

# COUNTRY STYLE

An easy run or two-day jaunt, the Healesville to Yea trek is a blinder, **RON AND VIV MOON** write

**T**he Toolangi and Black Range State Forests are a maze of tree fern-lined valleys and gum tree-clad ranges north of Healesville, a tourist hamlet and gateway to the mountains north-east of Melbourne. The drive to Toolangi, even before hitting dirt, passes through Myers Creek Scenic Reserve whose mighty trees and tall slender tree ferns give an indication of the delights ahead.

This trek also skirts the western edge of Yarra Ranges National Park, which takes in 76,000ha of near-pristine forest country between Healesville and the headwaters of Yarra River beyond Warburton.

This thickly vegetated country was rarely used by Aboriginal people and posed a barrier to early European exploration. The tall trees, mainly stately mountain ash, have been harvested since the late 1800s and were initially cut for use as fence palings by bush sawyers and paling splitters.

By 1900 small sawmills and tramways were established in the forest with seven mills operating in the Toolangi area alone, but the 1939 bushfires devastated most of these. However, within a relatively short time loggers returned and today the state forest sections of these mountains are still big producers of fine timber. You'll see plenty of regrowth, worked logging coups and areas being harvested. At



Crossing Murrudindi River near Bull Creek camping area



Plunging into the darkness of Cheviot Railway Tunnel



the old Dindi Mill site off Yellowdindi Road there are still a few rusting reminders of when this was a working sawmill.

The Murrindindi Scenic Reserve, in the heart of Toolangi Forest, stretches along the lower reaches of Murrindindi River and covers just over 800ha. Established in 1981, the Reserve protects a rich area of moist fern gullies and tall mountain ash as well as Murrindindi River and Cascades and the 75m-high Wilhelmina Falls. There are several walking tracks located here: from the easy 600m return walk to Murrindindi Cascades to a 12km circuit walk or the popular 3.6km return walk to the bottom of Wilhelmina Falls.

Soon after the start of this trek – while travelling along the Monda Road – you will pass the walking track to the crest of Mount St Leonard, the highest peak in the area at 1025m. An impressively heavy steel gate and rock work marks the start of this 2km return walk which provides breathtaking views of the surrounding area.

Another milestone on this trek is the well-preserved Cheviot Railway Tunnel. Marvel at the craftsmanship of the brick work before exiting via Native Dog Road onto Goulburn Valley Highway, 10km north of Yea.

**STANDARD AND TIMES**

This trek is an easy day trek from Healesville to Yea, but could just as well be a weekend jaunt with an overnight stop at the Murrindindi Scenic Reserve.

When the area is dry it is an easy trek,

however with a bit of rain around, the route in parts, can become slippery and boggy. Some of the tracks are a little overgrown in places while the country around McClure Break Track is steep and rugged.

There are some interesting tracks in and around the SEC powerline easement close to where McClure Break Track joins the Old SEC Road for those who are a little bored with the drive north. In fact, there are a few harder 4X4 tracks in and around these forest areas and those so inclined can find challenges aplenty.

