Point Nepean National Park

Visitor Guide

Point Nepean is one of Victoria’s most beautiful natural landscapes. Its rich history has played an important role in shaping the early settlement, quarantine and defence of Victoria. The park is 560 hectares and located at the very tip of the Mornington Peninsula, with outstanding coastal scenery and panoramic views of Bass Strait, the Rip and Port Phillip. Visitors can explore the military forts and tunnels, discover the historic Quarantine Station, view the memorial where Prime Minister Harold Holt went missing and enjoy the diverse coastal environment.

Exploring the park

**Quarantine Station**
Discover the historical precinct which has almost 50 heritage listed buildings. The Quarantine Station was established in 1852 and from 1952 the buildings also housed the Army Officer Cadet School. Walkers and cyclists can take Coles Track which links the Quarantine Station to the Gunners Cottage and Fort Nepean. A self-guided walk and audio tour is available. Plan your visit at the Point Nepean Information Centre located here.

**Range Area Walk**
The 1.8 kilometre walk meanders through coastal scrub, a former Rifle Range and passes Monash Break and Light. Climb the Monash Light tower and take in sweeping views of the park and Melbourne City. The Range Area was used to train cadets in the Army Officer Cadet School; training included firing rifles, grenades and machine guns. The walk links the Quarantine Station and Cheviot Hill.

**Wilson’s Folly Track**
This 1.7 kilometre walking track links London Bridge in the Mornington Peninsula National Park with Point Nepean. The track is an extension of the long coastal walk from Cape Schanck and passes through pockets of Coastal Banksia stands, Moonah woodland and native grasslands.

**Gunners Cottage**
From here you can visit the historic Point Nepean Cemetery or walk the Walter Pisterman Heritage Walk to the remnants of the former quarantine cattle jetty at Observatory Point. Cyclists and walkers can take Coles Track to the Quarantine Station or Fort Nepean.

**Cheviot Hill and Harold Holt Memorial**
Cheviot Hill is the park’s highest point and contains World War II fortifications. It overlooks Cheviot Beach, the site where former Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt disappeared without a trace in December 1967. A memorial is located about 500 metres further along Defence Road from Cheviot Hill.

**Pearce Barracks, Fort Pearce and Eagles Nest**
Explore the lookouts from the fortifications with stunning views of Bass Strait. The Pearce Barracks site is where many of the army personnel stationed at Point Nepean lived. Eagles Nest was the site of Australia’s largest Disappearing Gun.

**Fort Nepean**
Discover a series of military fortifications dating back to the 1880s with stunning views of Port Phillip Bay and Bass Strait. Explore the tunnels, forts and gun emplacements from which allied shots were fired for both World War I and II.

**Bay Beach Walk**
The 2.8 kilometre walk along Port Phillip Bay Beach can be accessed at Jarman Oval, Observatory Point and The Bend. Remnants of the former quarantine cattle jetty still exist at Observatory Point, where you can view the southern end of Port Phillip. Hooded Plovers regularly nest along this beach, seasonal management may apply. Swimming is not recommended due to the strong currents, unpredictable waves, and proximity to The Rip.
History

Indigenous history
Point Nepean is part of Boonwurrung country. The Boonwurrung people lived on and around Point Nepean for thousands of years gathering shellfish and other foods along the coastline. The interaction with early settlers and ceremony make it an important place. Extensive shell middens are reminders of their enduring association.

Early settlement
Point Nepean has evidence of some of the earliest European settlement in Victoria, including pastoral activities and lime burning. Shepherd’s Hut located in the Quarantine Station is one of the earliest intact limestone buildings in Victoria. Its cellar dates to 1854.

Quarantine Station
It is the second oldest permanent quarantine station in Victoria (1852 – 1980). Comprising of over 50 heritage listed buildings and the oldest intact buildings erected for quarantine purposes in Australia. The site later became home to the Officer Cadet School (1952 – 1985) and School of Army Health (1985 – 1998).

Defence
The entrance to Port Phillip Bay was the most heavily forted port of the British Empire. There are many Colonial and Commonwealth structures from 1880s – 1940s located around the park. Fort Nepean is considered to be one of the best examples in Australia of a major fort complex exhibiting the changes in military engineering over the 19th and 20th centuries.

Flora and fauna
The remnant flora and fauna of Point Nepean is of very high significance. A remote and protected location, it is home to the White-footed Dunnart, Long-nosed Bandicoot, Black Wallaby, Singing Honeyeater, Blue-winged Parrot and Hooded Plover. The park also comprises the largest and most intact area of remnant coastal vegetation remaining on the southern Mornington Peninsula. Native plants and vegetation communities include Coastal Moonah Woodland, Coastal Dune Scrub, remnant grasslands and threatened orchids.

The marine life
Surrounding Point Nepean is Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park. The diversity and abundance of marine flora and fauna in these waters are greater than many comparable habitats elsewhere in the world. Its intertidal zone is a habitat for a wide variety of shellfish, marine invertebrates, dramatic underwater gorges, colourful sponge gardens, tall kelp forests and emerald sea-grass beds.

Location and access

How to get there
Point Nepean is located 90km from Melbourne. Visitors can catch a train from Melbourne to Frankston and then a bus to Portsea (stops at park entrance gate). The Sorrento to Queenscliff passenger ferry operates on the hour from 7am to 6pm (with extended summer hours).

Getting around the park
Visitors can park at the Quarantine Station and begin their park discovery from here. Alternatively you can park at Gunners Cottage car park and walk or cycle the 2.6 kilometres to Fort Nepean. Bikes can be hired from the Point Nepean Information Centre.

Want to volunteer?
If you are interested in lending a hand there are volunteer groups involved in maintenance, conservation and heritage protection programs, please call 13 1963.

Works program
Point Nepean has recently undergone a $13.88 million infrastructure and essential upgrade services program. Some related works will continue into 2013 to complete the park’s transformation. For updates call the Point Nepean Information Centre on (03) 5984 6014.

Keep in touch
To keep up-to-date with what’s happening and to download audio guides for Point Nepean visit www.parks.vic.gov.au