

Craters and Limestone Precinct:

Mount Schank



Mount Schank is a highly prominent volcanic cone located 10 minutes south of Mount Gambier, which protrudes above the limestone plain, providing panoramic views.

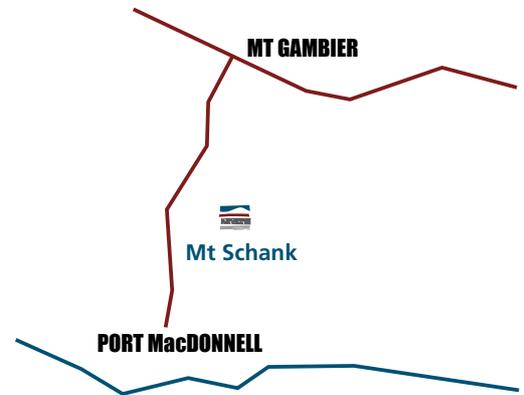
Early explorer Lieutenant James Grant named this fascinating remnant volcano after a friend of his called Captain Schank.

The mountain differs from the craters in Mount Gambier in that its floor is dry, being approximately at the level of the surrounding plain.

Evidence suggests two phases of volcanic activity. A small cone on the southern side of the mount was produced by the early phase, together with a basaltic lava flow to the west (the site of current quarrying operations). The later phase created the main cone, which now slightly overlaps the original smaller one and is known as a hybrid maar-cone structure.

Strong onshore winds greatly influenced the ash deposition, the effects of which are evident in the structural shape of the edifice and the distribution of the ash. This dramatic volcanic feature is situated 122 metres above sea level, and has an approximate age of 9,000 years. There is extensive quarrying on the lower western slopes and an old quarry on the eastern slope.

It is understood that a floating island similar to those found in the Colac Shire in Victoria once existed on the south side of Mount Schank. However due to a drop in the water table over many years, the 'mass' is now part of dry land.



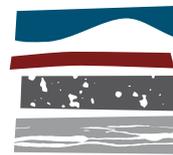
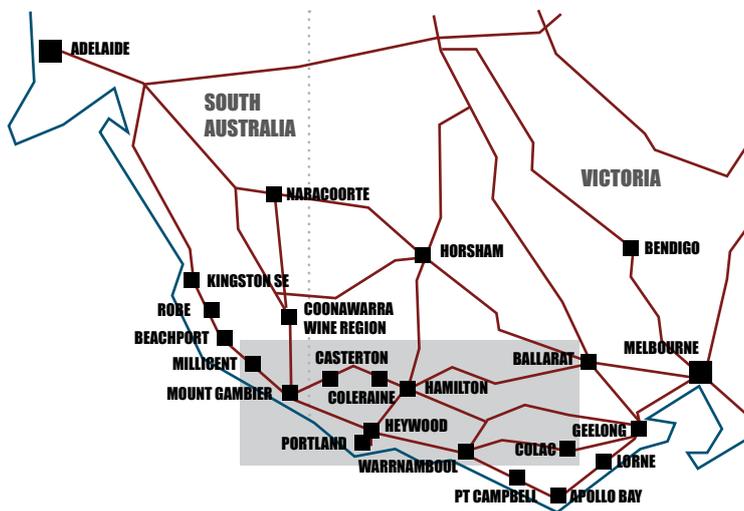
How to get there?

Mount Schank is 10 minutes south of Mount Gambier along the Riddoch Highway.

Things to do:

- Two steep walking trails offer a great geological experience. The Viewing Platform Hike (900m return) begins at the car park and goes to the crater rim. From the top, overlooking the nearby quarry, evidence can be seen of the lava flow and changes in the rock formation caused by heat and steam. On the southern side of the mountain, a small cone can be seen which is believed to have been formed by the first of two main stages.
- The Crater Floor Walk (1.3km return) also begins in the car park, and winds down to the crater floor and back.
- Interpretive signage, car parking, climbing path steps, observation board walks, toilets with disabled access, picnic area with tables and barbeques are also available. Access is by bitumen road to the carpark.





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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