

Lakes and Craters Precinct: Mount Leura



Mount Leura is the central and most obvious component of a larger volcanic complex south-east of the town of Camperdown known as the Leura Maar.

The Leura Maar is a shallow oval shaped depression about 2.5 kilometres long, 1.7 kilometres wide and up to 50 metres deep which originated from a series of major volcanic explosions, possibly 22,000 years ago. Some of the eruptive material was thrown high into the air, but most surged rapidly across the ground surface as a dense cloud of steam, gas and rock fragments.

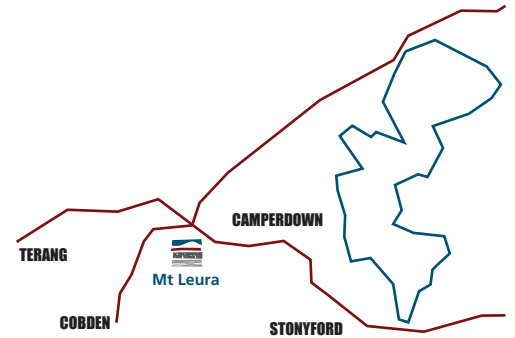
Inside the Leura Maar, there are many younger eruption points marked by craters and mounds of scoria. Because they are said to be nested inside the maar, Leura is therefore referred to as a nested maar. These younger volcanic features include Mount Leura, Mount Sugarloaf, the deep crater which separates the two mountains, and several smaller craters and mounds in the southern part of the maar.

Although not as explosive as the activity which produced the maar, the growth of Mount Leura and Mount Sugarloaf would have provided a grand spectacle, similar to the present day activity of volcanoes on the island of Hawaii.

They began as vents on the floor of the maar from which glowing fountains or explosive bursts of lava were ejected. Gases escaping from the lava caused it to break into angular, gravel-sized fragments called scoria, which fell back to the ground and heaped up around the volcanic vent forming the high, steep cones. The scoria included large blocks and smooth surfaced lava bombs that were hurled into the air and partly cooled before crashing back to the ground to be buried in the scoria.

Mount Sugarloaf is basically a steep conical accumulation of scoria rising as a high point on the same crater rim as Mount Leura. It formed as a result of lava fountaining from the same point in the crater, continuously building an ever increasing pile of scoria. Scoria volcanoes can achieve height quickly and Mount Leura could have been built in less than 20 years.

A strong revegetation program has been underway in recent years, including the reintroduction of flora and fauna.



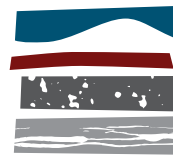
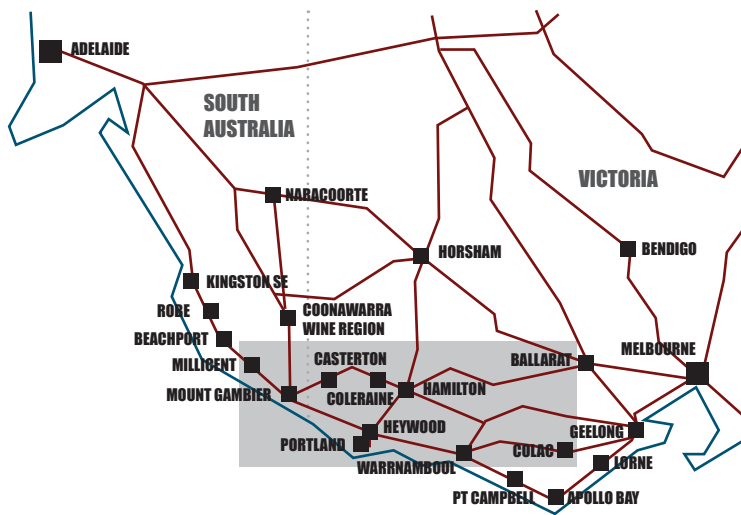
How to get there?

The site is just over a kilometre from the centre of Camperdown and can be accessed by turning left into Adeney Street, 500 metres on the Geelong side of Camperdown.

