



Aboriginal cultural heritage protections

October 2020

Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park

Background

Aboriginal cultural heritage has been rediscovered at a number of locations in Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park over the past 12 months.

These rediscoveries are protected by legislation and are enormously important to Traditional Owners the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples, who have occupied the lands around Mount Arapiles – known as Dyuritte – for thousands of years.

What are the rediscoveries?

Recent rediscoveries in the park include a large stone-tool quarrying and manufacturing site which extends for around 200 metres along the areas known as Plaque Rock and Tiger Wall. This is where Traditional Owners produced a variety of stone tools for use in the immediate area and for trading with other Aboriginal groups. These include sharp-edged knives and spear-heads for cutting and hunting, and flat stones for grinding down foods or crushing materials, such as to make pigments for painting.

Other recent rediscoveries include rock art, artefact scatters and other quarry sites, and in one location a Hertzian percussion cone – evidence of the initial step in the Aboriginal quarrying process.

Last year a significant rock art site was rediscovered at Taylors Rock, featuring dozens of motifs in charcoal and red ochre, including a decorated oval reminiscent of designs painted on Aboriginal shields.

Where is this cultural heritage?

Cultural heritage has recently been identified at the locations known, or referred to, as: Pharos Gully Boulders, Plaque Rock and Tiger Wall, Castle Crag and Chicken Boulder. Rock art was rediscovered last year at the location known as Taylors Rock (Declaration Crag).

> See maps below showing locations

How was the cultural heritage rediscovered?

These Aboriginal cultural places were identified over the past 12 months in various ways, including by a member of the public and through natural and cultural assessments.

How are these cultural values being protected?

To protect these special places, protection measures will be put in place along with signage so that people don't inadvertently enter these areas.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* protects Aboriginal cultural heritage and financial penalties apply for harm caused by individuals or corporate bodies.

Does this mean people can't climb in this area?

All park visitors are being asked to respectfully avoid entering these signposted areas.

Are there penalties if people climb at these places?

All Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected by the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2006*, and significant penalties apply if damage is caused.

Have you consulted with the community?

There is a legal responsibility to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage when it is identified.

Parks Victoria and Barengi Gadjin Land Council have updated a range of stakeholders about these cultural rediscoveries, including local community groups and a Rock-climbing Roundtable.

What happens next?

To better identify and document the park's rich history, and to provide more clarity for park visitors, including rock climbers, Parks Victoria and Barengi Gadjin Land Council will complete cultural and environmental surveys in the park.

These will focus on key climbing areas as climbing is sometimes undertaken in places where cultural values are more likely to be present.

When/where will the surveys take place?

Though details are still to be finalised, it is expected these surveys will commence imminently and be completed within six months.

The surveys will focus on key climbing areas, so as to provide greater clarity for rock climbers.

Will climbers be involved in the surveys?

While park and cultural heritage assessments requires specific expertise, we welcome information from climbers that would help us identify and focus on the climbing areas that are more significant to them.

Will there be changes to public access in the park?

As with most parks and reserves in Victoria, Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park contains cultural heritage, the full extent of which is still being understood.

As cultural heritage is found we will explore what kind of management response is required.

Cultural and environmental values can co-exist with recreation, but must be carefully managed and protected according to legislation.

Will climbing be allowed in the park in the future?

We understand the significance of rock climbing to the local community, and we support sustainable climbing where it does not harm natural or cultural values.

Cultural heritage and environmental values can co-exist with recreation, however they must be carefully managed and protected according to legislation.

We will be undertaking surveys and assessments in the park to provide greater clarity for where rock climbing can occur.

We hope the rock climbing community, Traditional Owners and land managers can all work together to protect the park's natural and cultural values and recognise its rich history.

Are you aware how important climbing is at these sites?

We are.

