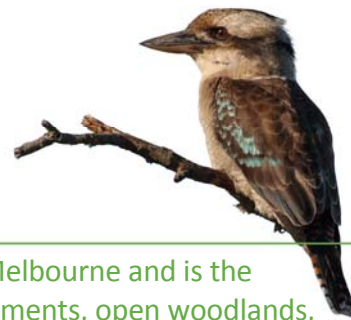


# Yarra Bend Park

## Visitor Guide



Yarra Bend Park is the largest area of natural bushland near the heart of Melbourne and is the home of the city's famous bat colony. The park features steep river escarpments, open woodlands, playing fields and golf courses.

Explore the park by foot or by bike, go boating on the river and enjoy superb views of the city skyline. Pleasant picnic areas, barbecues, rotundas and playgrounds make it popular with families. Meals, refreshments and boat hire are available at venues within the park.



### Getting there

Yarra Bend Park is located in inner Melbourne beside the suburbs of Kew, Fairfield and Abbotsford.

### Things to see and do

Yarra Bend Park is popular for walking, boating, canoeing, team sports, golf, picnicking, bird watching and just enjoying the bush.

Thousands of flying-foxes can be seen roosting in the Yarra Bend Park during the day and the "fly-out" at sunset is a unique spectacle.

### Walking

Yarra Bend Park provides walking trails of easy to moderate difficulty levels. Sights such as Dights Falls, Wills Lookout, river and city views and abundant birdlife are some of the highlights to be discovered along Yarra Bend trails.



#### 1. Bushland Circuit Trail – 850m, 25 minutes return

This walk begins on the Studley Park Picnic Area side of the river at Kane's Bridge. Heading away from the Boathouse, follow the path to the right, which leads away from the bank of the Yarra River.

Passing through the grasslands, keep an eye out for Black-faced Cuckoo Shrikes, Silvereyes and White-plumed Honeyeaters, all are easily located in the foliage by their constant chatter and song.

The path loops back following the river, returning to the boathouse.

On your return, you will pass through a Red Gum Woodland community, a favoured habitat of the Red-rumped Parrot due to the abundance of grass and other plant seeds for food, and hollows in the older River Red Gums for nesting sites.

While on your walk, you can contribute to our scientific understanding of how climate change is affecting our wildlife through our ClimateWatch Trail - [climatewatch.org.au](http://climatewatch.org.au)



#### 2. Dights Falls Trail – 3.2km, 1 hours return

On this walk you will discover the sites of the former Lunatic Asylum, the lookout over Galatea Point, the 'Greenlink, Yarra Bend' revegetation area, the former Deep Rock Swimming Club, the Koori Garden and Dights Falls.

The walk begins on the north side of Kane's Bridge. The sports oval on your right was the former site of the Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum, the first established in Victoria in 1845. The well established exotic

trees (figs, elms, and cypress) stand as remnants of the asylum's garden along the trail.

Following the trail along the bank of the river will lead you to a viewing platform that overlooks the River Red Gum dominated bush of Galatea Point across the river. The lookout is a great place for bird-watching with Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Sacred Kingfishers and Rainbow Lorikeets frequenting the area.

As you leave the lookout, walk up and around the fenced revegetation area following the path along the ridge. Descending the hill onto the flood plain of Deep Rock, you will see the rocky escarpment on the other side of the river which is made of uplifted silurian mudstone/sandstone sediments.

This quiet section of the river was used by the popular Deep Rock Swimming Club until the 1940s.

Past the site of the Deep Rock Swimming Club, at the junction of the Yarra River and the Merri Creek, you will find the Koori Garden. This site features indigenous plants and marks a former gathering place of the Wurundjeri people.

Cross the bridge over the Merri Creek to discover Dights Falls, an artificial weir built on a natural rock bar across the Yarra River. The original weir was built in the 1840s to provide water to the Ceres flour mill, one of the first in Victoria. The falls were later to become known as Dights Falls after the owners of the mill.

Cross back over the Merri Creek to the junction of the paths. To extend your walk to the Westfield Picnic Area turn left and continue up the Main Yarra Trail (see notes under Westfield Extension). Alternatively retrace your steps to return.



#### 3. Westfield Extension of Dights Falls Trail – 6.3 km, 2 hours circuit

From the junction of trails between the Merri Creek and the Yarra River, follow the Main Yarra Trail under the Freeway Overpass.

As you are walking alongside the Merri Creek, watch for Welcome Swallows, Red-rumped Parrots and other native birds visiting the area.

About half way up the trail, you will pass a lookout. The exposed basalt flows visible in the disused quarry across the creek contrast with the older sedimentary rock viewed earlier at the Deep Rock escarpment. The lookout also offers views over the Northcote area and of the city.

Continue along the path to the Westfield Picnic Area where picnic facilities, electric barbecues and toilets are available.

From the Westfield Picnic Area, follow the path alongside Yarra Bend Road back towards Kane's Bridge. Before you cross the Eastern Freeway you will see a bluestone pillar which is the remaining section of the original entrance gate to the Yarra Bend Lunatic Asylum.

Across the Eastern Freeway, you will rejoin the Dights Falls Trail, which returns to Kane's Bridge.



#### 4. Bat Colony Nature Trail – 500m, 20 minutes return

Starting from Bellbird Picnic Area Car Park, follow the gravel track upstream (northwards) past the Flying-fox Lookout. The trail then follows the banks of the river through pristine and restored bushland. There is interpretive signage along the way.

This walk can be made into a 2km circle walk by continuing on past the bat colony, crossing Yarra Boulevard (take care!) and then following the signed but rough in places path, along the side of the old Willsmere Asylum estate and up to the Wills Street park entrance, which offers spectacular views of the city. A sealed path leads you back to Bellbird Picnic Area.



