

Dandenong Ranges National Park



Education Program

The Dandenong Ranges National Park provides fantastic opportunities for students of all ages to learn about biodiversity in Victoria, the importance of national parks, different forest habitats, flora and fauna of the ranges, park management and local history. Students can also walk the iconic 1000 steps and discover the link between the Kokoda campaign and the Dandenong Ranges.

Excursion topics

Creature Features

Nearly 200 fauna species call the Dandenong Ranges home. Students will learn about many of these animals by investigating a variety of animal bones, viewing a taxidermy animal collection to determine which have feathers, fur and scales and discovering how to identify the evidence that animals leave behind.

This session is complimented by a range of teacher led, outdoor activities that allow students to differentiate between living and nonliving things, identify plants and complete a Habitat Scorecard to assess the health of the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Levels: F - 4

Key Learning areas: Geography, Science

Location: Education Centre, Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground

Victoria's Biodiversity

For such a small state, Victoria boasts an incredibly broad range of habitats from the Alps to the Mallee, Rainforests to Grasslands and Coastal to spectacular marine environments. This session examines biodiversity across Victoria and natural values, human impacts and management strategies in the Dandenong Ranges National Park

This session is complimented by a range of teacher led, outdoor activities that allow students to learn plant ID and mapping skills, and gain an understanding of local park management strategies and community response to fire.

Levels: 3 - 6

Key Learning areas: Geography, Science, Civics and Citizenship

Location: Education Centre, Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground

Critters in Crisis

Australia has one of the worst native fauna extinction rates in the world. National parks and other protected areas provide refuge for many threatened, endangered and vulnerable native fauna species as they contain remnants of formerly widespread forests or other vegetation types. The survival of the native fauna within a park is dependent on the protection and management of these vegetation remnants.

In this session students will learn about some of Victoria's threatened species and view a collection of taxidermy animals found in the Dandenong Ranges National Park. Students also undertake a group activity to develop their own management strategies for a *Critter in Crisis* which are then presented to their peers

Levels: 3 - 8

Key Learning areas: Geography, Science, Civics and Citizenship

Location: Education Centre, Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground

Changes in the Ranges

The Dandenong Ranges National Park has diverse habitats and a rich cultural history. Rotating through up to five activities, students use an App to collect and compare data about biotic and abiotic factors in rainforest, wet forest and dry forest habitats, discover the Indigenous and European history of the Dandenongs and learn about management strategies that help park staff protect both the natural environment and park visitors.

Levels: 5 - 9

Key Learning areas: Geography, Science

Location: Grants Picnic Ground

Staying Safe and Minimising Your Impact

"Good planning is living the experience in advance" - Sir Edmund Hillary.

Spending time in nature is great for improving mental, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing however a poorly planned trip can lead to getting lost or injured and one can unintentionally end up damaging the very features they came to visit in the first place. In this session students will learn how to stay safe undertaking outdoor pursuits while minimising their impact on the natural environment.

This session is designed to be run in conjunction with the Kokoda Memorial Walk / 1000 Steps walk and is complimented by teacher led, outdoor activities examining management strategies and developing solutions for park management issues.

Levels: 5 - 10

Key Learning areas: Health and Physical Education, Geography

Location: Education Centre, Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground

Kokoda

In 1998, Kokoda veterans adopted the 1000 Steps walking track and renamed it the Kokoda Track Memorial Walk due to its similarity to the Golden Staircase on the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea.

Students will learn about the Kokoda Campaign, the challenges faced by soldiers and the qualities they needed to demonstrate while fighting on the Kokoda Track. They will also learn about the events that led to the war in the Pacific and the near invasion of Australia.

NB This session is designed to be run in conjunction with the Kokoda Memorial Walk / 1000 Steps walk Levels: 3 - 6, 9 - 10

Key Learning areas: History, Civics and Citizenship

Location: Education Centre, Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground

ANZAC Service

This session is led by the Education Ranger and is based on the ANZAC ceremony recommended for schools by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Students are selected by schools to read key parts of the ceremony, lower and raise the Australian flag and lay wreaths at the base of the four pillars that display the key qualities of those who have served in Australia's Armed Forces. Students are also invited to participate in the singing parts of the ceremony.

NB: This session is designed to be run in conjunction with the Kokoda Memorial Walk / 1000 Steps walk. A separate session on the Kokoda campaign is also offered.

Levels: F - 2, 5 -6, 9 -10

Key Learning areas: History, Civics and Citizenship

Location: Kokoda Terrace, Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground

Unit 1 VCE Geography:

Living with the Forest - Fire in the Dandenongs

Fire is a natural part of the environment. Most plants have evolved to regenerate after fire however an increase in urbanisation in bushland areas has led to an increased risk to life and property. Historically, wildfires have occurred in the Dandenong Ranges roughly every five years however fire occurrence in recent years has decreased due to increased fire prevention works after the devastating fires of 1997 which killed three people and destroyed several homes.

Students will visit three sites in the National Park that have been burnt at different times over the last 80 years. They will collect data about fire risks and biotic/abiotic factors at each site to determine how fire has shaped both the landscape and the communities of the Dandenong Ranges and how fire is managed in one of the most fire prone areas in the entire world.

Location: Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground, One Tree Hill, Grants Picnic Ground, Burkes Lookout

Unit 2 VCE Geography:

Living with the Forest - Tourism in the Dandenongs

With nearly 4 million visitors per year, the Dandenong Ranges National Park is the most visited National Park in Victoria and the general region is a highly popular destination for both domestic and international tourists.

Students will visit three sites in the National Park and the hills township of Sassafras to determine why tourists visit the Dandenong Ranges, how tourism has impacted on the National Park and wider area and what strategies have been implemented to ensure the sustainability of tourism in this beautiful part of Victoria.

Location: Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground, Grants Picnic Ground, O'Donohues Picnic Ground, Sassafras township

Tertiary Groups

The Dandenong Ranges Education Program also caters for tertiary students. Contact the Education Officer to customise an excursion.

Delivery locations

Ranger led sessions are delivered from Grants Picnic Ground in Sherbrooke Forest, and both the historic Education Centre and the Kokoda Terrace at the base of the 1000 Steps in the Ferntree Gully Picnic ground. All locations are accessible by standard school buses.

Group size

Education programs cater for both individual classes and larger groups of up to 120 students. With larger groups, students rotate through both ranger led and teacher guided activities during their visit.

Most of the activities provide hands-on experience that enable students to explore the park in a fun and stimulating way. Teacher led activities are well supported with notes and resources.

Costs

Current cost for a ranger led session is \$7.50 GST inclusive. ANZAC services are delivered free of charge as a community service.

Timetable

Programs generally run between 10am and 2.30pm allowing adequate travel time to and from the park. Start and finish times are flexible and lunch, play time and toilet breaks are scheduled into the excursion program.

Accessibility

Outdoor components of excursions take place on unsealed tracks with uneven surfaces. A Hippocampe all-terrain wheelchair is available to use free of charge for students with restricted mobility. The wheelchair can be used on semi-rough walking track surfaces that are not accessible with a conventional wheelchair. School staff are responsible for the safe transfer of user. Advance bookings are required.



Incursions

The Education Ranger is available for school incursions. This service will assist in keeping your costs down while allowing your students to access new knowledge and experiences.

Bookings and further information

For further information contact:

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