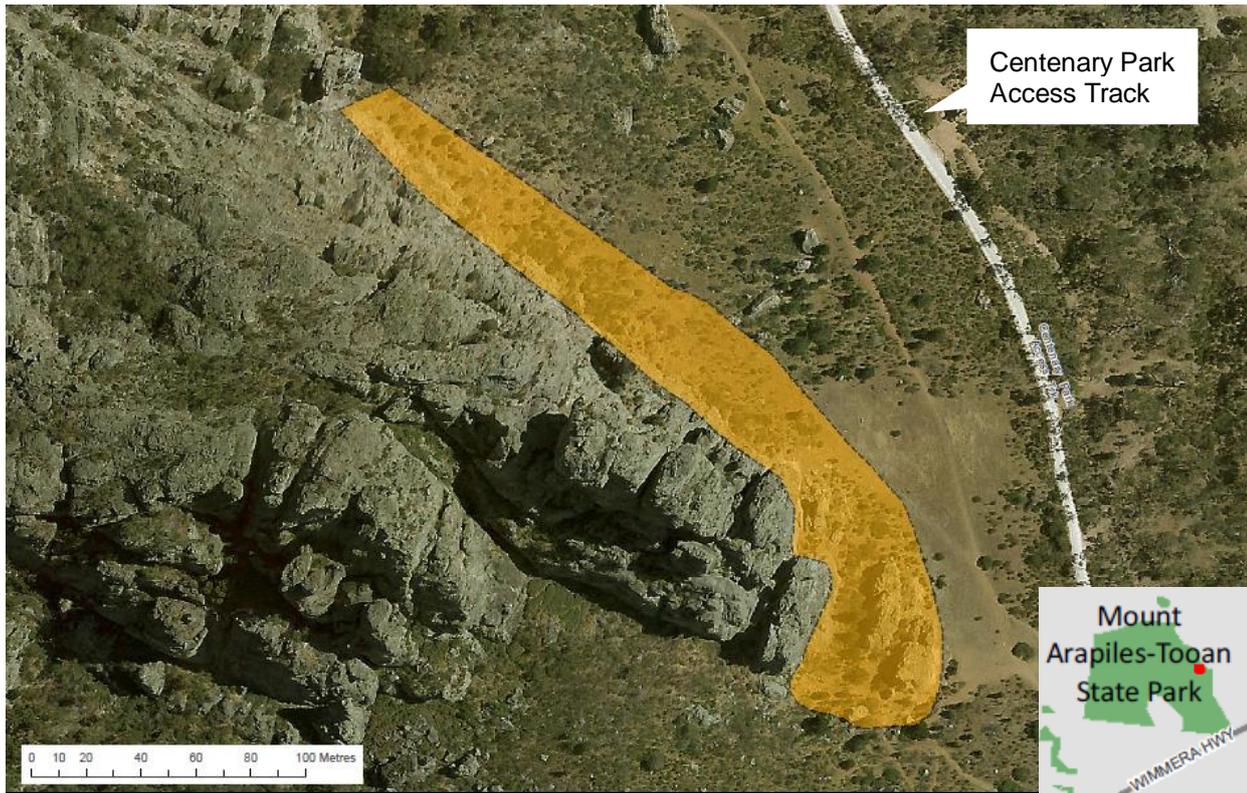
This is why we continue to have discussions with rock climbing representatives and local community groups.

We are also undertaking significant survey and assessment work in the park, focusing on climbing areas.

Where can I learn more about Aboriginal cultural heritage?

The Aboriginal Victoria website contains fact sheets and useful information about Aboriginal cultural heritage: www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au

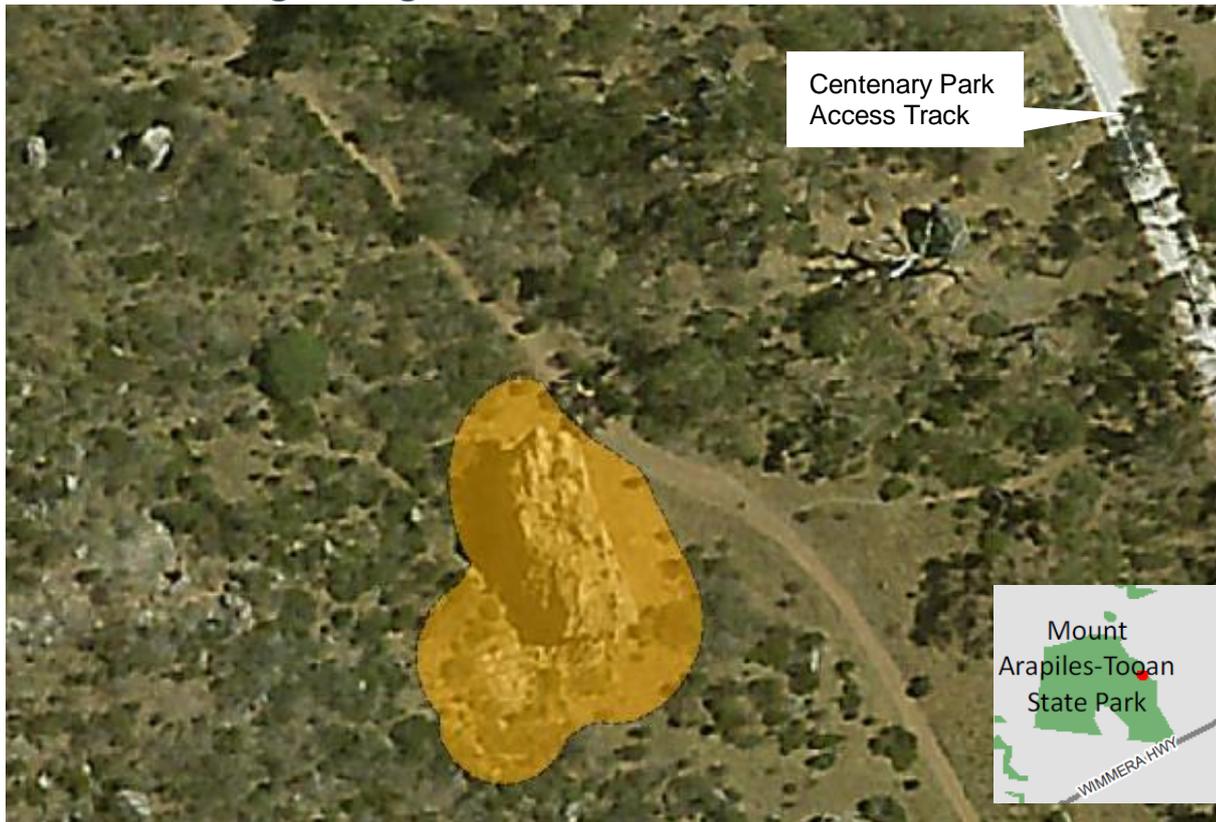
Area containing Aboriginal cultural values: 'Plaque Rock'



