

Flora

St AFNC holds a list of all plants identified to date. Plants marked with * are listed as threatened species under the Victorian FFG Act.

Golden Wattle	<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>
Gold-dust Wattle	<i>Acacia acinacea</i>
Spreading Wattle	<i>Acacia genistifolia</i>
Mallee Wattle	<i>Acacia montana</i>
Box Mistletoe	<i>Amyema miquelii</i>
Cane Speargrass	<i>Austrostipa breviglumis</i> *
Elegant Speargrass	<i>Austrostipa elegantissima</i>
Black-anther Flax-lily	<i>Dianella revoluta</i>
Goldfield Boronia	<i>Boronia anemonifolia ssp aurifodina</i> *
Sweet Bursaria	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>
Common Fringe-myrtle	<i>Calytrix tetragona</i>
Dodder-laurel	<i>Cassytha melantha</i>
Common Correa	<i>Correa reflexa</i>
Shrubby Dampiera	<i>Dampiera dysantha</i>
Hop Bush	<i>Dodonaea sp</i>
Long-leaf Box	<i>Eucalyptus goniocalyx</i>
Red Box	<i>Eucalyptus polyanthemus</i>
Blue Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus polybractea</i> *
Red Ironbark	<i>Eucalyptus tricarpa</i>
Green Mallee	<i>Eucalyptus viridis</i>
Variable Goodenia	<i>Goodenia varia</i>
Cat's Claw Grevillea	<i>Grevillea alpina</i>
Twiggy Hibbertia	<i>Hibbertia exutiaces</i>
Peach Heath	<i>Lissanthe strigosa</i>
Many-flowered Mat-rush	<i>Lomandra multiflora</i>
Grey Everlasting	<i>Ozothamnus obcordatus</i>
Bendigo Waxflower	<i>Philotheca verrucosa</i>
Rough Mintbush	<i>Prostanthera denticulata</i>
Sticky Everlasting	<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>

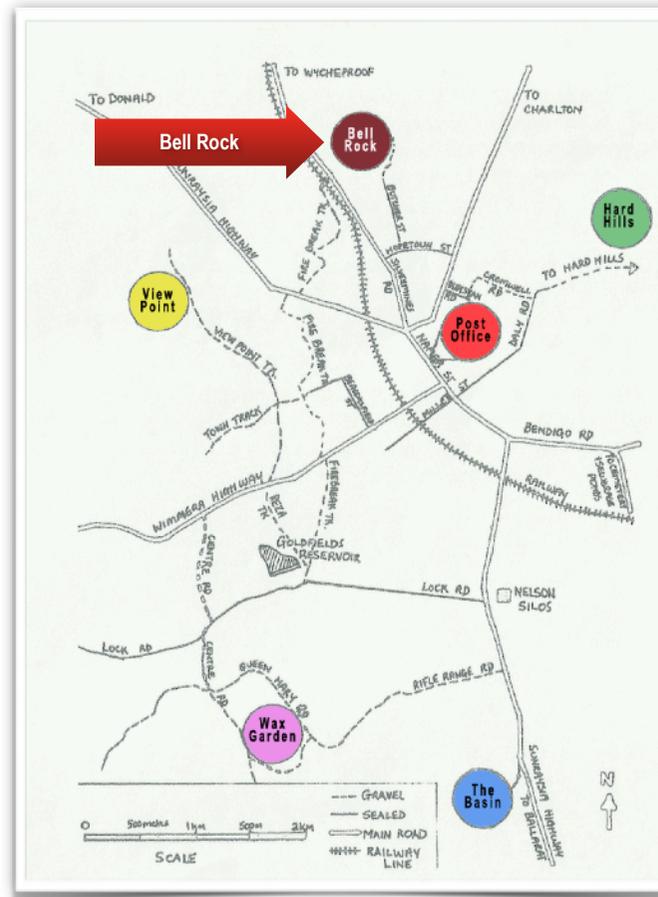


Goldfield Boronia (*Boronia anemonifolia ssp. aurifodina*)

Views

From the turntable the view to the north extends to Mt Jeffcott near Donald and to the east is the American Range and Mt Yawong (with wind generators) and Mts Kooyoora and Moliagur are to the south-east. The 1 km walking track-signposted, starts on the east side of the access road and has interpretive signs.

The Grand Circle Tour



Access to the Bell Rock Reserve is via Silvermines Rd from the Wycheproof Road.

Turn right at Hopetoun St and left into Butcher St. From here it is a gravel road and quite rough.

All photos by St AFNC / A Hughes

This project was funded by the Victorian Government through its 2018 Community and Volunteer Action grants

Please visit our website for more information on the St Arnaud Field Nats :

www.starnaudfieldnats.org.au



Bell Rock

Heritage Reserve



Rich History - Rich Biodiversity

sharing our natural heritage

The Grand Circle Tour is a project of
St Arnaud Field Naturalist Club Inc.
P O Box 53 St Arnaud Vic 3478

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Indigenous Heritage

St AFNC acknowledges the traditional owners of the land - the Dja Dja Wurrung people, past and present.

All the country visible from Bell Rock is part of Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

Traces of our first people's lives over tens of thousands of years can still be seen in the area despite the upheavals of European usage.

