

# Creswick Regional Park



## Visitor Guide

“Welcome! Home to a variety of native wildlife and displays of colourful spring wildflowers this park provides a fascinating glimpse of the past. Roam through the ancient hills and discover the relics of the gold mining era on a variety of easy walks, drive or cycle tours - or simply relax and enjoy a picnic by the tranquil St Georges Lake.” *Ranger In Charge, Marcia Johns*



## Enjoying our Parks



**Picnics:** There are several picnic areas in the park, with wood barbecues provided. Gas barbecues are available at St Georges Lake.



**Camping:** You can camp for short stays at Slaty Creek. This is suitable for motor homes as well as tents. Campers should bring their own drinking water and firewood. *Camping is not permitted at St Georges Lake.*



**Walking:** Why not take the time to explore the park by venturing out on some suggested easy walks. Step on and off the Great Dividing Trail. The 'Wallaby Track' passes through the park as the trail winds through Victoria's goldfields.



**Mountain bike riding:** Mountain bikes are a great way to see the park and there are many tracks available. Please note that bikes are not permitted on the walking tracks.



**Fossicking:** Panning for gold along Slaty Creek is a popular pastime in the park. **All adults must hold a current Miner's Right** to engage in fossicking. Remember to fill any holes and leave the area as you found it. **Relics must not be disturbed or removed.**

## Plants and animals

**Trees:** Eucalypts growing in the park include Messmate, Manna Gum, Scent-bark, Broad-leaved Peppermint and Narrow-leaved Peppermint. Candlebarks also grow in gullies and are recognised by their stark white trunks.

**Wildflowers:** Victoria's floral emblem, the Common Heath, is one of the plants frequently found growing under eucalypts. Look for its pink or white bells. There are many plants from the pea family growing, including the rich purple flowered Hardenbergia or "Sarsaparilla".

**Birds:** Common birds include Grey Currawongs, Crimson Rosellas, White-throated Tree-creepers, Grey Fantails, thornbills, robins and honeyeaters. Two migratory species found in the gullies are the Rufous Fantail and Satin Flycatcher.

**Mammals:** Koalas and Black Wallabies are common, although they can be difficult to find. The Koala's main food source is the Manna Gum, a white-trunked tree with hanging ribbons of bark on its trunk. These are common in damper gullies, along with Candlebark gums.

## A golden history

The Creswick area was intensively mined during the gold rush of the 1850's. Many methods of mining was used, including surface or alluvial mining by puddling, hydraulic sluicing, shaft and reef mining.

