

Mount Buffalo National Park



Visitor Guide to the Great Granite Plateau

Approaching Mount Buffalo, few people could fail to be impressed by the spectacular granite cliffs rising before them. Crisp fresh air, giant tors, deep gorges, tumbling waterfalls, Snow Gum woodlands and masses of wildflowers all combine with views of the nearby Alps.

Location and access

Mount Buffalo is 325 kilometres, a four hour drive north from Melbourne.

While driving up Mount Buffalo, enjoy the changing environment and views. Watch out for native animals, such as wombats and lyrebirds, especially early in the morning and at dusk. Take extreme care driving during winter. The main road is often snow-covered from McKinnons Corner through to Cresta Valley. Snow chains must be carried during the declared ski season and fitted when and where directed.

The Reservoir, Lake Catani and Horn roads are narrow and winding with gravel surfaces. Beware of dusty and rough conditions. These roads are closed seasonally during the colder, wetter months. Reservoir and Horn roads are not suitable for caravans due to the absence of a turning circle.

Things to see and do

During summer enjoy bushwalking, canoeing, swimming, picnicking, sightseeing and mountain biking. Rock climbing, abseiling and hang gliding challenge the adventurous visitor.

Over winter, snow blankets most of the plateau and attracts cross-country skiers to marked trails with back country touring, tobogganing and snow play at Cresta Valley. A café operates seasonally at the Dingo Dell Day Visitors Centre.

Pack a picnic

Mount Buffalo is perfect for that serene picnic amongst Snow Gums or a refreshing stop beside the lake. A number of picnic areas offer a variety of facilities and information shelters throughout the park.

Eurobin Creek and Rollasons Falls picnic areas have tables, toilets and fireplaces while Grossmans Mill and the Oval picnic areas only have tables and fireplaces.

The Cathedral Picnic Area has toilets that are only open for busy holiday periods. Eurobin Falls, Reservoir and the Horn picnic areas have tables. The nearest toilets to the Horn Picnic Area are at Cathedral Saddle.

The Gorge Day Visitor Area, perched on the edge of the Gorge, offers tables, viewing platform and

toilets for disabled visitors and a picnic shelter with a fireplace.

The Lakeside Day Visitor Area, located on the shores of Lake Catani, offers some shady relief for visitors. The Lake Catani jetty is arguably the best place to enjoy a cool swim or paddle a canoe. The Lakeside Day Visitor Area has tables, toilets, cold showers and fireplaces.

The best places to go

Sightseeing. Lookouts at the Gorge and the Horn offer superb views of the Australian Alps.

Walking. Over 90 kilometres of walking tracks can lead you to delightful waterfalls, great lookouts and amazing granite formations.

Bike riding. Restricted to vehicle tracks and the Ballroom track. Good rides are along the Reservoir Road and the Gorge-Lake Catani Track. Collect a Mountain Bike Riders Code from the Park Office prior to riding.

Rock climbing and abseiling. A number of licensed tour operators provide activities in the area. Rock climbers are required to complete the Trip Intentions book at the Gorge prior to climbing.

Tobogganing and snow play. Only permitted in the 'safe' designated area at Cresta Valley or Dingo Dell. Snow tubing may be available at Dingo Dell when conditions are favourable.

Cross country skiing. Marked trails commence at the information board adjacent to the Cresta Valley carpark.

Hang gliding. For experienced pilots only from the launch ramp 200 metres past the Gorge lower carpark.

Downhill skiing: Not available.

Staying overnight

There are unpowered car based camping sites at the Lake Catani Campground which is open from November to April.

Remote bush camping is available at Rocky Creek and Mount McLeod campgrounds for a limited number of hikers. These are minimal impact camping sites designed for fuel stove use only and have pit toilets. Remote camping is limited to a two night maximum stay with mandatory bookings required for busy holiday seasons. Book via www.parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.



Walking track guide

There are over 90 km of tracks traversing pristine subalpine plant communities and unique landscapes. The tracks are generally well defined and signposted. Maps should be carried at all times. Please keep to formed tracks.

Self guided walks

1. Gorge Heritage Walk (2.5 km, 1 hour return)

This loop walk starts in the Gorge Day Visitor Area opposite the Chalet. Interpretive signs describe the area's history and beauty through the eyes of local pioneer, Guide Alice.

2. Dicksons Falls Nature Walk (4 km, 1.5 hours return)

This walk starts on the east side of the road opposite Cresta Valley ski area. Subalpine plant communities and masses of wildflowers are a highlight in late summer.

