

Point Nepean National Park

Visitor Guide



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



Opening hours

Point Nepean National Park is open daily. Vehicles can enter from 7am–5pm (6am–6pm in daylight savings) and exit at any time. Pedestrians and cyclists can enter any time. The Point Nepean Information Centre is open daily, except Christmas day, 10am to 5pm.

Getting there

Point Nepean is located 90km from Melbourne. Visitors can catch a train from Melbourne to Frankston and then a (788) bus to Portsea, which stops at the park entrance. If driving, take Eastern Freeway (M3), then Mornington Peninsula Freeway (M11). The Queenscliff to Sorrento passenger ferry operates on the hour from 7am to 6pm.

Getting around the park

Visitors can park at the front entrance, Quarantine Station or at Gunners Cottage.

Cycling is a great way to discover this vast 560ha park. Visitors can bring their own bikes or hire bikes from local tourism operators. Cycling is permitted in the Quarantine Station (on roads, trails and grassed areas), along Defence Road to Fort Nepean, and along Coles Track, which is a shared path. A lock is recommended when leaving your bike. Helmets must be worn.

Bicycles cannot be taken into the Fort Nepean precinct, the Range Area, Wilsons Folly tracks or along the beach. There are bike racks at Fort Nepean, Fort Pearce, Cheviot Hill and the Quarantine Station.

Two all-terrain beach wheelchairs (adult & youth size) and one standard wheelchair are available for visitors who are frail or have physical disabilities free of charge from the Information Centre. Please phone to book the wheelchairs or visit the Information Centre on the day to arrange use.

A hop on hop off shuttle bus service operates from 10.30am to 4.00pm daily (extended hours in daylight savings), except Christmas day. Standard wheelchair access is available however, some large motorised wheelchairs and the adult sized all-terrain beach wheelchair cannot be taken on the bus. The timetable is available from the Information Centre, at designated stops and online. Tickets are purchased from the driver using cash or credit card. Ticket fares are available for adults and child / concession and are all day passes. There are no one-way fares. Group bookings can be arranged by calling (03) 5986 5666 or email rosebudcharter@venturabus.com.au.

The Quarantine Station to Fort Nepean is 4.5km via the most direct road route and takes approximately 1.15hrs to walk (one way).

Things to see and do



Quarantine Station – 1km, 30 minutes – 2 hours

Discover the historical precinct with almost 50 heritage listed buildings and artefacts spanning over 150 years. The Quarantine Station was established in 1852. From 1952 the buildings housed the Army Officer Cadet School and later the School of Army Health. Take the 700m coastal track from the Parade Ground to connect to the Bay Trail via Police Point Shire Park.



Wilsons Folly Track – 1.7km, 40 minutes one way

This 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.



Bay Beach Walk – 2.8km, 1 hour one way

This walk along the bay beach can be accessed at the Quarantine Station and Observatory Point, via Coles Track. Remnants of the former quarantine cattle jetty still exist at Observatory Point, and is an ideal location to view the southern end of Port Phillip. *The beach access steps are closed at The Bend due to storm damage.*



Range Area Walk – 1.8km, 45 minutes one way

This walk meanders through coastal scrub and a former Rifle Range. Climb the Monash Light tower stairs and take in sweeping views of the park and coastline. The Range was used to train army cadets to fire rifles, grenades and machine guns. The walk links the Quarantine Station and Cheviot Hill, and provides access to the Happy Valley Track.



Gunners Cottage and Walter Pisterman Heritage Walk – 1km, 45 minutes return

Gunners Cottage is the original Master Gunners house. Explore the nearby Point Nepean Cemetery, with burial sites dating back to the 1850s. The Walter Pisterman Heritage Walk links to the bay and Observatory Point picnic area. Portable gas barbecues cannot be used in this area, no drinking water is available beyond Gunners Cottage.



Cheviot Hill and Harold Holt Memorial - 750m, 30min

Cheviot Hill is the park's highest point and has World War II fortifications. It overlooks Cheviot Beach, the site where former Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt disappeared in December 1967. The Happy Valley loop track starts here.



- 1 Wilsons Folly Walking Track
- 2 Coles Track (shared path)
- 3 Bay Beach Walk
- 4 Walter Pisterman Walk
- 5 Range Area Walk
- 6 Happy Valley Track
- 7 Police Point / Bay Trail link

Point Nepean National Park Shuttle bus route

- Shuttle bus route (sealed road)
- Shuttle bus stop



Parking	Sheltered area	Drinking fountain	Stairs	Main road	Gate (no unauthorised vehicle access)	Point Nepean National Park	Restricted access
Information	Picnic table	Monument	Fishing	Sealed road	No cycling	Other park/reserve	No access
Disabled access	BBQ (gas)	Cycling	Parks Victoria office	Unsealed road	Esta marker	Marine National Park	Boat landing zone
Toilets	Lookout	Coach parking	Beach access	Walking track	Bus 788 Frankston-Portsea public bus stop	Cycling permitted	Underground tunnel

www.parks.vic.gov.au
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Point Nepean National Park

Fort Nepean / Quarantine Station



- 1 Medical Superintendent's Quarters (CO's House)
- 2 First Class Quarantine Precinct
- 3 Shepherd's Hut
- 4 Badcoe Hall
- 5 Parade Ground
- 6 Administration Building
- 7 Quarantine Station Jetty site & Passenger Waiting Room
- 8 Cook House
- 9 Disinfecting and Bathing Complex
- 10 Hospitals (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5)
- 11 The Stables
- 12 The Original Cemetery and Heaton's Monument
- 13 Isolation Fence
- 14 Influenza Huts
- 15 Isolation Hospital and Morgue



Pearce Barracks, Fort Pearce and Eagles Nest – 800m, 45 minutes

Fort Pearce was established in 1911 and designed to take advantage of the 6-inch Mark VII guns being introduced to coastal defence at that time. 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. Explore the fortifications and lookouts with stunning views of Bass Strait and Port Phillip.