**PERMITS, ACCESS AND CAMPING**

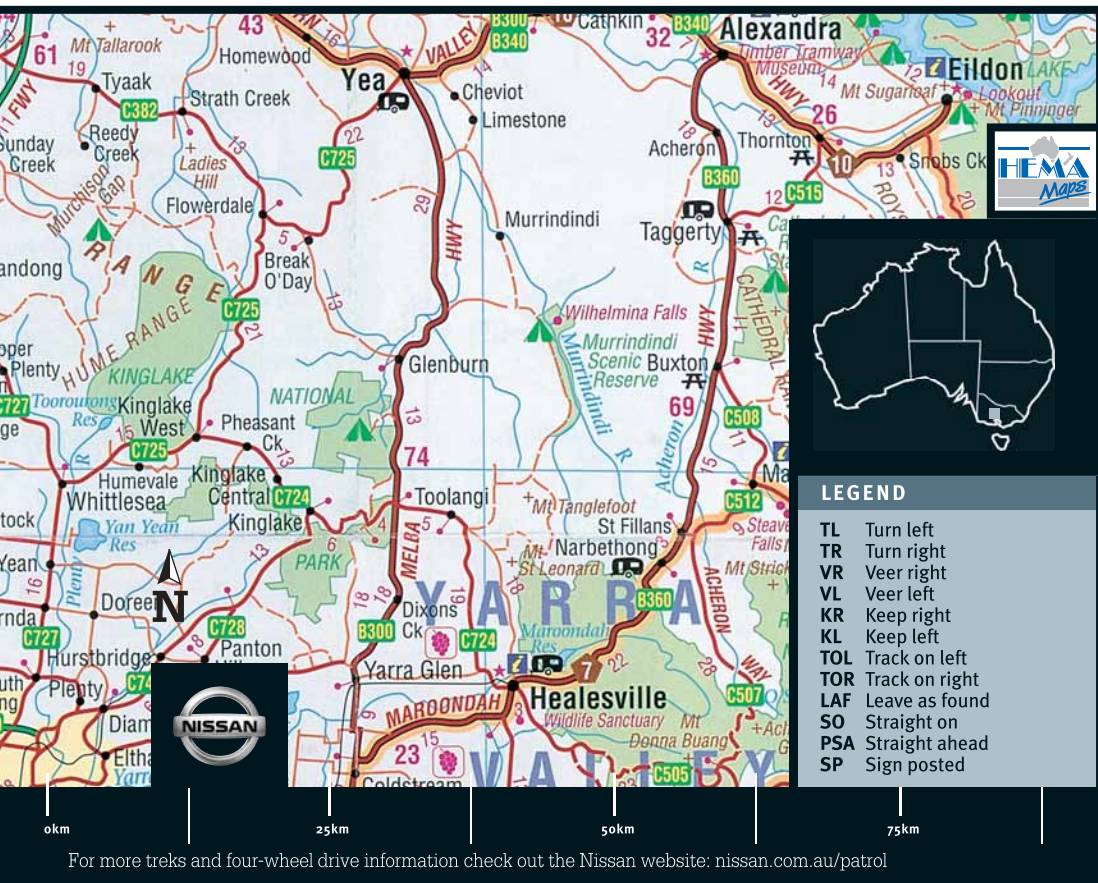
No permits are required to travel this area. Some tracks in the area are closed off during the winter months.

Camping permits are required for camping in Murrindindi Scenic Reserve. There's a self-registration site at the Suspension Bridge picnic area, close to the western entrance to the reserve. Dogs are allowed in some of the camping areas along Murrindindi River. Rangers regularly patrol the area.



**There are a few hard tracks in the forest area; those so inclined can find plenty of challenges**





For more treks and four-wheel drive information check out the Nissan website: [nissan.com.au/patrol](http://nissan.com.au/patrol)

Camping in the Reserve is very popular, especially during the summer months and holidays.

Several other camping spots exist within the forest; the most notable being Stanley Homestead site towards the end of this trek.

As is to be expected, the areas where tree-felling is being carried out are out-of-bounds to visitors – big trucks and falling timber mean it's a pretty dangerous area for visitors to be stumbling around in! These areas are changing constantly so you may come across a road closed anywhere along this trek. Take a good map so you can skirt around any of these closed-off areas without too much fuss.

Also take care on the roads as big logging trucks use them on any day of the week. On weekends trail-bike riders and other four-wheelers are common.

#### ACCOMMODATION & FACILITIES

There's plenty of accommodation in both Healesville and Yea. Fuel and all supplies are also available in these towns.

#### INFORMATION, MAPS AND GUIDES

The best maps are Rooftop's Murrumbidgee-Tallarook Adventure Map, and their Toolangi-Black Range Forest Activities Map. Hema's Melbourne's Mountain Country also covers this region and more.

