

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands



Visitor Guide

Experience a rich natural and historical environment in this remarkably large and seemingly remote unique park setting on Port Phillip Bay close to Melbourne. Relax and picnic with the family alongside a migratory bird habitat of international significance, a marine sanctuary and a historically significant homestead.

How to get there

Turn off the Princes Freeway (Westgate Freeway) some 20 kilometres southwest of Melbourne at the Point Cook Road exit. The main entrance is approximately 6 kilometres along Point Cook Road. The Homestead and Tower can be reached by turning left into Point Cook Homestead Road just before the main entrance (Melway map 207, K12 and map 198 K1).

Picnics

Point Cook Coastal Park is the perfect place for a family picnic. The beach picnic area contains free gas BBQs and picnic tables. Water taps, shade shelters (which can be reserved for a fee), two children's playgrounds and regularly maintained toilets ensure that you will have everything you need.

If outdoor picnics are not your style, the Homestead Restaurant is fully licensed and serves excellent meals.

Enjoying the beach and water

A narrow sandy beach separates the land from the sea and, off the coast, a series of low reefs rise from the seafloor. This combination supports a fascinating range of marine life. Children, in particular, find the intertidal zone great for exploring.

The Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary ensures that representative samples of Victoria's diverse, distinctive and amazing marine environment are conserved for the enjoyment of current and future generations. Snorkelling, swimming and SCUBA diving are wonderful ways to enjoy the sanctuary without damaging its values.



New Holland Honeyeater/Silver Banksia © MT

Bird watching

Point Cook has long been recognised for its abundant bird life. More than 200 species have been recorded, 34 of which are covered by international migratory agreements. The best places to view the birds are from the Spectacle Lake bird hide, on the beach at low tide and at the beach picnic area.

Walking and sightseeing

The entire complex is crossed by kilometres of mowed grass tracks. Good walking can also be found along the beach at low tide. The more adventurous should experience the magnificent 360 degree view from "The Tower". Access to "The Tower" is via the car park immediately north of the homestead and walking a gravel track through native grasslands. The track is 1.5 kilometres each way and is wheelchair accessible.

The RAAF airfield is still operational and watching planes is a popular visitor pastime.



For further information

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

Point Cook Coastal Park Office
Call 9394 9100

Point Cook Homestead
Call 9395 1213

Park Hours
Winter
8.30am to 5.00pm

Autumn & Spring
8.30am to 6.00pm

Summer
8.30am to 7.00pm

Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

Please take rubbish away with you – rubbish bins are not provided.

All native plants & animals, including snakes are protected and may not be disturbed or collected.

No animals, plants, rocks or other materials may be taken from the marine sanctuary.

Shellfish may not be collected from the tidal sand banks off Point Cook Coastal Park.

Dogs, cats, horses and other pets and animals are not allowed in the park.

Motor vehicles must keep to the paved roads in Point Cook Coastal Park and are prohibited in Cheetham Wetlands.

No fires, including BBQs, may be lit on a day of total fire ban.

Hunting, shooting and camping are not permitted in the park.

Healthy Parks Healthy People

Visiting a park can improve your health, mind, body and soul. So, with over four million hectares of parkland available to Victorians, why not escape to a park today



Visiting the past

The Homestead Precinct comprising the bluestone homestead, stables and weather board outbuildings, is a rare example of early Victorian rural architecture. As well as housing the Homestead Restaurant, events (such as weddings and functions) can be arranged by contacting the Homestead lessees.

Birdlife

Each year, the Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands host thousands of migratory birds from as far away as Siberia and Japan. Birds travel to this area to escape the northern hemisphere winter and enjoy the wetlands habitat of Port Phillip Bay. Numbers reach a peak between September and March.

From the bird hide at Spectacle Lake (please keep to the access track and stay in the hide to avoid disturbing birds on the lake), one is likely to see waders and other waterbirds, such as the pied stilt, the hoary headed grebe and Australian shelduck. Many birds roost on the shores and saltmarsh areas of the RAAF Lake at high tide, including the ubiquitous pelican. Two rare migratory waders may be found here – the double banded plover from New Zealand and the eastern golden plover from Siberia and Alaska.

