

GRAMPIANS PEAKS TRAIL®

Walk Victoria's Icons

Community Update

July 2018

The Grampians Peaks Trail® is a world-class long-distance walking experience of 13 days and 12 nights which showcases the spectacular natural and cultural landscapes of the Grampians National Park. The Grampians National Park is located in a region known by the Traditional Owners as Gariwerd. Construction for Stage Two is well underway and the complete trail is expected to be finished in late 2020.

The project

Welcome to the July 2018 edition of the Grampians Peaks Trail® project which provides the latest information on how works are progressing.

Make sure you stay in touch or register for updates via gpt@parks.vic.gov.au

Stage One

Stage One of the Grampians Peaks Trail, completed in 2015, is a favourite with locals and tourists and offers a 3 day - 2 night hike. Starting at Halls Gap, the 36km walk showcases the spectacular rock features of the Wonderland Ranges close to Halls Gap.

Our first dedicated hikers camp 'Bugiga' is also a must see, with elevated timber tent platforms and an architecturally designed, award winning communal shelter. Nestled between Mt Rosea and Sundial Peak, it offers stunning views across to the Serra and Mt William ranges.

Stage Two

Traditional Owners are engaged with Parks Victoria through collaborative governance on the Grampians Peaks Trail. The full delivery of the project has been pushed out to 2020 as a result of a native title claim lodged on 27 May 2016 which extends across the entire Grampians National Park. To enable works to progress, and to ensure native title is maintained under section 238 of the Native Title Act 1993, an Integrated Land Use Agreement was signed by the State of Victoria with the claimants on 5 June 2018.

Construction of Stage Two is well underway and continues with upgrades to approximately 60 km of existing walking tracks that will form part of the trail. Stage Two will be complete in September this year.

Approvals for the new works - approximately 85-100 km of new walking tracks and 10 new hiker camps and one school camp - are nearly complete.

GPT experiences

There will be a variety of experiences on offer including hikes for day walkers, opportunities for school groups, the long distance walk for independent walkers as well as a number of fully facilitated walks opening the trail up to people with a range of hiking abilities.

Parks Victoria is looking at how the fully facilitated walks can include accommodation, food, beverage and landscape interpretation.

These experiences offer:

- ✓ Greater accessibility and flexibility
- ✓ Range of options for all levels of walkers
- ✓ Variety of three day/two night walking experiences
- ✓ Family friendly opportunities
- ✓ An opportunity to explore the natural and cultural heritage of the Grampians National Park



Current upgrades

Mt Stapylton

Mt Stapylton and Mt Abrupt walking tracks continue to be upgraded with the addition of over 500 new hand-built rock steps, flagstone paving, new drainage, a retaining wall, removal of trip hazards and track resurfacing. The walking tracks remain open while works are being undertaken, and will be completed by the end of September.

Major Mitchell Plateau

The final section of the Major Mitchell Plateau walk from Mt William Summit to Jimmy Creek campground recently opened after upgrades. The walk now features more elevated boardwalk sections as well as specialised rock steps, flagstone paving, improved drainage and track resurfacing.

Trail alignment and hiker camps

We're currently working through different trail alignment options. Ongoing minor changes to overall distances between proposed hiker camp locations will continue to occur for the duration of the project as onground scoping continues.

McGregor Coxall have partnered with Noxon Giffen to design the shelter and toilets for each hiker camp. Local and state bushwalking clubs have provided feedback on the current design which has all been largely positive.

Planning and permit approvals

The permit process is progressing for the removal of vegetation under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* with a Native Vegetation Counterbalance Offset Strategy pending.

Approvals have been received for:

- ✓ Cultural Heritage Management Plan
- ✓ Permission to remove vegetation under the *Environmental, Biodiversity and Conservation Act*
- ✓ Local Govt Planning Permit from Northern Grampians Shire Council, Southern Grampians Shire Council and Ararat Rural City Council
- ✓ Permission to establish a new walking track within the Major Mitchell remote natural area (*National Park Act 1975*)
- ✓ Integrated land use agreement with the Gariwerd Native Title Claim Group



Rock steps at Mt Stapylton



Bush walkers relax at Bugiga Hiker Camp



Flagstone paving at Major Mitchell Plateau



Community news

What's next

Parks Victoria will be in a planning phase until November to scope works for the new tracks. Priority areas include sections in both the north and south, eg Roses Gap Road (Mt Difficult range section) to Halls Gap (north) and Cassidy Gap Rd to Dunkeld (south). Once planning components are completed, subject to receiving approvals contractors will commence work.

The permit for Mt Christabel building removal is still pending and work is anticipated to commence in spring when it is drier.

Where possible, construction of the Grampians Peaks Trail will be rolled out as part of a staged approach in order to provide continued access to popular visitor areas.

Parks Victoria provide updates and information, regarding track closures to allow works to be completed safely. Visit Parks Victoria's website for the latest conditions in the Grampians National Park.

www.parks.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/grampians-national-park

Community events

There are a number of well-known community events that utilise sections of the Grampians Peaks Trail!

The Peaks and Trails event is on in August in the majestic Grampians National Park, starting and finishing in Dunkeld. There are a range of races that running enthusiasts can choose from including the famous 6.2km Mt Abrupt Challenge and a 1km Kids Dash. You can take part by registering at www.discoverdunkeld.com/peaks-and-trails

On the June long weekend the eighth Serra Terra event was held. The course utilised a section of the recently upgraded Grampians Peaks Trail from Jimmy Creek to Stockyard Saddle.



Runners participating in the Peaks and Trails run

Did you know?

We are currently entering "larneuk" or the season of nesting birds as it is known by the Jardwadjali and Djab Wurrung people, the Traditional Owners of Gariwerd.

Larneuk is the wettest time of the year and runs from July to August. Many small birds like Lapwings are nesting and early nesters can be seen feeding young. Cuckoos return and call continuously and fledgling Powerful Owls and Wedge-tailed Eagles emerge.

It is also the time of the year where there are dramatic weather changes and the rivers and creeks run high. When walking in the Grampians National Park at this time of year it is recommended you rug up and ensure you have appropriate wet weather gear.

To learn more about the Grampians Peaks Trail visit www.grampianspeakstrail.com.au