

William Ricketts Sanctuary

Visitor Guide



Situated in a ferny glade in the Dandenongs, William Ricketts Sanctuary is a place of beauty and tranquillity, due both to the bushland setting and the mystical sculptures half hidden among ferns along the pathways. It is a place for quiet reflection and contemplation of the essence of the vision of artist William Ricketts.



Opening hours

Open daily from 10am to 4:30pm (except Christmas Day, days of Total Fire Ban and Severe Weather events).

Getting there

William Ricketts Sanctuary is located at 1402 Mount Dandenong Tourist Road, Mount Dandenong.

The sanctuary can also be reached by taking the Mount Dandenong bus (No. 688) from Croydon Station to the William Ricketts Sanctuary bus stop.

Things to see and do

Walking

Interconnecting paths take you on a magical tour of cool temperate forest, lush fern gullies and the striking sculptures of William Ricketts. A total of 92 Ricketts sculptures are dotted throughout the sanctuary.

Walking is suitable for visitors with limited mobility.

Audio tour

An audio tour bringing to life the work and passion of William Ricketts is available for hire at the sanctuary for a fee of \$5.

Sculptures

Sculptures in the sanctuary are made of kiln-fired clay, which have been fired to 1200 degrees centigrade, then placed in the forest scene. Water flowing over sculptures represents the flowing essence of life.

Australia Crucified

This sculpture explores William's distress over the clearing of forests in the region. Before William was born, Mountain Ash was cleared from the area to help build Melbourne. During his lifetime, the government approved further clearing for pastoralists and settlers.

Pmara Kutata

William looks at Aboriginal totemic ancestry in *Pmara Kutata*, which translates as sacred earth or everlasting home. This work reflects a Dreamtime story about the ancestors' supernatural beings creating the landscape its creatures and the Aboriginal people, who then grow overwhelmingly weary and fall asleep.

Gallery and Visual Display Centre

A gallery featuring additional works by William Ricketts, as well as information on the artist and his sculptures can be found in the north-west of the grounds. A short, 20-minute film about William's life and art can be viewed in the Visual Display Centre.

Gift Shop

The giftshop offers an assortment of flora and fauna, aboriginal and William Ricketts-themed gifts, mementos and souvenirs.

Exploring the history

Born in Richmond, Victoria in 1898, William Ricketts settled permanently in Mount Dandenong in 1934.

From 1912 to 1920 William had developed artistic skills in playing the violin, crafting jewellery and clay modelling.

From 1949 to 1960 he made frequent trips to Central Australia to live with the Pitjantjatjara and Arrernte Aboriginal people whose tradition and culture inspired his sculptures.

In 1970 he took his largest works to India where he stayed for two years. During his trip, William discovered a spiritual empathy with the people of India, spending some time at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry.

William died in 1993 at the age of 94.

Caring for the sanctuary

Help us look after your sanctuary by following these guidelines:

- Firearms, dogs, cats and other pets are not permitted in the sanctuary.
- Eating, drinking and smoking are not permitted.
- All plants, animals, other natural features and cultural sites are protected and must not be disturbed or removed.
- Feeding wildlife is bad for their health. It is an offence to feed or leave food where it is accessible to wildlife. Penalties apply.

Be prepared and stay safe

William Ricketts Sanctuary 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, on the VicEmergency smartphone app or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226. No fires may be lit in William Ricketts Sanctuary.

On Code Red, Total Fire Ban and Extreme Weather/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.

Parks Victoria

Phone 13 1963
www.parks.vic.gov.au



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