

## Preparing for your overnight hike in Grampians National Park

Bushwalkers looking for the excitement and challenge of overnight hiking will find plenty of scope in Grampians National Park. Only fit, well-prepared and experienced walkers should undertake these recommended hikes. Careful planning is essential, please follow these safety guidelines before every trip.

### Before your trip – Plan to stay safe

- 1) **Research and plan your hike** – Study guidebooks and maps of the area, and get advice from experienced bushwalkers or Parks Victoria Rangers to understand the conditions. Visit [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au) for info.
- 2) **Register your trip** – All overnight hikes in Grampians National Park must be registered in advance. In Addition, tell a friend your plans and what to do if you don't return home.
- 3) **Understand the environment** – Check the weather forecast before you go and have a plan to alter your trip if the weather deteriorates. Don't push your limits.
- 4) **Be safe, be prepared** – Take appropriate clothing and equipment to suit the weather and conditions. Ensure you carry sufficient food, water, and supplies that match the demands of all possible scenarios.

Please note: Many campgrounds and hiker camps in Grampians National Park must be booked in advance. Visit [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au) or call Brambuk on (03) 5361 4000 to find out where you need to book.

### Register your trip

All groups or individuals must register their trip. Parks Victoria is working to make it easier to register online for your overnight walk. However, the online registration system is not yet active. Please fill out and submit the relevant form by following the links below:

- Tour groups, schools or clubs must please fill out a Group Activity Statement form that can be found on Parkweb at [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au) by searching 'Group Activity Statement'.  
\*Group sizes must not exceed 16 people (including leaders).
- Individuals must fill out the Trip Intention Form found on Parkweb at [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au) by searching 'Trip Intention Form'. All forms must be lodged at Brambuk ahead of your departure.  
\*Upon conclusion of your trip you must inform Brambuk of your safe return in person or by phone on (03) 8427 2058.

### Understand the environment

Weather can vary considerably at any time of year – be prepared for both extreme heat and cold weather. Always check weather conditions prior to your walk; do this online at [www.bom.gov.au/](http://www.bom.gov.au/) or visit a local Visitor Information Centre.

Total Fire Bans are common during summer and autumn. For up-to-date information on fire conditions call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226, get the Vic Emergency App, or check online at [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au). During days of increased fire risk, consider changing your plans to another date.

#### Summer

Hot and dry conditions – many creeks will have no water. Temperatures can exceed 40 degrees Celsius with a high likelihood of bushfires and extreme heatwaves.

#### Autumn

Milder temperatures with sporadic hot days; typically drier weather – many creeks will still have no water.

## Winter

Wet and cold conditions are common. Higher elevations may receive snow and sub-zero temperatures during the day and overnight. Creeks and streams typically have water.

## Spring

This is the best season to go overnight bushwalking in the Grampians. Milder temperatures and drier conditions are common, with water typically available in creeks.

## Be safe, be prepared

- **Know your limitations:** Plan your route according to your group's ability and experience.
- **Water:** Ensure all group members carry at least 3-4 litres per person per day. Water in creeks is not usually available during summer and autumn.
- **Food:** Carry enough food for every meal on your trip plus extra in case of an emergency.
- **Clothing:** Pack clothing suitable for a wide range of weather conditions, including waterproof rain jacket and pants, warm layers and clothing to protect from the sun – weather conditions can change quickly.
- **Equipment:** Use the equipment checklist provided at the end of this document
- **Navigation:** Each member of the party should carry the latest topographic map and a compass, and know how to navigate with them. GPS devices can be useful – but these should not be relied on as the primary navigation method, make sure the datum corresponds to the map you are using.
- **Wilderness First Aid:** Carry a first aid kit that is equipped for use in a wilderness environment and know how to use it. Depending on your location, it may be many hours before help can reach you. You must be self-sufficient and capable of providing first aid in a dynamic wilderness situation.
- **Emergencies:** Call 000 in an emergency. Have a plan for emergency situations and know when and how you will contact help. Do not rely on mobile phones as service is limited in the Grampians. Service may only be available from higher elevations or at the top of mountains. Prior to your trip visit [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au) or download the Vic Emergency App on your phone. Carry a PLB (personal locator beacon) or a satellite phone.

