

A man wearing a hat and a dark jacket is sitting on a wooden picnic table in a forest. He is operating a radio on the table. The background is a dense forest of tall, thin trees with light-colored bark. The text "35 EASY DAY TRIP SOTA ACTIVATIONS AROUND MELBOURNE" is overlaid in large red letters across the top half of the image.

# 35 EASY DAY TRIP SOTA ACTIVATIONS AROUND MELBOURNE

**Ron Cook**  
**VK3AFW**

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## **Acknowledgements.**

I have used information from my own experience and blogs on access principally those by Glen VK3YY, Peter VK3PF, Rik VK3EQ, Peter VK3ZPF, Paul VK3HN, Tony VK3CAT and Wayne VK3WAM. Denis VK3BGS did the initial proof reading. Thanks guys.

Following a suggestion by Peter VK3PF I have added the names of parks associated with the summits and when available the VKFF reference. Rik and Peter subsequently provided better track information and Rik suggested segregation of the 4WD trips which while easy enough in such a vehicle can't be done in a 2WD and are inadvisable in an AWD. Both performed some invaluable editing.

**Cover photo: Peter VK3PF enjoying an easy activation on Mt Donna Buang October 2018**

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# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THIS BOOKLET.

Knowing which peak to activate can be a conundrum for the newish SOTA activator. Many peaks have access notes you can read once you have selected them, but which ones do you select? This is a list of 35 day trips from Melbourne allowing activation of at least one SOTA peak.

It is broken into two parts and the peaks are roughly ordered in terms of their difficulty and or distance from my QTH. Part one lists drive to the top peaks and part two lists those with a walk that is on maintained walking tracks. A couple of the walks have short steep sections and only one requires any "bush bashing".

Most of the peaks are in the Central Zone. The access to 47 peaks is described.

## ACCESS

Mostly a 2 WD vehicle will suffice but for some peaks AWD is recommended due to slippery surfaces after rain or a 4WD where there are spoon drains and poorly graded roads or the roads are steep and rough. None of the roads pose any significant degree of difficulty if you have the recommended vehicle and commensurate driving skills. Travel times should not be more than 3 hours one way so that an early start should have you home for dinner.

Take care and watch for cyclists as they often ride up these peaks as part of training or just for fun.

Summits marked in **GREEN** require average to good driving skills and minimum fitness levels. The activator only has to carry his station a short distance, perhaps 200 metres, and there is very little altitude change from the car park, up to 3 or 4 metres typically. Summits marked in **BLUE** require good driving skills and a reasonable degree of fitness. The roads are not sealed all the way and may be pot holed and corrugated in sections. The walk to the summit is around 2 km on average. The tracks are usually steady climbs but some have short steeper sections. Summits marked in **BLACK** require 4WD driving ability and a reasonable degree of fitness to cope with the steeper tracks. These are my subjective ratings and are a guide only.

The total points for the summits listed is over 200 points without bonuses so that would be a good start for the aspiring Mountain Goat and if only these peaks were activated every year it would give Goat-hood in 5 years.

## BEFORE YOU GO

Use a detailed list of items to check off before departure (fuel, water, food, radio equipment etc.). Make sure you have a reliable map. In-car GPS systems are often useless outside the city and can take you into dangerous situations if followed blindly. Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back. The VK3 Association Reference Manual has invaluable advice and reading it before your first activation is a must.

## **DISCLAIMER**

You are responsible for your own safety. These notes may have errors and omissions and should not be relied upon without you making your own checks for best safe access and position relative to the summit. I have included all the nearby summits with good sealed roads suitable for 2WD but some trips have sections of road where AWD is advisable especially after rain and in some instances, 4WD is recommended, mainly because of the presence of deep spoon drains requiring good clearance and a slow approach. Unsealed roads are often maintained to year round 2WD capability but remember conditions change over time. There are seasonal road closures with some gates remaining closed for longer periods. Abandon the activation if it is unsafe to continue. Trees and rock falls can block the road. Logging operations may impose closures. Heavy rain or snow may make unsealed roads hazardous.

Mobile phone coverage may not exist on some peaks although this also changes with time.

Phone coverage depends entirely on which carrier you use and the age of your phone, with Telstra and other providers using the Telstra network (e.g. Aldi, etc.) being the most extensive. In this document "good" is based on Telstra coverage.

Feedback on track details, errors and mobile phone coverage updates will be appreciated.

Don't forget your sun protection and insect repellent.

# PART 1: DRIVE TO THE TOP PEAKS.

These are the “low hanging fruit” for an activator but still represent a good day out. Minimal climbing is involved, generally just carrying the station across a car park to a grassy area so those with limited mobility can still participate. Sometimes the activation will be best carried out a few metres up or down a grassy slope from the car park.

All mountain roads involve winding roads with limited visibility on corners and often steep sections requiring longer travel time than in the suburbs. Take care and don't speed.

The mountain roads can change if wet especially if unsealed but can be negotiated if care is taken. In winter snowfalls can require the use of chains for peaks above about 1,000 m. If inexperienced in driving in snow or slippery roads, seek advice first.

## 1 Mt Dandenong VK3/VC-023 2 points.

### 2wd rating.

Take the Mt Dandenong Tourist Road and then the Ridge Road. Take the turnoff to Observatory Road on the west side to the Sky High restaurant parking area. A parking fee is charged. At quiet times setting up on the lawn in front of the restaurant will provide both a view and a picnic table. Otherwise to the North of the restaurant is car park 6 and just below it is a grassed area which is both within the activation zone and the **Dandenong Ranges National Park VKFF-0132**. In spite of the trees in the second spot referred to above, when the sunspots are about many S2S can be had with European stations on 20 m if you have alerted and operate in late the afternoon.