3. Lakeside Walk (3 km, 1 hour circuit)

Lake Catani is best seen from this circuit track as it passes through several different plant communities. The walk can be accessed from various points around Lake Catani.

Shorter walks

Ideal if you are short on time with all being less than 4km and generally take less than an hour to complete.

4. View Point Nature Walk (4 km, 2 hours return)

Access to this walk is easiest from the Lakeside Day Visitor Area starting about 500m from the Lake Catani jetty.

5. Eurobin Falls Track (1.5 km, 45 minutes return)

This track climbs past the pretty Ladies Bath Falls and onto Lower Eurobin Falls. A steeper track continues up to the base of the Upper Falls.

6. Rollasons Falls Track (4 km, 1.5 hours return)

Start at Rollasons Falls Picnic Area. Turn left at the intersection for the Upper Falls lookout and right to the Lower Falls and rock pool. There is a short steep section at the end of this relatively easy walk.

7. Gorge - Lake Catani Track (4 km, 1.5 hours return)

This easy track links the Gorge and Lakeside day visitor areas through stands of Alpine Ash. View Point Nature Walk begins at Eurobin Creek Bridge below the Lake Catani dam wall.

8. Underground River Track (2.5 km, 1 hour return)

From the lower Gorge carpark, this track leads to Billsons and Haunted Gorge lookouts and onto the Underground River. Continue on to link up with the View Point Nature Walk. Note the Underground River Cave should not be entered without an experienced guide and appropriate equipment.

9. Monolith Track (1.8 km, 1 hour circuit)

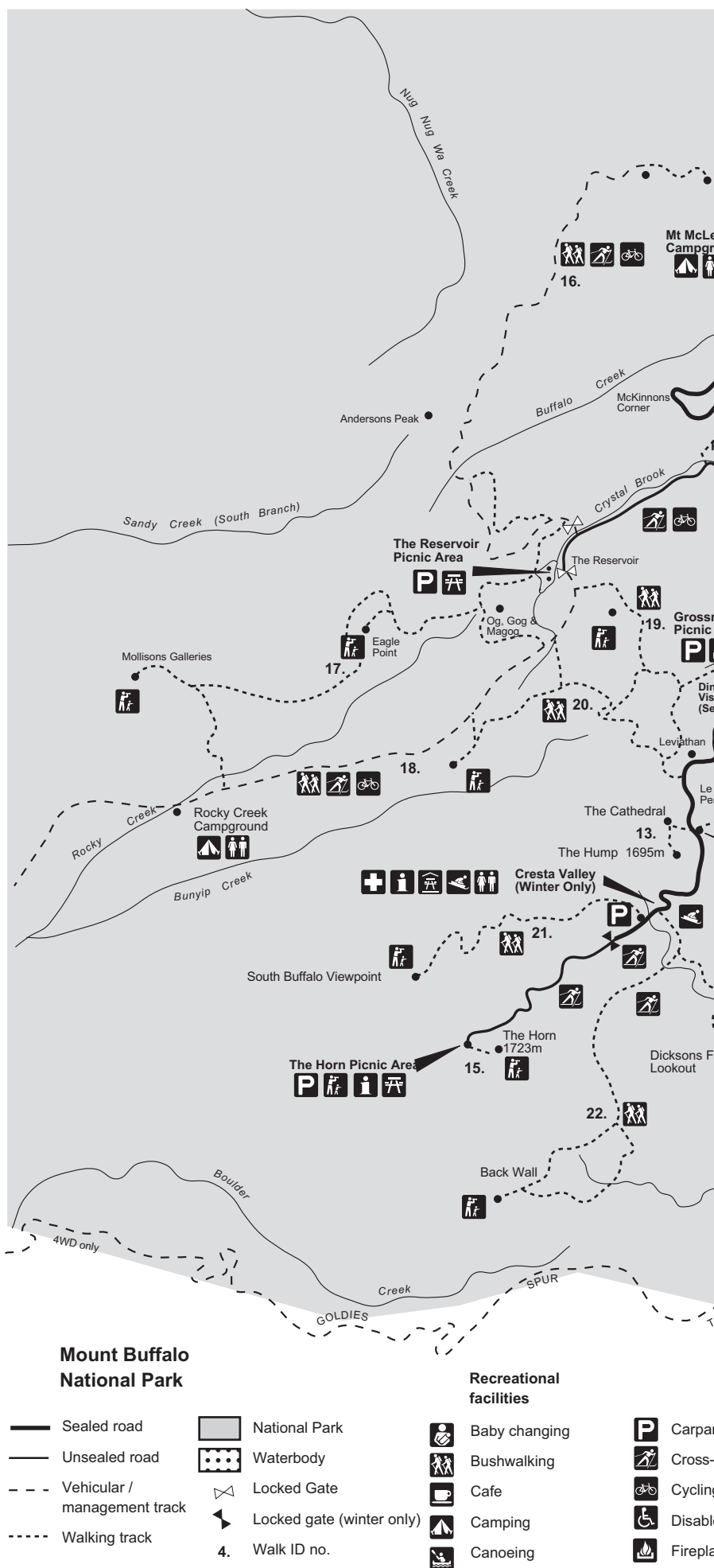
Access from the carpark opposite the Park Office. Returning by a loop to the Snow Clearing Depot and along the road to the carpark. Or continue 1.5 km to the Gorge Day Visitor Area. The track can also be accessed from the Chalet via the Gorge-Lake Catani Track.