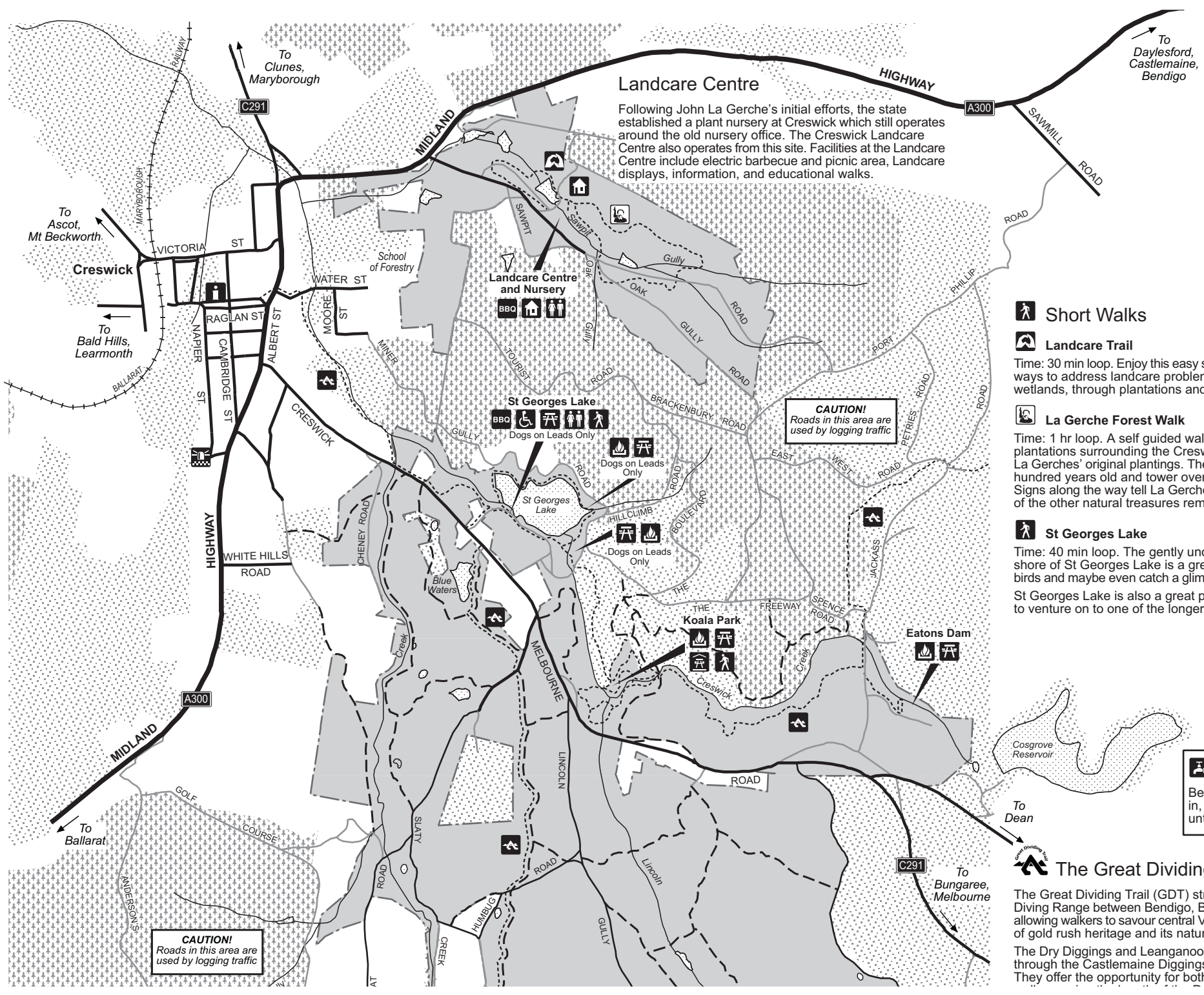
Relics preserved and protected within the park include remains of water races, quartz stacks and hut sites. Chinese mine shafts and mining dams are present, including the old stone and earth wall of Eaton's Dam.

The surrounding forest supplied timber for local firewood, mines and buildings. By the end of the 1890s, the forests had mostly been cleared to support the mining industry. With the hills left scarred and badly eroded, a pioneer of the time, John La Gerche, was one of the first people to re-plant the eroded gullies and slopes of Creswick with trees. La Gerche's original plantings are now over one hundred years old and protected as part of this regional park.

## Finding your way

Creswick Regional Park is 120 kms north-west of Melbourne, half way between Ballarat and Daylesford on the Midland Highway.





### Landcare Centre

Following John La Gerche's initial efforts, the state established a plant nursery at Creswick which still operates around the old nursery office. The Creswick Landcare Centre also operates from this site. Facilities at the Landcare Centre include electric barbecue and picnic area, Landcare displays, information, and educational walks.

### Short Walks

#### Landcare Trail

Time: 30 min loop. Enjoy this easy self guided trail and discover ways to address landcare problems while you walk the wetlands, through plantations and grasslands.

#### La Gerche Forest Walk

Time: 1 hr loop. A self guided walk through the nursery plantations surrounding the Creswick Landcare Centre and La Gerche's original plantings. These trees are now over one hundred years old and tower over the landscape. Signs along the way tell La Gerche's story, and explain some of the other natural treasures remaining in the park.

#### St Georges Lake

Time: 40 min loop. The gently undulating track around the shore of St Georges Lake is a great place to watch water birds and maybe even catch a glimpse of the elusive Platypus. St Georges Lake is also a great place to start if you decide to venture on to one of the longer walks in the park.

