

# KANAWINKA GLOBAL GEOPARK

South West Victoria & South East South Australia

## Lakes and Craters Precinct: Lake Corangamite



Lake Corangamite is a large inland lake with a surface area of 234 square kilometres and a circumference of about 150 kilometres. This spectacular body of water stretches for 32 kilometres in a north–south direction.

The lake's name is said to be Aboriginal for 'bitter' - a reference to its extreme salinity (three times saltier than seawater). The volume of the streams which feed the lake is insufficient to cause an overflow, and prevents ongoing interchange or flow of waters. Being a rather shallow basin, the water merely evaporates, causing an accumulation of salinity.

The lake contains only forage fish such as galaxiids and eels, but the Ramsar-listed wetland complex has a rich and diverse habitat supporting rare plant species and large numbers of birds.

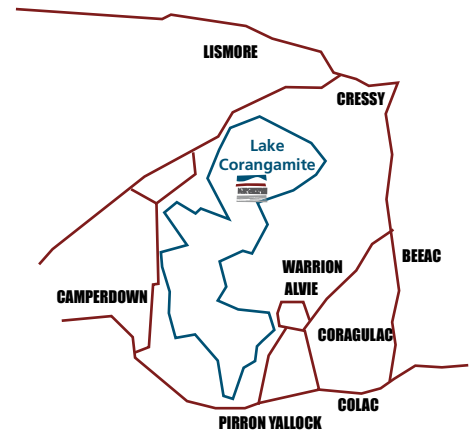
Surrounding Lake Corangamite are the most numerous and significant dry stone walls in the country. Most of the existing walls were built in the 1870s and 80s, and were seen as a sensible and practical way to utilise the volcanic stone cleared from the land in order to grow crops and introduce stock.

A great drive from Alvie through Dreeite, Cundare, Foxhow, Leslie Manor and Pirron Yallock circumnavigates the lake and explores the stony rise country in Dreeite and Pirron Yallock. Within these stony areas there are many stone walls. The drive also gives views of many seasonal wetlands east of Lake Corangamite.

Since the 1950's, the level of the lake has been controlled by diversion in the north end. This has caused a long term drop in the level. However the lake is reported to have been dry in the 1860's

There are a number of features of the lake including massive seasonal populations of brine shrimp which attract huge flocks of birds; the mounds of coxiella shells [tiny salt water snails] around the eastern shores; the north of the lake was used for bombing practice during World War II; The critically endangered Corangamite Water Skink is found around the lake.

Indigenous people have left reminders including fish traps on the eastern shore and circular rock shelter bases on the south western corner.



### How to get there?

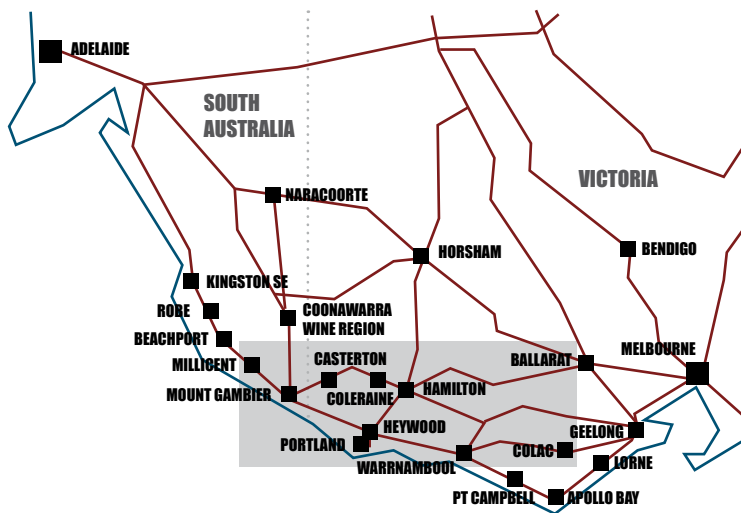
From Colac, drive along the Princes Highway, turn right down Red Rock Road and follow the signs.

Or, from Camperdown, drive along Foxhow Road and then right onto Leslie Manor Road.

### Things to do:

- Corangamite Arts has developed the Corangamite Dry Stone Walls Heritage Trail which takes in nine of the most important sections of walls with interpretation and brochure. The trail can be picked up at any location. For more information, you may also like to read the Corangamite Arts publication 'If these walls could talk', which is available at most local Visitor Information Centres.





