

Murrindindi Scenic Reserve - Walking tracks

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The Murrindindi Scenic Reserve

Situated in the northern end of the Toolangi State Forest, the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve provides excellent opportunities for recreational activities such as camping, bushwalking, picnicking, horse riding, fishing and mountain biking. The Murrindindi River is suitable for bathing and paddling, but is generally not deep enough for swimming or canoeing.

In 1981, 815 hectares of mixed species forest were set aside in order to protect the scenic features of the lower reaches of the Murrindindi River and its surrounds. The area comprises a variety of environments, which include tumbling waterfalls, soaring Mountain Ash and damp fern-filled gullies. There is a history of Aboriginal use in the area by nomadic tribes. In the Wurundjeri language Murrindindi means 'Mountain Home'.

Getting there

It is possible to reach the Reserve from two directions:

From Healesville - drive 13km along Myers Creek Road toward Toolangi, then turn right into Sylvia Creek Road and travel approximately 21km through majestic Mountain Ash forest to the reserve.

From Melbourne - travel along the Melba Highway to the intersection of Murrindindi Road just before Devlins Bridge. Turn right and drive 10 km to the Reserve.

Attractions

Forest Walks

The reserve and surrounding forest offer a wide variety of walks ranging from short strolls to day-long hikes. The range of walks is detailed overleaf.

Camping

There are approximately 100 campsites spread along the banks of the Murrindindi River. Most sites and their surrounds are flat and provide reasonable access for people with disabilities. No bookings are necessary for camp sites, however modest fees of \$5/car/night are payable. Dogs are not allowed in any part of Murrindindi Scenic Reserve. For further information on camping in the reserve refer to the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve-Camping Guide (FS0010).

Flora and fauna

The Murrindindi River rises in the damp hills of the Great Dividing Range and flows north to join the Yea River. The river valley contains an amazing variety of vegetation, which changes as the river descends. Lying on the drier north side of the Great Divide, the Reserve is typically dominated by a dry sclerophyll forest. Sclerophyll refers to plants with hard, leathery or stiff leaves and particularly applies to eucalypts.

The main forest types of the Murrindindi area are:

- Mixed Species Forest comprised of Messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), Narrow-leaved Peppermint (*E. radiata*), Mountain Grey Gum (*E. cypellocarpa*) and Manna Gum (*E. viminalis*) are to be found along the lower reaches of the river valley.
- Rainforest species appearing in the cool moist gullies include Myrtle Beech (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*), Sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*), and Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) interspersed with many different ferns.
- Wet sclerophyll forest appears at higher altitudes to the south in the Toolangi State Forest. The area is dominated by towering Mountain Ash (*E. regnans*) which is the world's tallest hardwood.

The forests of the Murrindindi valley contain many varied species of native fauna. The bush is known for its wombats, echidnas, and swamp wallabies. There is also an amazing array of birds including the elusive Lyrebird, the noisy Gang Gang and the brightly coloured Crimson Rosella. Species lists of birds and animals of the Reserve are available from the Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre.

Looking after our forests

- Dogs are not allowed on any walking tracks within the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve.
- Bikes and horses are generally not permitted on walking tracks. Please observe access signs and help protect the reserve.
- Don't disturb native plants or animals.
- There is no rubbish collection service, so please take your rubbish home. If you have the misfortune to come across other people's rubbish, do the bush a favour and take it out with you too.

- Take care with fire – observe all fire regulations and Total Fire Ban days. Use existing fireplaces rather than create your own. Ensure fires are safe and that they are completely extinguished when you leave.
- Keep your party small, ideally, less than eight people and go off peak.
- Here in the mountains the weather can change quickly and cold, wet, windy conditions can set in at any time of the year. It is essential to be properly equipped, especially for longer walks. Wear good walking boots or sturdy shoes and carry a small rucksack containing spare warm clothes, a waterproof jacket and some food and water.
- Make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return, and don't forget to let them know when you are back.

Walking tracks

1. Murrindindi River Walk

Easy 13 km, 4-5hrs one way.

Meandering along the Murrindindi River valley this walk extends the length of the Reserve. This walk offers pleasant walking with the track travelling to and from the river through a variety of bush from tall open forest to damp ferny gullies. The walk is clearly signposted and accessible from most of the picnic and camping areas.

2. Wilhelmina Falls

Moderate 3.6 km return, 1 hr 30 mins.

These spectacular falls drop 75 metres down a steep granite rock face. After crossing the footbridge the track climbs gradually to the base of the falls which flow all year round. On the return walk it is possible to follow an alternative track to Grassy Flat and Falls Creek. There is a viewing platform 800 metres from the start for those not wishing to walk all the way to the falls.

3. Boroondara Track

Moderate 12 km return, 4 -5 hrs.

This track encompasses both Wilhelmina Falls and a section of the Murrindindi River Walk. After reaching Wilhelmina Falls continue upstream to the track intersection, taking the right hand track in a southerly direction and turning right again at the next track junction. From here the track descends to the Murrindindi River. Follow the River Walk downstream to Wilhelmina Falls Picnic Area.

4. Historic Tramway

Easy 4km return, 1 hr 30 mins.

Beginning at the Bull Creek picnic area, this walk follows the historic tramway route in a southeasterly direction along the Murrindindi River. Some interesting features along the way include a reconstructed horse-drawn bogie, sections of intact tramline and the remains of the old Traford sawmill site. Access to the river is also available at various points along the track.

The sawmill site marks the turnaround point of the walk. Simply retrace your steps to the picnic area.

5. Historic Tramway and Cascade Circuit

Moderate 12 km return, 4 -5 hrs.

Beginning at the Bull Creek picnic area, this walk forms a circuit incorporating the historic remains of the timber industry and the picturesque Murrindindi Cascades. From the Traford Mill site on the Historic Tramway walk continue south to cross Bull Creek and climb steeply to the Murrindindi Cascades. Continuing on from the Cascades to the carpark walk approximately 500 metres southwest along Murrindindi Road to the Camp Creek Road. The return trip via Camp Creek Road is a distance of 5.6 km on an easy downhill grade along a little used forest road, which returns you to the Bull Creek picnic and camping area.

6. Murrindindi Cascades

Easy 0.6 km return, 20 mins.

At the Cascades, the Murrindindi River drops steeply over granite boulders, through beautiful cool temperate rainforest of Myrtle Beech and Sassafras trees. From the carpark and picnic area cross the road and follow the stepped track down to where two foot bridges cross the river at the base of the cascades. Retrace your footsteps to return to the carpark.

For more information

Call the Toolangi Office of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Ph 5962 9203, or visit the Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre.

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry".

The Murrindindi Scenic Reserve is managed primarily for the protection of the environment and provision of recreation. Other areas of the State Forest are managed for a wider range of uses including timber production, catchment protection, recreation and conservation. If you are interested in how State Forests are managed, the current Central Highlands Forest Management Plan can be viewed on the Department's website on the Internet at <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au> then select "Forestry", then select "Publications"

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