

Davies Plain Drive

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Davies Plain Drive

Victoria's Iconic 4WD Adventures



Take a challenging adventure through remote Alpine landscapes, taking in snow gum woodlands, tranquil riverside campsites, historic mountain huts and panoramic mountain views.

Best undertaken over a number of days, the tour includes often demanding 4WD tracks in some of Victoria's most isolated and scenic mountain country. The effort is rewarded with 'Man from Snowy River' landscapes, fishing in crystal clear mountain streams, and camping in true high country settings.

The 160-kilometre loop drive is best accessed through Omeo and Benambra, but can also be reached via Tom Groggin from the north and Corryong or Tallangatta in the northwest.

The drive is classified as Very Difficult in dry conditions, under Victoria's new 4WD Recreational Track Classification System – see Track Classification section for details. Drivers need to be very experienced and accustomed to mountain track conditions, and should reconsider the trip if tracks are wet, or inclement weather is forecast. Snow is possible at any time of year.

Limestone Road/Beloka Road junction to Mt Anderson Peak (50km)

From Benambra travel 14 kms along Limestone Road to the start of the tour at the Beloka Road junction. Heading north the road passes the picturesque Fantail Falls beside the road on Benambra Creek on the way to Buenba Flat.

Take a moment to enjoy a picnic or wander through the pleasant grassy flats beside Buenba Creek. You may also notice small signs and markers that identify the Australian Alps Walking Track as it passes through here on its 650km journey from Walhalla in Gippsland, through NSW to Canberra.

Experience the true grandeur of the Alps as the tour ascends to Mount Gibbo for a magnificent 360° panorama from amongst the snow gums and wildflowers. The emergency helipad on nearby Mount Anderson also gives expansive views over Tom Groggin Station (no public access) and south to the Cobberas Wilderness.

If you have time, take a side trip to the 1772m summit of Mount Pinnibar for some of the most spectacular views on the drive – northwest to the craggy peaks of the Main Range, Kosciuszko National Park and south to the Victorian Alps, with the prominent Davies Plain ridge also visible.

Mount Anderson Peak to Davies Plain Hut (46km)

The tour continues towards Dogman Hut Campground, a pleasant spot to camp beside the headwaters of the Murray River with views across the privately owned Tom Groggin cattle station. Built in 1964, Dogman Hut is one of the few remaining examples of huts specifically built for the then Lands Department wild dog trappers.

Tom Groggin Station is famous as the home of Jack Riley, the inspiration for Banjo Paterson's 'The Man From Snowy River', who worked and managed Tom Groggin for 30 years. Experience the timeless beauty of this spectacular valley on the slopes of the Snowy Mountains that inspired this famous poem.

Just downstream from the picturesque Buckwong Creek Picnic Area, the Buckwong Creek feeds into the Murray River. Relax beside this beautiful mountain stream before tackling the ascent onto Davies Plain Ridge, or take a longer break and try your luck at catching a wily brown trout.

The tour continues through towering Alpine Ash forest, Snow Gum woodland and over rolling wildflower-strewn plains to the historic Davies Plain cattleman's hut.

The legend of the cattlemen and women who drove their stock into the high country each summer has become a unique part of Australia's recent cultural heritage.

It is important also to remember that Aboriginal people walked the high country ridges and valleys for many thousands of years beforehand and most likely camped here just as you might.

Davies Plain Hut to Limestone Black Mountain Rd/Beloka Road junction (64km)

A few kilometres further south and still high on the Davies Plain Ridge, Charlie Creek Campground provides a less frequented site, set in a picturesque grassy green plain surrounded by Snow Gums.

A short side-track off the main drive finds the Poplars Picnic Area, the highest point of vehicle access on the Murray River and a great fishing spot for more experienced anglers.

The imposing mountain forest of Alpine Ash, Candlebarks and Mountain Gums opens out at Limestone Creek Campground, where broad grassy flats on the banks of the crystal clear creek provide a relaxed camping area sheltered from the exposure of the higher plains.

Once on the Limestone Black Mountain Rd, an alternative side trip takes you to Native Dog Flat Campground, a picturesque snow plain at the headwaters of the Buchan River, or simply head west back to Benambra and Omeo.

Davies Plain 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

- 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.

Take particular care if accessing or leaving this tour through the ford across the Murray River near Tom Groggin – the crossing may be very difficult or impassable depending on the river level. Always check river levels before attempting a river crossing.

