



## Itinerary 1

### THE TRAIL IN A DAY.

**Note:**

***Nominated travel times are estimated at 10kms per hour, which is based on the pace of most users of a reasonable fitness level. Travel times will vary according to individual ability and pace. Times will be slower for those travelling with children and/or disabled persons.***

***Other factors that will influence travel times are mode, type and quality of transport.***

***Prevailing weather conditions must also be considered at the time of travel.***

***This document has been written from a southwest-to-northeast perspective.***

#### **Arrive Glengarry:**

There is good off road parking at the Glengarry trail head (near the old Glengarry Railway Station), which is close to all the shops and amenities. You can grab breakfast at Bushies Bakery to start the day, and explore Glengarry afterwards. You'll be intrigued by the old Victorian Railways crane at the trail head and also browse around the old Glengarry Railway Station, which now houses a quilting specialist business, Batiks and Buttons. Even if quilting is not your 'thing', the interior still retains the charm of years gone by, and once you've stepped inside, you'll get the feel of what a busy day might have been like at the station more than a century ago. For more information on the Old Glengarry Railway Station, see the 'Trail Highlights' entry under 'Stay and Explore' on this website.

(If you're beginning your rail trail adventure later in the day, then plan your journey in the comfort of the Glengarry Hotel while you have lunch, then stock up on all you need, such as drinking water, snacks, first aide, and (limited) cycle accessories, at the supermarket before you head off.)

#### **Depart Glengarry 7.00am – Arrive Eaglehawk Creek 7.15am (2.5kms / 10-20 min. approx.):**

Eaglehawk Creek is an ideal spot to take your first break, and take a few scenic photos. The sound of the babbling stream, the breeze through the trees, and the soft grasses will give you a real sense of being in the bush. The newly constructed timber deck watercourse crossing is a welcome addition to the trail, and makes for an easy traversing of Eaglehawk Creek.

#### **Depart Eaglehawk Creek 7.25am – Arrive Toongabbie 8.05am (6.5kms / 35-45 min. approx.):**

As you arrive at Toongabbie, you will traverse the Toongabbie Wetlands. Keep a keen eye open for the Ned Stringer Memorial (on your right as you head east). Once you arrive at the trail head at Traralgon-Maffra Rd (C105), the Toongabbie Rail Trail General Store is located across the road, and a little to your left, occupying the block between Victoria and Main Sts. This is an opportune time to check your drinking water, snack food, and first aid supplies. It's also about time to get a tea, coffee, or soft drink to refresh yourself as you explore the area. Behind the shop and across Cowen St., you'll find public toilets; and a little further along past the toilet block, the historic cricket pavilion is well worth a look.



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### THE TRAIL IN A DAY (continued):

#### **Depart Toongabbie 8.20am – Arrive Cowwarr 9.15am (9kms / 50-60 min. approx.):**

You are now entering one of the prettiest legs of the trail, and should watch for your first sighting of the Great Dividing Range in the North and Northeast. The remains of the old Cowwarr Station will be your first indication that you are close to Cowwarr. Nothing but the old railway siding remains, yet somehow this site has an unusual, almost *haunted* feel about it. This is a great place to get creative with your camera! Only a few metres from the trail head (once again; on C105 Traralgon-Maffra Rd) you will see the rear of Cowwarr Art Space; home of renowned artist-in-residence, Clive Murray-White. Apart from Clive's stunning sculptures and other art works, they brew a fine coffee at Cowwarr Art Space, and the art and coffee connoisseur will be most pleased after a visit. The entrance to Cowwarr Art Space is only a few metres to your left (west) as you meet C105 Traralgon-Maffra Rd.

To your right is Cowwarr township, and the beautiful Cricket Club Hotel, built in what is widely regarded as a fine example of art deco architecture. Helena's restaurant is located within the hotel, and offers wonderful in-house dining in an elegant surround. Or the Cowwarr General Store has a good range of drinks, tea, coffee, and take away foods for morning tea. Public toilets are located at the Cowwarr Hall (opposite the Cricket Club Hotel).