## On your trip

## Minimal impact guidelines

Please respect our environment and culture

- Stay on track to prevent trampling vegetation.
- Camp in existing sites, not in pristine areas.
- Leave campsites as you find them.
- Carry it in, carry it out; don't bury or burn it.
- Dispose of waste properly; Use toilets where available. Dig a hole 15-20 cm deep, at least 100 metres away from water sources, campsites and walking tracks. Make sure you refill the hole with soil.
- Respect Aboriginal heritage by not camping in caves or rock shelters.
- Leave all artefacts undisturbed.
- Fuel stoves only; no campfires at hiker or bush camps.
- Be considerate of other campers, and wildlife.

## Be fire ready – stay safe

- The Grampians National Park is in a high fire risk area. Code Red is the highest fire danger rating and on days of Code Red Fire Danger this park will be closed for public safety.
- If you are already visiting and hiking in the park you should attempt to leave as soon as possible; this may require you to change or retrace your route.
- You may not receive a warning if the park is closed. For up-to-date information on fire conditions call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226, get the Vic Emergency App, visit [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au) or carry a small AM/FM radio and listen to ABC local radio 594 AM or 94.1 FM.
- During summer and autumn Total Fire Bans are common; this means no fires are to be lit even in designated firepits, however you still may use a gas stove.
- Being aware of Total Fire Bans or high fire risk weather is your responsibility.

## Walking track conditions

- Walking track conditions may change due to storms, bushfires or other environmental events.
- Always check current conditions when you register your walk with Brambuk.
- Walking tracks may involve rock steps, uneven and slippery track surfaces, water crossings and rock hopping.
- There are high cliffs and steep slopes throughout the Grampians, please be careful and supervise children at all times.
- Report any damage or safety concerns at the end of your trip to Brambuk.

## Campsites and campgrounds

- Please only camp in designated bush camps and established campgrounds.
- Reduce your impact by only using fuel stoves - campfires are not permitted in hiker or bush camps.

## Water Treatment

Remember to treat any water collected from creeks, streams and other bodies of water. Bring the water to a rolling boil, and then cool it before drinking. If boiling is impractical other treatment methods include chlorine and iodine tablets, handheld UV units, micro-filters, and purifiers. More information can be found on the Parks Victoria website at <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/safety/be-safe-plan-ahead/drinking-water>.

## What to do if lost

- Stop, think and remain calm
- Recheck your map and try to locate your position using surrounding terrain and features
- If practical, back-track a short distance to your last known point
- Gaining some height to see better may help assist you with orientation
- If the above does not help **STAY WHERE YOU ARE**
- Attempt to contact emergency services
- Find shelter, stay warm and dry
- Attempt to make your position visible to searchers on the land and in the air
- If you are in a group, stay together and do not separate
- It may take considerable time for rescuers to reach you. Make it your priority to remain warm and dry, and ration your food and water

## Overnight hiking equipment checklist

Prior to undertaking any overnight hike in the Grampians, you must register your trip. See section above.

It is essential that hikers are well-prepared and self-sufficient when overnight hiking in Grampians National Park. Check clothing and equipment to ensure its in good condition and you know how to use it.

Please use the following list as a guide when preparing for your walk:

### Hiking/Camping

- Backpack (60-70 litre size for multi day hiking – larger if your trip is longer)
  - \*remember, the lighter your pack, the more you'll enjoy your hike
- Waterproof pack liner (a plastic bag can suffice)
- Tent – 3 season
- Sleeping bag (appropriate for temperatures / season) — it can get very cold in the Grampians during winter
- Sleeping mat
- Topographical map, compass, photocopy of relevant guidebook pages
- Torch and spare batteries

### Clothing

- Hiking boots/shoes (sturdy, with good ankle support)
- Waterproof rain jacket and pants
- Walking clothes – lightweight, quick-drying and appropriate for the season and weather. Avoid cotton; cotton clothing provides no warmth when wet
- Camp clothes – clothes that you keep dry to wear at night and to bed
- Thermals (check weather – for colder temperatures)
- Gaiters – these help to protect from snakes and scratches
- Wide-brim sun hat
- Sunglasses
- Beanie, gloves – during colder months