#### 5. Andrews Reserve Trail – 1.2km, 40 minutes one way

This short but challenging walk follows narrow and at times unstable path and has steep steps and several tripping hazards.

The walk begins near the footbridge adjacent to Walmer Street in the southern end of the park. Follow the sealed track taking in the views of the city and the Richmond area until you come to the earthen steps leading down to your left. Descend these steps into the riparian vegetation of the Yarra River.

Following the winding track along the river listen out for the call of Bell Miners. Other birds often sighted in this area include Red Wattlebirds and Willie-wagtails.

The large eucalyptus trees are River Red Gums, habitat for Brushtailed Possums.

At the completion of this trail, relax at the picnic tables by the playground at Andrews Reserve.



#### 6. River Trail – 1.7km, 30 minutes return

The River Trail begins from the carpark beside the Fly Casting Pool, just off Yarra Bend Road. Begin the walk along the gravel path beside the Eastern Freeway fence.

From the ridge where you are standing you can observe the escarpment vegetation dominated by Yellow Gum and Yellow Box on the other side of the river. This vegetation plays a vital role stabilising the steep escarpment. Follow the path down into the sheltered serene riparian or river bank vegetation.

A billabong and a small waterfall have been created providing habitat for native fauna such as the Water Rat and the Striped Marsh Frog, as well as an assortment of native birds.

The track finishes at the bend in the river with a bridge overhead. Return via the same route or turn it into a loop by continuing along the Main Yarra Trail, through Fairfield Park, then turning left into a walking track running along Yarra Bend Road.

### Cycling

Yarra Bend Park offers many opportunities to cyclists. Popular with walkers, joggers and cyclists, Main Yarra Trail is a scenic river path that passes through Yarra Bend on its way from Melbourne's eastern suburban fringe to the CBD.

There are also several unsealed trails in the park that are shared by walkers and cyclists.

### Picnicking

Studley Park Picnic Area offers picnic shelters, electric barbecues and toilet facilities.

Bellbird Picnic Area (off Yarra Boulevard) is a peaceful alternative to the busy Studley Park Picnic Area. There is a shelter, electric barbecue, toilet facilities and canoe launching ramp.

On the west bank (Yarra Bend Road) side of the park, Westfield Picnic Area has electric barbecues, shelters, toilet facilities and extensive open spaces. At the Lower Loop, there are also barbecues, shelters, a toilet and a playground, making it one of the park's most popular picnic spots.

Open space and sporting fields are used for organised and informal sports including cricket, football, soccer and bocce.

### Dog walking

Dogs are permitted in most areas of the park, but must be kept on a leash in certain areas, and kept out of dog exclusion areas. When dogs are in off-lead zones, a leash must be carried to bring your dog under immediate control if necessary.

An area below Deep Rock is a great spot for dogs to enter the river.

### Dog friendly park code of conduct

- Consider other park users and ensure that dogs are kept under effective control at all times.
- Carry a lead at all times.
- Bring a friend if you wish to walk with more than two dogs.
- Ensure children are supervised when near dogs, as they are vulnerable to attack.
- Ensure your dog's vaccinations are up to date.
- Minimise any disturbance to river banks and native fauna in the park.
- Clean up after your dog and take all rubbish home.

### Events

The park is popular for fun runs, cross country events, and weddings. Permits for all events must be submitted through the Parks Victoria webpage [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

### Golf courses

Golf is a popular pastime at Yarra Bend Park. The 18 hole Yarra Bend Golf Course is a picturesque public course near the river. Bookings can be made directly to the 18 hole Golf Course by calling 9481 3729 and the nine hole Studley Park Par 3 Golf Course on 9852 8144.

### Flora and fauna

Yarra Bend Park contains some of the last stands of original bushland in inner Melbourne. A total of approximately 320 indigenous plants have been recorded in the park of which more than 100 species are considered to be of local, regional or state significance. Animals found in the park include the platypus, water rat and a number of bat and reptile species.

The bird life of the park is diverse, including waterbirds and birds that utilise remnant vegetation, as well as those that occur in more modified habitats.

### Grey-headed Flying-foxes

Grey-headed Flying-foxes, a nationally threatened bat species, are an important part of Melbourne's wildlife. In 2003, the colony was successfully relocated from the Royal Botanic Gardens to Yarra Bend Park. The flying-fox colony is best viewed from the Yarra Boulevard or Bellbird Picnic Area. At Bellbird Picnic Area, a viewing platform, walking trail and interpretive signage allows visitors to learn about and view the flying-foxes in their natural environment.

## Other park facilities

Studley Park Boathouse, built in 1863 and recently restored, offers kiosk, café and restaurant dining as well as canoe and rowboat hire.

The Boulevard Restaurant and Function Centre offers a contemporary setting in a country atmosphere only minutes from the CBD.

The fly-casting pool is frequently used by the Red Tag Fly Fishers Club. For further information on joining the Red Tag Club, or to enquire about booking the pool for your club, contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963.

The Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-operative (VINC) is a not-for-profit plant nursery. VINC produces local indigenous flora for the north and east of Melbourne for supply to local government, community groups, schools and members of the public. VINC is located on Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield.

## Caring for the park

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

- Please take rubbish away with you for recycling and disposal.
- All native plants and animals are protected by law. Please do not disturb them in any way.
- Portable coal barbecues or ovens are not permitted. Portable gas barbecues are allowed.

## Be prepared and stay safe

Yarra Bend Park is in the Central 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.

Sections of this park have been identified as high bushfire risk and will be closed for public safety on days of Code Red Fire Danger Rating. As an exception, the golf courses and playing fields have been assessed to have a low/acceptable level of bushfire risk and will remain open. 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 emergency marker sign near you, read the information on the marker to the operator.