**CAUTION!**  
Roads in this area are used by logging traffic

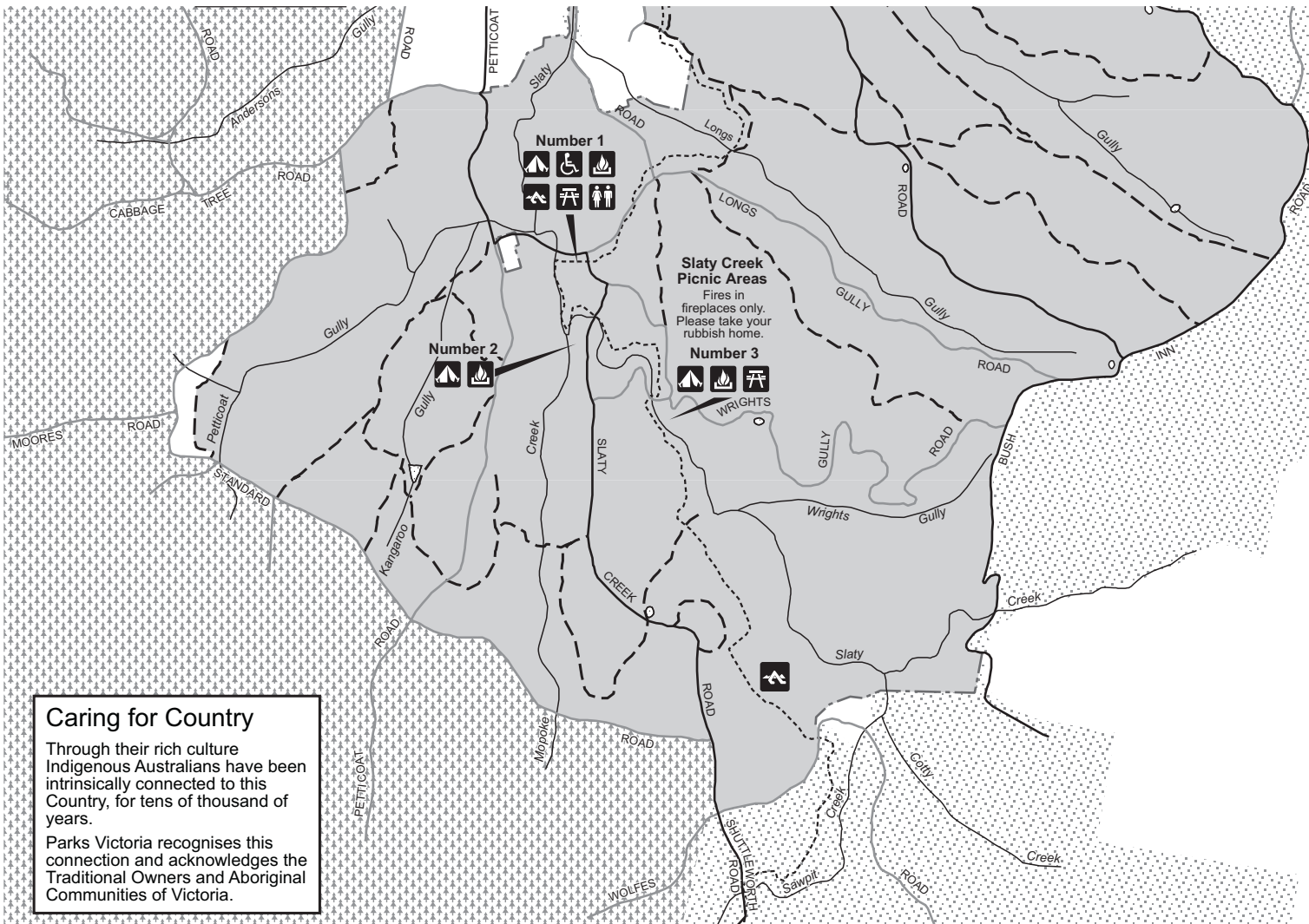
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**Drinking Water**  
Be self-sufficient and carry water in, and/or know how to make untreated water safe for drinking.

