

Wonnangatta Drive

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*Healthy Parks
Healthy People*



Victoria's Iconic 4WD Adventures

www.iconic4wd.com.au



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Discover the history and heritage of the High Country on this tour through rugged bushland and mountain scenery in Victoria's Alpine National Park.

Dramatic cliff-top lookouts offer panoramic views over the Alps, and history comes alive at the many historic sites - from the ruins of old gold mining towns and the cattleman's huts on the high plains to the Wonnangatta Station site, scene of a still unsolved murder mystery.

Allow 2-3 days for this epic 4WD journey through the beautiful isolated and historic Wonnangatta Valley and across the high plains, enjoying the peace and tranquillity of sheltered bush campsites.

The drive is best accessed from Mansfield, but can also be reached from the south via Licola, from Myrtleford/Bright in the north and Dargo to the east.

The 222-kilometre loop drive is classified as Very Difficult in dry conditions, under Victoria's new 4WD Recreational Track Classification System – see Track Classification section for details.

King Billy Track – Zeka Spur Track junction to Grant (81 kms)

From Mansfield the drive heads 96 kilometres east along Bluff Track and Billy Goat Bluff Track to the start of the tour at Zeka Spur Track, then heads north for a very steep descent into the remote and secluded Wonnangatta Valley.

Surrounded on all sides by forbidding mountains, Wonnangatta Station near the junction of Conglomerate Creek and Wonnangatta River was the home of the pioneer Bryce family for many years. In 1917 the station manager and cook disappeared, and were later found to have been murdered. Nearly a century later the crimes remain unsolved.

Although the homestead burnt down in 1957, the ruins are still clearly visible and the nearby cemetery contains the graves of settlers and their children.

Another link with the High Country's colourful past awaits at Talbotville, one of the settlements that sprung up to service the rich Crooked River goldfield in the 1860s. Now all that remains is a virtual ghost town on broad river flats on the banks of Crooked River, including the Talbotville cemetery.

Grant to Horseyard Flat (75 kms)

Born during the frenetic rush for gold in the 1860s, the town of Grant was once home to 3,000 people and supported 18 hotels. Wandering through the forgotten streets, past old mines, mining relics and the town's cemetery, it's possible to imagine the life of backbreaking and often fruitless toil and physical hardship endured by the miners and their families.

The tour continues along McMillan Road to Dargo, one of Victoria's most remote communities, nestled in the foothills before the climb to the Dargo High Plains. Set in a picturesque valley, the delightful old timbermill town is known for its groves of century-old walnut trees that line the valley floor.

Head east on Wonnangatta Road, and then ascend the renowned Billy Goat Bluff Track to reach the Pinnacles Lookout, for a short but steep walk to the firetower lookout perched on a rocky escarpment. The climb is rewarded with breathtaking views as far south as the distant Gippsland Lakes, Mt Hotham to the north and the settled areas of the Wonnangatta Valley far below.

Horseyard Flat to Mansfield (66 kms)

It's a short distance from the Pinnacles Lookout to Horseyard Flat Campground, one of the High Country's most popular camping areas. Spend a night under the stars in a beautiful grassy clearing among Snow Gums beside the Moroka River, and explore the remains of the old horseyards, which include morticed posts and split rails.

Enjoy the expansive views north over the vast and remote Mount Darling Snowy Bluff Wilderness Park as the journey continues along Moroka Road past Moroka Hut, built by mountain cattlemen in 1946.

The landscapes of Mountain Ash forest and sub-alpine vegetation gives way to grassy alpine plains as the tour passes the Snowy Range Airstrip, the highest airstrip in Australia. Take time out for the short walk to Dimmicks Lookout for a spectacular view of the forested wilderness and the cliffs of Bryce Gorge, and the Wonnangatta Valley below the ridge.

A parking area further along Howitt Road gives access to a number of interesting walks. Less than a kilometre away is Guys Hut, a fine example of log construction with the distinctive high country chimney. If you have time, a longer walk brings outstanding views of Bryce Gorge, Conglomerate Falls and Pieman Falls, which plunges 100 metres from a massive escarpment.

The tour continues past Howitt Hut, built on the Howitt Plains by cattlemen at the start of the last century, before heading back to Mansfield.

Wonnangatta Drive

Important information

FOUR WHEEL DRIVING IN VICTORIA'S PARKS AND FORESTS

- Plan ahead and obtain a detailed map before you go – this map is a guide only
- Drive vehicles only on formed roads and vehicle tracks that are open to the public – do not drive off-track
- Stay off tracks that are too wet, or have been recently graded
- Avoid wheel spin and churning up the track surface
- Remove fallen trees or limbs from roads; don't create new tracks by driving around them
- Cross rivers and streams only where river crossings are clearly marked. Check depths and drive slowly
- Use a tree protector if winching is required and use wheel chains as a last resort
- Be aware that Seasonal Road Closures exist across Victoria due to the potential for increased environmental impacts and risks to public safety during the wetter months
- Be sure to check for road closures before you go – check with Parks Victoria on 13 1963 or at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au or the Department of Sustainability and Environment on 13 6186 or at www.dse.vic.gov.au

The best way to enjoy four wheel driving is by joining one of the many four wheel driving clubs in Victoria. Contact Four Wheel Drive Victoria for more information or visit www.fwdvictoria.org.au

OFF-ROAD DRIVING TECHNIQUES

Off-road driving demands different techniques to road driving, and every surface has its own particular characteristics. All vehicles should be in first-class mechanical condition and carry equipment appropriate to the trip.

