The Track

Walk into History

The Walk into History follows historic timber tramways that wind their way through spectacular and diverse forest scenery, including forests of the world’s tallest trees (Mountain Ash) and sections of cool temperate rainforests in most sheltered gullies. The walk is unique in Victoria, retracing the route of the original tramways and visiting the sites of former settlements and bush mills, now largely reclaimed by the forests. From the early to mid 1900’s, these tramways carried sawn timber from dozens of bush mills to Warburton and Powlett Town.

Getting There

From Melbourne, take the Maroondah Highway to Lilydale. Just beyond Lilydale, turn right onto the Warburton Highway and follow this to the township of Warburton, where you can visit the Water Wheel Tourist Information Centre (weekdays 10am - 5pm and weekends 10am - 3pm) for more information.

The Track

The extensive riparian zone of the Ada River and, especially, Eucalyptus viminalis welcome the explorer as they intuitively guide the walker. The expansive riparian zone of the Ada River, downstream from Starlings Gap, provides a good place to rest, although no facilities exist.

Short steep hills

Alternative walks from the Crossroads.

At this point, the walk route to Powelltown turns to the south, however two very worthwhile options exist for further exploration: 2km to the north the New Ada Mill can be reached. New Ada Mill closed in 1942, the workers then being transferred to the Powlett Town branch. Alternatively, New Federal Mill can be reached by walking east for 2.2km from the tramway crossroad, passing an impressive party collapsed tramway bridge en-route. New Federal Mill continued the sawmilling industry in the Warburton area for almost 15 years. Its closure in 1939 signalled the end of the timber tramway era. Workers were welcome to camp at this site of historical significance, although no facilities exist.

A walking track links New Federal Mill with the Ada Track (1.4km) and the Ada No 2 Mill picnic area at the High Lead Car Park. The Ada No 2 Mill was destroyed in the 1939 bushfires, however the relics of structures and machinery around the campsite provide the visitor with a sense of a very different time. The site has camping platforms, fireplaces and sturdy food boxes to protect your food stocks from the resident possums.

The Bump is also known for The Bump Tunnel, a historic tramway tunnel constructed in 1925. Spanning 313 metres in length, the tunnel was constructed to avoid winching up the existing steep inclines. Both entrances to the tunnel were blown in many decades ago, although the excavations that led to the entrances are still evident. Over The Bump, the track winds its way down the Little Yarra catchment, crossing the Little Yarra three times over log bridges, before joining Mackley’s Rd.

To the north, the track passes the historic Union Church and the sawmill before reaching the Powelltown Picnic Area, the site of the unique Environment and Primary Industries wartime campsite.

Safety Information

On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days, parks and state forest are closed to the public. Do not enter parks or forests on Code Red days. If you are already there when a Code Red day is announced, you should leave the right before early in the morning.

For more information contact DEPI.

Be careful camping under trees - they can drop their limbs (particularly during high winds).
Looking After Our Forests

- Dogs are allowed in the state forest, but must be under direct control at all times and are expected to be kept on a leash in picnic and camping areas or when near other visitors.
- Trailbikes, mountain bikes and horses are allowed in state forests, but are not permitted on the walking track.
- The fauna and flora are protected so please respect the forest and the animals that live there.
- There is no rubbish collection service, so please take your rubbish home. If you come across any rubbish, do the bush a favour and take it out with you.
- You are allowed to light a campfire except on days of Total Fire Ban. It is your responsibility to know if a Total Fire Ban is declared. If in doubt, do not light a campfire. Use existing fireplaces rather than create your own. Never leave fire unattended. Ensure fires are safe and that they are completely extinguished. Remember if it’s cool to touch, it’s safe to leave.
- Only light fires in fireplaces or 30cm deep trenches. Fires must be less than one metre square and at least three metres clear of combustible material.
- Keep the size of your group small, ideally, less than eight people and go off peak.

Things To Remember

- Here in the mountains the weather can change quickly, so please come prepared, especially for the longer walks. Wear good walking boots or sturdy shoes, take spare warm clothes, a waterproof jacket and some food and water in a small backpack.
- Make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return, don’t forget to let them know when you are back.
- Mobile phone coverage is intermittent, consider taking an epirb (personal location beacon) or emergency device if you intend to go trekking.

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