Cheetham Wetlands, consisting of salt marshes and natural and artificial lagoons of Skeleton Creek, are a natural bird haven. The landscape contrasts with the rest of the park with distant views of the city and the You Yongs as a backdrop to the marshes.

Marine Sanctuary

The Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary covers nearly 300 hectares. It was declared in 2004, along with a number of other significant sites in Port Phillip Bay, to protect the marine ecosystems of the basalt reef. It is relatively unspoilt and is one of the last intact reef environments in the Bay.

This diverse marine environment supports bushy brown seaweed which harbours innumerable tiny animals and plants between its leaf-like fronds. Prickly sea urchins are abundant near crevices, masses of tubeworms and anemones cluster around exposed rocks while small sharks and skates patrol the surrounding eelgrass beds. In late summer, swarms of jellyfish can pulsate over the reefs clearing the water of microscopic plants and animals that build up in the nutrient-rich environment.

The Tower

At the southern boundary of the Cheetham Wetlands stands "The Tower, a Monument to Migration and Aspirations". Artist Bill Kelly used the theme of bird migration as a symbol for human migration in the design of the Tower. The structure, which has won international awards, uses recycled materials and was a joint effort involving the artist, Parks Victoria and the Ministry of the Arts.

Community activities

Park activities involving the community take place throughout the year. These are advertised in advance.

Visitors with limited mobility

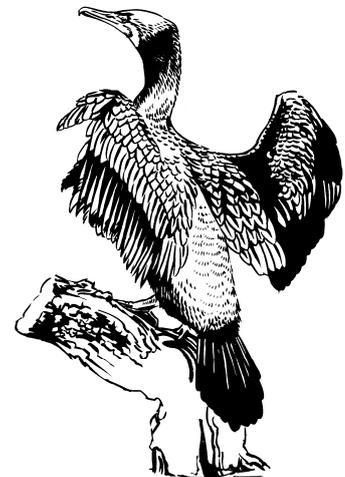
Wheelchair access is provided via hard-surfaced trails from the beach car park to the toilets, the picnic ground, the beach and Spectacle Lake bird hide. Access via a gravel track is also provided from the Homestead car park to and from the Tower.

Nearby attractions

The Point Cook RAAF Museum (Melway map 198 J4) displays vintage aircraft and RAAF historic exhibits. For more details phone 9256 1040 or visit their website at www.raafmuseum.com.au.

Werribee Mansion (Melway map 201 D1) is one of the last surviving 19th century pastoral properties in Victoria. The Mansion Precinct hosts a farm, formal rose garden, restaurant, kiosk, shops and picnic area. Activities include self-guided tours and educational programs.

Werribee Open Range Zoo (Melway map 201 D1) offers guided bus tours that present animals from around the world in a natural setting, a restaurant and shops.



