

# Howqua Hills Historic Area



## Visitor Guide

Howqua Hills is a site of natural beauty, from river flats to surrounding hills with Manna Gums and Narrow-leaved Peppermints. Rediscover the days of gold mining and settlement as you walk past historic relics from times gone by.

### Location

The Howqua Hills Historic Area is located 30 minutes drive from Mansfield via Merrijig by taking the Howqua Track, a gravel road 3 km past Merrijig on the Mount Buller Road.

### Things to see and do

#### Camping

Camping along the Howqua River is one of the best ways to enjoy this historic area and offers a great base for bush walking, fishing and relaxing.

#### Walking

Walkers can enjoy the Howqua Hills Historic Walk with its self guided interpretive panels. This easy 1.5 hour return walk follows the Howqua River from Sheeppond Flat to Fry's Flat.

#### Horseriding

Horse riding (seasonally from November to May) is a great way to explore the Howqua Hills Historic area. Horse yards are available at Fry's Flat and Tunnel Bend Flat with further yards located nearby in the Alpine National Park. Horse yard bookings must be arranged prior to arrival by contacting the Mansfield office on 13 1963.

#### Relics from the past

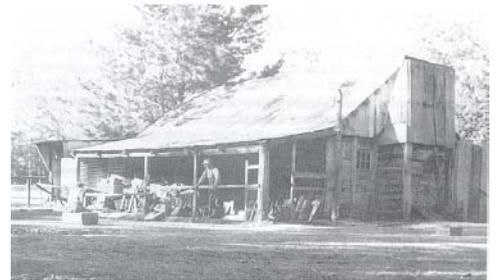
Tunnel Bend is named after the 100m tunnel built in 1884 as a link between the Howqua River and the four kilometre hand cut water race to the "Hanney" waterwheel at Sheeppond Flat. The tunnel entrance can be seen near the base of the steps at Tunnel Bend.

The remains of the water race can be seen above the road between Tunnel Bend and Sheeppond Flat. It was constructed to carry water to power the "Hanney" waterwheel. The "Hanney" was 63 feet (18 metres) in diameter and drove the crushers which broke the ore into a suitable size for smelting in the furnace. The brick chimney and smelting furnace, built in 1884, is still standing and is visible on the Heritage Walk between Sheeppond Flat and Fry's Flat.

### Fry's Hut

Master Bushman, Fred Fry built his home in the late 1930s. Using split timber and with his own personal style of workmanship he erected many huts in the region including Upper Jamieson Hut, Ritchies Hut, Gardiners Hut and Noonans.

Fred's life in the Howqua Valley was the basis of Neville Shute's 1950 novel 'The Far Country'. Overnight camping is not permitted in Fry's Hut.



*Fred Fry at his hut in the Howqua*

### Aborigines, quarries and gold mining

Aborigines used the Howqua River as a major trade and war route across the Great Dividing Range. They had several quarries in the area that yielded the prized Howqua greenstone. Selected for its hardness, Aborigines used it for stone axes, spearheads and cutting tools.

European settlement began in the 1840's when pastoral company Watson and Hunter began grazing this area, known as part of the Howqua run. Grazing of this area still continues today.

The discovery of alluvial gold during the 1860's heralded major changes for the valley. A gold-bearing reef was discovered in the 1870's and mining began in earnest. The main mining companies were the Mountain Chief, Great Rand and Howqua United. The population soared and in 1888 the township of Howqua was proclaimed. It had a smithy, hotel, butcher, bakery, post office and several boarding houses. The rush was short lived and by 1905 all major goldmining operations had come to an end.



