

KANAWINKA GLOBAL GEOPARK

South West Victoria & South East South Australia

Lava Flows Precinct Mount Eccles National Park and Lake Condah



At the heart of the Kanawinka Global Geopark lies Mount Eccles National Park and Lake Condah. Mt Eccles is located only 9 kilometres southwest of Macarthur and is a young volcanic structure that has a remarkable variety of volcanic features in an excellent state of preservation. It was formed around 20,000 years ago, when volcanic eruptions opened the earth's crust and poured out thousands of tonnes of molten lava flowing up to nearly 50 kilometres in length.

The Aboriginal Gunditjmarra people of Western Victoria who witnessed the eruption believed that it was an ancestral creation-being revealing himself in the landscape. They refer to Mt Eccles as Budj Bim, and the scoria cones as tung att – or, 'teeth belonging to it'.

The lava flow from Mt Eccles changed the drainage pattern in this part of Western Victoria. The younger flows were distributed along 'canals' that branch from the northern end of the Lake Surprise crater and elsewhere, and created large wetlands where the Gunditjmarra people grew and harvested eels and fish. They used the stones from the lava flow to construct channels linking the wetlands, weirs, fish-traps, wind breaks and stone huts, and lived on fish, native plants and animals.

The first European sighting of Mount Eccles was probably by Matthew Flinders in 1802, he noted "a round hill" visible from the sea. Originally named Mount Eeles after a war veteran, an error by a mapmaker in the 1850s saw the volcano recorded as Mount Eccles and the name has remained.

Conflict between Europeans and Aborigines was endemic. The Gunditjmarra resisted European encroachment on their lands during the Eumerella wars that lasted more than 20 years, often launching their attacks from the Mt Eccles lava flow, with the rocky, uneven surface proving difficult for Europeans and their horses to penetrate. After a number of attacks on pastoral properties, native police were dispatched to the district and, by 1849, they had broken Gunditjmarra resistance (Clarke 1990: 238-250).

In the 1860s, Victoria began developing a system of Aboriginal Reserves. Gunditjmarra living in the Portland and Heywood areas refused to move to the mission at Framlingham so a new reserve and mission was created at Lake Condah in 1868 (Clark 1990: 232; Context 2000).

In 1919, after the First World War in which many Gunditjmarra served, the Victorian Government closed the Lake Condah mission. Much of the land was sold to the Closer Settlement Board to provide land to returned soldiers. Although attempts were made to settle Aboriginal people on the Lake Tyers Reserve many remained or returned to the Lake Condah mission area, which was later returned to them under the Aboriginal Land (Lake Condah and Framlingham Forest) Act 1987.

Mount Eccles was declared a public purposes (picnic) reserve in 1926. The 35 hectares was managed by a committee of local people who built the existing picnic shelter and the track down to and around the edge of Lake Surprise. After World War 2, management was taken over by the Shire of Minhamite until 1960, when it was declared a National Park. Mount Eccles is the only Kanawinka Geosite located within a National Park.

Mount Eccles National Park increased to its present size of 10,000 hectares, which covers the majority of the lava flow from Mount Eccles, following incorporation of The Stones Flora and Fauna Reserve and the Dunmore State Forest.

In July 2004, the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape at Lake Condah was listed on the National Heritage List. Processes have now commenced for the nomination of Lake Condah as a World Heritage Site.



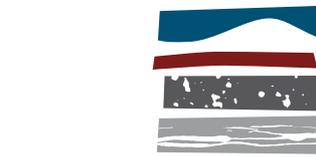
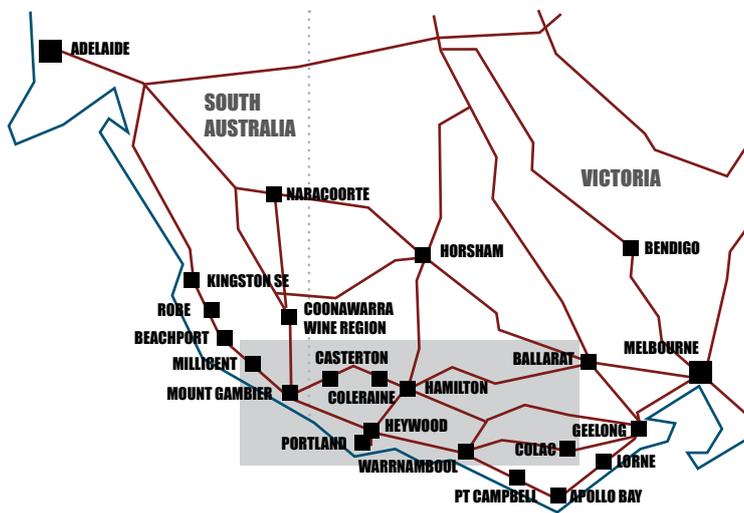
How to get there?

Mount Eccles National Park is 300 kilometres south-west of Melbourne, 45 kilometres south of Hamilton (Melway ref: 507 C10). It stands at the western edge of the volcanic plains that stretch from Melbourne to Port Fairy, extending northwards to Hamilton and Ararat. At Hamilton, take the Hamilton-Port Fairy Road and turn off at Macarthur. It can also be reached via the Princes Highway, turning off at Port Fairy and then at Macarthur.

Things to do:

- You can discover the wonders of this volcanic landmark along the self-guided Crater Rim Nature Walk, which takes you around the rim and then inside the crater and along the shoreline of the lake. If you look closely at the walls of the crater, you can see cracks which separate the different flows of the lava during eruptions. Extending in a line southwest from the main crater, you'll find several small subsidiary spatter cones with entire craters surrounded by spatter cones and lava dribble ramparts. One of these – 'The Shaft' – has a vertical vent 30 metres deep, and is considered a rare phenomenon in Australia.
- Swim in the crater of a volcano. The turquoise-coloured Lake Surprise has a maximum depth of 14 metres.
- The picnic ground at Mount Eccles National Park has fireplaces, tables, toilets, a picnic shelter and an Information Centre. The camping grounds have basic facilities including fireplaces, tables, hot showers and toilets. There are sites for larger groups and one for people with disabilities. Bookings are required during holiday periods and fees apply.
- The traditional owners currently manage guided tours of the Budj Bim National Parks for small groups.





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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.



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