The Track

The Walk into History follows historic timber tramways that wind their way through spectacular and diverse forest scenery, including forests of the world's tallest hardwoods (Mountain Ash) and sections of cool temperate rainforest in moist sheltered gullies.
The walk is unique in Victoria, retracing the route of the original tramways and visiting the sites of former settlements and bush mills, now largely reclaimed by the forests.
From the early to mid 1900's, these tramways carried sawn timber from dozens of bush mills to Warburton and Powelltown.

Getting There

From Melbourne, take the Maroondah Highway to Lilydale. Just beyond Lilydale, turn right onto the Warburton Highway and follow this to the township of Warburton, where you can visit the Water Wheel Tourist Information Centre (weekdays 10am - 5pm and weekends 10am - 3pm) for more information.
For further historical information visit the Upper Yarra Museum, Old Railway Station, Warburton Highway, Yarra Junction (opening hours Wed & Sun 11am - 4pm every 3rd Sat 11am - 4pm).
You may choose to commence the walk from Warburton, however most walkers prefer to start from the Big Pats Creek Recreation Area, a further 6km from Warburton. To get there, continue through Warburton another 4km and turn right into Riverside Drive after crossing the Yarra River. After 600m turn left into Big Pats Creek Rd and continue on through the small settlement of Big Pats Creek. After crossing a bridge, turn right into Smyths Creek Rd. After 1km, the recreation area and car park is reached.

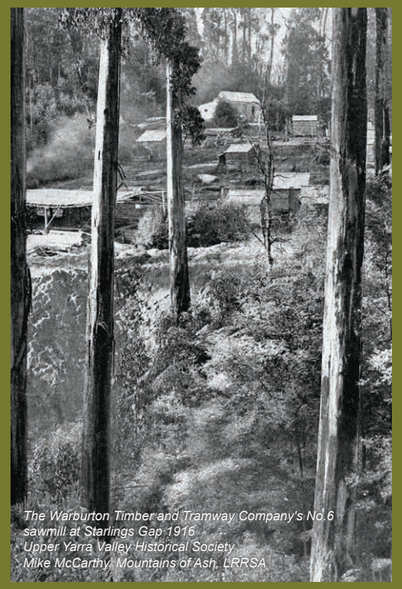
Track Overview And Options

With Warburton township providing good options for accommodation before and after the walk, we recommend walking from Warburton or Big Pats Creek to Powelltown for those immersing themselves in the full Walk into History.
Many options exist to explore the natural and cultural delights of the Walk Into History, from hiking half day sections to more extended overnight and three day walks. Some possibilities are described here, but studying the route; where it intersects roads; and the times various sections take to hike, allow a range of other options to be considered.

Walk into History

33 km from Big Pats Creek	2 - 3 days
Very steep & difficult	
• Rough track, Many obstacles	
• Limited signage	• Many steps
Experienced bushwalkers	

If doing the entire walk, it is best done from Big Pats Creek to Powelltown over two or three days. Please note the above description is the overall track grading, which takes into account the most difficult sections. To assist walkers in choosing the appropriate walk option, this pocket guide divides the track into sections that are graded separately, some of which are easier and contain only short steep sections and/or steps. The most challenging section for most walkers is the sustained steep grade of The High Lead Incline.



The Warburton Timber and Tramway Company's No.6 sawmill at Starlings Gap 1916
Upper Yarra Valley Historical Society
Mike McCarthy, Mountains of Ash, LRRSA

Big Pats Creek To Starlings Gap

9 km	3.5 hours
Short steep hills	
• Rough track, Many obstacles	
• Limited signage	• Many steps
Experienced bushwalkers	

This section of the walk follows timber tramways constructed originally from 1908 to 1916 to service sawmills that extended as far as Starlings Gap.
The long white trunks of the Manna Gum (Eucalyptus viminalis) welcome the explorer as the track gradually ascends the valley of Big Pats Creek and alongside the large gully of its tributary, Mortimer Creek. As the track subtly shifts more southerly in aspect, the forest becomes taller and wetter.
Careful observation along this section of the walk sometimes reveals sections of elevated tramway constructed with logs, where large granite rock prevented the normal side cut excavation.
Two sawdust heaps are also visible. The first is Ezard's sawmill site (later Porta's), where a large heap falls sharply away from the track in a partly obscured location. The second heap is reached just before Starlings Gap. This sawmill site operated under various ownership until 1939.