Australia may be referred to as a relatively young nation, but the well-preserved ancient landscape provides many precious windows into the past. The Kanawinka Global Geopark can take you on an amazing journey through this landscape, enabling visitors to travel back in time over thousands and thousands of years.

The surface geology of South Western Victoria and South Eastern South Australia is a striking contrast of sweeping plains and spectacular mountains which are largely the product of volcanic activity. In fact, with six sites of international significance and 14 of national significance, this area is Australia's most extensive volcanic province.

The history of these geological masterpieces stretches back to the Tertiary and Quaternary eras, when great outpourings of volcanic material through vents took place. Lava flows spread evenly across the existing plains, followed valleys, flowed under water, and in some cases forced upwards into rough, stony hills called tumuli, or steeper scoria cones.

In total, the flows cover an area of some 23,000 square km, extending north to the hills beyond Ballarat, and reappearing in a small section of south-eastern South Australia. This area is known as the Newer Volcanics Province, and features nearly 400 individual eruption points, most of which occurred between 4.5 and 2 million years ago.

Many of the eruptions were witnessed by the indigenous peoples of the area who have inhabited this region for up to 45,000 years, and feature prominently in stories of the Dreamtime.

Aboriginal people also made use of the stones from the lava flow to construct channels linking the wetlands, weirs, fish-traps, wind breaks and stone huts, and excellent examples created by the Gunditjmarra people can be found around Western Victoria's Lake Condah region in particular.

Later, during the 1870s and 80s, European settlers utilised the volcanic stone cleared from the land to construct dry stone walls in order to grow crops and introduce stock. Many examples can be found surrounding Corangamite on the Dry Stone Walls Heritage Trail.

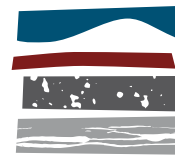
The region's spectacular and intriguing volcanic landscape also offers a range of other visitor experiences, from a 45-minute tour to the surface of Mount Gambier's Blue Lake, to the gruelling trek up Mount Schank and down to the crater floor.

In western Victoria, you can go on a chartered boat tour to Lady Julia Percy Island, which has the largest colony of Australian fur seals in the southern hemisphere. Or, take The Alan Marshall Walking Tour of Mount Noorat and the nearby township, or swim in the turquoise-coloured waters of Lake Surprise.

There are also plenty of picturesque picnic and camping spots just waiting to be discovered. Alternatively, you can take your time and spend the night in one of the numerous towns in the Kanawinka Global Geopark.

The Geopark is known as KANAWINKA GEOPARK, meaning Land of Tomorrow from the Buandik people. It is also the name of a geological fault line from Naracoorte Caves to Bass Strait at Portland and a Parish name west of Casterton about 1911 so all levels of the history, Geological, Indigenous and European are brought together in one name.

**The Kanawinka Geopark was declared the 57th Member of the Global Network of National Geoparks assisted by UNESCO on June 22, 2008.**



# KANAWINKA GLOBAL GEOPARK

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## Accredited Visitor Information Centres

### Victoria

#### Casterton

Shiels Terrace  
03 5581 2070

#### Colac

Cnr Queen & Murray  
Streets  
03 5231 3730

#### Dunkeld

Parker Street  
03 5577 2558

#### Hamilton

Lonsdale Street  
1800 807 056

#### Nelson

Leake Street  
08 8738 4051

#### Port Campbell

26 Morris Street  
03 5598 6089

#### Port Fairy

Railway Place,  
Bank Street  
03 5568 2682

#### Portland

Lee Breakwater Rd.  
1800 035 567

### Warrnambool

Flagstaff Hill  
Merri Street  
1800 637 725

### South Australia

#### Beachport

Millicent Road  
08 8735 8029

#### Millicent

Mt Gambier Road  
08 8733 0904

#### Mount Gambier

The Lady Nelson  
Jubilee Hwy East  
1800 087 187

#### Penola/Coonawarra

27 Arthur Street  
08 8737 2855



#### Camperdown

Old Court House  
179 Manifold Street  
03 5593 3144

#### Lake Bolac

2110 Glenelg Hwy  
03 5350 2204