September 2011
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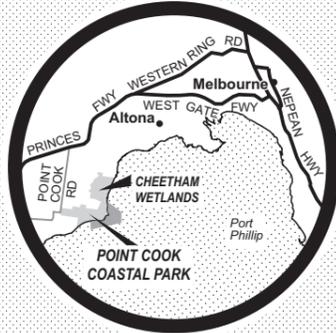
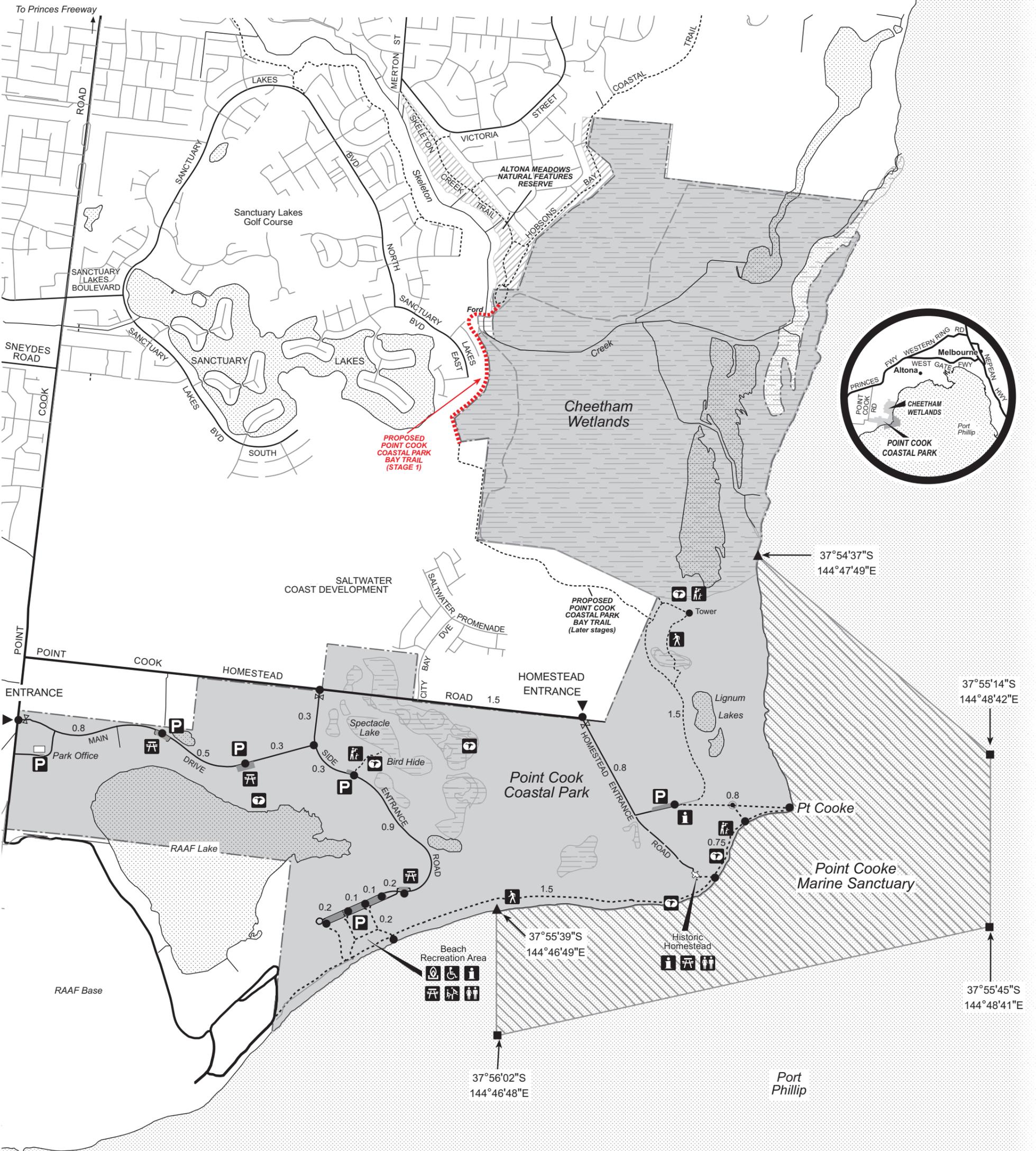
Point Cook Coastal Park

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Major sealed road — Minor sealed road — Other local road - - - Unsealed road - - - Management Vehicle Only track - - - Multi-purpose track ⊗ Gate ▲ Yellow Triangular Boundary Marker ■ In-water boundary marker (Pile or Buoy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Park ▨ Marine Sanctuary ▨ Other reserve ▨ Water body ▨ Wetland ● to ● Distance in km 	<p>Recreational Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🍖 Barbecue-Gas 🦅 Bird watching 🅑🅓 Carpark ♿ Facilities for people with disabilities 👁️ Lookout 📄 Park information 🪵 Picnic table 🎡 Playground 🚻 Toilets 👣 Walking track 	<div style="text-align: right;">  <p>Cartography by Spatial Vision 2009 M/6861</p> </div> <div style="text-align: right;">  <p>N</p> </div>
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MELBOURNE
GEELONG

Parks
VICTORIA



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144°47'49"E

37°55'14"S
144°48'42"E

37°55'39"S
144°46'49"E

37°55'45"S
144°48'41"E

37°56'02"S
144°46'48"E