

Dandenong Ranges National Park

Olinda

The Olinda section of Dandenong Ranges National Park, covering 790 hectares between Olinda, Kalorama and the catchment of Silvan Reservoir, once formed part of the Dandenong State Forest Reserve.

One of the newest sections of the National Park (the other four include: Doongalla, Fern Tree Gully, Mt. Evelyn and Sherbrooke), Olinda boasts relatively undisturbed native habitat.

Tall timber and settlement

George Holden and his two sons, Mark and Luke were the first to camp on the hills of Olinda in 1855. For nearly 50 years they felled huge Mountain Ash trees for commercial purposes. Timber felling ceased in 1968 when the land use was changed to 'mixed recreation'.

The first official settlement took place on the western slopes of Olinda in the early 1870's. The name Olinda is a Spanish word meaning 'Oh, most beautiful'.

As well as timber production, early settlers cultivated fruit travelling all the way to the Victoria Market in North Melbourne to sell their produce. Ten years later falling fruit prices resulted in settlers turning to tourism for income and new guest houses and tea rooms were quickly built.

Things to see and do

Three picnic areas are located in the forest. Valley Picnic Ground to the south (Melway Map 122 C5), Eagle Nest Picnic Ground to the east (Melway Map 122 E3), and Olinda Falls Picnic Ground to the west (Melway Map 66 K2), which is the ideal location to start your walk to the nearby Olinda Falls.

Suggested walking tracks include:

1. **Eagle Nest Walk**
3 km, 1 hour, one way (Moderate)
2. **Valley Walk**
6.5 km, 3.5 hours, one way (Steep)

Both of these walks start at the Valley Picnic Ground carpark. See overleaf for locations.

They take you through a variety of forest landscapes, from clusters of Mountain Grey Gum trees and cool fern gullies to dry bushland. Sections along both walks pass through delicate lyrebird habitat.

To commence the walk follow the track that slopes downhill with the toilet facilities to your left. This track connects to Eagle Nest Road which takes you to Eagle Nest Picnic Ground.

When you arrive at Eagles Nest Picnic Ground, cross the wooden bridge and continue for 400m.

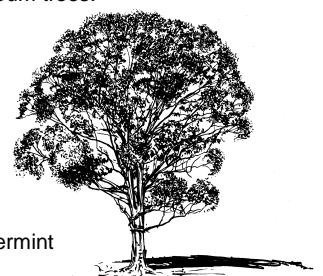
At this point you can decide to return to Valley Picnic Ground via Hermons Track or continue on a more challenging adventure.

The extended walk follows Possum Track to the right later turning right into Georges Rd. Take a left at Barges Rd which is steep and return to Valley Picnic Ground along the Rifle Range Gully Track.

Valley Walk is steep and rocky in some sections and is only recommended for prepared, experienced walkers.

This is no Mess-mate

Olinda is primarily a dry forest with Messmate and Narrow-leaved Peppermint eucalypts. However, the wetter gullies contain an abundance of tree ferns and areas of Manna Gum, Mountain Grey Gum and occasional Swamp Gum trees.



Narrow-leaved Peppermint



Further information

Phone the Parks Victoria Information Line on **13 1963** or visit our website at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Caring for the environment

Help us look after the park by remembering these guidelines:

Rubbish bins are not provided, please take your rubbish home.

No fires may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban.

Firearms are prohibited.

Dogs and cats are not permitted in the park.

All native plants and wildlife are protected by law. Please do not collect specimens.

Leave the park as you find it.

Please don't throw this Park note away. Keep it, return it for others to use, or recycle it.

A wildlife haven

Being one of the more isolated areas with the least neighbours, many shy birds and animals have made this section of the National Park their home.

Birdlife often seen includes the Gang Gang Cockatoo and the Superb Parrot. Some visitors are fortunate enough to see or hear the calls of the Superb Lyrebird and if you are very lucky you may spot a Wedge-tailed Eagle swooping overhead.

