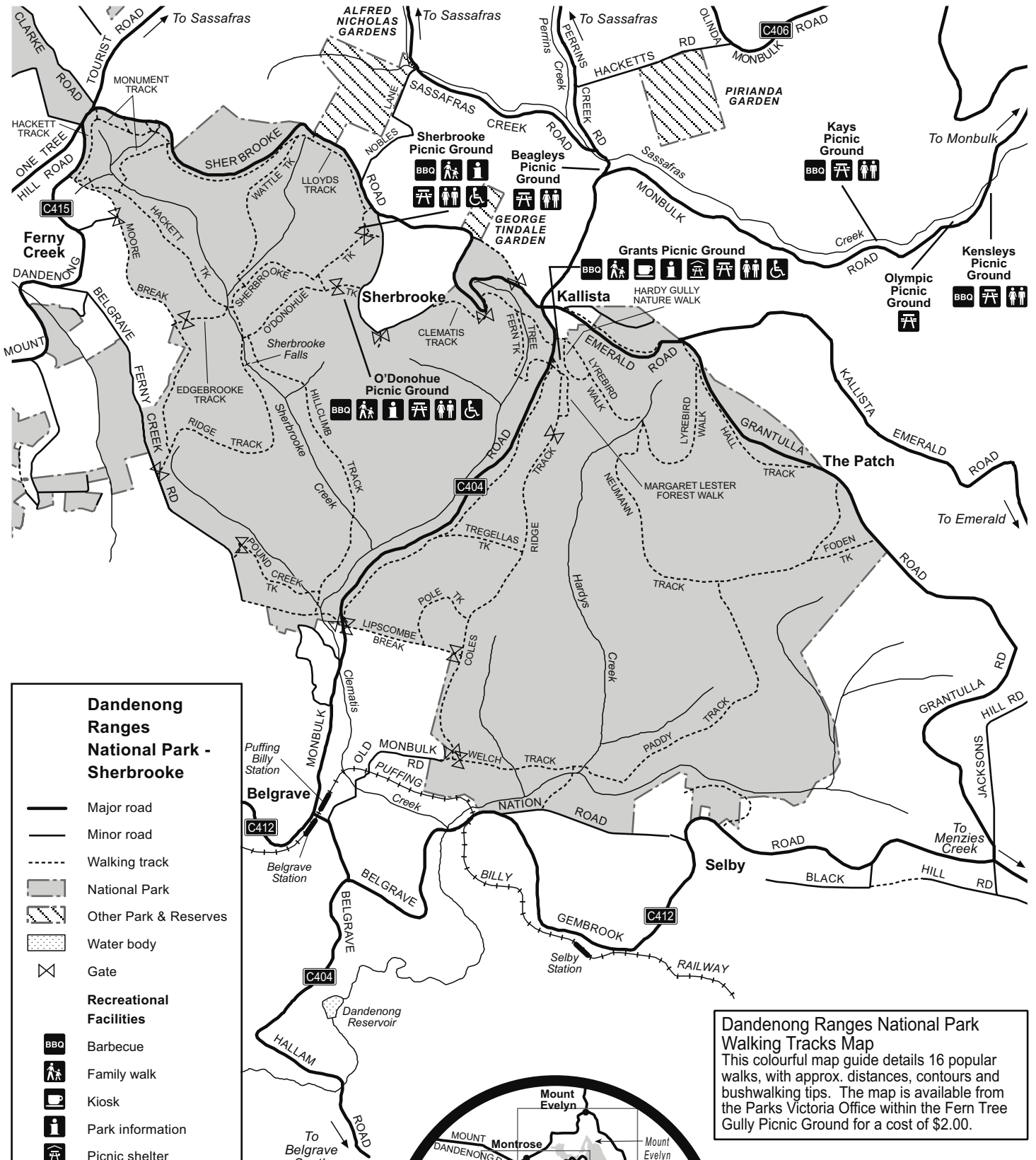
Major bushfires in 1962 and 1968 further accelerated the acquisition program in order to develop a fire protection buffer zone.

Today

The Dandenong Ranges National park was proclaimed in December 1987. It consists of the amalgamation of Fern Tree Gully National Park, Sherbrooke Forest and Doongalla Estate along with the Upwey and Sassafras land corridors. In 1997, the Olinda State forest was formally added to the National Park along with the Montrose Reserve.



Common Ringtail Possum



Dandenong Ranges National Park - Sherbrooke

- Major road
- Minor road
- Walking track
- National Park
- Other Park & Reserves
- Water body
- Gate

Recreational Facilities

- Barbecue
- Family walk
- Kiosk
- Park information
- Picnic shelter
- Picnic table
- Toilets
- Toilet for disabled

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Cartography by Spatial Vision 2002
M/6615



Dandenong Ranges National Park Walking Tracks Map
This colourful map guide details 16 popular walks, with approx. distances, contours and bushwalking tips. The map is available from the Parks Victoria Office within the Fern Tree Gully Picnic Ground for a cost of \$2.00.

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Updated March 2002

