



Organ Pipes National Park



Visitor Guide

The Organ Pipes, a set of basalt columns formed by the cooling and cracking of molten lava, are the park's best known feature. Visitors can enjoy the fantastic range of picnicking, walking, bird watching and photography opportunities available. Since the park was declared in 1972, a great deal of work has been done to restore the indigenous vegetation to the area.

Enjoying the park

Start at the Visitor Information Centre and follow the walking track to explore the many wonderful features of the park.

1. Keilor Plains

Walk through the small gate to the two viewing platforms. All around you are the basalt Keilor Plains, one of the world's largest lava flows.

These plains, formed by lava which came from volcanoes near Sunbury, are fairly flat except where streams, like Jacksons Creek below you, have cut deep valleys.

2. Native plants revival

As you walk down to the Organ Pipes look closely at the trees and shrubs. In 1972 this area was covered with weeds, mainly thistles and boxthorn. Each year since the weeds have been removed more native trees and shrubs have established.

The task of re-establishing native grasses and herbs has been more difficult, but there is now a substantial field of Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) on the north side of the track.

3. The Organ Pipes

About a million years ago, molten lava flowed over the Keilor Plains from Mount Holden and other nearby volcanic hills. It filled the depressions and valleys of the former land surface, then cooled and solidified into basalt.

Here at the Organ Pipes, it is believed that the lava filled a river valley running at right angles to Jacksons Creek and was perhaps 70 metres thick. Once a surface crust had formed, the lava beneath cooled very slowly.

During cooling, the lava contracted and surface cracks developed (as they do in a drying mud puddle). As it continued to harden, the cracks lengthened until the basalt mass was divided into columns.

Over the million years since the lava flow, Jacksons Creek has cut a deep valley through the basalt and revealed the Organ Pipes.

4. Sandstone Bedrock

Walk down the stream for 200 metres, past well-established trees and you will see yellowish rocks across the creek. These are sandstones and mudstones, sedimentary rocks laid down under the sea. Fossils in these old rocks suggest they were formed about four hundred million years ago. The old river valley now filled by the Organ Pipes was cut in this sedimentary bedrock.

5. Rosette Rock

Now walk back upstream. About 400 metres past the Organ Pipes, look across the creek to see Rosette Rock, a radial array of basalt columns like the spokes of a wheel.

6. Tessellated Pavement

Three hundred metres further on is the Tessellated Pavement, which consists of the tops of basalt columns "filed down" by Jacksons Creek.

7. Scoria Cone

You can now return to the car park by the short-cut path shown on the map. The car park is on an eroded scoria cone – a small volcano that ejected molten volcanic rock called scoria. Scoria is reddish-brown and light in weight; it has many air-holes because it was full of steam when ejected.

How to get there

Organ Pipes National Park is just off the Calder Freeway about 20km north-west of Melbourne (Melways Map 3 D4).

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For further information

Parks Victoria
Information Centre

Call 13 1963

or visit the

Parks Victoria website

www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Organ Pipes Park Office

Organ Pipes Road

Diggers Rest 3427

Caring for the
environment

Help us look after your park
by following these guidelines:

Please take rubbish away
with you for recycling &
disposal

All native plants, animals,
archaeological sites and
geographic features
are protected by law.

Please do not disturb them
in any way

Dogs and other pets are not
permitted

Firearms are prohibited

Use only gas barbecues.

Solid fuel fires are not
permitted in the park

No fires, including barbecues,
may be lit on a day of

Total Fire Ban

Organ Pipes National Park

is in the **Central**

Total FireBan District

Please keep to walking tracks
to minimise erosion and
trampling of vegetation

Be self-sufficient with drinking
water. Carry it in and/or know
how to make untreated water
safe for drinking