Most of the animals which inhabit this area, such as possums, bats and gliders are active only at night. During the day you might catch a glimpse of a Swamp Wallaby disappearing into the bush or the rare Broad Toothed Rat scuttling about in the undergrowth.



Wedge-tailed Eagle

History of the Dandenong Ranges

"Corhanwarrabul" was the Aboriginal name for the Dandenong Ranges. It appears from historical accounts that the Bunurong (Western Port) and the Woiworong (Yarra Yarra) Aboriginal people used the Dandenongs as hunting grounds during the summer months.

European Settlement

The first recorded expedition into the Dandenong Ranges was made by botanist Daniel Bunce during the 1840s.

By the early 1850s, wholesale clearing began as settlers foraged further into the forests for agricultural land and timber resources. Timber splitters invaded the forest, felling giant eucalypts to be used for railways, piers, bridges and sailing ship masts.

To protect the area from indiscriminate clearing a timber reserve, the Dandenong Woori Yallock State forest, was established in 1867.

By the end of the 19th century, only one fifth of the original timber reserve remained in public ownership.

The push by settlers for land near Melbourne pressured the government into releasing 4,400 hectares in 1878. A further 4,900 hectares were released in the 1890s. From the later 1860s, Melbourne residents began to visit the area for recreation. At first the retreat of the wealthy, the area became a popular destination for the general population with the advent of the railway in the 1890s and later the motor car.

In 1882, land was reserved as a site for public recreation and extended to 227 hectares in 1927. This area was later declared the Fern Tree Gully National Park.

Early 20th Century

The area became a focal point for the arts and attracted painters, writers, poets and naturalists including Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Anneas Gunn and C.J. Dennis. Between the early 1900s to the mid 1920s, the beauty of the hills attracted a large number of holiday makers and weekenders. Land was cheap and roads were pushed through unreserved forested areas where quarter acre blocks were developed for weekend shacks. During this time, many well known guest houses were built, most of which were destroyed in the bushfires of 1923 and 1926.

Visitors to the ranges in the early 1920s often returned home laden with ferns and flowers for their gardens and vases, indicating the conservation ethic of the time.

Post World War 2

Since the late 1940s, residential development has expanded steadily, altering the character of the ranges and making them almost a suburb of Melbourne. During the 1940s and 1950s, public debate was intense concerning development in the hills. Some residents, concerned about the rate and nature of land subdivision formed the "Save the Dandenongs League" in 1944. A Buy Back program was initiated, creating a corridor linking the Fern Tree gully and Sherbrooke sections of the Dandenong Ranges National Park. The government's purchase of Doongalla Estate in 1950 was the first example of this acquisition program.