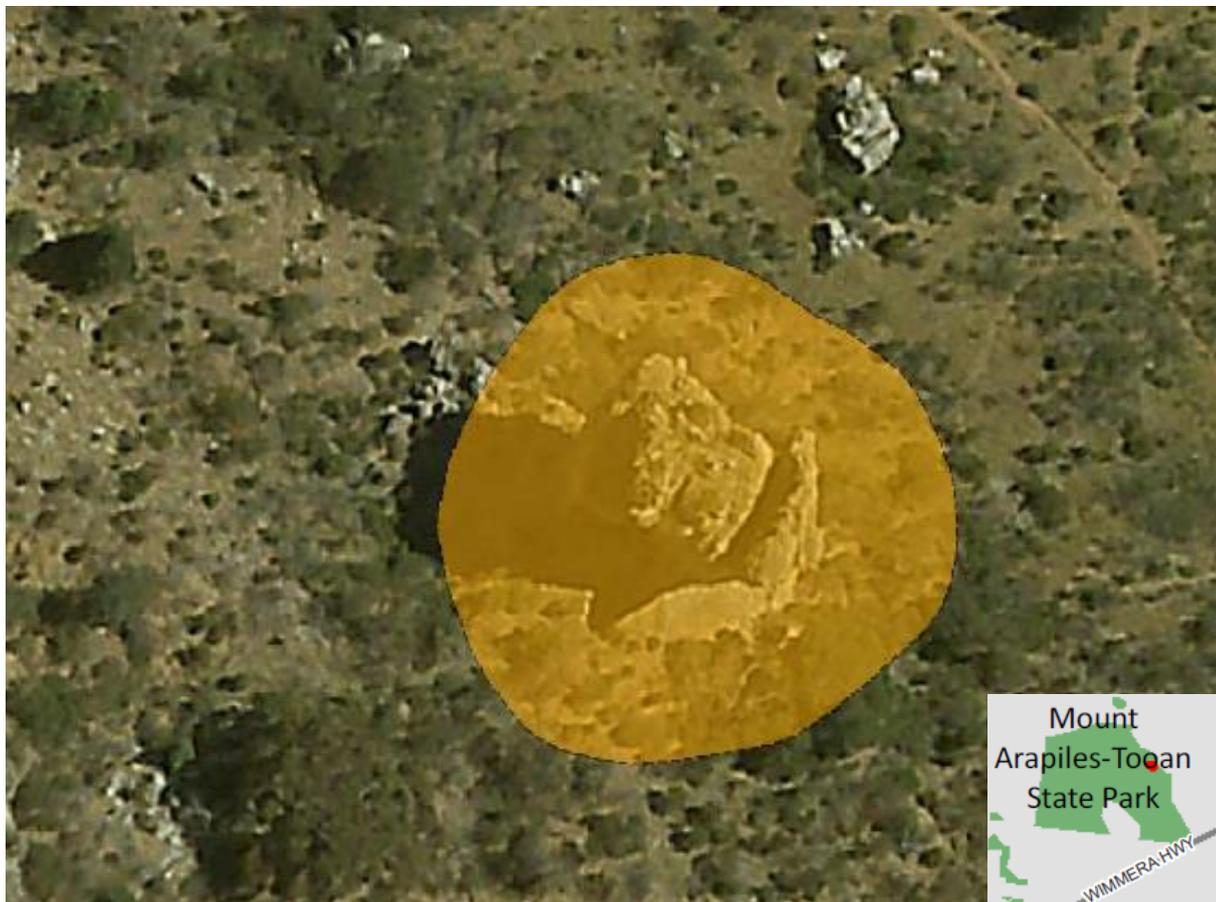
Area containing Aboriginal cultural values: 'Pharos Gully' boulders area



Area containing Aboriginal cultural values: 'Chicken Boulder'



Area containing Aboriginal cultural values: 'Castle Crag'



Area containing Aboriginal cultural values: Taylors Rock (Declaration Crag)