Starlings Gap provides a good place to rest, explore or even camp overnight before beginning the next section. Whilst at Starlings Gap take a few minutes to visit the old winch and boiler located on a level track 100m past the toilet block.

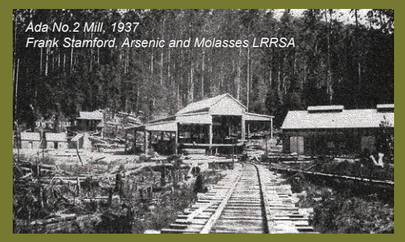


Starlings Gap To Crossroads & Ada No 2 Mill

7.5 / 8 km	3 hours
Short steep hills	
• Rough track, Many obstacles	
• Limited signage	• Many steps
Experienced bushwalkers	

This section of tramway walk traverses tall wet forest and cool temperate rainforest as it follows the Ada River Valley, downstream from Starlings Gap.
The expansive riparian zone of the Ada River, devoid of Eucalypts but dominated by Tea Trees and Melaleuca's, is regularly viewed below the tramway.
Another significant tramway existed on the south side of the Ada River, where timber from other sawmills as far west as Starlings Gap was transported back to Powelltown. As with hundreds of kilometres of other tramways in the area, this is completely overgrown.
After 7.5km the track reaches the junction with the Powelltown tramway at a point known as the crossroads.

Alternative walks from the Crossroads.
At this point, the walk route to Powelltown turns to the south, however two very worthwhile options exist for further exploration.
2km to the north the New Ada Mill can be reached. New Ada Mill closed in 1942, the workers then being transferred to the Powelltown mill. A walking track continues beyond the mill site before linking up with VHC Track, a vehicular track accessible from Big Creek Rd.
Alternatively, New Federal Mill can be reached by walking east for 2.2km from the tramway crossroads, passing an impressive partly collapsed tramway bridge en-route.
New Federal Mill dominated the sawmilling industry in the Warburton area for almost 15 years. Its closure in 1949 signaled the end of the timber tramway era. Walkers are welcome to camp at this site of historical significance, although no facilities exist.
A walking track links New Federal Mill with The Ada Tree (1.4km) and the Ada Tree picnic area and car park (a further 1.4km). This provides an option for an end point and car pick up.
Back on to the main walk route, the Ada No.2 Mill campsite is reached after heading south a few hundred metres from the Crossroads.



Ada No.2 Mill, 1937
Frank Stamford, Arsenic and Molasses LRRSA

Ada No.2 Mill To Highlead Carpark

5.5 km	2.5 hours
Very steep & difficult	
• Rough track, Many obstacles	
• Limited signage	• Many steps
Experienced bushwalkers	

The Ada No 2 Mill was destroyed in the 1939 bushfires, however the relics of structures and machinery around the campsite provide the visitor with a sense of a very different time. The site has camping platforms, fireplaces and sturdy food boxes to protect your food stocks from the resident possums.
Heading south, the track crosses swampy riparian vegetation on a boardwalk adjacent to a long tramway bridge, the remnants of which are still visible. After ascending Dowey Spur and crossing Dowey Spur Rd, the track descends 415 metres in 1600 metres down a section known as The High Lead Incline. The name of the incline relates to the high lead cable logging systems formerly employed in this locality; an efficient technology for logging in steep terrain imported from North America, involving the aerial movement of logs.
Burnt in the Black Friday fires of 1939, the hallmarks of the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires are also evident in the younger regrowth forest in this section. Soon after crossing Big Creek Basin Rd, the track flattens out in the lower reaches of Big Creek near its confluence with the Latrobe River. Some exotic plants indicate the site of Knotts Mill and soon after the Latrobe River is traversed on an old log before reaching the Yarra Junction - Noojee Rd at the High Lead Car Park.

