

Alpine National Park – around Benambra, Buchan and Bonang

Visitor Guide



In the heart of the Australian Alps, this is one of Victoria's largest and most remote areas of national park. The rugged landscape features the magnificent Snowy River and Suggan Buggan Valleys, the headwaters of the Murray River and spectacular peaks including the Cobberas and Mount Tingaringy.



Getting there

This part of the Alpine National Park adjoins Kosciuszko National Park along its northern boundary and the Snowy River National Park to the south.

The park is between 440 and 500 km north-east of Melbourne. The main access roads are all unsealed, narrow and winding and generally unsuitable for caravans.

The Snowy River Road accesses the Snowy River at Willis on the state border. This road becomes the Barry Way across the border and passes through Kosciuszko National Park en route to Jindabyne. The Bonang Road from Orbost is an alternative approach - McKillop Road branches from it a few kilometres south of Bonang.

The Limestone-Black Mountain Road crosses the central part of the park and links Benambra to the Snowy River Road. This road is often closed in winter as a result of heavy snowfalls.

Things to see and do

Walking

This area of the Alpine National Park has a great deal to offer adventurous, fit and experienced bushwalkers.

Management tracks (shown on the maps in this guide) are suitable for easy and medium walks and serve as approaches to the principal features of the park.



Mt Stradbroke Walk – 12.7km, 7hrs return Grade 4

The Mount Stradbroke track commences at the Limestone Black Mountain Road on Second Emu Flat and follows a disused and 4WD fire trail for part of the walk. It later becomes a mere trail winding through snowgum woodland towards the rocky summit.

Emerging onto the summit of Mt Stradbroke, you are greeted by views across the mountains and down into the Suggan Buggan Valley.

Mount Stradbroke is in one of the most remote areas of national park. The rugged landscape features the magnificent Snowy River and Suggan Buggan Valleys, the headwaters of the Murray River and spectacular peaks including the Cobberas (No 1 1838m) and Mount Tingaringy (1448m).



Mt Cobberas No. 1 Walk – 15km, 8 hours circuit Grade 4

Starting at Cowombat, off Limestone Black Mountain Road, this spectacular circuit hike ascends Mt Cobberas No 1, the highest peak in the area and provides an opportunity to explore other peaks

along the trail. It is a demanding hike that requires good navigational skills.



Tingaringy Falls – 800m, 50 minutes return. Grade 3

This short but steep walk leads through an open forest dominated by majestic Silvertop Ash and Red Stringybark before arriving at a viewing platform, overlooking the beautiful waterfalls. The trail begins at Tingaringy Track, which is only accessible by 4WD and is closed seasonally.



Australian Alps Walking Track Grade 5

The long distance Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) passes through this area on its 650 km route between Walhalla (Gippsland, Vic.) and the Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre (near Canberra, ACT).

This 'track', which at times is barely a foot pad, passes through the remote, Limestone Creek country into the Cobberas Wilderness, eventually entering the Pilot Wilderness (Kosciuszko National Park) at Cowombat Flat.

Bushwalking along the AAWT in this area is only for experienced walkers with navigation and self-sufficiency skills. There are no signs or track markers within wilderness areas.

Car touring

Although unsealed, narrow and winding in places, the Buchan - Jindabyne, McKillop and Limestone - Black Mountain Roads are suitable for scenic driving in a conventional 2WD car.

There are also numerous tracks suitable only for 4WD vehicles. One of the most popular drives is the iconic 4WD Adventure, the Davies Plain Drive, a challenging adventure through remote landscapes, taking in snow gum woodlands, tranquil riverside campsites, historic mountain huts and panoramic mountain views.

Macfarlanes Flat Track and Cobberas Trail are also popular with experienced four-wheel drivers. Classified as Black Double Diamond, these are challenging touring routes with very difficult steep, rocky and loose sections. They reward the drivers with a great adventure and the chance to explore a remote part of the park they would otherwise not be able to see.

These tracks should only be traversed by four-wheel drive vehicles (low range required) with high ground clearance, mud terrain tyres and experienced drivers. Winch and recovery equipment are required. Diff-locks are recommended.

The tracks should be driven in groups of four or more vehicles.