Places of interest in and around Cowwarr include \*Cowwarr Weir, the Cowwarr Public Hall (opened 1930), the old churches and lock-up in Church St, and the picnic ground on Rainbow Creek (corner Park Ave. and Cross St).

*\*Cowwarr to Cowwarr Weir: 12kms round trip; allow a minimum 1hour 40 minutes, (includes 30 min. rest time).*

#### **Depart Cowwarr 9.45am – Arrive Dawson 10.15am (5kms / 25-35 min. approx.):**

Leaving Cowwarr from the trail head, and heading towards the northeast, you'll pass by "Flights of Fancy", which is a series of native bird sculptures which were created by local schoolchildren, under the guidance of Stratford artist Gavin Roberts. Only a few metres further along, you'll come to the Rainbow Creek crossing. Have your camera at the ready as this is quite a picturesque spot. Next you'll come to the Dawson Connection; and it is here that you'll leave the trail and travel a short, easy and flat 5kms along the quiet back roads between Cowwarr and Dawson. There is a large billboard here that shows clearly the route you'll take. All roads are sealed, and the route is well signposted.



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### **THE TRAIL IN A DAY (continued):**

#### **Depart Dawson 10.30am – Arrive Heyfield 11.05am (6kms / 30-40 min. approx.):**

Recently major upgrade works at Dawson mean it is easy and pleasant to ride on. This is where many plants of significance are found, so please treat these precious plants with care; and remember that unauthorised removal of protected flora is an offence. Dawson was once the site of busy Glenmaggie Railway Station and siding, but no trace of a railway presence remains today, other than the few original railway tracks at the entrance to the reserve.

As you approach Heyfield you will pass by the impressive log stacks of ASH (Australian Sustainable Hardwood). These impressive wood stores are destined for processing at Australia's largest hardwood sawmill, also in Heyfield, but not visible from the trail. (Note: the wood stock piles and sawmill are both located on private property, and access by unauthorised persons is not permitted.) Now there is a short descent to Racecourse Road, and care must be taken here. Follow Racecourse Road to the left, as far as Davis Street; turn left again, and after just a few metres you'll see the Heyfield trail head at the western entrance to Apex Park, on the other side. Follow the trail through Apex Park to the rotunda in adjoining Lion's Park. There are several highlights to see in Heyfield before lunch, including Apex Park and the Heyfield Visitor and Wetlands information Centre. Now it's time for a well-earned break, and some lunch.

There are many dining choices in Heyfield from chic cafés, tasty takeaways, a bakery (with café inside), hotels, and restaurants. For more details about dining in Heyfield, refer to the 'Restaurants & Cafes' and/or 'Hotels and Wineries' section in the 'Stay and Explore' section of this website.

#### **Depart Heyfield 12.30pm – Arrive Tinamba 1.30pm (10kms / 55-65 min. approx.):**

The trail begins at Apex Park, which you passed through as you arrived in Heyfield, so it's best to pick-up the trail from the rotunda in Lions Park, and continue east. As you leave Heyfield you'll pass by the Heyfield Vintage Machinery Shed near the corner of George and Fawaz Sts., which is worth a quick look. From here, trail runs parallel to Traralgon-Maffra Rd (C105) for about three kilometres before crossing to the north side and continuing with a gentle climb north-easterly through rich dairy country. Major works on the Boggy Creek crossing (between McKinnon's Rd and Traralgon-Maffra Rd) were carried out late in 2013. The works were jointly funded by the Victorian State Government and Wellington Shire Council, and have greatly improved a section of the trail that was once susceptible to flooding. These days, Boggy Creek no longer lives up to its name. The crossing is smooth and quite safe for all users, and is a good place to take a quick break and a photo or two.

Once you leave Boggy Creek, you are very close to Tinamba, and you'll arrive at the Tinamba trail head at Traralgon-Maffra Rd (C105) which is located only a few metres South of Tinamba township. To visit Tinamba, simply turn left and follows the road for about 200 metres. You can refresh at the historic and beautifully appointed Tinamba Hotel, which is a genuine oasis of elegance in the bush and the refinement needs to be seen to be believed. If the hotel is not for you, then renew your drinking water and grab a quick snack at the charming Tinamba General Store just across the road from the hotel.



