

Dundas Tableland Precinct: Nigretta Falls



Nigretta Falls is a small waterfall set in outstanding scenery. The waterfall is considered more spectacular than Wannon Falls, due to its clearer features.

The history surrounding the Wannon and Nigretta Falls dates back to the 1850's when the small town of Redruth, renamed Wannon in 1908, was first settled. Planned around the Wannon Inn and a ferry for crossing the river, the community consisted of two schools, two hotels, a store and four sawmills located nearby. Over time, the Falls became a popular tourist attraction, attracting many visitors in the 1890s when excursion trains travelled from Hamilton.

The Hamilton Progress Association developed in 1908 tried to establish Nigretta Falls as a picnic resort, but was not successful in establishing a reserve until 1912. Working bees were then organized to clean up the area, plant trees and improve facilities for visitors.

Formation of the Nigretta Falls: The Nigretta Falls are also developed on a hard rock outcrop, but these have no underlying soft bed to allow easy undermining of the wall. Instead their form is more complex and controlled by the well-developed jointing (crack patterns) in the rock (see diagram). With time these falls will probably grade back to a set of rapids, rather than migrate upstream as a vertical face.

Geological Setting: The Wannon and Nigretta Falls occur within 10km of each other at the edge of the late Cainozoic Western Districts Volcanic Province. However, they are developed in quite different styles on rocks of different age and character. The oldest rocks are Devonian volcanics (rhyolitic ignimbrites) seen at the Nigretta Falls and the valley of the Wannon River thereabouts. Further south, in the valley bottoms we find poorly exposed, soft, Cretaceous stream and lake sediments and Tertiary marine sediments. The plateau surface along the highway east and west of the Wannon Falls is a late Tertiary lateritic soil developed on the Tertiary sediments. In the Grange Burn valley, west of Hamilton, there is a local area of Pliocene sediments which contains vertebrate fossils.

These lie immediately below the basaltic lavas of the Pliocene to Pleistocene Western District Volcanic Province.



Nigretta Falls



Complex crack patterns in the hard rock control the form of the falls - producing a series of cascades.

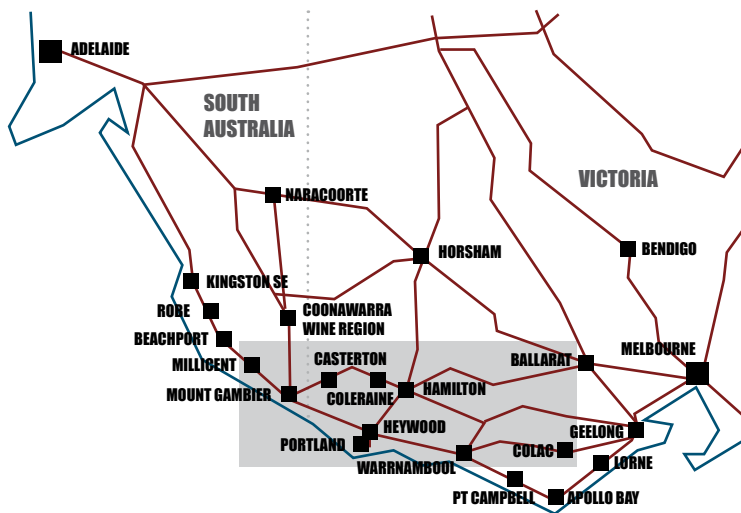
How to get there?

The turn-off to the falls is signposted off Nigretta Road, 5 kilometres west of Hamilton along the Glenelg Highway.

Things to do:

- A walk to Nigretta Falls commences approximately five kilometres off the Hamilton to Mount Gambier Road and is well signposted. It is possible to walk both to the base and headwaters of the falls.
- The area has excellent river walks and viewing areas with barbecue facilities and red gum picnic tables.





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.

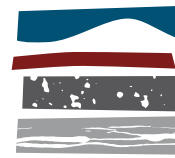
The region's spectacular and intriguing volcanic landscape also offers a range of other visitor experiences, from a 45-minute tour to the surface of Mount Gambier's Blue Lake, to the gruelling trek up Mount Schank and down to the crater floor.

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.



KANAWINKA GLOBAL GEOPARK

South West Victoria & South East South Australia

PO Box 860, Hamilton 3300
Victoria, Australia

PHONE +61 4 2282 1066

FAX +61 3 5597 6753

EMAIL administration@kanawinkageopark.com

www.kanawinkageopark.com



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