

The Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park

Key sites in the Gariwerd cultural landscape

Gariwerd is the traditional language name for the Grampians. Gariwerd Country is a spiritual place and it is paramount to the cultural values and heritage of many Traditional Owner communities in south-western Victoria. For over 22,000 years, Gariwerd has been the living, hunting, gathering, cultivating, ceremonial, Dreaming Country and territory of Jadawadjali and Djab Wurrung peoples and their ancestors.

The term 'Country' encapsulates the mountains, rivers, forests, wetlands, valleys, rocky outcrops and all living species that make up this landscape. These are signs of the Dreaming and links with the past.

Parks Victoria is partnering in decision-making to manage the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park with Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. We are working together to progress Traditional Owners' aspirations for land, water and culture in Gariwerd Country.

Parks Victoria recognises the devastation caused by colonisation to Traditional Owner communities, including the loss of ancestral lands, separation of families and attempted suppression of culture. Gariwerd is considered by Traditional Owners and others to be a place to seek health and wellbeing benefits. This sense of healing relates to the restoration of Country as it recovers from the exploitation and clearing which resulted from colonisation.

The Gariwerd landscape is rich in Aboriginal rock art shelters, and the area contains over 80% of Victoria's rock art sites (some dating back over 20,000 years). There are currently five sites open for public viewing: Billimina, Manja, Ngamadjidj, Gulgurn Manja and Bunjil.

For park information visit Brambuk the National Park and Cultural Centre in Halls Gap or the Grampians National Park page at parks.vic.gov.au



Barengi Gadjin
LAND COUNCIL
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Eastern Maar
Aboriginal Corporation



GUNDITJ MIRRING
Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation
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1 Ngamadjidj Shelter

Ngamadjidj Shelter is referred to as the "Cave of Ghosts", this is due to the white painted figures that are illustrated across this site. These paintings were applied with a stick or with fingers and were likely made with Kaolin clay that was ground and mixed with water.

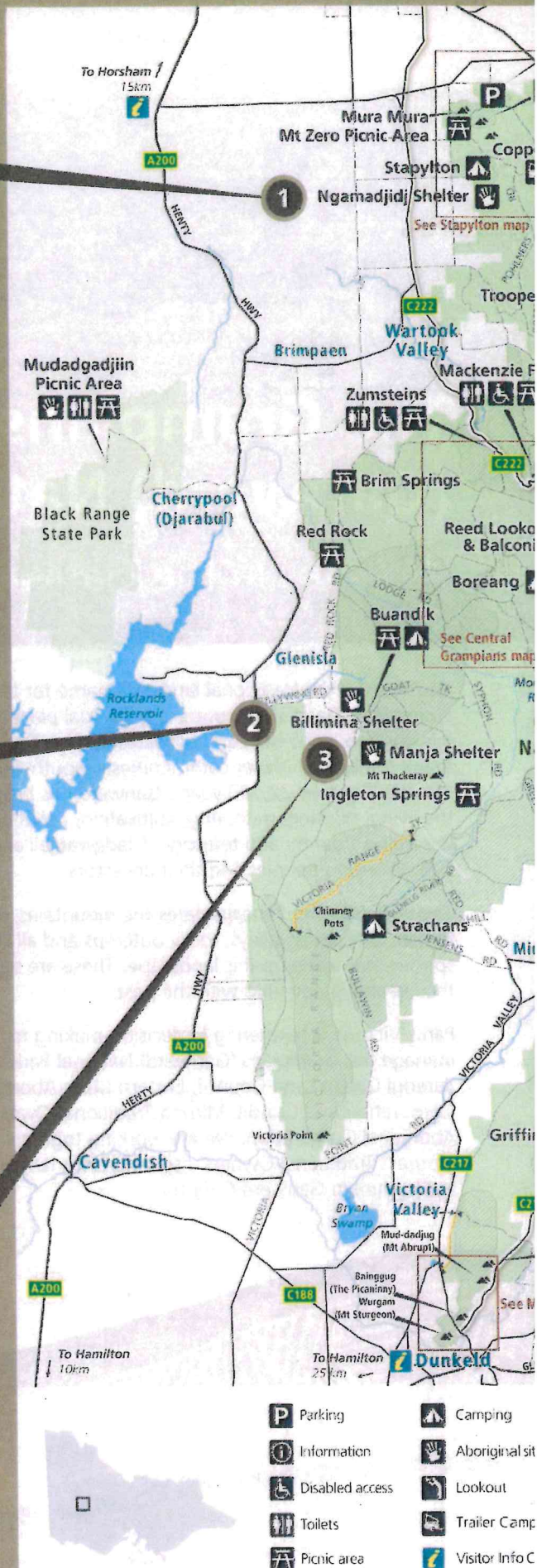


2 Billimina Shelter

Jadawadjali people camped at Billimina shelter from late winter to early summer and left many red paintings. You will notice the numerous bars arranged in horizontal rows, it is believed these marks were used to keep count of events, but it is also hypothesised that the Jadawadjali people used these to record how long they spent at the shelter. There are also 55 human stick figures as well as emu and kangaroo tracks displayed here. Findings from an archaeologists' excavation in 1976 demonstrated that the Jadawadjali people used this place to shelter from harsh winters and caught small mammals such as bandicoots, possums and bettongs.

