



Dandenong Ranges National Park



Education Program Guide

The Education Centre, housed in the historic kiosk at the bottom of the Kokoda Track/1,000 Steps in Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground, is the base for the national park's education program.

The park's diverse forest types, ranging from cool temperate rainforest, tall Mountain Ash forests and dry shrubby forests, make a wonderful classroom for students to explore and learn in.

Programs can be developed for all levels and needs. Refer to the programs in this brochure to view what is offered, or contact the Education Officer on 13 1963 to discuss your needs.

The park

The park has captured the interest and dedication of locals and visitors for well over 120 years. A small area of 168ha at Ferntree Gully was first set aside for public recreation in 1882. Since that time, many parcels of land have been reserved and continue to be added to. Today the national park covers an area of 3,540 ha, is home to a diverse variety of native plants and animals, and is enjoyed by 2 million visitors a year.

Mt Ash forests are vital to the habitat of native species like the Lyrebird.



Education programs

Curriculum

The Dandenong Ranges National Park education program is specifically designed to meet Parks Victoria's organisational and park management objectives, and the curriculum requirements of CSFII / VELS Levels 1 – 6 and VCE studies.

Group sizes

Education programs cater for both individual class groups as well as larger groups of up to 120 students, where students rotate through a number of different activities during their visit.

Most of the activities provide hands-on experience that enables students to explore the park in a fun and stimulating way. Teacher-led activities are well supported with notes and resources.

Timetable

Programs generally run between 10am and 2.30pm which allows adequate travel time to and from the park. However, the start and finish times are flexible. Lunch, play time and toilet breaks are scheduled into the excursion program.

What we offer:

- A full-time Education Officer (qualified teacher) and Education Centre.
- Pre and post visit material and support.
- A student information service offering access to education resources.
- Free teacher information sessions presented at your school.

Option for activities to be delivered on school grounds (subject to availability).

Cost:

- Up to 2 hours: \$3.00 per student
- 2 – 3 hours: \$4.00 per student
- 3 + hours: \$6.00 per student

\$35 for ½ hour introduction talk

(Prices exclude GST)

Warning

Activities in the forest will not be conducted when the Bureau of Meteorology issues a strong wind or severe weather warning for the Melbourne Metropolitan area, or if the CFA declare a Total Fire Ban day. Depending on group size, a limited program may be offered at the Education Centre or the visit will be rescheduled.

education

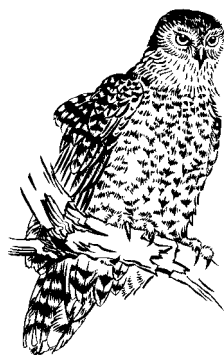
CSF II & VEL5

'Threatened Species'

CSF II & VEL5 2 – 6

Changes to the Australian environment have resulted in the decline of many of our native plant and animal species. Students will use problem solving skills to identify strategies to protect plant and animal species. National Threatened Species Day is held annually on 7 September. Support one of the state's threatened species by participating in this national event. A variety of stuffed animal specimens can be viewed and handled by students in the Education Centre.

Extension activity: Creature Features
Students focus on species adaptations and behaviour.



The Powerful Owl is threatened in the area due to cats/foxes, loss of habitat through land clearing and by visitors not remaining on tracks provided.

'Victoria's Environmental Diversity'

CSF II & VEL5 2 – 6

As an introduction to Victoria's environmental diversity, students will experience a virtual tour of the state's terrestrial and marine national parks. In groups they will identify and classify Victoria's environments and discuss visitor use, impact and management strategies.

'Kokoda Track'

CSF II & VEL5 2 – 6

The Kokoda Track, also known as the 1,000 Steps, commemorates the effort and sacrifice made by soldiers fighting in Papua New Guinea during World War II. Interpretive plaques along the track bring to life the soldier's battles, hardships and determination to succeed. The walk generally takes 1½ – 2 hours to complete. This activity compliments ANZAC and Remembrance Day studies.

Lyrebirds are often seen along the track throughout the year but are most active during the winter months.

The walk can be incorporated into other programs offered at the Education Centre.

A student-led commemorative activity is also offered to schools and incorporates the raising of the Australian Flag, laying of wreaths, and the Last Post.

'Park Pests'

CSF II & VEL5 2 – 6

There are many threats to the national park caused by pest plants and animals. Students will focus on the role of humans as both a positive and negative factor in pest control. For a hands-on approach, students can assist in the removal of pest plants, which can directly affect local wildlife populations such as the Lyrebird and Platypus.

'Changes in the Ranges'

CSF II & VEL5 2 – 6

Since European settlement of Melbourne in 1835, the Dandenong Ranges have been used extensively, causing many impacts and changes. Signage along the Margaret Lester walk at Grants Picnic Ground documents these changes. Using this information, students can create a time line, highlighting the history and impacts. Indigenous history, the boom of the 1850s gold rush, the 1890s depression and the settlement of the area following both wars are part of the changes in ranges.

'Introduction to the Park'

CSF II & VEL5 2 – 6

This activity gives a brief overview of the national park, its main management concerns (ie wildlife feeding) and outlines what visitors can do to help care for the park. Students have the opportunity to wander through the Education Centre to view the stuffed animals specimens and get a feel for what a national park is.

'Fire in the Environment'

CSF II & VEL5 2 – 6

Victoria is ranked behind California and the French Riviera in terms of living in high fire risk areas. In the Dandenong Ranges fire is essential to the park's diversity of flora and fauna, and each year fire is used to reduce fuel loads to minimise the impact of bushfires on life and property.