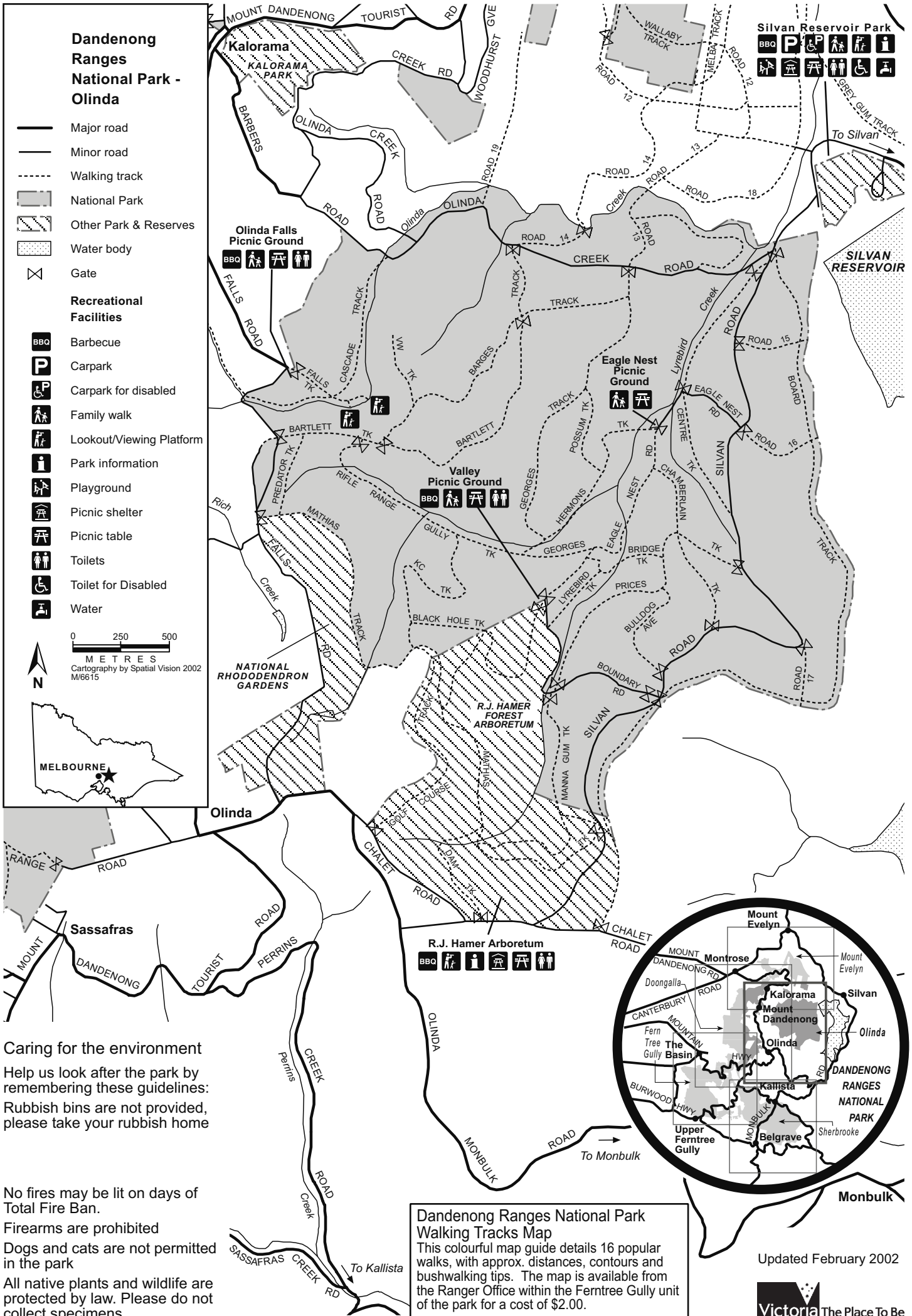
Major bushfires in 1962 and 1968 further accelerated the acquisition program in order to develop a fire protection buffer zone.

Today

The Dandenong Ranges National park was proclaimed in December 1987. It consists of the amalgamation of Fern Tree Gully National Park, Sherbrooke Forest and Doongalla Estate along with the Upwey and Sassafras land corridors. In 1997, the Olinda State forest was formally added to the National Park along with the Montrose Reserve.



Superb Lyrebird



Dandenong Ranges National Park - Olinda

- Major road
 - Minor road
 - Walking track
 - National Park
 - Other Park & Reserves
 - Water body
 - Gate
- Recreational Facilities**
- Barbecue
 - Carpark
 - Carpark for disabled
 - Family walk
 - Lookout/Viewing Platform
 - Park information
 - Playground
 - Picnic shelter
 - Picnic table
 - Toilets
 - Toilet for Disabled
 - Water

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M E T R E S
Cartography by Spatial Vision 2002
M/6615



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Dandenong Ranges National Park Walking Tracks Map
This colourful map guide details 16 popular walks, with approx. distances, contours and bushwalking tips. The map is available from the Ranger Office within the Ferntree Gully unit of the park for a cost of \$2.00.

Updated February 2002