3 Manja Shelter

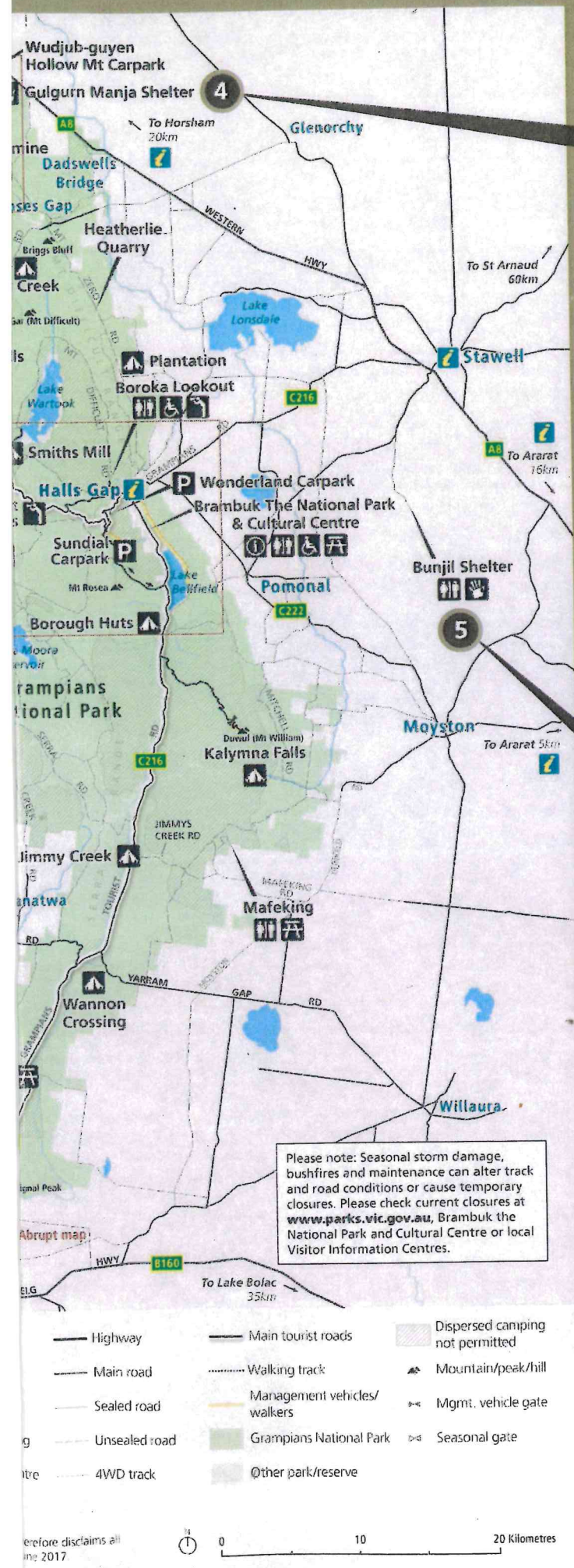
Manja (pronounced Many), meaning 'hands', is situated in a sandstone outcrop. It has a total of 90 recorded hand stencils across the two shelters. It is believed these stencils were used to renew the ties a person has to a particular place, as well as to record a visit to a site. You will notice animal tracks and human stick figures are also present at this site.



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4 Gulgurn Manja Shelter

Meaning "Hands of Young People", the paintings at Gulgurn Manja include bars, emu tracks and handprints. Many here were done by children, hence the name for the site. Some of the paintings here are found only in the northern sections of Gariwerd, some of which were part of a unique local art style which was used to pass on the law of the people and tell stories. You will notice sections within these walls where stone has been broken, the Jadawadjali people did this to make stone tools.



5 Bunjil Shelter

This shelter is home to the only known rock art painting of Bunjil. According to the creation stories of the Traditional Owners, Bunjil created all that the people saw – the land, water, trees, plants and animals. Bunjil set the laws and religion and remains here as a protector of the natural world, his people, their laws and beliefs. This shelter is considered one of the most significant cultural sites in south-eastern Australia.



Make Brambuk – The National Park and Cultural Centre in Halls Gap your first stop. Here you can begin your journey to understanding what Gariwerd means to Aboriginal people.

Brambuk provides an opportunity for visitors to connect and learn about culture and heritage in this important heritage-listed landscape. Here you can learn about Gariwerd's key cultural sites, unique plants, animals and landscape features that make this one of Victoria's most visited National Parks. The impressive Cultural Centre building will be upgraded between 2021 and 2023 so visitors may experience closures. The Information Centre (entrance building) remains open for park information, souvenirs, map sales and interpretive displays. A walking trail through a wetland and native gardens links the entrance building and the Cultural Centre. There is also a series of self-guided walks around the precinct, providing a glimpse of the native plants and animals of Gariwerd.

In association with Parks Victoria, Brambuk is managed by Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, who represent the Jadawadjali and Djab Wurrung Peoples.



Brambuk – The National Park and Cultural Centre