

## Introduction to Kinglake National Park

Kinglake National Park is the largest national park close to Melbourne, with 216,000 hectares of rolling, forested hills and fern gullies.

Significant features of the park include:

- Tall forests and fern gullies.
- Scenic views and waterfalls.
- A population of Superb Lyrebirds.
- High biodiversity, including a variety of forest types and a great diversity of plants and animals including significant species such as Powerful Owl, Regent Honeyeater, Tiger Quoll, Brush-tailed Phascogale, and several species of bats.
- An extensive network of walking tracks.

Kinglake National Park is located on the Great Dividing Range some 65 kilometres north of Melbourne. Access to the park is via three main routes: the Melba Highway from Yarra Glen; the Heidelberg - St. Andrews Road from St. Andrews; and the Whittlesea - Yea Road from Whittlesea.

The park consists of four separate blocks of forest that are physically separated from each other by State Forest and freehold land (mostly farm land and residential areas).

These are:

- Sugarloaf block to the west,
- Everard Block to the south-east,
- Wombelano Block to the north, and
- Wallaby Creek Designated Water Supply Catchment to the far west.

### **Sugarloaf Block (Western)**

This is the most visited section of the park. The **Masons Falls picnic area**, **Mt Sugarloaf** and **Frank Thomson Reserve** are all suitable for coach visits. Most of these areas have toilets. Mason Falls picnic area has picnic shelters and \$1 coin operated gas barbecues. No solid fuelled fires are permitted.

### **Everard Block (Eastern)**

**Jehosaphat Gully** has a picnic area and walking tracks. It is accessible by car and minibuses but is not suitable for coaches as there is limited parking and turning space. There is \$1 coin operated electric barbecues. No solid fuelled fires are permitted at this picnic area.

### **Wombelano Block (Northern)**

The **Gums Camping Area** and **Island Creek picnic area** are suitable for school visits, although facilities are limited. The character of the area means it is suitable for large groups. This section of the park has Mountain Ash regrowth.

**Andrews Hill Education Area** is the only area available in the park for data collection techniques that involve soil, water and vegetation sampling. Access is via Yarra Glen-Glenburn road off the Melba Highway. The adjacent Mountain Creek provides opportunities for stream studies. At present there are no facilities provided within the Andrews Hill Education Area. Walking is the only way groups can reach this site; allow approximately 45 minutes one way.

**Wombelano Falls** is not accessible to coaches and the walking track is narrow, making it unsuitable for large groups.

### **Wallaby Creek Designated Water Supply Catchment**

This part of the park is closed to the public as it forms part of Melbourne's water catchment. Keeping people out of water catchment areas significantly increases the quality of the water collected in the catchment and greatly reduces the cost for treating the water for drinking quality standards. The catchment also protects high quality habitat and so plays an important conservation role.

## Park facilities

The park has a small visitor centre located adjacent to the park office just inside the Masons Falls section of Kinglake National Park. The Centre has static displays depicting the flora and fauna, vegetation communities and the history of European settlement. The centre can also be used as an auditorium for slide or video presentations. The small size of the centre means it can only be used by one class at a time. The visitor centre needs to be booked. Phone 5786 5351

Class sets available from the ranger for use by school groups while at the park:

- *Trees of Victoria*. L. Costermans
- *Birds of the South Eastern Australia: The Ranges*. Gould League
- *Ferns and Fern Allies of the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges*.

## Ranger service

The ranger staff at Kinglake National Park provide for primary and secondary school groups visiting the park.

Teachers are advised to book their visit well in advance. See the booking form in Section 3 or telephone 5786 5351. At least four weeks notice is required.

Teachers are requested to identify their curriculum objectives so that an appropriate session can be provided at the park. When a school group visit to the park is part of a demonstrable curriculum program, a park ranger endeavours to be available for 30 to 60 minutes, subject to staffing levels. Group sizes should be kept to one class at a time for the ranger's session.

Possible topics include:

- Vegetation studies (no sampling except at Andrews Hill education area).
- Geology and changing environments.
- Managing recreation uses in a national park.
- Rare species monitoring program
- Ecological burning.

## Camping

### At Kinglake National Park

The Gums camping area is the only camping area within the park. Facilities provided include pit toilets, wood-fired barbeques and creek water. The campground is not suitable for large groups. Overnight camping of small groups (maximum group size 30) is by permit only. Site fees apply and advance bookings are required. Phone 131963

### Local camping sites suitable for schools

Kinglake West Adventure Camp has accommodation for up to 90 people either catered or self catered. It also offers outdoor education programs.

Phone 5786 5230  
www.kwac.com.au

### Other educational opportunities in the area

Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre offers educational programs about the use and management of Mountain Ash forests. Phone 5962 9318 Fax 5962 9022

Many useful contrasts can be made between the use and management of a state forest such as Toolangi and the use and management of a national park such as Kinglake.



Bat (Goulds Wattle) ©MT