A few millimetres of rain can turn tracks treacherous and impassable – even for the most experienced driver. Please remember:

- check road conditions and river crossing levels before starting out
- vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public
- many roads and tracks are closed seasonally for environmental and safety reasons

Camping

Dispersed bush camping is permitted throughout the area but there are several sites where basic facilities such as a pit toilet and fireplace are provided:

- McKillop Bridge beside the Snowy River on McKillop Road.
- Willis on Snowy River Road (NSW/Victorian border)
- Native Dog Flat (Limestone-Black Mountain Road)
- Other vehicle based (4WD only) dispersed campsites with toilet and camping facilities include Limestone Creek, The Poplars, the Davies Plain area, Charlies Creek and Buckwong Creek.

All campers should be fully self-sufficient with food, water and camping equipment. Huts are for emergency use only. Some camping areas are not accessible by vehicles during seasonal road closures. Please carry out all your rubbish.

The wilderness experience

Wilderness areas have been set aside to provide opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation activities including bushwalking, canoeing, dispersed camping, nature studies and photography.

There are four wilderness areas in this part of the Alpine National Park. They are Indi, Cobberas, Tingaringy and Buchan Headwaters (see map).

These wilderness areas protect large and essentially untouched areas containing significant plant and animal communities and a variety of geological formations.

People visiting wilderness areas need a level of self-reliance far exceeding that required for most other natural areas.

Horseriding and vehicles, (including motor and mountain bikes), are not permitted in wilderness areas. All tracks in wilderness areas are closed to public vehicles.

Horse riding

The area is excellent for horse riding in remote country.

The area of Alpine National Park east of Snowy River (but outside of the Tingaringy Wilderness) is great for dispersed horse riding and camping with horses all year round.

The Bicentennial National Trail, a long distance national trail designed primarily for horse riding, passes through the area on its journey from Cooktown in Queensland to Healesville in Victoria.

Look for the red and yellow triangular markers around Limestone Creek and Tom Groggin. Bicentennial National Trail Guidebooks are available (Guidebooks 11 and 12 cover Victoria and the Alpine National Park).

You may also come across wild horses. Treat stallions with caution.

Rafting and canoeing

The Snowy River is renowned for its challenging white water canoeing and rafting. Consult canoeing guidebooks and park staff when planning your trip, and check river flow levels and weather close to your date of departure. The safe level for the Snowy River (at McKillop Bridge) is between 0.9m and 1.6m. River levels, normally quite low in summer, can rise suddenly after heavy rain over the catchment. Environmental flows being released into the Snowy River can also affect river heights. Please register trip details at the Buchan Police Station.

River heights information can be obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology www.bom.gov.au

Plants and animals

The park is of great importance for nature conservation because it is relatively undisturbed. It contains a wide variety of vegetation types, including the habitat for several rare plant and animal species.

Vegetation ranges from Snow Gum woodlands and Alpine Ash forest at higher elevations to Cypress-pine and White Box woodlands in the much lower warm, dry country of the Snowy River and Suggan Buggan Valleys.

Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies inhabit rock faces with large tumbled boulders, ledges and caves. In the early 1900s, these wallabies were abundant in the Upper Snowy River area. However, they suffered a rapid population decline around 1910, attributed to unrestricted hunting and an increase in the numbers of foxes and wild dogs. Only a small number of colonies remain since the decline and are considered critically endangered in Victoria.

Be prepared and stay safe

Fire

For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000). This part of the park is in the East Gippsland district. Bushfire safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions.

Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban at emergency.vic.gov.au, on the [VicEmergency smartphone app](#) or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days.

On Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating days this park will be closed for public safety. Do not expect a personal warning. Do not enter the Park. If you are already in the park, leave the night before or as early as possible in the morning.

Check the latest conditions at parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.

Driving

- Check road conditions and river crossing levels before starting.
- Vehicle access is limited to formed roads and tracks open to the public. Public vehicles are not permitted in Wilderness Areas.
- Many roads and tracks are closed seasonally for environmental and safety reasons.

Walking

Weather conditions can change rapidly in alpine areas.

Snowfalls can be experienced at any time of the year and water can be extremely scarce, so always be prepared with:

- warm clothing
- wind and waterproof jacket
- gloves, hat, sunglasses and strong footwear
- first aid kit and sunscreen
- energy food and water
- compass and relevant topographical map

Before you go, let someone know where you are going, and when you expect to return.

