

Buchan Caves Reserve

Education Program

Joint managed by the Gunaikurnai people and nestled in a picturesque valley, the Buchan Caves Reserve hides an underground world of colour and enchantment just waiting to be discovered. Through a guided tour students have the opportunity to learn how landforms and landscapes are created and continue to change over time, and to catch a glimpse of spectacular limestone formations and megafauna fossils.

Excursion topics

Amazing Landforms: Caves

Levels: All Levels

Learning areas: Geography

Caves are a unique and exciting place to learn about how landforms and landscapes are created and continue to change over time. Come and explore an underground world featuring some of the most spectacular limestone formations in Australia. The reserve is home to the Royal Cave and Fairy Cave, two of the finest caves in the region boasting elaborate stalactites and stalagmites and beautiful calcite.

Students will head underground with a guide and explore the mineral formations within the caves system, learn about the various ways water shapes the earth and how caves are formed. Students will also hear some of the human stories associated with the caves.

Students can explore either one or two caves with a guide, and take one of the short walks in the reserve as an option to extend the excursion.

Buchan Caves Megafauna

Levels: 7 - 9

Learning areas: Science as a Human Endeavour, Biological, Chemical, Earth and Physical Science

This curriculum aligned tour is based on the standard tour of the Royal Cave, though it extends and deepens the tour content to include a wider story about the megafauna of the area; specifically, *Simosthenurus occidentalis*. Which was a large short-faced kangaroo whose remains are still encapsulated within the rock of Skelton Chamber. Students will head underground with a guide and explore the caves system, while being introduced to multiple megafauna creatures and learn how the megafauna of Buchan is a key to our past, that can help guide our future.

The program has developed four components for extended learning, a pre-visit quiz, a post student question and answer sheet, five teacher notes and a teacher professional development skype presentation if requested.

Group size

The cave system has a low ceiling and is very narrow. For this reason, group sizes are limited to 30 students at a time.

Accessibility

Parks Victoria is working to increase the accessibility of its parks for people on the autism spectrum. A Buchan Caves social script resource for children on the autism spectrum has been developed with the professional assistance of AMAZE. This resource is available on the Parks Victoria website.

Both Fairy Cave and Royal Cave have many steps, narrow passageways and uneven ground. However, the end section of Fairy Cave can be accessed by children and light adults with mobility limitations using an electric Stairclimber. This equipment enables visitors to experience one of the most spectacular viewing areas of Fairy Cave. The Stairclimber is provided by the Buchan Caves Reserve and can take passengers up to 60kgs in weight. To use the Stairclimber, visitors who use wheelchairs are required to transfer from their personal wheelchair into the Stairclimber. The Stairclimber is operated by an experienced cave guide who will take the visitor down into Fairy Cave. Bookings for the Stairclimber can be made in advance by contacting buchanvisitorcentre@parks.vic.gov.au.

Booking your visit

For more information about excursion costs and availability, please contact the Buchan Caves Visitor Centre at buchanvisitorcentre@parks.vic.gov.au.

Camping is also available for school groups and can be booked through <http://www.parkstay.vic.gov.au> or by calling 131963.