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
-  Alternate 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

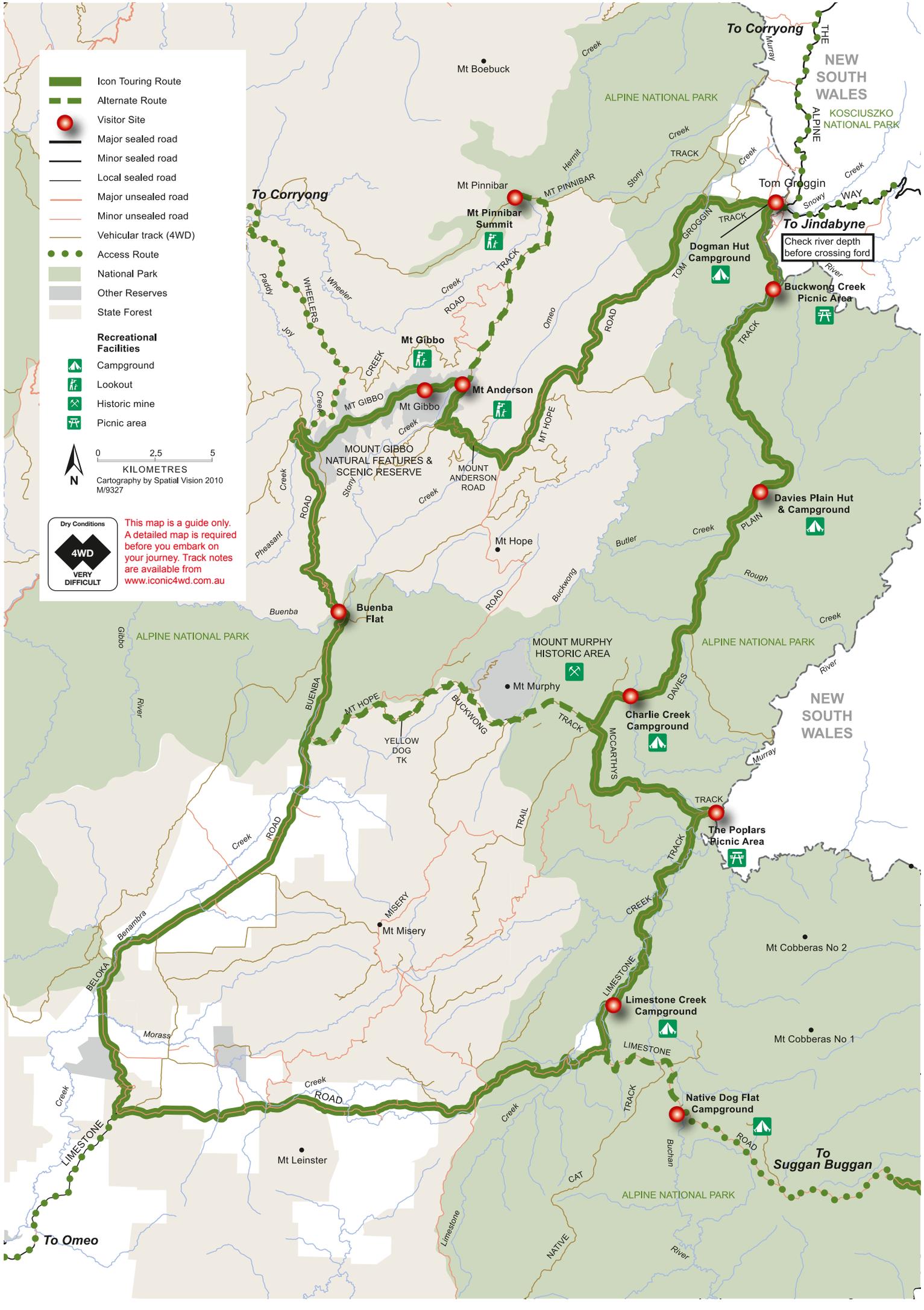
- Recreational Facilities**
-  Campground
 -  Lookout
 -  Historic mine
 -  Picnic area

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KILOMETRES
Cartography by Spatial Vision 2010
M/9327

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.ionic4wd.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 Davies Plain 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 the beginning May through to the end of November on Davies Plain.

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.