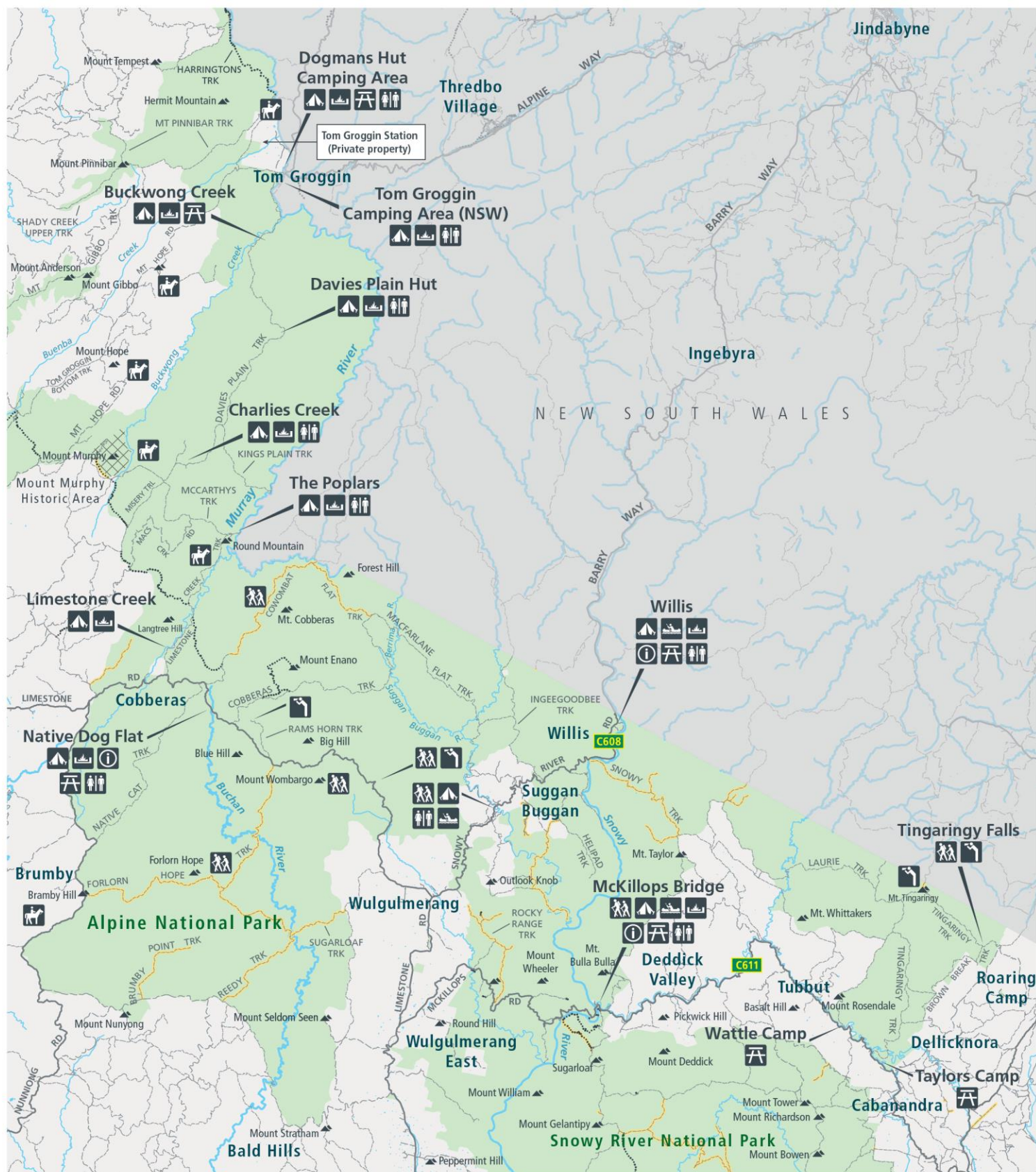
Please keep to walking tracks, particularly in old gold mining areas where there may be mine shafts or unsafe cliff edges.

Other resources

Visit www.parks.vic.gov.au for other visitor guides for Alpine National Park:

- Around Heyfield, Licola and Dargo in the Wonnangatta area
- Around Mansfield and Whitfield
- Around Mitta Mitta, Omeo, Tallangatta and Corryong
- Tali Karng
- Grant Historic Area
- Alpine National Park Horse Riding

Benambra, Buchan, Bonang



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|--|---|---|---|---|
|  Camping area |  Lookout |  Highway/freeway |  Walking track |  Other park |
|  Fireplace |  Canoeing |  Main road |  Management vehicle/ walking track only |  Historic area |
|  Picnic table |  Horseriding |  Sealed road |  Major river | |
|  Toilets |  Hiking |  Unsealed road |  Minor river | |
|  Information |  Mountain/hill |  4WD |  Alpine National Park | |

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