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### **THE TRAIL IN A DAY (continued).**

#### **Depart Tinamba 1.50pm – Arrive Maffra 2.40pm (8kms / 45-55 min. approx.):**

As you get closer to Maffra, following the crossing of Serpentine Creek, you'll find the remains of an old railway trestle bridge, which makes a good photographic subject. Next you'll meet Traralgon-Maffra Rd (C105) and cross to the North side where you'll quickly enter a short section called The Billabong Trail; so named because of the billabong there. But just prior to the billabong, you'll see an ancient giant gum tree which towers above the surrounding vegetation. You'll also notice that this short section of the trail is very lush; almost tropical in its appearance. After leaving the Billabong Trail, you'll cross the Macalister River on Maffra's West boundary. Before going into town, turn left here and proceed along River St. to the Maffra Wetlands Reserve, where native birds abound. Alternatively, if you'd like afternoon tea now, continue along Johnson St. into Maffra's town centre. Some suggestions are Coffee House 138, Café L'Attitude and Maffra Community Sports Club. If it's a quick take away you'd prefer then Maffra Hot Bake Bakery, Maffra Bakery, Red Rose Take Away, Maffra Fish & Chips, Mr. Pizza and Richo's Pizza and Chicken all make a great a choice.

Maffra's attractions include the Maffra Sugar Beet Museum, Macalister Park, Maffra Wetland's Reserve (if you didn't visit there earlier), Pingvin Booksellers, Antiques, Collectable and Ephemera where an amazing and diverse range of items are available (some believe Pingvin is the largest second-hand bookstore on the eastern seaboard between Melbourne and Canberra!), and the amazing Pino Deriu Mineral Collection which is housed at the Maffra Visitor Information Centre (in Maffra's old courthouse) in Johnson St. near the post office..

Finally, continue along Johnson St. to the five-ways intersection of Johnson St., Powerscourt St., Maffra-Stratford Rd., Maffra-Sale Rd., and Station St. Circle the roundabout in a clockwise direction, around its North and East sides, to Maffra-Sale Rd. Head towards Sale (south-easterly) for about seventy five metres, and you'll find the main Maffra trail head. Diagonally opposite, you'll see the Gippsland Vehicle Collection Shed. This is definitely a must-see attraction for any motoring enthusiast. The display of vintage, heritage, classic and racing cars is extensive, and the Club often have special events and additional displays. Don't leave Maffra without dropping in for a look. After visiting the Gippsland Vehicle Collection, make your way back to the trail and begin the journey to Powerscourt.

#### **Depart Maffra 3.40pm – Arrive Powerscourt 4.10pm (5kms / 25-35 min. approx.)**

Powerscourt is named after the grand Powerscourt Homestead which was built in 1850. Although no longer open to the public, this private residence is visible in the distance to the north from the Maffra-Stratford Road (C105). Nothing today remains of the once busy railway station that was once located here too, but Powerscourt is your exit to delight in the wonderful wines produced at Avon Ridge Winery, just across the road. For more information about Powerscourt Station, and Powerscourt homestead, please refer to 'About the Trail' in the 'Maps & Info' section of this website. More information about Avon Ridge winery will be found under 'Hotels & Wineries' in the 'Stay & Explore' menu of this website.



## Itinerary 1

### THE TRAIL IN A DAY (continued):

#### **Depart Powerscourt 4.20pm – Arrive Stratford 4.50pm (5kms / 25-35 min. approx.):**

You will meet Princes Highway (M1) just to the South of Stratford. Roughly half a kilometre prior to the convergence, you will see the remains of two original wooden railway bridges which make excellent photographic studies. The trail marries to Princes Highway (M1) at the Avon River Bridge crossing. The bridge is equipped with a dedicated pathway for pedestrians and cyclists across its northwest side. The pathway is protected by barriers, and is quite safe from traffic. Once on the Stratford side of the bridge, do a sharp U-turn to your left; **do not attempt to cross the highway**, instead, continue down to below the bridge. You can now make your way under the bridge, and into Apex Park where the trail head is located. Services include toilets, water, bbq, sealed parking, children's playground, BMX track, the all abilities Stratford Arts Trail, caravan park and swimming (when safe) in the Avon River or in the adjacent municipal swimming pool.

