

Yarra State Forest

Situated only 80 km east of Melbourne, the Yarra State Forest (managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment - DSE) provides some of the best forest walks and drives in close proximity to Melbourne. Choose from a range of short or long walks, picnic or camping areas and lookouts in the mighty mountain ash forests of the region.

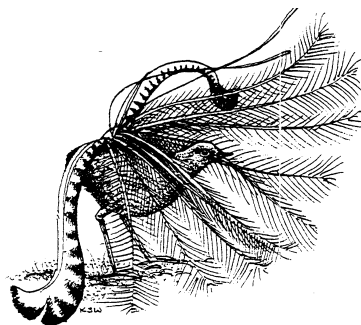
Getting there

From Melbourne, head out along the Maroondah Highway to Lilydale. Past Lilydale, turn right onto the Warburton Highway. At the township of Yarra Junction, turn right at the traffic lights and travel onto Powelltown in the heart of the Yarra State forest to the orientation and information board in the town centre or continue through the traffic lights to Warburton and visit the Water Wheel Tourist Information Centre.

Flora and fauna

Powelltown and the surrounding area is renowned for its mighty forests: the mountain ash forests being one of the most productive ecosystems in the world. However, on closer inspection, the Yarra forests support a much broader diversity of native vegetation than might first seem apparent. They include:

- Wet sclerophyll forests dominated by the majestic Mountain Ash (*E. regnans*). Regnans means reigning, accurately describing the world's tallest hardwood. Typically straight and tall, some grow to over 100m in height.
- Damp sclerophyll forest occurring at slightly lower altitudes, of Mountain Grey Gum (*E. cypellocarpa*) and Messmate (*E. obliqua*).
- Cool temperate rainforest dominated by Myrtle Beech (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) and/or Southern Sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*) occurring in moist sheltered gullies.



The forests surrounding Powelltown support a variety of native fauna species. These include; swamp wallabies, wombats, platypus, echidnas and several species of possums and gliders. One bird of note is the Superb Lyrebird, unique to Australia.

The Lyrebird is a great mimic and is able to imitate the calls of many other birds including the kookaburra, pied currawong and crimson rosella.

Walking tracks

1. Ada Tree

Skill Level¹: Basic

Fitness Level: Low

3.2km, 1.5 hrs return

Journey through Myrtle Beech Rainforest to visit the Ada Tree, one of the largest known flowering trees in the world. Estimated at over 300 years old, the Ada Tree stands about 76m tall with a circumference of 15m measured at 1.5 m above ground level. The walk begins at the picnic area on Ada River Rd, following Island Creek to the Ada Tree. Return to the picnic area along the same route. If you have time, allow an extra 45 minutes to visit the New Federal Mill. Just continue 1.4km along the walking track at the Ada Tree.



2. Seven Acre Rock

Skill Level: Moderate

Fitness Level: Average

1.2km, 30 mins return.

This short easy walk leads to Seven Acre Rock, a granite rock outcrop which provides commanding views of the Bunyip State Park, Western Port Bay and Port Phillip Bay on a clear day. The walk starts from the picnic area, 500 metres east of the junction of Learmonth Creek Road and Bunyip Road.

3. Reids Tramline

Skill Level: Basic

Fitness Level: Average

6km, 2.5 hr return.

This walk follows the route of the historic tramline along which horses, and later, steam locomotives once hauled logs out of the forest. Begin at the picnic area opposite the DSE office and head east through the town. Pass the present day mill (look out for the original workers cottages above the mill) before picking up the original tramline at

¹ To assist visitors in choosing walks, the walks are classified by skill level and fitness level. For a description of these classifications, refer to the Forests Note 'FS0020 - Bushwalking in State Forest'

the eastern end of the town. Relics of the former mill and tramline can still be seen on this walk. Return along the same route or for a more challenging walk return via Big Bertha Track.

4. Spion Kopje

Skill Level: Moderate Fitness Level: Average
1km; 45 mins return.

A short, but slightly challenging walk to Spion Kopje lookout for views across the Tarago forest and Latrobe Valley. Approximately 15 km further on from Seven Acre Rock. The walk is signposted off Limberlost Road.

5. La La Falls

Skill Level: Moderate Fitness Level: Average
3.2km, 1.5 hrs return.

An enjoyable walk through tall Mountain Ash and lush tree ferns, before reaching the picturesque falls. Follow the signs from Park Road along Old Warburton Road to the start of the track on Irruka Road. The falls are said to be named after past landowner Leila Ward, whose guest house "La La" (meaning Welcome Welcome) was located in the area.

