

ACCESS TO MT BATES.

The summit may be reached by using a well-kept walking track that commences from the car park on nearby Mt Pitt. The walking distance is about 550 m and mostly easy going but is not suitable for wheelchairs. A sealed road leads to Mt Pitt from the Burnt Pine township some 2.8 km away. The start of the track is on the left side of the end of the car park.

Descend down some wooden steps and follow the track in a northerly direction. It runs along the ridge between Mt Pitt and Mt Bates and undulates a little, reaching its lowest point some 30 m (vertical) below the summit towards the end of the walk.

It is worth keeping an eye out for the bird life. The local pigeons prefer to walk rather than fly and the indigenous kingfisher carries a rainbow of colors. The green Norfolk Island parrot is rare but has been seen hereabouts.

The last part of the track has two steep sections on grass which are slippery when wet.

At the summit the track opens out into a small clearing amongst the subtropical forest. The flax imported a millennium ago by Polynesians and the indigenous Norfolk Island Pines and tree ferns are but three of many interesting plants. A 40 m dipole can be set up here making use of the local vegetation for support.



Above: Mt Bates Summit.



**Paul VK9PAS/P on air,
Marija VK3FMAZ in background**

A few metres to the east there is a viewing area with a seat that has superlative views over the township, the nearby islands, and Mt Pitt. It is reached via a wooden stair. The side posts of this structure make a fine support for squid poles and the steps serve well as operators seats.

Across the other side of the clearing is the actual summit, less than 2 m above the clearing. Just past that is another clearing with benches. It is not quite big enough to run a half wave on 40 m in a straight line but has a wonderful take off particularly to the North West.



Above: The western clearing.

View from Mt Bates lookout, Phillip Island on horizon

At the beginning of the clearing there are the last remains of the World War 2 radar station that graced the peak for many years. Operators of this station found they could hear noise from the sun as it rose and set. It was called the Norfolk Island Effect and after being brought to the attention of the scientific community gave rise to solar research using radio astronomy.

Spotting from here is not routine. It may be possible if you purchase a local SIM card and data allocation from the local telco. Otherwise use the Wi-Fi at your accommodation and post an alert and hope a skimmer or helpful operator will spot you.

Apart from the seats there are no facilities at Mt Bates or Mt Pitt. The nearest coffee shop/pie shop/bar/toilets are back in town, 5 minutes drive from Mt Pitt.

Allow up to 20 minutes for the walk. You can do it faster but enjoying the flora and fauna should be part of this activation. Take care on the return trip, especially the initial steep grassy sections as they get damp and slippery in the evenings.

The summit is of course part of other award schemes, for example IOTA, OC005 and VKFF0392.

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VK3AFW