### TREK NOTES

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| <p><b>0.0</b> Road junction in Healesville opposite Ampol servo. TL off MaroonDAH H'way into St Leonards Rd. Becomes Myers Creek Road after 1km.</p> <p><b>7.0</b> Myers Creek Scenic Reserve</p> <p><b>11.1</b> Cross roads. TR onto Monda Road.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 34' 7" S 145° 30' 2" E</b></p> <p><b>14.5</b> Mt St Leonard walking track on right. PSA</p> <p><b>15.2</b> Tanglefoot walking track and Road on left – PSA, keep on main track.</p> <p><b>17.5</b> Gate and Monda dugout on right. PSA.</p> <p><b>17.7</b> Y-junct. VL onto Hardy Creek Rd.</p> <p><b>25.4</b> Track junction. TR onto Reeds Tk, sometimes boggy and overgrown.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 30' 58" S 145° 32' 36" E</b></p> <p><b>27.4</b> T-junct – TL.</p> <p><b>27.6</b> T-junct – TR.</p> <p><b>28.6</b> Siberia Bridge and T-junct. Cross Murrumbidgee River and TL onto Siberia Extension Road.</p> <p><b>28.7</b> Track junct – TL onto Dindi Log Rd.</p> <p><b>31.3</b> Track junct. Campsite to left, near Murrumbidgee River. PSA, main tk.</p> <p><b>32.3</b> Track Junction – VL onto Yellowdindi Rd.</p> <p><b>33.1</b> T-junct. TR onto Murrumbidgee Rd. Another track here (hard left) leads to the old Dindi Mill site.</p> <p><b>33.7</b> Winch Rd on right – PSA.</p> <p><b>36.1</b> Egans Bridge then Kalatha Rd on left – PSA.</p> | <p><b>36.6</b> Camp Creek Rd on left – PSA.</p> <p><b>36.9</b> Murrumbidgee Cascades carpark. PSA.</p> <p><b>40.7</b> Bull Creek Rd and Camping Area to right – PSA. Also leads to Murrumbidgee River walking trail.</p> <p><b>40.9</b> Bull Creek camp to right – PSA.</p> <p><b>41.2</b> Ferns camp to right – PSA.</p> <p><b>41.3</b> Falls Creek Road on right. Straight ahead leads to more camping areas and Wilhelmina Falls walking trail and the western entrance to Murrumbidgee Scenic Reserve and exit to Melba H'way.</p> <p><b>Zero trip meter</b></p> <p><b>0.0</b> Falls Creek Road on right – TR.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 25' 36" S 145° 34' 00" E</b></p> <p><b>5.5</b> Cross roads, Jacksons Rd – PSA.</p> <p><b>6.8</b> Kelty Tk on right – PSA.</p> <p><b>7.3</b> Thompsons Tk on left – TL.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 23' 42" S 145° 36' 17" E</b></p> <p><b>8.9</b> T-junct – TR onto Waterwheel Tk. Can be boggy when wet. Bridge, 3 tonne limit.</p> <p><b>9.4</b> T-junct – TR</p> <p><b>9.7</b> T-junct – TR</p> <p><b>10.3</b> Garlicks Tk on left – PSA.</p> <p><b>11.5</b> T-junct. TL onto McClure Break Tk.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 21' 58" S 145° 35' 58" E</b></p> <p><b>11.8</b> T-junct – TL staying on McClure Break Track. This track is very steep in parts from this point.</p> <p><b>NB:</b> If this route left is closed due to logging, TR onto Northeastern Rd, follow for 2.5km and TL onto Old SEC Road. Follow this steep</p> | <p>route for 4km to junction of McClure Break track, meeting with it at 15.1 below.</p> <p><b>14.5</b> Private property on left. McClure Break track veers hard right.</p> <p><b>14.8</b> Cross small creek and pass under power lines. Numerous steep 4X4 tracks in and around here.</p> <p><b>15.1</b> T-junct with Old SEC Rd – TL. Diversion routes joins here.</p> <p><b>Zero trip meter</b></p> <p><b>0.0</b> T-junct with Old SEC Rd – TL</p> <p><b>0.6</b> T-junct – TR onto Ginter Rd.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 21' 01" S 145° 33' 57" E</b></p> <p><b>1.1</b> Y-junct – VL.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Tower Tk on left – PSA.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Tratford Tk on right – PSA.</p> <p><b>10.0</b> Stanley Homestead site on right. Good camp spot. PSA on main tk.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 17' 12" S 145° 33' 30" E</b></p> <p><b>11.4</b> Boundary Rd on right – VL onto Limestone Rd. Leaves forest soon.</p> <p><b>12.5</b> Limestone Creek – bridged. PSA on main road.</p> <p><b>18.0</b> Bitumen begins.</p> <p><b>21.3</b> Cross roads. TR, Cheviot Rd (dirt).</p> <p><b>24.6</b> Gate – PSA.</p> <p><b>24.9</b> Y-junct – VR, old railway easement.</p> <p><b>25.1</b> Enter Cheviot Tunnel.</p> <p><b>25.3</b> Exit tunnel.</p> <p><b>26.9</b> Gate. TL after gate, Native Dog Rd.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 12' 03" S 145° 31' 00" E</b></p> <p><b>30.7</b> T-junct with Goulburn Valley Highway, 10km north of Yea.</p> <p><b>GPS</b> <b>37° 10' 05" S 145° 30' 45" E</b></p> |
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