### Water, Food and Cooking

- Water bottles and water - prepare to carry at least 3-4 litres of water per person per day
- Food – 3 meals/day, plus extra for emergency. Choose light + nutritious, remove excess packaging
- Stove and fuel
- Cooking pot(s)
- Pocket knife
- Utensils – fork, spoon, knife, mug, plate or bowl
- Waterproof matches and lighter

### Safety and Hygiene

- A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is recommended for use in an emergency
- Mobile phone – please note mobile phone service in the Grampians is limited
- Toiletries
- Toilet paper and hand trowel
- Wilderness first aid kit and medications
- sunscreen
- Whistle – to attract attention in an emergency
- Water treatment method – tablets, filter, boiling

### Extras to Consider

- Trip intention form submitted to Brambuk – The National Park and Cultural Centre in Halls Gap
- Check [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au) or download the VicEmergency App on your phone
- Check weather conditions prior to your walk; do this online at [www.bom.gov.au/](http://www.bom.gov.au/)
- Handheld GPS
- Satellite phone
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Camp shoes (thongs)
- Trekking pole
- Portable AM/FM radio for keeping up-to-date with weather and fire conditions

### How heavy is your pack?

Ideally, the average weight for walkers is 15-18 kg, including water. The max weight for your bag should be 1/3 your body weight. The lighter your pack, the more you will enjoy your hike.

**Enjoy your hike!**

## Recommended Overnight Hikes

Grampians National Park is a well-known destination for overnight hiking, with numerous opportunities for walkers to explore and challenge themselves in a spectacular environment. The walks listed here are a selection of the most popular overnight hikes in the Grampians. Additionally, to these track notes, please also refer to the related publication "*Preparing for your Overnight Hike*", which provides key information to help you plan and prepare for your trip.

Please note The Mt Difficult & Briggs Bluff overnight hike was extensively damaged by a bushfire in January 2014. This walk will continue to remain closed to assist with environmental recovery.

### Grampians Peaks Trail (Wonderland Loop)

**Distance:** Day 1: 8.6km, Day 2: 13.8km, Day 3: 14.2km = 36.6km total

**Time:** 3 days / 2 nights

**Start/Finish:** Halls Gap

**Grade:** 4 (Very steep, formed track, many obstacles, clearly sign posted)

**Experience Required:** Bushwalking experience recommended – well-prepared and self-sufficient bushwalkers prepared for all weather conditions.

**Elevation changes:** Day 1: 840m, Day 2: 1033m, Day 3: 600m

#### Camps

All camps on this hike need to be booked in advance.

Datum used GDA94 Zone 54

- Bugiga Hiker Camp GR339840
- Stoney Creek Group Camping Area (for school or large groups) GR318841
- Borough Huts Campground GR366791

#### Topographical Map Required:

Northern Grampians Outdoor Recreation Guide

Scale: 1:50,000

Produced in 2014 by Spatial Vision

#### Day One

##### Halls Gap to Bugiga (8.6km – 5 Hours)

Starting from the carpark in Halls Gap, walk past the swimming pool, cross the road and follow signs to Venus Baths. Just before the rock pools at Venus Baths, take the track up the stairs towards Splitters Falls. Once on the track you will come to a track junction where you can take a small detour to view the falls. Return to the main track and climb up through a rocky gully to the Grand Canyon. After the canyon a steady ascent takes you through woodland and to the rocky corridor of Silent Street and then on to the famous Pinnacle. From this lookout views of Mt William, Halls Gap and Fyans Valley are astounding. Follow the GPT signs south to Lakeside Lookout and then to Sundial Carpark. Much of this track is near the ridge that provides hikers with views along the way. At Sundial Carpark take the track towards Sundial Peak for 250m. Turn right and follow the track towards Rosea Carpark, after 1.1km turn left onto the track to Bugiga Hiker Camp. Alternatively, keep following the track to the Stony Creek group Hikers Camp.