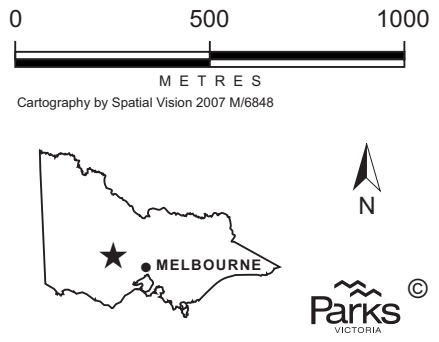
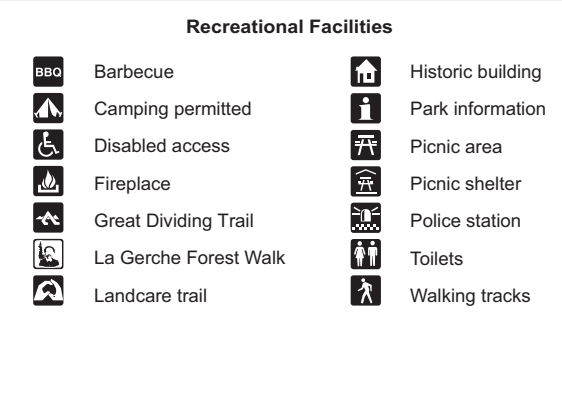
### The Great Dividing Trail

The Great Dividing Trail (GDT) stretches along the Great Diving Range between Bendigo, Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh allowing walkers to savour central Victoria's unique combination of gold rush heritage and its natural beauty.

The Dry Diggings and Leanganook sections of the GDT pass through the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park. They offer the opportunity for both short and long distance



**Caring for Country**  
 Through their rich culture Indigenous Australians have been intrinsically connected to this Country, for tens of thousand of years.  
 Parks Victoria recognises this connection and acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Communities of Victoria.



They offer the opportunity for both short and long distance walks running the length of the Park from Porcupine Ridge in the south to Specimen Gully in the north. The wallaby track passes through the Creswick Regional Park.

**Longer Walks**

**Eatons Dam**

Time: 1 hr 45 min return. Walk to the concrete ford on the eastern side of St Georges Lake. Follow the Great Dividing Trail track along the water race and through the gate into Koala Park. Walk through the park and exit on the other side continuing along the water race across Jackass Road to the picnic area at Eaton's Dam. A relic from the gold mining era, Eaton's Dam is an interesting example of early stone and earth construction techniques.

**Koala Park**

Time: 40 min - 1 hr 30 min. Explore the many tracks within Koala park and make your time here as long or as short as you want. You may even be lucky enough to catch sight of a Koala in the canopy of a Manna Gum, the Koalas favourite food source.

**The Great Dividing Trail**

Time: 4 hrs to Ballarat. The Great Dividing Trail takes you on an historical journey through Creswick Regional Park to Ballarat along the same path Miners walked a century ago. Follow water races and trails marked by quartz stones, the same quartz stones that the miners used to guide their journeys when travelling at night. Find out more about the trail that goes from Buninyong to Castlemaine. Visit [www.gdt.org.au](http://www.gdt.org.au) for more information.

**Walking: Be Safe, Be Prepared**

- Walkers should always stay on designated tracks as there are many deep mine shafts throughout the park.
- Strong shoes or walking boots with good tread, a hat, waterproof jacket, food, water and a map are recommended. On longer walks, take a whistle and basic first aid kit as well.
- Walking tracks may involve uneven and slippery track surfaces, water crossings and rock hopping.
- Take care when crossing or entering water.
- Before setting out on any walk of more than a few hours, let somebody know your proposed time of return, registration number of vehicle and where parked. Make sure you get in touch with contact when you return.
- Think seriously before bushwalking on days of high fire danger or Total Fire Ban.





## For further information

Parks Victoria  
Information Centre

**Call 13 1963**

or visit the

Parks Victoria website

**www.parkweb.vic.gov.au**

Parks Victoria Office  
25 Vickers St  
Sebastopol  
Tel: 13 1963

Ballarat Visitor  
Information Centre  
Cnr Eureka & Rodier Sts  
Ballarat 3350  
Toll Free: 1800 648 450

Miner's Rights:  
Department of Sustainability  
& Environment  
Information Centre,  
Level 2,  
State Government Offices, Cnr  
Mair and Doveton Sts  
Ballarat 3350  
Tel: (03) 5336 6856  
8.30 am-4.30 pm Mon-Fri

## Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

All native plants and animals are protected by law. Please do not disturb them in anyway.

Firearms are not permitted in the park

Dogs are permitted in the park but must be kept on a leash at all times

No fires, (including gas or fuel stoves in tents) may be lit on days of **Total Fire Ban**.

