

# Budj Bim National Park

## Visitor Guide



A truly fascinating place, Budj Bim is one of several places in this area's rich cultural landscape formed by powerful ancestral creation forces. Many visitors return to explore and relax in the tranquil surrounds.



### Getting there

Budj Bim National Park is 330km south-west from Melbourne. Take the Hamilton-Port Fairy Road to Macarthur and then travel west along the sealed Mt Eccles Road.

### Welcome to Country

*"Ngatanwarr wartee pa kakay teen Gunditjmara mirring — Welcome brothers and sisters to Gunditjmara Country.*

Our spirit is in this Country, its land, trees, rocks, plants and sky. It flows from Budj Bim to Tyrendarra and beyond to Koonang (the sea). It is a part of us and who we are, and we ask that you care for it when you visit.

Gunditjmara Country is a flowing and connected cultural landscape of special places: forests, mountains, lakes, streams, eel traps, rocks and pathways all woven together to form our Country.

The Aboriginal Traditional Owners welcome you to Budj Bim. We are happy and proud to share this special place with you and ask that you take the time to look, listen and feel the Country. The Creation Ancestors gave us a kinship system linking people to all things and the cultural responsibility to look after them all.

We have always understood the biodiversity of Country and our traditional ancestral knowledge is a vital part of managing this rich environment." – Gunditjmara Elders.

Budj Bim National Park is Victoria's first co-managed national park. The partnership between Gunditjmara Traditional Owners and Parks Victoria was formalised with the establishment of the Budj Bim Council.

The Council forms part of the *2007 Native Title Settlement Agreement* between the Gunditjmara and the Victorian Government bringing them together to manage the area's significant landscape.

Budj Bim is the source of the Tyrendarra lava flow which extends over 50km to the southwest. It is central to the history of the Gunditjmara people.

### Enjoying Budj Bim - things to see and do

The park is rich with birdlife, animals and plants and interesting volcanic features to discover on walks. Expect to hear koalas calling at night with their unruly grunting, groaning and squealing. Quiet visitors may be rewarded on walks with a range of sightings and bird sounds from parrots, honeyeaters, kookaburras, wrens, hawks and eagles.

### Walking

All walks start from the picnic area or the Lake Surprise lookout carpark. Ensure you have good shoes for uneven terrain. A hat, water and sunscreen are essential.

It is not unusual to see wildlife, including snakes on these walks. This is where they live. They are protected here. If you see a snake on the track leave it alone and wait for it to leave.



#### 1. Natural Bridge – 3.2km, 2 hours return, or drive and park for a 200m walk. Grade: Moderate

This short walk leads to the Natural Bridge, a lava canal, and a cavern which you can enter and explore. The cavern is dark and slippery; carry a torch and wear appropriate shoes.

This walk can also be commenced after driving along the Natural Bridge Road to the Natural Bridge carpark. A 200m walk from the carpark leads to the Natural Bridge cavern.



#### 2. Lake Surprise – 2km, 1 hour circuit Grade: Moderate

Starting at the lookout, this easy walk ventures down and around the lake edge. This hidden lake is a bit of a surprise. Lake Surprise is not suitable for swimming.



#### 3. Crater Rim – 2.6km, 2 hour circuit Grade: Moderate

This trail is like the Lake Surprise walk but higher up along the crater rim it offers a different perspective.

Tunnel Cave, which is a remnant of a lava flow, is 250m along the Crater Rim Walk. A torch is recommended for the cave.



#### 4. Lava Canal – 6.5km, 3 hours circuit Grade: Moderate

A longer, more challenging loop walk, uneven underfoot as it follows a lava flow channel. Includes the Tunnel Cave, Lava Blisters and Natural Bridge.

### Camping and picnicking

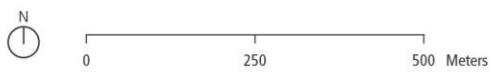
The Picnic Area offers a tranquil setting for day visitors. Facilities include picnic tables, barbecues and toilets.

The campground is approximately 250m from Lake Surprise and adjacent to the picnic area. Sites are located in protected hollows between rocky ridges formed by ancient lava flows. Toilets, water (untreated, natural supply), hot showers and 10 shared fireplaces are provided. Most campsites can accommodate up to six people with provision for one vehicle.