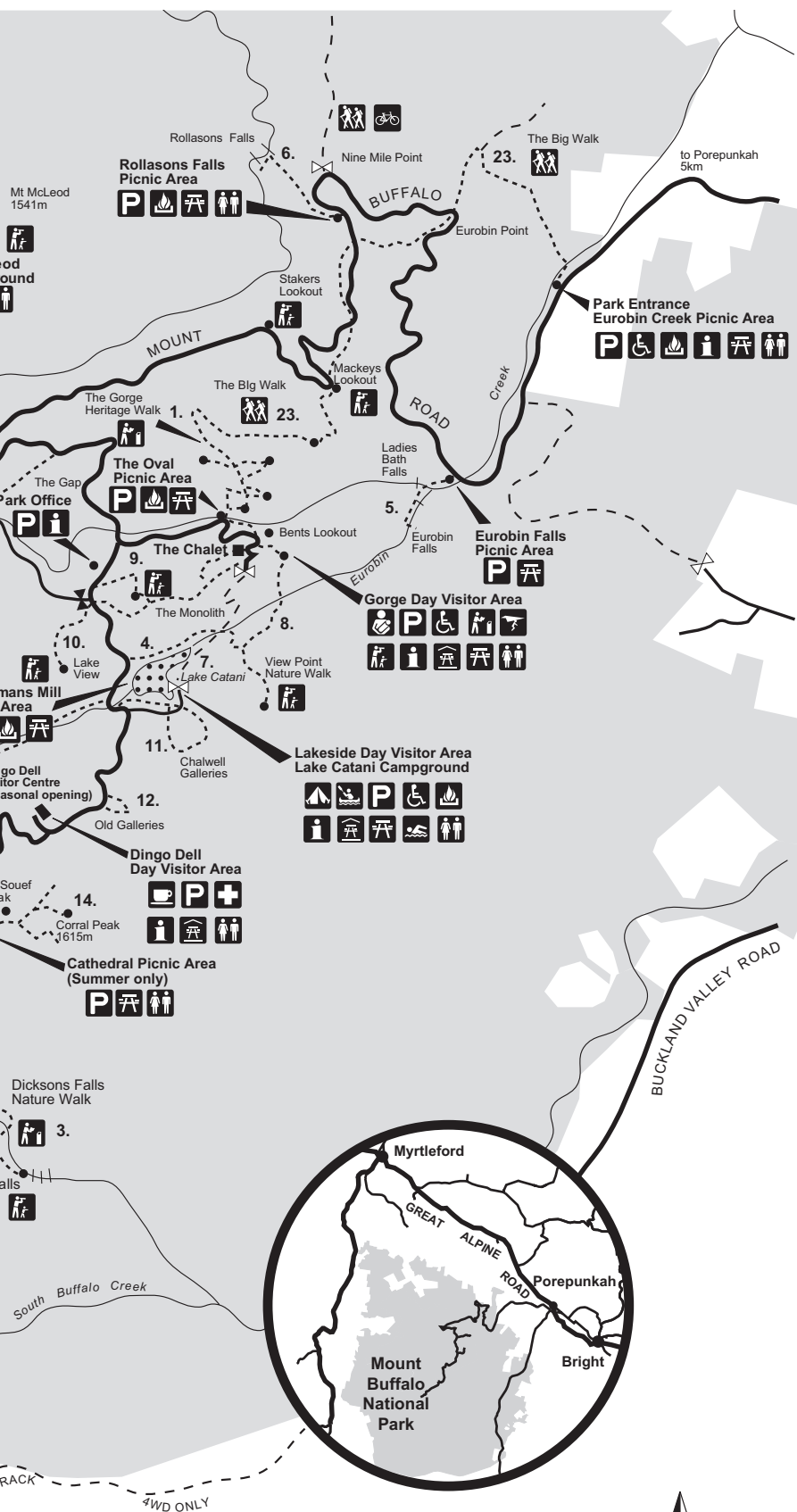
10. Lake View Track (2 km, 45 minutes return)

This steep track, commencing near the Snow Clearing Depot, terminates at a large rock slab giving fine views of Lake Catani below and the Alps beyond Mount Buffalo.