Fort Nepean – 1km, 1 -2 hours

Located at the very end of the peninsula, Fort Nepean enables visitors to step into the boots of the soldiers once posted there. Discover a series of military fortifications dating back to the 1880s, explore the tunnels, forts and gun emplacements.

During the late 19th century the government decided that Victoria's fertile goldfields needed protection so, thanks to its strategic position, Fort Nepean became an important defence post. Numerous military fortifications soon were built, making it one of the most heavily defended harbours in Australia. These battlements were modified and used until the end of World War II. The first shot of the British Empire in WWI and the first Australian shot of WWII were fired from Gun Emplacement 6, earning its entry into military history.

Mornington Peninsula Walk

Experience the diversity of the Southern Peninsula on the Mornington Peninsula Walk. The walk can be completed in sections or as an approximately 100km continuous walk linking Point Nepean with the Bay Trail, Coastal Walk and the Two Bays Walking Track.

Visitor facilities

The Information Centre is located in the Quarantine Station, an easy 180m walk from the main car park. It's open 7 days a week 10am–5pm, except Christmas Day. Plan your visit here. BBQ facilities with a shelter are available at the Quarantine Station Car Park. Picnic facilities are available at the Parade Ground, front entrance car park, Observatory Point and Fort Nepean. There are no café facilities. Drinking water is available at the front entrance and at the Quarantine Station precinct.

Self-guided tours

Audio tours offering an insight into the history and cultural significance of the park are available on iPod Nano's with headphones for daily loan (at no cost) from the Information Centre. Self-guided brochures are also available in the park for the Quarantine Station and forts area.

Flora, fauna and marine life

The remnant flora and fauna of Point Nepean is of very high significance. A remote and protected location, it is home to many native animals including the White-footed Dunnart, Long-nosed Bandicoot, Black Wallaby, Echidna, Singing Honeyeater and Hooded Plover. The park also comprises a large intact area of remnant coastal vegetation. Native plants and vegetation communities include Coastal Moonah Woodland, Coastal Dune Scrub, remnant grasslands and threatened orchids.

Surrounding Point Nepean is Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park showcasing a great diversity and abundance of marine flora and fauna. Its intertidal and subtidal zone are habitat for a variety of fish and shellfish, migratory shorebirds, marine invertebrates, dramatic underwater gorges, colourful sponge gardens, tall kelp forests and sea-grass beds.

History

Aboriginal history

Point Nepean is part of Bunurong country. The people of the Kulin nation lived on and around this land for over 35,000 years gathering shellfish and other foods along the coastline. The interaction with

early settlers and ceremony make it an important cultural 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 1845.

Quarantine

Established in 1852, the Quarantine Station was the major place for quarantine purposes in Victoria until 1979 and closed in 1980. The site later become home to the Army Officer Cadet School (1952–1985) and the School of Army Health (1985–1998). In 1999, selected buildings were used to accommodate Kosovo refugees.

Defence

The entrance to Port Phillip was the most heavily fortified port in the Southern Hemisphere. 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.

National Park

After World War II, soldiers were removed from the forts and the buildings and fortifications declared redundant. The area remained closed to the public and used as an occasional firing range and training ground until 1988 when, as part of the Bicentennial celebrations, control of the site was transferred to Victoria, declared a national park and opened to the public. The Quarantine Station became part of the national park in 2009 fulfilling the long term aspirations of the community for future generations to learn from and enjoy one of Victoria's truly unique landscapes.

Caring for the park and visitor safety

Help us look after this park by remembering these guidelines:

- Dogs, cats and other domestic animals are prohibited
- Fires and camping are prohibited
- Access to the ocean coastline and Marine National Park areas is prohibited for conservation and safety reasons
- Swimming at the bay beach is not advised due to strong currents
- Portable gas barbecues may be used in the Quarantine Station
- Fishing is permitted from the Quarantine Station shoreline
- Boat landing is permitted at designated areas at the Quarantine Station
- All the plants, animals, historic artefacts and geological features are protected - leave the park as you find it
- Take all rubbish with you when you leave
- Keep to designated tracks
- Permits are required to carry out organised tours, events, weddings, and commercial photography and filming activities. Permits are required for remote controlled planes and drones.
- Change of Conditions information is available at www.parks.vic.gov.au – check before you visit

Be prepared and stay safe

Point Nepean National Park is in the Central fire district. Bushfire safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban at www.emergency.vic.gov.au or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

No fires may be lit on Total Fire Ban days. On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days this park will be closed for public safety. Closure signs will be erected but do not expect an official warning. Check the latest conditions at www.parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963. For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000). If there is a green emergency marker sign near you, read the information on the marker to the operator.