6. Walk into History

Skill Level: Fitness Level:
33km, 2 days (one way)

The Walk into History follows some well preserved sections of the historic timber tramlines, past old mills and other relics of the early timber industry. Several creek crossings are required and a map of the area is essential. Due to the steepness of the High Lead section, the easiest way to do the walk is from Warburton or Big Pats Creek down to Powelltown.



The walk can be done in sections as detailed below.

6a. Warburton to Big Pats picnic area

Skill Level: Fitness Level:
6.5km, 2 hrs

Follow the Centenary Trail and Big Pat's Creek Rd to Big Pat's Creek Recreation Area.

6b. Big Pats picnic area to Starlings Gap

Skill Level: Fitness Level:
9km, 3.5 hrs

This section of the walk follows the Federal tramway and was constructed in 1933. Bush workers used to walk this section on a Sunday evening to be ready to begin work early Monday morning. On a Saturday afternoon however, some workers were known to have run the 9 km distance back to Big Pats Creek in time to make the weekly football

match. Two sawdust heaps are all that remains to indicate the sites of the bush mills along this section. The first marks the site of Ezards sawmill, the second near Starlings Gap operated here until 1942. Starlings Gap provides a good place to rest, explore or even camp overnight before beginning the next section. When at Starlings Gap take a few minutes to visit the old winch and boiler located on a level track 200m past the toilet block.

6c. Starlings Gap to Ada No.2 Mill

Skill Level: Fitness Level:
8km, 3 hrs.

The journey to the Ada No2 Mill takes walkers through the Ada River Valley. In the first 2 km of this walk alone, nine trestle bridges were required to move timber from the mill to Starlings Gap. 7.5km into this section visitors reach the tramway junction known as the 'crossroads'. From this intersection you can head north to the New Ada Mill (2.8km return), or east to the Federal Mill (4.3km return) and Ada Tree (5.7km return) or continue the walk south to the Ada No.2 Mill.

6d. Ada No.2 Mill to Highlead Carpark

Skill Level: Fitness Level:
5.5km, 2.5 hrs.

This section leads visitors through forest that has seen the effects of both the Black Friday fires of 1939 and more recently the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983. The high lead marks the start of the most difficult section of the walk. The track drops 415 metres in 1600 metres, a grade of almost 1 in 4.

6e. Highlead Carpark to Powelltown picnic area

Skill Level: Fitness Level:
10.5km, 3 hrs.

The track follows the Latrobe River, crossing it numerous times before arriving at 'The Bump', the divide between the Little Yarra and Latrobe Rivers. This site is also known for 'The Bump Tunnel', an historic railway tunnel constructed in 1925. Spanning 313 metres in length, the tunnel was constructed to avoid winching up the existing steep inclines. Evidence of the tunnel can be seen along the walk. Here the track leaves the Latrobe and joins the Little Yarra River, where it makes its way back to Powelltown.

The number of sections per day depends on experience and fitness. Please obtain further information from DSE office. Map: The Ada River, Spion Kopje and Gladysdale sheets in the 1:25 000 VICMAP series cover this walk.

7. Richards Tramline

Skill Level: Fitness Level:
9km one way, 3 hrs

This walk, which follows an old logging tramline, winds its way up the Mississippi Valley towards Starvation Creek. The track starts opposite the Big Pats Creek Picnic Area (800m along Smyth Creek Road from the bridge over

Big Pats Creek) and finishes on Brahams Road. The first 2km of track, known as 'The Curves', gets its name from the series of bends constructed along the tramline to allow for a steady descent from Mississippi Fireline towards Big Pats Creek.

For keen walkers who wish to explore the area further, DSE officers in Powelltown will be more than happy to give you information on other walks in the area.

Camping

Latrobe River Camping Area and Starlings Gap are the main campgrounds in the Yarra State Forest. Both campgrounds have toilet facilities, picnic tables and fireplaces. Camping is on a first-come first-served basis and no bookings are required, but early arrival may be advisable during peak periods.

Picnic sites

Picnic facilities are available at the Powelltown, Starlings Gap, Seven Acre Rock, Big Pats Creek, Latrobe River and Ada Tree picnic areas.

Driving in the forest

All of the camping sites, picnic sites and walking tracks in the Yarra State forest are accessible from well formed gravel roads. These roads are suitable for vehicles for most of the year, but care should be taken after rain.

Snowfalls can occur at higher altitudes such as Starlings Gap and the Ada Tree.

Take care on forest roads, they are generally narrow and winding and remember that the roads are used by many vehicles, including log trucks, so please adjust your driving accordingly.

