

Lakes and Craters Precinct: Red Rock



Red Rock features a concentrated cluster of eruption points with well-preserved maers, tuff rings and scoria cones. Their distinctive colour is due to the presence of iron.

Over 40 eruption centres have been mapped in an area measuring 4 km by 3 km just south of the township of Alvie, and there are several smaller eruption points just north of the township. The eruption sequence includes an initial extended phase of maar and tuff ring formation with minor intervening scoria phases when phreatomagmatic activity declined due to depletion of groundwater. Ash deposits formed around the craters and lava jets shot hundreds of metres into the air creating the hills of Red Rock.

There are nine entire craters up to 75 metres deep, some containing lakes including Lakes Purdiguluc, Werewrap and Coragulac.

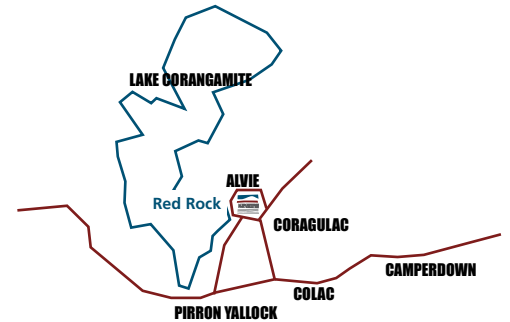
Lake Purdiguluc has been formed by at least five coalescing eruption points. Following the maar activity, there was an extended phase of scoria eruption in the north around Lake Werowrap which buried part of the maers and tuff deposits. The feature is approximately 27,000 years old.

The Red Rock lakes have been dry since 1999. Controversially this may be a cyclic event or due to over extraction of groundwater. The lakes have been surveyed to show that they have historically matched groundwater levels. Stories tell of dry lakes in times gone by.

The critically endangered Corangamite Water Skink can be found around the lakes.

Before white settlement, the scoria cones were covered in predominantly Casuarina open woodland.

There is a detailed sheet on Red Rock available from the Colac Visitor Information Centre.



How to get there?

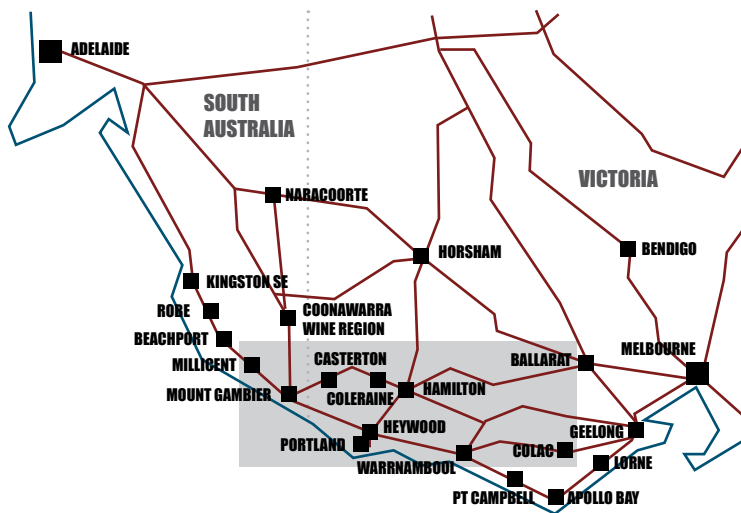
Take the signposted left past the Alvie picnic area (which has toilets, a gas barbecue, water, a playground, a shelter with a fireplace, picnic tables and benches). Adjacent is the Old Shire Pit - a scoria quarry which reveals layers of ash and lava flow.

An intersection beyond the picnic area features a branch road on the left which will take you to Eastern Lookout. The branch road on the right leads to Western Lookout. In the foreground, to the south, are Lake Werowrap, Lake Gnalingurk and Lake Purdigulac. These lakes were originally volcanic craters which blew lava hundreds of metres into the air and are part of the Red Rock formation.

Things to do:

- A great long 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.
- It is also possible to take a roadside walk to the summit from the well-sheltered picnic area, which offers barbeques, seats and shady trees.
- Alternatively, you can drive to Red Rock lookout, about 17 kilometres north of Colac, near Alvie, for magnificent 360 degree views.





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.

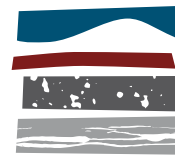
The region's spectacular and intriguing volcanic landscape also offers a range of other visitor experiences, from a 45-minute tour to the surface of Mount Gambier's Blue Lake, to the gruelling trek up Mount Schank and down to the crater floor.

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.



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Accredited Visitor Information Centres

Victoria

Casterton

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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