Today, our Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners still care for this land and are active in its restoration and protection to further traditional commitments to caring for Country and to use it in accordance with traditional lore.



Rich hopes and crushed dreams.

In the 1850s, prospectors flocked to Victoria in search of gold. Sebastopol Hill, as this site was originally known, was rich in minerals like lead, zinc, pyrites, silver and some gold.

Prospectors worked the Armenian, Rotten, Warwickshire and Queen Semiramis reefs, and from 1857, many small mines were established in the area.

Recovering minerals from deep underground, and overcoming the problem of underground water, was a difficult and expensive business.



Company mines were formed to raise the necessary capital needed to build shafts up to 130m (400ft) deep. The costs far outstripped the riches extracted. Soon after starting operations here in 1857, the Alpha Co. failed due to high operating costs.

It was re-formed as the Freiburg Co. which built a large dam in

the gully below the Rock and a 24-head battery to crush the extracted quartz. However, in 1867, this mine also failed.

It was sold and its name was changed again to the St Arnaud Gold and Silver Mine Co. managed by Mr Amos Cheale. Tragically, on 12th January 1869, Cheale was shot and killed outside the mine by Andrew Vair, a disaffected local prospector.

The police searched in vain for Vair, who had been well hidden by sympathetic miners. He attended Cheale's funeral, sitting in a tree near the grave. Locals knew he was there but did not give him away.

Vair lived in an abandoned mine tunnel for several months, fed by locals, before fleeing to Adelaide where he was arrested in 1870 and brought back to Victoria.

Despite the jury's plea for clemency, Vair became the first man to be hanged at the Ararat Jail. The mine closed permanently shortly after the murder, and the crushing plant was converted into the Freiburg Flour Mill. A few years later, it too was destroyed by fire.

In 1885, the ruins were converted into Eckersley's Eucalyptus Distillery, famous all over Australia for its 'Mentholine' White Mallee (*Eucalyptus dumosa*) oil.

Geology

Bell Rock sits at the very end of the Great Dividing Range and its complex geology starts in early Paleozoic times.

The ridges to the north of St Arnaud are of Ordovician sandstone and mudstone and contain graptolite fossils. The nutrient-poor soils, when disturbed are particularly prone to erosion.

During the Cambrian Era (540-485 million years ago) most of Victoria was under the ocean and the formation at Bell Rock shows the marine sedimentary rocks-sandstone, siltstone and shale.

This area is fossil-free, demonstrating its great age-somewhere between 484-443 million years. Bell Rock and its immediate surrounds are part of the oldest rocks in Victoria.

Special Vegetation at Bell Rock

The area sits on the dividing line between 3 vegetation types: Box-Ironbark forest, Mallee and Grassy Plains. Red Ironbark (*Eucalyptus tricarpa*) and Red Box (*E. polyanthemos*) abound to the west. Blue Mallee (*E. polybractea*) and Green Mallee (*E. viridis*) are to the east.

Despite years of mining and other intensive human activity, 3 threatened flora species remain at Bell Rock.



Blue Mallee can be seen on the east side of the turntable where it forms dense stands to about 8m high.

Much of Victoria's Blue Mallee has been harvested for the production of Eucy Oil, leaving few untouched mature stands

Goldfield Boronia

Boronia anemonifolia ssp. *aurifodina*, flowers in early spring and can be seen from the walking track on the west side of the hill.

Flowers are mostly small and pale pink occasionally deep pink.

This species, endemic to the Western Goldfields region, is listed as rare and threatened under Victoria's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act).



Cane Spear-grass

Austrostipa breviglumis

a once- common inhabitant of the Grassy Plains, now mostly cleared for agriculture, this tall clumping grass with showy heads in early summer is now restricted to protected Mallee bush areas.



Rough Mintbush *Prostanthera denticulata*, is found down the northern slope from the turntable in company with Common Fringe-myrtle, Grey Everlasting and Bendigo Waxflower.

Spring is the best time to see the wildflowers in bloom. Enjoy them by taking the walking trail which starts on the east side of the access road.

Birds

Birds from 3 different vegetation types are found at Bell Rock. Following is a list of species seen in the Reserve since 2002.



Species marked * are either listed under Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act or State FFG Act as threatened, endangered or rare.

Common Bronzewing	Striated Pardalote
Peaceful Dove	Weebill
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Pallid Cuckoo	Yellow Thornbill
Rainbow Bee-eater	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Laughing Kookaburra	Varied Sittella *
Galah	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Red Wattlebird	Rufous Whistler
Crimson Rosella	Grey Shrike-thrush
Eastern Rosella	Crested Shrike-tit *
Musk Lorikeet	Grey Currawong
Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie
White-eared Honeyeater	White-browed Woodswallow
Black-chinned Honeyeater *	Willie Wagtail
Brown-headed Honeyeater*	Little Raven
White-naped Honeyeater*	Grey Fantail
Eastern Spinebill	White-winged Chough
Red Wattlebird	Red-capped Robin *
Fuscous Honeyeater *	Mistletoebird
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Silvereye
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater *	Common Blackbird
Spotted Pardalote	