



## Lava Flows Precinct

### Tower Hill State Game Reserve



Tower Hill formed at least 30,000 years ago when lava from beneath the earth's crust came into contact with the subterranean water table. The violent eruption that followed created the main funnel-shaped crater which later filled with water to form a lake up to 90 metres deep. Further volcanic activity within the centre of the crater formed the islands and cone-shaped hills that can be seen today.

The formation of Tower Hill is known as a nested maar. Measuring 3.2km by 2.4km wide, it is the largest of its type in Australia.

Artefacts found in the volcanic ash layers show that Aborigines were living in the area at the time of the eruption, with the area providing a rich source of foods for the Koroitgundij people.

The first confirmed sighting by Europeans was by French explorers sailing with Captain Nicholas Baudin aboard the *Geographe* in 1802. However, the legend of the Mahogany Ship suggests that Tower Hill may have been seen by the Portuguese as early as the 17th century.

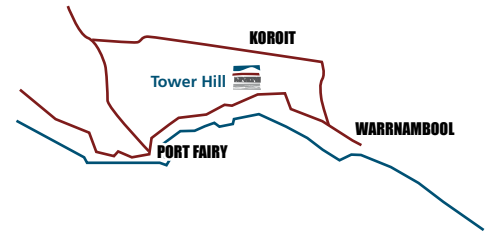
The vegetation of Tower Hill was originally very diverse, consisting of manna gum, blackwood, black wattle, swamp gum and drooping sheoak. Much of this was removed by early settlers, and in an attempt to halt further degradation, the area was declared Victoria's first National Park in 1892.

Unfortunately the new regulations that came with it didn't have the desired effect, and grazing, crop growing, quarrying and rubbish dumping continued. By the 1950s, the area was almost bare, and wildlife sightings were rare.

Little was known about the original vegetation until the discovery of a painting of Tower Hill by noted Victorian artist Eugene von Guerard, dating back to 1855. The painting is so detailed that some individual plant species can be identified, and a revegetation program based on these began in the late 1950s.

Tower Hill was declared a State Game Reserve in 1961, and is now managed by Parks Victoria. Since then, volunteer groups have helped plant more than 300,000 trees. Moves are also underway to re-introduce indigenous understorey plants including ferns and grasses.

The revegetation of Tower Hill has provided new habitats for many animals, and you may see koalas, emus, kangaroos, magpie geese, echidnas, and possums. Boardwalks, nesting boxes and a bird hide have been constructed to enable bird watchers to catch a glimpse of chestnut teal, musk ducks, spoonbills and other water birds.



### How to get there?

Tower Hill is just off the Princes Highway 15 km north-west of Warrnambool and 275 km west of Melbourne. The reserve is open all year round.

### Things to do:

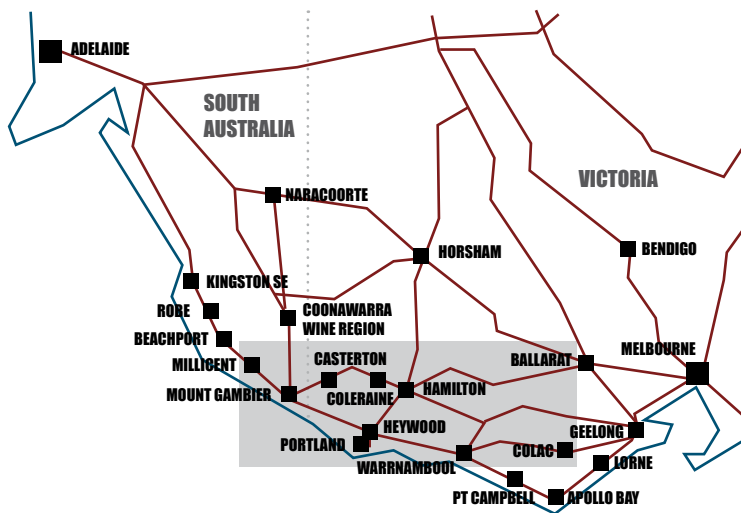
Tower Hill Reserve is open at all times. Barbecues, picnic tables and toilets are provided. Open air fires are not permitted, along with dogs and other pets.

There are three main self-guided walks at Tower Hill, and each starts from the picnic area.

- Peak Climb (orientation and geology 30 mins, steep)
- Lava Tongue Boardwalk (wetlands – 30 mins, easy)
- Journey to the Last Volcano (geology - 1 hour, moderate)

The Natural History Centre designed by the late Robin Boyd has interesting displays including Worn Gundidj's local Aboriginal art and craft, and is open from 9am – 4:30pm every day.





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.

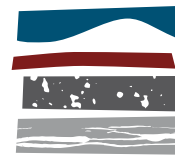
The region's spectacular and intriguing volcanic landscape also offers a range of other visitor experiences, from a 45-minute tour to the surface of Mount Gambier's Blue Lake, to the gruelling trek up Mount Schank and down to the crater floor.

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