Looking after our forests

- Dogs are allowed in State forest but must be under direct control at all times and are expected to be kept on a leash in picnic and camping areas or when near other visitors.
- Bikes and horses are generally not permitted on walking tracks. Please observe access signs and help protect the forest.
- Don't disturb native plants or animals.
- There is no rubbish collection service, so please take your rubbish home. If you have the misfortune to come

across other people's rubbish, do the bush a favour and take it out with you too.

- Take care with fire – observe all fire regulations and Total Fire Ban days. Use existing fireplaces rather than create your own. Never leave fires unattended. Ensure fires are safe and that they are completely extinguished when you leave.
- Only light fires in fireplaces or 30 cm deep trenches. Fires must be less than 1 metre square and at least 3 m clear of burnable material.
- Keep the size of your group small, ideally, less than eight people and go off peak.
- Vehicles and trail bikes must be registered and roadworthy and may only be driven on designated public roads and tracks.
- Make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return, and don't forget to let them know when you are back.

For more information

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is responsible for managing Victoria's State Forest. For further information contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment office at Powelltown (☎ 5966 7203) or the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

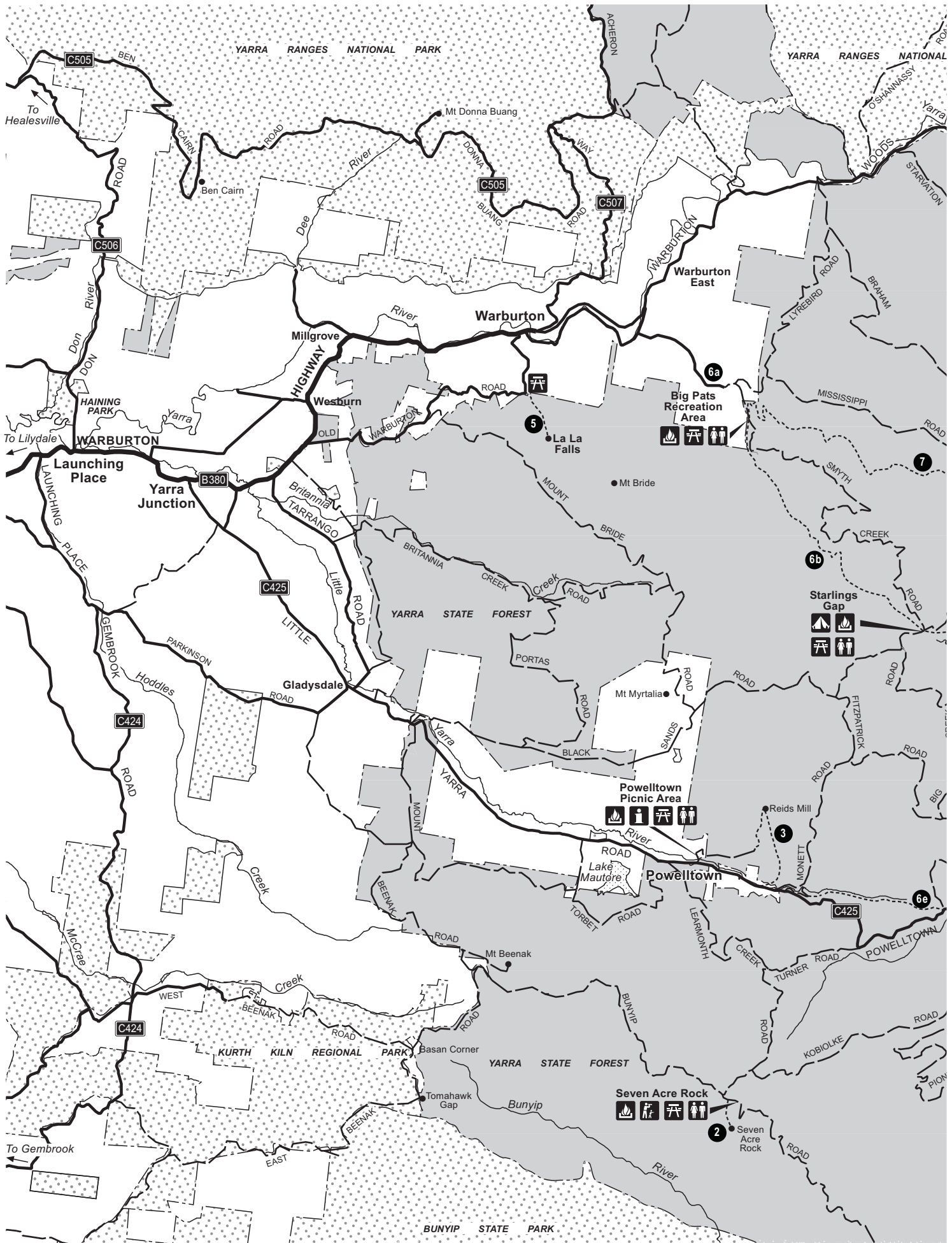
Visit DSE's website

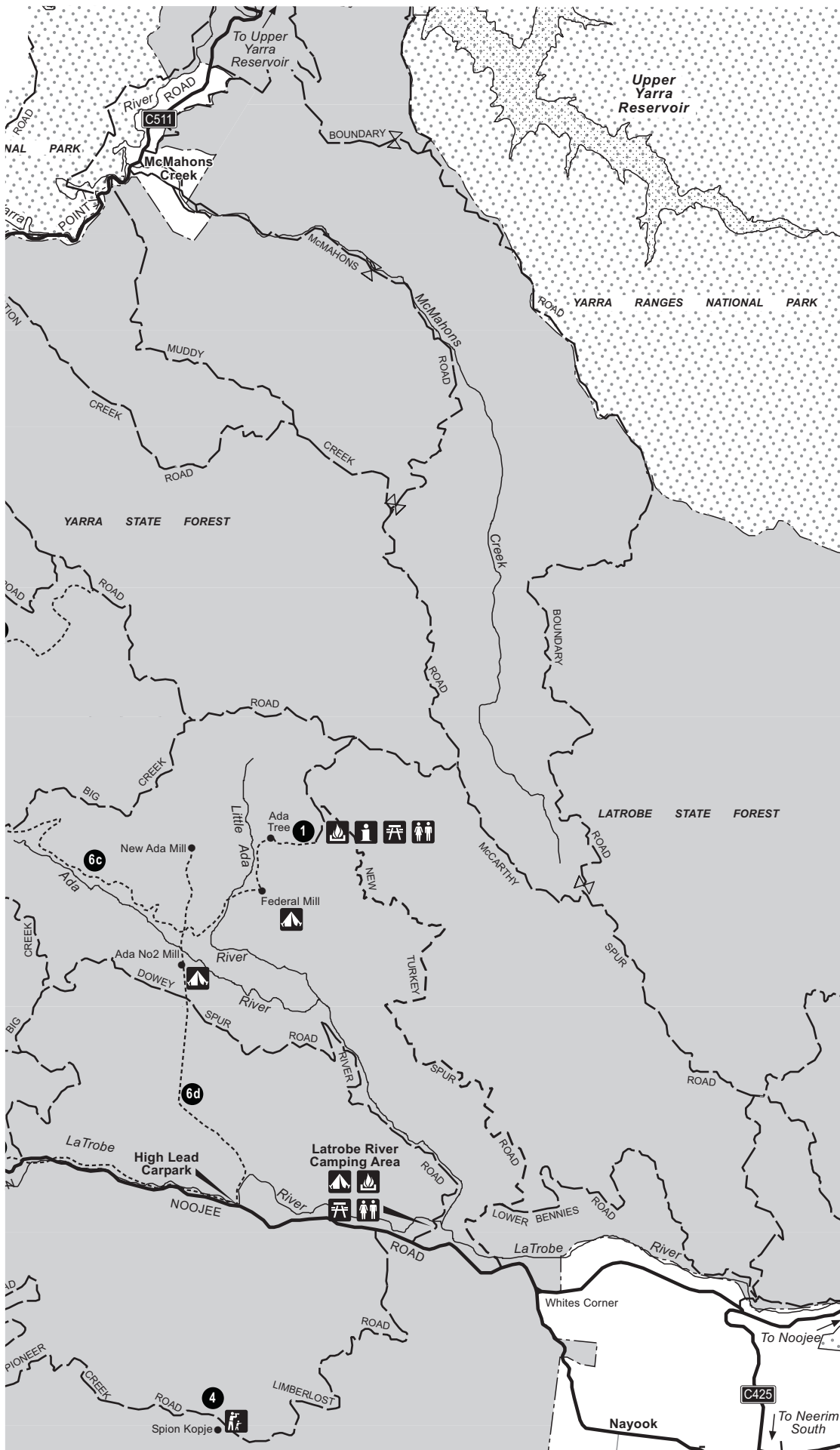
<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry".

The Yarra State Forest is managed for a wide range of uses including catchment protection, timber production, recreation and conservation. If you are interested in how State Forests are managed, the current Central Highlands Forest Management Plan can be viewed on the Department's website on the Internet at

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>
then select "Forestry", then select "Publications".

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Yarra State Forest

- Highway
- Sealed road
- Minor unsealed road
- Walking track
- Gate
- State Forest
- Parks & Reserves
- Water body
- Walk number

Recreational Facilities

- Camping
- Fireplace
- Lookout
- Forest information
- Picnic table
- Toilets

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KILOMETRES
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