Students view images of recent fires across the state, discussing fire behaviour, strategies for fighting fire, and how the landscape, flora and fauna recover from fire.

Follow up field studies examine what it means to live in such a high fire risk area and what is done to protect neighbouring homes and properties. Fuel assessments can be conducted at various sites to determine fire risk.

'Healthy Parks, Healthy People'

CSF II & VEL5 2 – 6

Parks Victoria promotes the enjoyment of the State's parks and reserves with the Healthy Parks, Healthy People catch phrase. As part of your school's visit to the park you may like to consider some of the benefits of the great outdoors. For example consider options for a healthy lunch according to balanced eating models and have minimal packaging; include an element of physical activity into the program. A goal for the visit could be striving to reduce the amount of rubbish that is created.

'Rainforest Ecology'

CSF II & VEL5 4 – 6

Within the national park there are small pockets of cool temperate rainforest that have very specific environmental factors that limit distribution. Students collect data and make observations of the adaptations that plant and animal species have for surviving in this environment. Data can be collected from other nearby environments and comparisons made. This activity is offered at Grants Picnic Ground.



Cool temperate rain forest is one vegetation type in the national park. Its range is limited and it requires specific environmental conditions to survive.

VCE programs

VCE Outdoor & Environmental Studies

Unit 1: Understanding outdoor experiences

Looking at past and present uses of the Dandenong Ranges, students will examine the human/nature relationships, identifying similarities and differences over time. The park is an ideal springboard for students to launch into developing minimal impact values and practices.

Unit 2: Environmental Impacts

Students will explore Victoria's environmental diversity to better understand use, past and present; natural and human impacts on the environment; and how Parks Victoria implements Management Plans to protect and best manage the state's national parks and other protected areas.

Unit 3: Relationships with natural environments

Students will explore issues relating to changes in land use perception over time. Resources to investigate include photographs, electronic and print media, displays and park site visits.

Mountain bike riders have a wide variety of designated tracks available to explore the park on.



Unit 4: The future of human-nature interactions

How do we balance how we manage public land with visitor usage? Students will investigate management strategies and current policies and use them to identify and solve local park issues for the future.

VCE Geography

Unit 1: Natural environments

Students will explore how the Dandenong Ranges have changed over time due to natural and human induced factors, and will gain an understanding of how the ranges are currently managed today.

VCE Geography

Unit 2: Regional Resources

Students will describe and map characteristics of a local resource, studying past and future management using data collected in the field.

VCE Environmental Science

Unit 1: The (forest) environment

By visiting a number of key sites in the national park students will collect data to understand the complex relationships that exist between organisms and their environment. Students will investigate how ecosystems have changed over time due to human and natural disturbances.

VCE Biology

Unit 2: Organisms and their environment

Data collection from sites within the national park will assist students to understand the complex relationships that exist between organisms and their environment. Students will gain an understanding of changes to ecosystems over time due to human and natural disturbances.

**Dandenong Ranges
National Park
Education Centre**

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Having trouble getting to us?

During the winter months it can be difficult to hold an excursion to outdoor venues. The Education Officer is available to visit your school and deliver programs on site during June, July, August and September. This service will assist in keeping your costs down while allowing your students to access new knowledge and experiences.

For further information and bookings contact the Education Officer.

Self guided activities

A number of self-guided activities are available for school visits. Check the Parks Victoria web site for activities that can be downloaded or contact the Education Officer to borrow resources or materials.

Teacher information sessions

If you are developing a unit of work for students that looks at any environmental issue, the Education Officer may be available to do a Teacher Professional Development talk at your school. Resources and further information will be made available.

To book a session please contact the Education Officer.

Curriculum material

A range of free curriculum units are available on Parks Victoria's website www.parkweb.vic.gov.au, including:

- native animals
- endangered species
- tourism.

Activities are available for primary and secondary students. For further information please contact the Education Officer.

Making the most of your visit

- If you are carrying out an independent excursion within the Park you must notify the Education Officer of the date, time and location of your visit.
- Utilise the skills of our education staff when planning and preparing your visit.
- For the safety of you and your students keep to the existing walking tracks, as many search and rescues are the result of people walking off the tracks.
- Ensure your students are prepared for all weather conditions, bring a drink bottle. Wear sunscreen, suitable clothing and footwear.
- Bring a garbage bag to collect your rubbish as bins are not provided.

- Prevent problems with wildlife by not feeding the animals and taking all your rubbish out of the park when you leave.

Feeding, and or handling of wildlife, is an offence under the National Park Regulations.



The Education Centre started life as the park's kiosk. Originally built in 1907, the centre was established after restoration was completed in 1997.

What happens if...?

- Wet weather – you can postpone on the morning of the visit and reschedule for another mutually convenient date.
- Extreme or Severe Weather – if the Bureau of Meteorology issues a weather warning for Metropolitan Melbourne, the education program would generally be postponed until another day, due to the risk of high winds in the forest.
- You can monitor weather conditions and warnings at www.bom.gov.au/weather/vic/
- You will be notified as soon as possible by the Education Officer if a warning is issued.
- Total Fire Ban – education programs will not be offered on these days unless discussed prior to the day.
- Cancellations – please notify the Education Officer at the earliest possible convenience if you need to cancel – every effort will be made to help you reschedule.
- Emergencies – the Education Officer is trained in Level 2 First Aid and a First Aid kit and communications device is on hand at all times.

Payment

Payment is not required on the day. After the program an invoice will be raised through the Parks Victoria finance department and sent to the school for payment.