Creswick Regional Park is in the **Central Total Fire Ban District**

Do not camp within 20 metres of waterways

Please take rubbish away with you for recycling and disposal

Vehicles, including motor cycles, must not be driven off open formed roads. All vehicles must be registered and drivers licensed

Do not disturb or remove any historic relics or artefacts

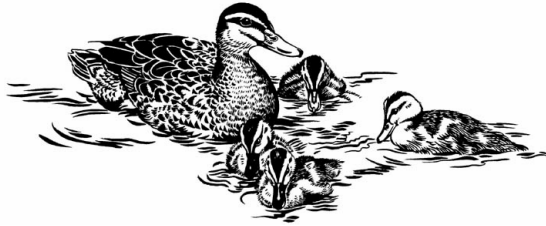
## Mobile Phones

You may not be in network range in some areas of the park. To be connected to Police, Ambulance or CFA, **key in 112 then press the yes key**.

## Places of Interest

### St Georges Lake

Popular with visitors and wildlife, St Georges Lake was once a mining dam used to supply water to the Creswick State Battery for crushing quartz. Today it is a popular summer base for water activities. Free gas barbecues and toilets are provided in the main picnic area. Wood barbecues are also provided in another picnic area east of the main area on the inlet creek. Dogs are permitted at St Georges Lake, but they must be on a lead. There is *no camping* at the lake and *power boats are not permitted*.



**Black Duck with young**

### Slaty Creek camping & picnic area

Close to the township of Creswick, Slaty Creek is a great place to enjoy a bush picnic. Pan for gold along the meandering creek, take a stroll beside old water races, or sit and watch the bush come alive with many species of birds. There are three camping areas with wood barbecues and tables on the creek flats, surrounded by tall Manna Gums. The main area has toilets and is more suitable for larger groups.

### Koala Park

Koala Park has a network of walking tracks for visitors and there's a chance of spotting a Koala, although you are more likely to see one at Slaty Creek or Eaton's Dam.

In 1942, forestry students constructed a netting fence in a section of the forest to be used as a breeding area for Koalas. Koalas were released in the enclosure to breed and boost the numbers of the local population. However, they were able to climb the fence and so dispersed into the surrounding forest.

## Exploring the region

The surrounding area offers other opportunities for you to enjoy Victorias' past and relax with family and friends.

### Buried Rivers of Gold Heritage Trail

Beneath the rolling hills of this district are long buried underground streams - full of gold!! This car-based tour passes underground mining operations that won wealth for some beyond their wildest dreams.

Booklets are available at the Creswick Museum or the Creswick Visitor Information Centre.

## New Australasian Mine

In the early 1880s the New Australasian Mine was the site of great wealth and prosperity, having tapped a rich goldbearing deep lead. Today the site is remembered as the place of Australia's largest gold mining disaster, when 22 men lost their lives underground.

## Creswick Museum

A fine collection of local art, relics and history from the area is beautifully presented in the old Town Hall at Creswick. **Open 1:30pm to 4:30pm Sundays and public holidays.**

## Mount Beckworth Scenic Reserve

A lone pine tree on the granite peak is a landmark across the district, and the slopes of Mount Beckworth protect an abundance of native wildlife, orchids and spring wildflowers.

## Anderson's Mill, Smeaton

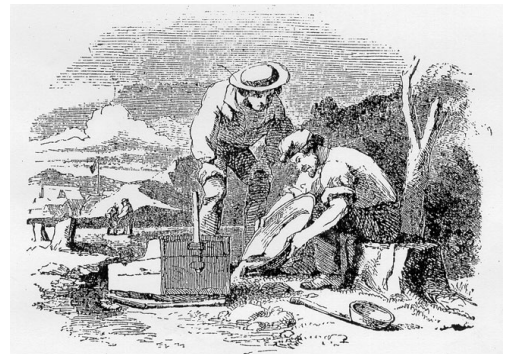
On the banks of Birch's Creek at Smeaton, the bluestone flour mill and grounds are like a scene from a postcard. Anderson's Mill was built and operated by the Anderson family from 1862 to 1959. Picnic by the creek and stroll around the impressive ground any day.



**The Mill building is open on the first Sunday of every month 12 - 4pm.**

## Hepburn Regional Park

Winding creeks with dry stone miner's walls, bushwalks along old water races and mineral springs in attractive bush settings make this park an enjoyable place for everyone.



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