#### **Explore Stratford:**

Stratford has a strong arts and Shakespeare theme, and in Apex Park a section of the Stratford Arts Trail can be seen. However, for full details of the Arts Trail, head along Tyers Street (M1) to the Courthouse Theatre where Segue Arts Cafe' is located. There you can get all the information needed to explore the Stratford Arts Trail, including a map and an MP3 audio presentation. The trail is short enough to walk in good time, and is an excellent way to see the town. Some of the sites you might encounter when in Stratford are; the Stratford railway station, Hobbies Plus (a dream world for the model trail enthusiast), Turkish Magic, where magnificent Turkish rugs, runners, ceramic wear and leather goods can be seen (and bought at very reasonable prices!), Apex Park (with its medieval themed playground), Avon River flats, and the railway bridge to the east of Apex Park. If you're lucky enough to see a train crossing the bridge, the driver often gives a toot and a wave.

If you decide to stay overnight in Stratford, then the Stratford Motel or Stratford on the River Tourist Park are close to everything in town, and offer clean, comfortable, and affordable accommodation. For a late afternoon tea, Segue Arts Cafe is a great choice. You can even bring your own food to Segue, and everyone is welcome; particularly cyclists. Need dinner? Try the Avon Hotel.

#### **Goodbye, and thanks ☺:**

From Stratford, you can easily make your way back to Traralgon (or beyond) on the V-line service. However, we'd like to offer two alternatives:

1. Rather than head home, why not venture further East, to Bairnsdale, where you can ride the East Gippsland Rail Trail from Bairnsdale to Orbost (almost 100kms!), via Bruthen and Nowa Nowa? For your convenience, we've included a few details about using V-line service between Stratford and Bairnsdale (see Page 6).

2. Ever thought of taking a return journey along the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail back to Traralgon? Who knows what you've missed the first time? And besides, things always look different when viewed from another angle. You can catch the train home from Traralgon.

Whatever it is that you decide, we'd like to thank you for visiting the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail. We genuinely hope you enjoyed your time with us, and we'd love to see you again sometime soon.

Oh...and please; don't forget to tell your friends about us! ☺



People wishing to continue their Gippsland Rail Trail adventure can take the opportunity to travel from Stratford on to Bairnsdale, on a V-line locomotive. The trip takes only about 40 minutes, and you'll be travelling in air conditioned comfort. You can relax, as you plan the next exciting leg of your trip while watching the pastures and mountains roll by.

V-line operates three locomotive services daily from Stratford to Bairnsdale on weekdays and Saturdays; two services on Sundays. Fares are very affordable at only \$5.40 for adults and \$2.70 for children.

**M-F:**

Depart Stratford 1025hrs – arrive Bairnsdale 1104hrs

Depart Stratford 1629hrs – arrive Bairnsdale 1707hrs

Depart Stratford 2141hrs – arrive Bairnsdale 2218hrs

**Sat:**

Depart Stratford 1035hrs – arrive Bairnsdale 1113hrs

Depart Stratford 1505hrs – arrive Bairnsdale 1154hrs

Depart Stratford 2126hrs – arrive Bairnsdale 2204hrs

**Sun:**

Depart Stratford 1104hrs – arrive Bairnsdale 1142hrs

Depart Stratford 2116hrs – arrive Bairnsdale 2204hrs

**Disclaimers:**

- Bicycles are permitted on V-line locomotives provided there is enough space. Where space is limited, V-line reserves the right to refuse bicycle carriage in the interest of all travellers.
- Passenger fares and V-line timetables (as depicted above) are correct at the time of publication (Nov. 2013), but are subject to change without notice.
- Extra fares may be charged where a bicycle or bicycles is/are to be transported.