11. Chalwell Galleries Track (1.7 km, 1 hour circuit)

Begin near the Lake Catani Campground. This track passes through the galleries which are a jumble of large granite rocks forming impressive passages. The climb through the galleries is steep and challenging.





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| | First aid (winter only) | | Picnic Table |
| | Guided walk | | Swimming |
| | Hang gliding | | Tobogganing |
| | Lookout | | Toilet |
| | Park information | | |
| | Picnic shelter | | |



Cartography by Nature Tourism Services 10/11



12. Old Galleries Track (1 km, 30 minutes circuit)

Similar to Chalwell, the Old Galleries offer a shorter walk through the awe inspiring rock formations of Mount Buffalo. This short loop returns back along the main road.

13. Cathedral - Hump Track (2 km, 45 minutes return)

Starting at the Cathedral Picnic Area, the track leads past the spectacular Cathedral and on to the Hump summit for fine views of Cresta Valley and the Horn.

14. Corral - Castle Track (3.5 km, 1.5 hours return)

Le Souef Peak, Mahomets Tomb and the secluded Corral are also accessed from Cathedral Picnic Area. A side trip past the Sentinel and onto the Castle is worthwhile.

15. The Horn Track (1.5 km, 45 minutes return)

The highest point of Mount Buffalo at 1723 m is a must with 360o views of the plateau and Alps at the summit.

Longer walks

These longer walks take you to more remote areas of the park. Wear sturdy footwear, pack a snack, water and a jacket, be ready for sudden changes in the weather and always let someone know before you go!

16. Mount McLeod Track (16 km, 6 hours return)

Starting near Reservoir Picnic Area, the track leads to the most remote part of the park, North Buffalo Plateau. As an alternate return route, try the Mount McLeod Shortcut Track providing a more gradual climb onto the main plateau, linking back with the Mount McLeod Track.

17. Mollisons Galleries Track (18 km, 6 hours circuit)

Begin on Mount McLeod Track turning left after 300m. Detour to Og Gog & Magog and Eagle Point along the way. An alternate return route is available via the Rocky Creek loop track which is a wilderness track- basic construction with limited markings & definition. The track may be difficult to find and independent navigation is essential.

18. Rocky Creek Track (13 km, 4 hours return)

From the Reservoir this management vehicle track links in with Long Plain, Macs Point and Mollisons Galleries Tracks, terminating at the remote Rocky Creek Campground.

19. Long Plain Track (8 km, 3 hours return)

Reach Mount Dunn via this picturesque track from near Lake Catani. Continue 2 km onto the Reservoir or try a loop out to Macs Point and back via Rocky Creek Track.

20. Macs Point Track (7 km, 3 hours return)

Start at the snow plain 300m south of the Leviathan. This track also links into Long Plain Track via Stanley Rocks and Giants Causeway. A longer circuit is via Rocky Creek Track returning along Long Plain Track.

21. South Buffalo Track (8 km, 3 hours return)

From Cresta Valley this track initially climbs a ridge then meanders though Snow Gum glades and small snow plains, terminating at the South Buffalo view point.

22. Back Wall Track (12 km, 4 hours return)

Begin on Dicksons Falls Nature Walk, turning right after 500m passing by the historic Chinamans Wall. The alternative Eastern Loop track is currently closed.

23. The Big Walk (11.3 km, 4 - 5 hours one way)

The longest walk on Mt Buffalo. This track climbs the plateau from the park entrance to the Gorge Day Visitor Area. Detours are possible to Rollasons Falls and lookouts along the way. Water is limited along this track so remember to carry plenty with you.

For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre

Call 13 1963

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

Camping permits and track information

Mount Buffalo Entrance
Station and Park Office
PO Box 72

Porepunkah VIC 3740

Phone: 13 1963

Relevant maps

Mount Buffalo Plateau

1:30,000 topographic by

Geoff Lawford

Eurobin & Buckland 1:25,000

topographic from Vic Map

Relevant codes / guides

Bushwalking Code

Car Camping Code

Bush Camping Code

Mount Buffalo Visitor Guide

Alps in Flower Field Guide

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 and
landforms are protected

Dogs, cats and other pets are
prohibited within the park

Firearms are also prohibited

Camping is permitted only in
the designated areas

Fires are permitted only in
fireplaces provided and must
be attended at all times whilst
going. Hot coals are
considered a 'going fire'

No fires may be lit in the open
on days of Total Fire Ban.