For further information

Parks Victoria  
 Information Centre  
**Call 13 1963**  
 or visit the  
 Parks Victoria website  
**www.parks.vic.gov.au**

Mansfield Park Office  
 128 Highett St Mansfield 3722

Caring for the  
 environment

Help us look after your park  
 by following these guidelines:

Please take rubbish home with  
 you for recycling & disposal

All native plants & animals  
 are protected by law, please do  
 not disturb them in any way

Dogs are permitted but must be  
 on a leash at all times

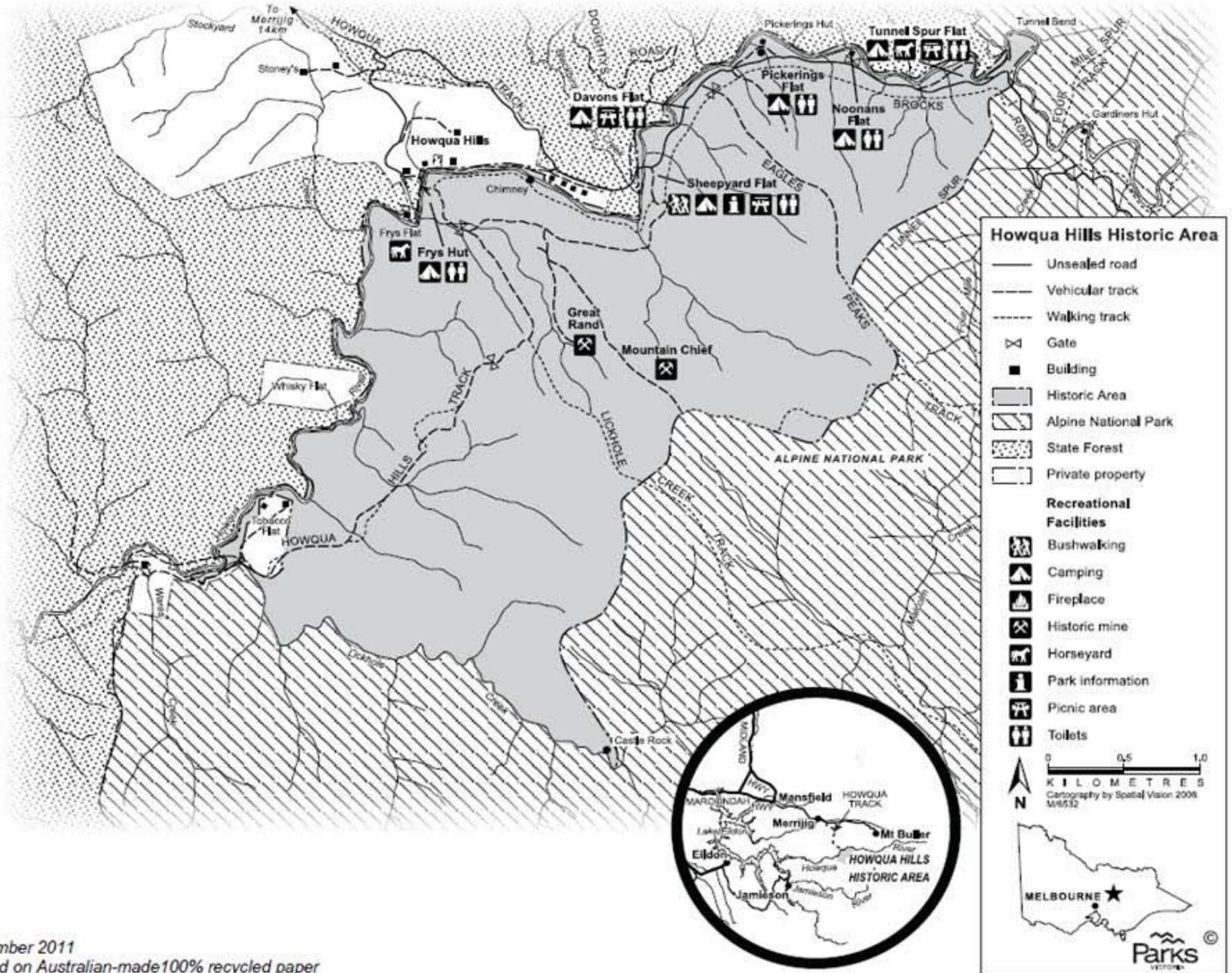
Do not disturb or remove any  
 fossil, relic or historic artefacts

Collect only dead, fallen timber  
 for firewood

Always check fire danger  
 forecasts. No fires (including  
 stoves) are permitted on days  
 of Total Fire Ban

Beware of open mineshafts

*This park is located in the  
 North-East Total Fire Ban  
 District.*



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