A haven for wildlife

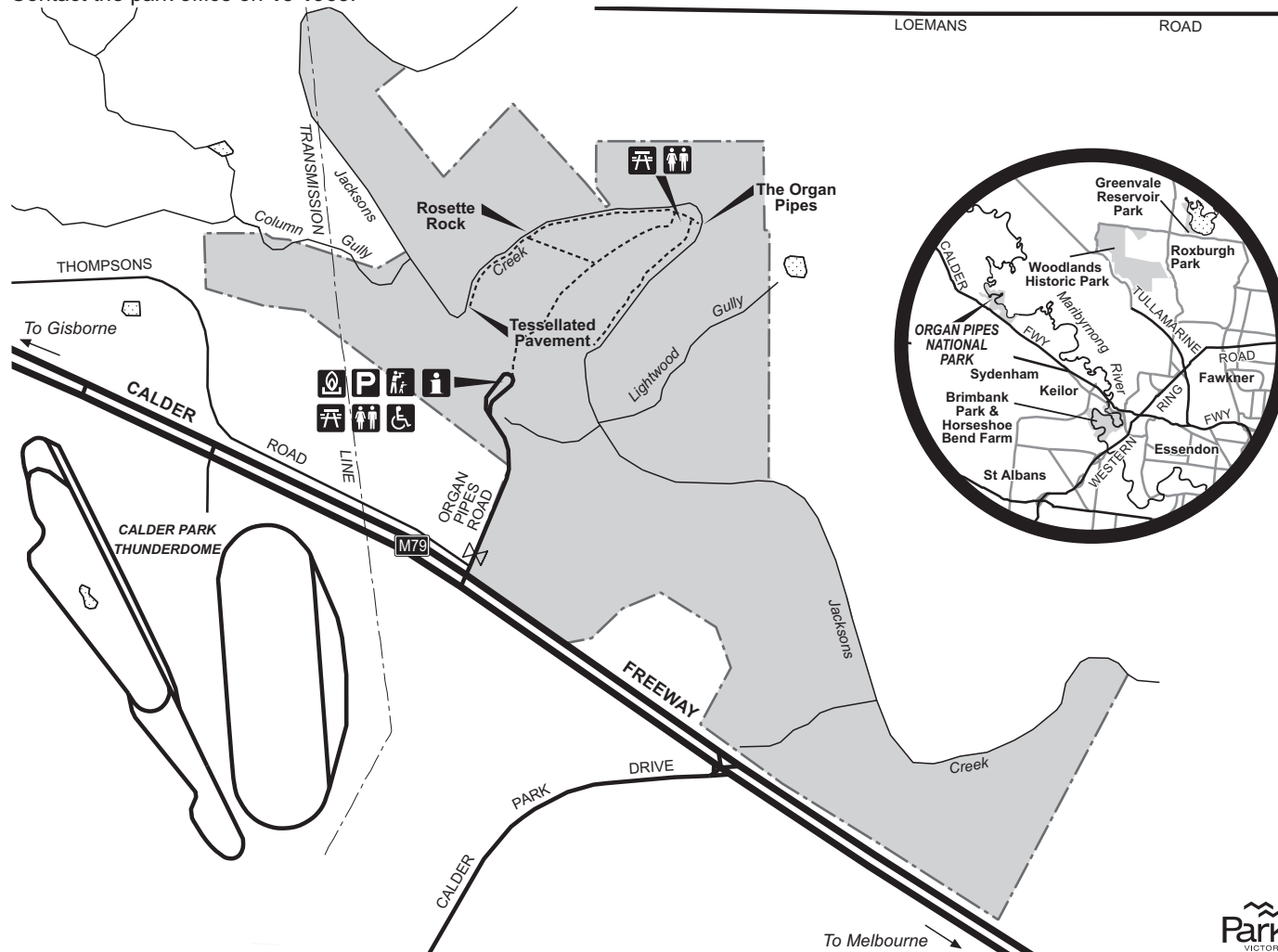
The number and variety of native birds recorded has increased greatly since the park was established. Mammals such as possums, wallabies and echidnas can sometimes be seen, although the nocturnal possum and the shy echidna will not be easy to spot. Reptiles are also common, including skinks and blue-tongue lizards. Sugar gliders were released early in 1989 and other species, such as the threatened Striped Legless Lizard, are being introduced as native vegetation and habitat continue to develop.

Facilities

Picnic tables and toilets are provided. Wood fires are not permitted but you can bring your own gas barbecue.

School groups are welcome, but arrangements must be made in advance.

Contact the park office on **13 1963**.



Get Involved - hands on!

Work by volunteers has been vital in the restoration of the park, long recognised as one of the most successful restoration projects in the state. The Friends of Organ Pipes and other volunteers have spent many thousands of hours working on the restoration. Volunteers are always welcome to assist with the ongoing work in Organ Pipes National Park. Call the Parks Victoria Information Centre on **13 1963** to find out about joining a Friends Group.

Park hours

The park is open from 8.00am to 4.30pm each day. During the summer daylight saving period it closes at 6.00pm on weekends and public holidays.

Admission is free.