#### Day Two

##### Bugiga to Borough Huts (13.8km – 5 to 6 Hours)

Take the track to Rosea Carpark, cross Stony Creek Road to start an ascent through tall Messmate forest. On the ridge, carefully follow track markers through a maze of sandstone outcrops, to cross a bridge over the Gate of the East Wind. Continue the climb up windswept terraces to a sign posted intersection, turning left

to the summit of Mt Rose. Enjoy amazing 360-degree views over the Serra and Mt William Ranges. Follow the markers down and veer left, through a sheltered forest. Track markers will guide you down rocky outcrops and forested gullies before reaching Borough Huts Campground for your second night's stay.

### Day Three

#### **Borough Huts to Halls Gap (14km - 5-6 Hours)**

From the campground, carefully cross the Grampians Tourist Road and follow the track to Bellfield Track, then continue along the Terraces Fireline. Follow this track to the Tandara Road intersection, turn left and walk to Tandara Road. Continue to the end of the road and cross over to the sealed walking track that will take you back to Halls Gap.

### The Fortress and Mt Thackeray

**Distance:** Day 1: 4.3km, Day 2: 8km, Day 3: 15km = 27.3km total

**Time:** 3 days / 2 nights

**Start/Finish:** Harrop Track Carpark (near Deep Creek)

**Grade:** 4 (Very steep, rough track, many obstacles, limited signage, many steps)

**Experience Required:** Experienced and self-sufficient bushwalkers who are well-prepared for all weather conditions.

**Elevation changes:** Day 1: 560m, Day 2: 150m, Day 3: 710m

#### **Camps:**

Datum used: GDA94 Zone 54

- Deep Creek Hiker Camp GR147704
- Fortress Hiker Camp GR157698
- Mt Thackeray Hiker Camp GR184715

#### **Topographical Map Required:**

Southern Grampians Outdoor Recreation Guide

Scale: 1:50,000

Produced in 2008 by Spatial Vision

### Day One

#### **Harrop Track Carpark to the Fortress (4.3km – 2-3 Hours)**

Starting at Harrop Track follow the Management Vehicle only Track for 600m through the banksia and heathland forest. The track turns to the right and rises sharply, offering spectacular views of the imposing Fortress buttress and surrounding mountainous terrain. Use the Deep Creek or Fortress Hiker Campsites.

### Day Two

#### **The Fortress to Mt Thackeray Hiker Campsite (8km - 4-4½ Hours)**

After following a winding track along the ridge for about 1km, the track drops off the range and meets a 4WD track. Follow this 4WD track to the Victoria Range Track, turn left and continue to the Mt Thackeray carpark where you can bushcamp.

*(Optional, walk to Mt Thackeray from carpark; see Southern Walks Brochure)*

### Day Three

#### **Mt Thackeray Hiker Campsite to Harrop Track Carpark (15km - 5-5½ Hours)**

Follow the Victoria Range Track for 7.5km. Turn left into Hut Creek Track, and follow until you reach Harrop Track. (During winter the creek is following - take care when crossing.) At Harrop Track turn left and return to the Carpark.

## Major Mitchell Plateau

**Distance:** Day 1: 12.7km, Day 2: 13km, Day 3: 15km = 40.7km total

**Time:** 3 days / 2 nights

**Start/Finish:** Sheep Hills Carpark, 3km south of Mt William Road

**Grade:** 4 (Very steep, rough track, many obstacles, limited signage, many steps)

**Experience Required:** Experienced and self-sufficient bushwalkers who are well-prepared for all weather conditions.

**Elevation changes:** Day 1: 640m, Day 2: 850m, Day 3: 190m

### Camps:

Datum used GDA94 Zone 54

- First Wannon Hiker Camp GR407683
- Jimmy Creek Campground GR331628

### Topographical Map Required:

Southern Grampians Outdoor Recreation Guide

Scale: 1:50,000

Produced in 2008 by Spatial Vision

### Day One

#### Sheep Hills Carpark to First Wannon Hiker Campsite (12.7km - 5 Hours)

This walk begins as a gentle stroll through a forest of Stringybark's and Banksias before rising steadily to a ridge where you will be rewarded with great views of the neighbouring ranges and valleys. Follow the ridge until the track intersects with the Mt William Road. Follow the sealed road towards your right until you reach the Mt William Carpark. From the Carpark follow the sealed road beyond the gate towards the summit of Mt William (Duwul). Before the summit, follow an old management vehicle track along the top of the range, the track narrows and descends to Boundary Gap (Dirag). A steep rock scramble upwards brings you onto the Major Mitchell Plateau, and the First Wannon Hiker Campsite is reached shortly after.