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|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| <b>P</b> Parking | Picnic table | Caravan          |
| Information      | BBQ (Gas)    | Caving           |
| Disabled access  | BBQ (Wood)   | Self-guided walk |
| Toilets          | Camping area |                  |

- Featured walks**
- 1** Natural Bridge (2 hrs)
  - 2** Lake Surprise (1 hr)
  - 3** Crater Rim (2 hrs)
  - 4** Lava Canal (2-3 hrs)





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|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Budj Bim National Park | Main road     | Walking track            |
| Reference area         | Sealed road   | Management vehicles only |
| State forest           | Unsealed road | Budj Bim trails          |
| Waterbody              | 4WD           |                          |

The campground has 22 campsites, some, not all, are suitable for small caravans and camper-trailers.

Site 1 - is suitable for campers with disabilities and includes access to toilets and washing facilities.

Site 22 - is a group site that can accommodate up to 12, 18 or 24 campers.

Camp fees apply for all sites and bookings are required. Information and booking visit [www.parks.vic.gov.au/stay](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au/stay)  
Please take all rubbish away for disposal or recycling.

### **Budj Bim Trail - cycling and four-wheel driving**

A range of vehicle tracks are open and available to vehicles and mountain bikes to share in the national park.

Management Vehicle Only (MVO) tracks in the national park are closed to all vehicles including mountain bikes. They are however, open to walkers and offer quiet walk options.

Budj Bim Trail is a longer mountain bike track that extends beyond the national park area and can be attempted in one day or split over three days.

Riders can find camping along the way at Allambie, Murphy's Hut and Lake Gorrie. These three camping areas are all outside of the national park on Gunditjmara managed land.

Booking for these three camping areas should be made with Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

Walkers, riders and drivers should all be alert and watchful for each other.

### **Budj Bim Tours**

Budj Bim Tours are a great way to discover the cultural landscape that is Budj Bim.

Visit [www.budjbimtours.com](http://www.budjbimtours.com) or call (03) 5527 1699.

### **The Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape (NHL)**

One of three landscapes in Victoria to be listed on Australia's National Heritage List in July 2004.

The Budj Bim NHL contains two separate areas; Budj Bim-Lake Condah Area (see map) and the Tyrendarra Area (southwest of Budj Bim).

Around 30,000 years ago Budj Bim erupted and produced a huge river of hot molten lava stretching 50km to the coast. The lava flow is one of the largest on the Victorian Volcanic Plain. This effectively dammed rivers and streams forming vast wetlands and swamps. Volcanic activity here ceased around 6,500 years ago.

The Gunditjmara people developed this landscape by excavating channels to bring water and young eels from Darlots Creek to low lying areas. They created ponds and wetlands linked by channels containing weirs. Woven baskets were placed in the weirs to harvest mature eels.

Dating back thousands of years, the area shows evidence of large, settled communities systematically farming and smoking eels for food and trade.

This area is considered one of Australia's earliest and largest Indigenous aquaculture ventures. This complex, sustainable enterprise took place in a landscape carved by natural forces and full of meaning to the Gunditjmara people.

These engineered wetlands provided the economic basis for the development of a settled society with villages of stone huts built using stones from the lava flow. Early European accounts of Gunditjmara describe how they were ruled by hereditary chiefs.

With European settlement in the area in the 1830s came conflict. Gunditjmara fought for their land during the Eumeralla Wars, which lasted more than 20 years. In the 1860s, as this conflict drew to an end, many Aboriginal people were displaced and the Victorian government began to develop reserves to house them.

Some Aboriginal people refused to move from their ancestral land and eventually the government agreed to build a mission at Lake Condah, close to some of the eel traps and within sight of Budj Bim.

The Mission was closed in 1919 but the Gunditjmara continued to live in the area and protect their heritage. The mission lands were returned to the Gunditjmara in 1987.

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation has been established as a representative body of the Gunditjmara to protect their traditional rights.

Gunditj Mirring directly manage a number of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) around Budj Bim National Park and along the Tyrendarra lava flow.

After lobbying from Gunditj Mirring, the Australian Government listed the National Park and several IPAs as the Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape in 2004.

The landscape was added to the National Heritage List because of its outstanding cultural heritage importance to the nation. The landscape has now been nominated for World Heritage listing.

### **Koala management program**

Protecting the health of manna gum woodlands and the welfare of koala populations are the primary objectives of this program. To get the best results possible Parks Victoria and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation have engaged extensively to gain the knowledge and support required. Program partners include DELWP, National Parks and Wildlife of South Australia, University of Melbourne, RSPCA and forestry experts.

### **Be prepared and stay safe**

Budj Bim National Park is in the **South West** fire district. Bushfire safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban at [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au), on the VicEmergency smartphone app or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226. No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days.

On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days this park will be closed for public safety. Closure signs may be erected but do not expect an official warning. Check the latest conditions at [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au) or by calling 13 1963.

For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000). If there is a green marker sign near you, read the information on the marker to the operator.