

Mallee Drive

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*Healthy Parks
Healthy People*

Victoria's Iconic 4WD Adventures

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Experience the timeless outback landscapes of Victoria's Mallee, from sand dunes and pink lakes to woodlands and rolling plains, with abundant native wildlife and fascinating remains of the pastoral era.

It's a journey best undertaken at a leisurely pace to fully appreciate the abundant opportunities for relaxation and solitude, exploring by day before sitting around the campfire under starry skies.

The tour features many of the scenic highlights of Wyperfeld and Murray-Sunset national parks, which protect over a million hectares of unique Mallee landscapes.

It may be Victoria's driest region, but the Mallee is far from barren and lifeless. Large numbers of emus and kangaroos, native birds, attractive woodlands and colourful spring wildflower displays make this tour a nature lover's delight.

The 625-kilometre drive is classified as Medium difficulty in dry conditions, under Victoria's new 4WD Recreational Track Classification System – see Track Classification section for details.

Wyperfeld National Park entrance to Underbool (126 kms)

The tour begins at the Wyperfeld National Park entrance, 40 kilometres west of Hopetoun via Hopetoun -Yaapeet Road and Wyperfeld Park Road, and winds north through the eastern section of the park.

Not far from the entrance, Wonga Campground is a large wooded picnic and camping area on the Outlet Creek floodplain. Explore the surrounds on short walks to the Eastern Lookout and a fascinating Malleefowl mound, or the 15km circuit Eastern Lookout Nature Drive. This easy loop drive passes through usually dry lakebeds, flood plains, sand dunes and peaceful Mallee country.

Casuarina Campground in the northern Pine Plains area is set amid Pine-Buloke woodlands and vast open lakebeds surrounded by Mallee sand dunes. Enjoy peaceful walks through native woodlands and past remnants of the area's pastoral history, or just watch a stunning sunset from the nearby dunes.

The drive skirts the rim of the dry bed of Lake Agnes and past the pleasant Snow Drift Picnic Area, set alongside one of the largest white sand dunes in the area, before heading north to O'Sullivan's Lookout. A 20-minute uphill walk leads to expansive views over the vast plains.

Underbool to Shearers Quarters (213 kms)

From Underbool the tour heads west for a short distance along the Mallee Highway, turning right along Pink Lakes Road to Murray-Sunset National Park and the Lake Crosbie and Lake Becking campgrounds.

There are plenty of opportunities here for picnics, short walks and enjoying the spring wildflower displays, while the famous Pink Lakes are outstanding subjects for photography, especially early or late in the day or in overcast conditions.

The pink colour is due to the red pigment beta-carotene secreted by algae in the lake. Commercial salt mining was carried out here from 1916 until 1979, when the area was declared a State Park, and there are many remnants of the salt harvesting activities littered throughout the area.

A short drive further north is Mt Crozier Campground, where an energetic climb to the Mt Crozier lookout is rewarded with expansive views of the surrounding desert with saltbush flats and grassland plains scattered with sand dunes.

Looping around the ancient dry creekbed of Rocket Lake, a vast area covered with saline shrublands and surrounded by casuarina woodlands, the tour heads west through the heart of the park to the Shearers Quarters Campground.

Shearers Quarters Campground to Wyperfeld National Park entrance (286 kms)

Once the home of the lessee of Sunset Pastoral Company, the old Shearers' Quarters now offers basic style accommodation. Step back into the Mallee's pastoral past as you watch emus and kangaroos graze around the nearby fences and stockyards.

Heading south, the drive passes through Murrayville on the way to Big Billy Bore, an attractive picnic and camping spot that was supposedly named after the tank here that was the largest in the desert and held water like a billy.

Take a 77-kilometre detour to Red Bluff Camping Area, travelling for a short time along the South Australian border before winding back to Red Bluff, where you can camp for the night below this impressive natural landmark.

On the way back to the Wyperfeld National Park entrance the tour passes Round Swamp Camping Area, set among Cypress Pine, Yellow Gum, Mallee Black -Box and large Bull Mallee, with a deep, dry well and the remnants of an old blacksmith's forge.

Mallee 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: SAND

Kit

- Take a shovel, sand flag, flat plate so the jack doesn't sink in, compressor and tyre pressure gauge
- Full tank of fuel as consumption is high
- Pole and red sand flag so you can be seen approaching dunes.

Prep

- Lower tyre pressures (15 psi for medium/large sized 4WD wagons)
- Remove weight from the vehicle
- Fit pole and red sand flag.

Driving

- Use steady momentum, but not aggressive driving
- High range for higher speed, low range for tight tracks
- Keep the speed down even when it's flat

- Disable stability control, engage 4WD. Cross-axle lockers aren't often useful
- If the wheels spin, immediately stop and back out. Don't spin your vehicle's wheels into a hole
- Lights on for visibility
- Accelerate gently, brake by just coming off the accelerator.