### Day Two

#### First Wannon Hiker Campsite to Jimmy Creek Campground (13km - 5 Hours)

The track continues beyond the First Wannon Hiker Campsite along the Major Mitchell Plateau, revealing magnificent panoramic views. Keep watch for the track markers along the less conspicuous sections of the track. The track leaves the Major Mitchell Plateau and descends steeply to Stockyard Saddle; continue along a Management Vehicle Track that leads to a helipad. From the helipad, the walking track gradually winds downhill to Jimmy Creek Campground.

### Day Three

#### Jimmy Creek Campground to Sheep Hills Carpark (15km - 5 Hours)

Cross the Wannon River at the footbridge and follow the track to the Ingleton Fireline. From this intersection follow the Fireline north. Cross over Serra Road and continue along the undulating Fireline, directional signage indicates the turn-off to Sheep Hills Carpark.



## Mt Difficult Range

**Distance:** Day 1: 13.8km, Day 2: 10.1km = 23.9km total

**Time:** 2 days / 1 nights

**Start/Finish:** Beehive Falls Carpark (Roses Gap)

**Grade:** 4 (Very steep, formed track, many obstacles, limited signs)

**Experience Required:** Bushwalking experience required – well-prepared and self-sufficient bushwalkers prepared for all weather conditions.

**Approximate Elevation changes:** Day 1: 300m Day 2: 456m

### Hiker Camp Options

There are two camping options for hikers in the Mt Difficult Range, Longpoint West and Longpoint East. These hiker camps are cleared sites with no toilets, hikers will need to be completely self-sufficient and follow minimal impact guidelines. Please note, bush camping is not permitted anywhere else in the Mt Difficult Range.

Datum used GDA94 Zone 54

- Longpoint West Hiker Camp GR293025
- Longpoint East Hiker Camp GR305026

### Topographical Map Required:

Northern Grampians Outdoor Recreation Guide

Scale: 1:50,000

Produced in 2014 by Spatial Vision

### Day One

#### Beehive Falls Carpark to Longpoint West Hiker Camp (13.8km – 5 - 6 hours)

Starting at Beehive Falls Carpark at Roses Gap follow the easy 1.5km well-constructed path to Beehive Falls. From here take the steep track rising on the right hand side of the falls for 2.5km to the Briggs Bluff track junction. Drop packs here, take the essentials and complete the return trip out to Briggs Bluff (approx. 2.4km return). Continue on from the Briggs Bluff track junction for 0.5km to the Deep Creek track junction. This is the beginning of the loop around the Mt Difficult Range and you will return to this point the following day. From here the loop is best completed in a clockwise direction by taking the south eastern track. The track from here rises steeply through cliffs and winds across the top of the range for 4.1km, before dropping down for 1km to Longpoint East Hiker Camp. Walkers have the option of camping here or continuing on to the more popular Longpoint West Hiker Camp, a further 1.8km.

### Day Two (Return option)

#### Longpoint West Hiker Camp to Beehive Falls Carpark (10.1km – 4 – 5 hours)

The track rises steeply from the hiker camp for 1.8km to the Mt Difficult track junction. Drop packs here, take the essentials and complete the 1.4km return trip to Mt Difficult. Once complete, continue on from the Mt Difficult track junction 2.9km across the range and back to the Deep Creek track junction to complete the loop. From The Deep Creek track junction take the track for 4.5km back to Beehive Falls Carpark, passing the Briggs Bluff track junction and Beehive Falls.

### Day Two (Thru-hiking option)

#### Longpoint West Hiker Camp to Mt Difficult Road, Lake Wartook or Smiths Mill Campground (distance and time varies)

Hikers looking to extend their trip can continue on from Longpoint West Hiker Camp along Longpoint Fireline and Mt Difficult Rd into the Central Grampians. Finish on Mt Difficult Road, Lake Wartook or at Smiths Mill Campground by organising a car shuffle.