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

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!*



The making of a mountain

Massive as the mountain now is, it was once three times its present height. Originally this area was covered with sedimentary rock laid down by the sea. The fantastically shaped boulders and tors were further shaped by heat, wind, plants, water and ice attacking joints in the granite, widening cracks, forming soil and giving this park its unique and spectacular landscape.

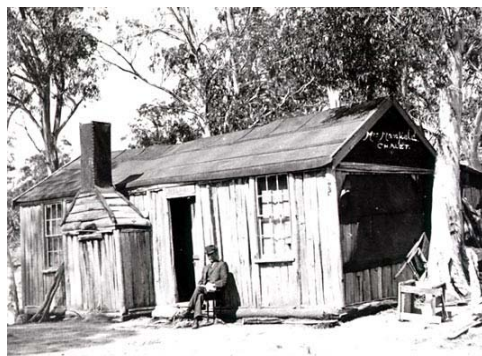
A natural island in the sky

The plateau's isolation, harsh alpine climate and range of altitudes have resulted in a rich array of plants and animals. Some plants such as Buffalo Sallee, Buffalo Sallow Wattle and Fern-leaf Baeckea are found nowhere else in the world. Dry foothill forests, tall wet mountain forests, Snow Gum woodlands, alpine heathlands, Sphagnum Moss beds, Snow-grass plains and wildflowers can all be found along the main road and on tracks throughout the park.

Look for Crimson Rosellas and Gang-gang Cockatoos feeding in the tree tops. Superb Lyrebirds are often seen scratching in the leaf litter. If you walk quietly, Wombats, Swamp Wallabies and Brown Antechinus may be visible, as well as a variety of snakes and lizards. At night Greater Gliders, Tawny Frogmouths and Eastern Pygmy Possums are active. Some animals are quite common while others, like the critically endangered Spotted Tree Frog, are rare or threatened. Do not feed the animals and help us keep our wildlife wild.

The first visitors

It is believed the Minjambuta people frequently journeyed up the mountain in summer to feast on Bogong Moths, gather for ceremonies and to socialise in the cooler summer temperatures. Explorers Hume and Hovell named Mount Buffalo, after likening it to a sleeping buffalo, as they passed present day Glenrowan in 1824 on their journey to Port Phillip.



Manfields Chalet, Gorge Area. Circa 1909

A classic national park

The Bright Alpine Club actively lobbied the government to protect the area. Subsequently 1,152 ha surrounding the Gorge was declared a national park in 1898, becoming (with Wilson's Promontory) one of Victoria's first national parks.

Following this, the park became a focus for tourism, and in 1908 a road was cut up the mountain. The Mount Buffalo Chalet was built two years later and became very popular. In 1936, Australia's first ski tow was installed at Cresta Valley.

The park now covers 31,000 ha encompassing the entire plateau and most of the forested foothills down to nearby valleys.

The park is also part of the collective Australian Alps National Parks. A co-operative agreement between NSW, ACT, Victoria and the Commonwealth to encourage a cohesive management of our fragile alpine ecosystems.

Fire in the Alps

Fires swept through the Alps during the summers of 2003 and 2006. The natural environment will recover over time with some alpine species taking longer to regenerate. Many Australian species are well adapted to cope with fire and some require it for regeneration. Evidence of the fires, and the recovering vegetation are observed around Mount Buffalo's striking landscape.

Stands of juvenile Alpine Ash can now be seen after the fire opened the mature seed pods, resulting in massive seed release and a new generation. Spectacular wildflowers occur during spring and an abundance of wildlife has returned. To assist in the park's recovery please keep to designated walking tracks, especially in fire affected areas.

Take care!

All visitors, especially walkers, should note that weather conditions can change rapidly in mountain and alpine areas. Snowfalls can be experienced at any time of the year, so always be prepared with:

- wind and waterproof jacket, warm clothing, woollen hat, gloves, sunglasses and sunscreen
- high energy food and water
- strong and sturdy footwear and a first aid kit
- compass and relevant topographical map

Let someone know before you go and:

- Check road and track conditions before setting out by calling **13 1963**. Many roads and tracks are closed seasonally during the colder, wetter months for environmental and safety reasons.
- Report incidents to park rangers or call 13 1963. In case of emergency call 000.

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