Things to do:

- Mount Leura has vehicle access, and from the Lookout, views of 20 volcanic features can be seen. An information board is located adjacent to the car park, and there is a short, three-minute walk to the summit.
- Visitors can also park at the carpark at the base of Mt Leura where there is an extensive display of interpretive information inside the information shelter which has been made from the exotic cypress felled and milled from the reserve. Picnic tables and seats make a pleasant place to enjoy lunch and view the beds of native grassland species. There is an extensive network of walking tracks that can be used to view all aspects of Mt Leura and Mt Sugarloaf.
- Mount Sugarloaf also has a walk.
- The picturesque town of Camperdown is at the foot of the Mountain, with a Visitor Information Centre, motels, restaurants, and shops.
- Camperdown Botanic Gardens designed by William Guilfoyle are nearby and overlook the lakes complex.





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Australia may be referred to as a relatively young nation, but the well-preserved ancient landscape provides many precious windows into the past. The Kanawinka Global Geopark can take you on an amazing journey through this landscape, enabling visitors to travel back in time over thousands and thousands of years.

The surface geology of South Western Victoria and South Eastern South Australia is a striking contrast of sweeping plains and spectacular mountains which are largely the product of volcanic activity. In fact, with six sites of international significance and 14 of national significance, this area is Australia's most extensive volcanic province.

The history of these geological masterpieces stretches back to the Tertiary and Quaternary eras, when great outpourings of volcanic material through vents took place. Lava flows spread evenly across the existing plains, followed valleys, flowed under water, and in some cases forced upwards into rough, stony hills called tumuli, or steeper scoria cones.

In total, the flows cover an area of some 23,000 square km, extending north to the hills beyond Ballarat, and reappearing in a small section of south-eastern South Australia. This area is known as the Newer Volcanics Province, and features nearly 400 individual eruption points, most of which occurred between 4.5 and 2 million years ago.

Many of the eruptions were witnessed by the indigenous peoples of the area who have inhabited this region for up to 45,000 years, and feature prominently in stories of the Dreamtime.

Aboriginal people also made use of the stones from the lava flow to construct channels linking the wetlands, weirs, fish-traps, wind breaks and stone huts, and excellent examples created by the Gunditjmarra people can be found around Western Victoria's Lake Condah region in particular.

Later, during the 1870s and 80s, European settlers utilised the volcanic stone cleared from the land to construct dry stone walls in order to grow crops and introduce stock. Many examples can be found surrounding Corangamite on the Dry Stone Walls Heritage Trail.

The region's spectacular and intriguing volcanic landscape also offers a range of other visitor experiences, from a 45-minute tour to the surface of Mount Gambier's Blue Lake, to the gruelling trek up Mount Schank and down to the crater floor.

In western Victoria, you can go on a chartered boat tour to Lady Julia Percy Island, which has the largest colony of Australian fur seals in the southern hemisphere. Or, take The Alan Marshall Walking Tour of Mount Noorat and the nearby township, or swim in the turquoise-coloured waters of Lake Surprise.

There are also plenty of picturesque picnic and camping spots just waiting to be discovered. Alternatively, you can take your time and spend the night in one of the numerous towns in the Kanawinka Global Geopark.

The Geopark is known as KANAWINKA GEOPARK, meaning Land of Tomorrow from the Buandik people. It is also the name of a geological fault line from Naracoorte Caves to Bass Strait at Portland and a Parish name west of Casterton about 1911 so all levels of the history, Geological, Indigenous and European are brought together in one name.

The Kanawinka Geopark was declared the 57th Member of the Global Network of National Geoparks assisted by UNESCO on June 22, 2008.



Accredited Visitor Information Centres

Victoria

Casterton

Shiels Terrace
03 5581 2070

Colac

Cnr Queen & Murray
Streets
03 5231 3730

Dunkeld

Parker Street
03 5577 2558

Hamilton

Lonsdale Street
1800 807 056

Nelson

Leake Street
08 8738 4051

Port Campbell

26 Morris Street
03 5598 6089

Port Fairy

Railway Place,
Bank Street
03 5568 2682

Portland

Lee Breakwater Rd.
1800 035 567

Warrnambool

Flagstaff Hill
Merri Street
1800 637 725

South Australia

Beachport

Millicent Road
08 8735 8029

Millicent

Mt Gambier Road
08 8733 0904

Mount Gambier

The Lady Nelson
Jubilee Hwy East
1800 087 187

Penola/Coonawarra

27 Arthur Street
08 8737 2855



Camperdown

Old Court House
179 Manifold Street
03 5593 3144

Lake Bolac

2110 Glenelg Hwy
03 5350 2204