It may be worth considering one of the training programs for touring off-roaders run by Four Wheel Drive Victoria to ensure you are properly prepared. Here are some brief pointers.

QUICK TIPS: DIRT ROADS

Driving

- Reduce speed to match tyre pressure
- Expect the unexpected
- Engage 4WD on part-time systems, and stability control for those cars that have it
- Use a slightly lower gear than normal
- Headlights on for visibility
- Don't swerve for animals; slow down
- Slow down for oncoming vehicles, especially those with dust clouds
- When following another vehicle keep well back to avoid dust
- Expect vehicles anywhere on the road
- Keep away from loose, gravelly parts of the road, follow defined wheel tracks.

TREAD LIGHTLY IN THE VICTORIAN BUSH

Please help protect the natural environment by following these guidelines:

- Keep to walking tracks. Short cuts cause erosion and disturb native habitat
- If you carry it in – carry it out! Please take your rubbish out
- Dogs, cats or other pets are prohibited in National Parks
- Firewood is limited. Please use fuel stoves for cooking, and observe fire regulations and days of TOTAL FIRE BAN.

MINIMAL IMPACT CAMPING

- Be self-sufficient with drinking water. Carry it in and/or know how to make untreated water safe for drinking
- Camp at least 20 metres from any stream, lake or reservoir
- Dispose of and dirty water away from streams and waterways. Do not use soaps, detergents and toothpaste near water sources so fish and wildlife aren't harmed
- Use toilets where provided or bring your own portable toilet. If there are no toilets, walk at least 100 metres from water sources and campsites, dig a hole 15 centimetres and cover
- Light fires in designated fireplaces. Use a fuel stove where possible as it's better for the bush.

FIRE SAFETY

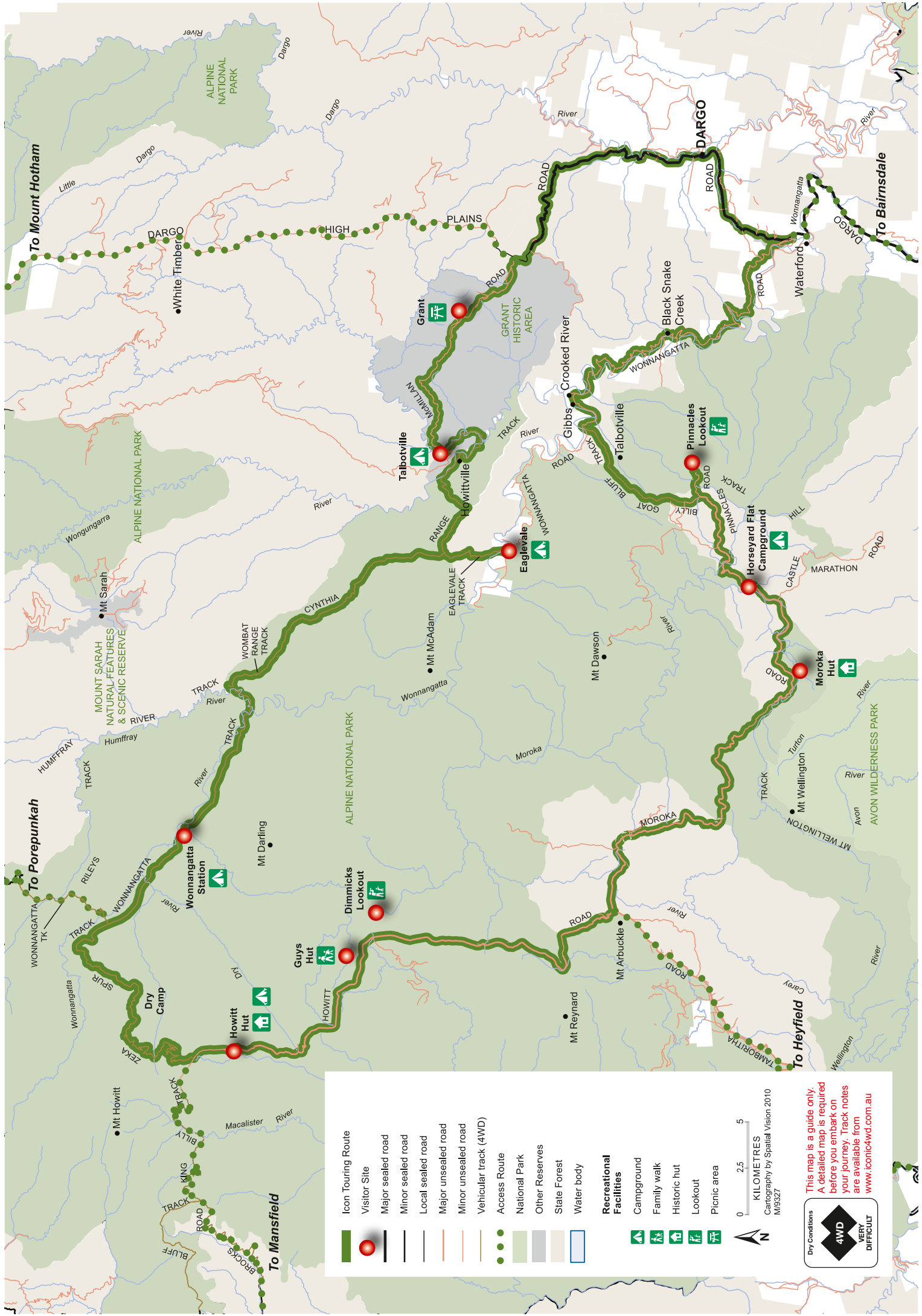
A bushfire survival plan is just as essential for drivers and campers as it is for those at home. Check the weather forecast before you go, stay aware of daily conditions and be ready to activate your bushfire survival plan.