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
- Avoid resting, picnics or camping under or close to River Red Gum trees. They may drop heavy branches at any time without warning.

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

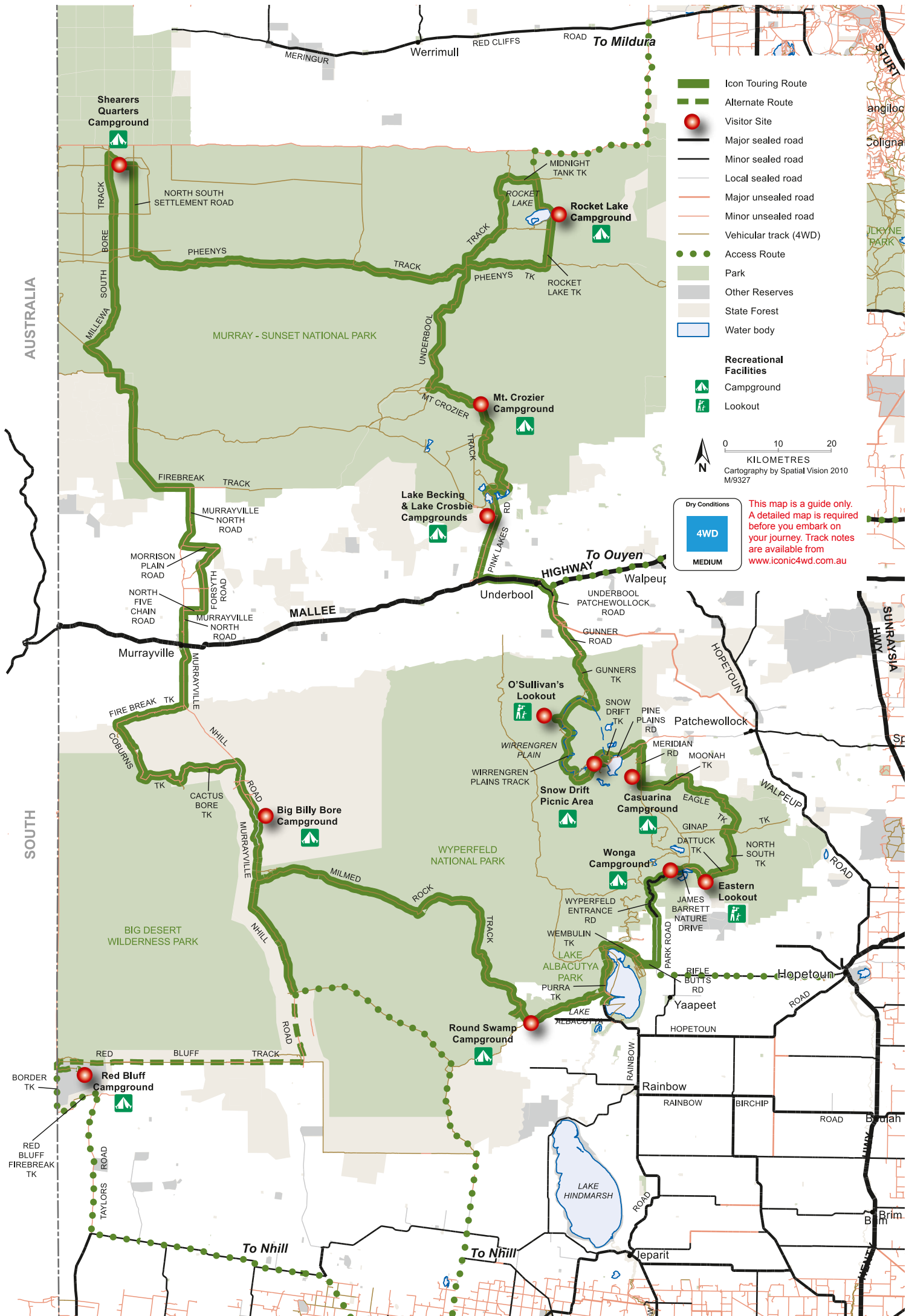
A bushfire survival plan is just as essential for drivers and campers as it is for those at home. Check the weather forecast before you go, stay aware of daily conditions and be ready to activate your bushfire survival plan.

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.





Track Classification

Medium

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 Mallee Drive is rated as Medium

- Mainly High Range 4WD but Low Range required
- Some 4WD experience or training required
- Tracks with some steep and/or rocky/slippery/sandy sections
- Some tracks may develop deep holes after rain ('Crab Holes'). Be aware and slow down on clay surfaces
- May have shallow water crossings
- Suitable for medium clearance vehicles with dual range and all terrain or road tyres
- Recommended to be done in groups of vehicles
- Will be more difficult in wet conditions.

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. But not the Mallee!!

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.