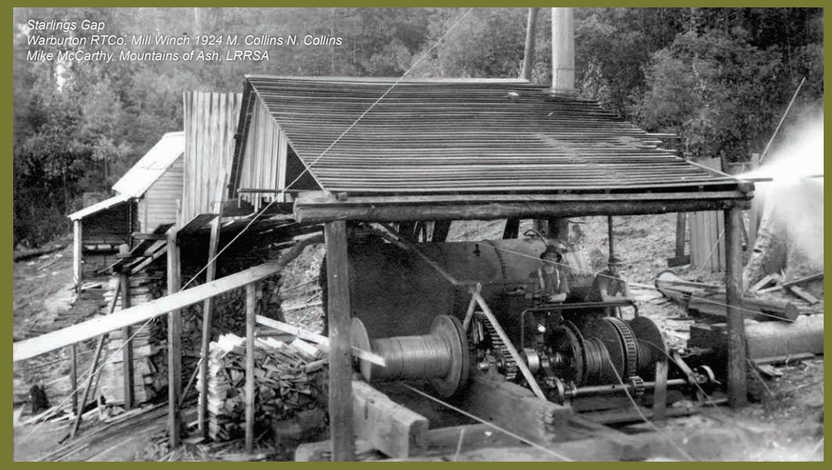




Highlead Carpark To Powelltown Picnic Area

10.5 km	3 hours
Very steep & difficult	
• Rough track, Many obstacles	
• Limited signage	• Many steps
Experienced bushwalkers	

The track turns westward opposite the High Lead Car Park and runs parallel to the main road.
Two log bridges span the Latrobe River before the track crosses the main road and passes the site of the Nayook West township. Crossing the Latrobe again the track climbs up and crosses the main road at the site known as The Bump, the divide between the Latrobe and Yarra catchments.
The Bump is also known for The Bump Tunnel, a historic tramway tunnel constructed in 1925. Spanning 313 metres in length, the tunnel was constructed to avoid winching up the existing steep inclines. Both entrances to the tunnel were blown in many decades ago, although the excavations that led to the entrances are still evident.
Over The Bump, the track winds its way down the Little Yarra catchment, crossing the Little Yarra three times over log bridges, before joining Mackleys Rd.
Into the Powelltown Township, the track passes the historic Union Church and the sawmill before reaching the Powelltown Picnic Area, opposite the Department of Environment and Primary Industries work centre.



Starlings Gap
Warburton RTCo. Mill Winch 1924 M. Collins N. Collins
Mike McCarthy, Mountains of Ash, LRRSA



Safety Information

On Code Red Fire Danger Rating days, parks and state forest are closed to the public. Do not enter parks or forests on Code Red days.
If you are already there when a Code Red day is announced, you should leave the night before or early in the morning.
For more information contact DEPI.

Be careful camping under trees - they can drop their limbs (particularly during high winds).

Walk Into History





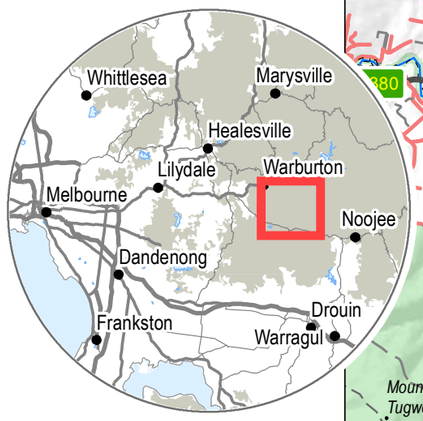

Looking After Our Forests

- Dogs are allowed in the 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.
- Trailbikes, mountain bikes and horses are allowed in state forests, but are not permitted on the walking track.
- The fauna and flora are protected so please respect the forest and the animals that live there.
- There is no rubbish collection service, so please take your rubbish home. If you come across any rubbish, do the bush a favour and take it out with you.
- You are allowed to light a campfire except on days of Total Fire Ban. It is your responsibility to know if a Total Fire Ban is declared. If in doubt, do not light a campfire. Use existing fireplaces rather than create your own. Never leave fire unattended. Ensure fires are safe and that they are completely extinguished. Remember if it's cool to touch, it's safe to leave.
- Only light fires in fireplaces or 30cm deep trenches. Fires must be less than one metre square and at least three metres clear of burnable material.
- Keep the size of your group small, ideally, less than eight people and go off peak.

Things To Remember

- Here in the mountains the weather can change quickly, so please come prepared, especially for the longer walks. Wear good walking boots or sturdy shoes, take spare warm clothes, a waterproof jacket and some food and water in a small backpack.
- Make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return, don't forget to let them know when you are back.
- Mobile phone coverage is intermittent, consider taking an epirb (personal location beacon) or emergency device if you intend to go trekking.





Historic and Cultural Features Reserve
State Forest
Major sealed road
Minor sealed road
Unsealed road
Minor unsealed road
4WD vehicle track
Stream
Walk Into History Trail
Toilets
Picnic table
Covered picnic facilities
Fireplace
Car parking
Walking trail
Camp ground
Information board
Historical site
Overnight hike

0 1 2
Kilometers



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