Remember that official warnings of bushfires are not always available in remote locations, so extra effort is required to keep informed. If you are camping, take a portable radio and tune in to ABC or local outlets for weather and fire updates. Monitor conditions with updated bushfire information from the Victorian Bushfire Information Line: 1800 240 667.

Extra care must be taken with any potential ignition sources like power tools and cigarette butts. Vehicles should not be driven over dry ground cover or parked on dry grassy areas.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land and recognises their rich culture and intrinsic connection that stretches back over many tens of thousands of years, including the areas now managed as parks.



- Icon Touring Route
- Visitor Site
- Major sealed road
- Minor sealed road
- Local sealed road
- Major unsealed road
- Minor unsealed road
- Vehicular track (4WD)
- Access Route
- National Park
- Other Reserves
- State Forest
- Water body

- Recreational Facilities**
- Campground
- Family walk
- Historic hut
- Lookout
- Picnic area

0 2.5 5
 KILOMETRES
 Cartography by Spatial Vision 2010
 M19327

Dry Conditions
4WD
VERY DIFFICULT

This map is a guide only. A detailed map is required before you embark on your journey. Track notes are available from www.iconic4wd.com.au



Track Classification

Very Difficult

A new classification system for 4WD tracks on Public Land across Victoria has been developed.

A standard four level colour coded system is used to indicate the degree of difficulty of 4WD tracks and routes. Standard symbols and signage are used to show easy to very difficult tracks.

The Wonnangatta Drive is rated as Very Difficult

- Low Range 4WD with high ground clearance. Experienced drivers
- Tracks with frequent very steep and/or rocky/slippery/sandy track sections. May have difficult river crossings.
- Suitable for high clearance vehicles with dual range tyres suitable for the terrain. (Mud terrain tyres)
- Winch recovery equipment required
- Drivers with extensive experience and advanced training should only attempt as there are several technical challenges. Recommended to be done in groups of four or more vehicles
- Will be more difficult in wet conditions
- The drive is not accessible during the Seasonal Road Closure period which generally extends from June to November each year.

The terrain and track conditions aim to provide a general description of the likely terrain and have limited subjective comments such as boggy or rutted as these can be interpreted differently by individuals.

The suitability of a vehicle relates to high/low range capacity, ground clearance and tyres.

The recovery equipment is advisory only and in line with Tourism Adventure Activity Standards and is not mandatory.

This is to guide the inexperienced driver that it may be in their best interest to have driver training or further experience before attempting more difficult terrain.

Note: Drivers need to be aware of changing weather conditions and how this may affect tracks they are using or planning to use. The tracks have been classified in dry conditions and most medium, difficult and very difficult tracks will become more difficult in wet weather.

One of the most enjoyable ways to experience Victoria's diverse and unforgettable memorable landscapes is on a four-wheel drive tour to enjoy the peace and solitude of the bush.

Now you can experience the best four-wheel drive experiences Victoria has to offer, on a range of tours from full day to several days. Licensed Tour Operators will help you get the most out of your park visit.

Victoria's Iconic 4WD Adventures are just waiting to be discovered, with a new series of touring guides to steer your journey of exploration.

**Grampians Drive • Otways Drive • Mallee Drive
Wonnangatta Drive • Snowy River Drive • Davies Plain Drive**

Further Information

Parks Victoria: call 13 1963 or visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Department of Sustainability and Environment:
call 13 6186 or visit www.dse.vic.gov.au

Four Wheel Drive Victoria: call (03) 9857 5209 or
visit www.fwdvictoria.org.au

Look out for the distinctive blue and yellow 'i' sign  as you travel around Victoria, which identifies Accredited Visitor Information Centres.

This track is subject to Seasonal Road Closures.
Please visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au for current track information.
The map contained within is a guide only. Ensure you obtain a detailed map before you embark on your journey.