There is a fair bit of TV and FM broadcast RF about up there but any reasonable HF or VHF transceiver should be OK.

FM contacts into Melbourne using a whip on a hand held transceiver are easy.

Public toilets are available. A small kiosk operates for part of the day and serves OK coffee. Good mobile phone coverage. There is an excellent view of the city and suburbs of Melbourne on a clear morning. This is affected by haze in the afternoon as the sun gets to the west and at the end of the factory working week.

Travel time typically 1 hour. Could be just a half day outing or perhaps combined with a long lunch at the restaurant. A short walk goes to the site of the Kyeema airline crash. There are many other attractions in the area.

## 2 Arthurs Seat VK3/VC-031 1 point.

### 2wd rating.

This is another peak with a licenced restaurant at the top. Take the M11 Mornington Peninsular Freeway to the Dromana turnoff (McCulloch St) and travel ahead onto the Arthurs Seat Road. Drive to the top but park in the overflow car park on the left just before the Chair Lift cables and the restaurant, not in the main car park. The main crowd go to the sealed car park and the restaurant although some will use the BBQ and picnic facilities adjacent to this car park. Travel time is about an hour.

An alternate activation site is near the car park at Seawinds Reserve. Entry is via Seawinds Entry Road just south of the summit, off Purves Road. This is well inside the activation zone and also inside the Arthurs Seat State Park VKFF-0750.

There is a west facing grassed area with some useful trees a short distance from the picnic facilities. This can get boggy in winter and spring after rain.

Public toilets are available. Good mobile phone coverage. There are views to the north along the bay from the end of the road outside the restaurant but the best views are from roadside spots on the way down. There is a walk to a memorial cairn located below the road in and just outside the activation zone.

Much of the peak is covered by the **Arthurs Seat State Park VKFF-0750**.

The top of the peak around the restaurant is excised from the park. The land to the east of a line that extends from the Chair Lift cable line is also outside the path

An alternate activation site is near the car park at Seawinds Reserve, entry via Seawinds Entry Road a little south of the actual summit, off Purves Road. This is well inside the activation zone and also inside the **Arthurs Seat State Park VKFF-0750**.

Good distances can be covered on 2 m SSB with a small beam.

### 3 Mt Donna Buang VK3/VC-002 8 points and Mt Toolbewong VK3/VC-033 4 points.

#### 2wd rating.

These two make an easy day and a fruitful one although either can be done individually of course.

Take the Warburton Highway eastward through Warburton and then left onto the Mt Donna Buang Road. Mt Donna Buang is the most activated peak in the State and while often having a poor snow season still has a 3-point bonus from 15 June until 14 October. When there is no snow, nor any prospect of it, the gate to the top car park is open and no entry charge is made. The gate may be closed at 5:00 PM according to an adjacent sign. I have been caught out by that once.

VHF into Melbourne is patchy with a rubber ducky even from atop the 20 m high lookout tower. A small beam or at least a Slim Jim is recommended.

There are picnic facilities and public toilets. A picnic table at the NW corner of the car park is a convenient and fairly unobtrusive spot to operate from but there are plenty of other options.

The Summit is in the **Yarra Ranges National Park VKFF-0556**.

There is mobile phone coverage sufficient for SMS posts.

**Mt Toolbewong** is best approached from the Mt Donna Buang–Healesville road. This may be closed in winter; in which case return to Warburton and continue west to Dom Road and head to the Donna Buang-Healesville Road. There is a sharp left turn past Panton Gap into Nyora Road when heading west. Follow the main track until a tee intersection with Moora Road is reached. Turn left and a short drive brings you into the activation zone. The summit is treed and fairly flat. The best operating places are two small clearings either side of the road just before the “Private Road” sign. These are well within the activation zone, being less than 10 m below the summit. The one on the eastern side usually has a collection of rubbish bins in a corner near the road. I have placed the antenna across the road once but was mindful that large trucks may come through so it has to be at least 4 m high. Also the garbage truck probably turns around here so allow for that.

VHF would be useful if a small beam were used.

The suggested operating position is inside the **Yarra Ranges National Park VKFF-0556**.

There is mobile phone coverage but no other facilities. It is fairly quiet RF wise although there is a Telstra facility within 100 m.

#### 4 VK3/VC-037 1 point.

##### 2wd rating when dry.

This interesting peak is in the **Bunyip State Park VKFF-0753** and is expected to be called “Near Four Brothers Rocks” at the next VK3 Association update. It is accessed on good unsealed roads and is close to Gembrook.

From Gembrook take the Beenak East Road which is sealed at this point and within 2 km becomes the Gembrook-Tonimbuk Road. Stay on the bitumen which lasts to the end of the subdivisions. It is only a few km past the bitumen to the Link Road turnoff on the left. After about 5 km take the Burgess Road turn on the right. About 2 km in you reach a locked gate. This is just below the summit. The activation zone is large as the top of this mountain is fairly flat. While you can park near this gate and set up here there is more parking 200 m further back at the Four Brothers Rocks car park and space to set up if it is not busy with walkers. Another 100 m further back there is a side road (Rankins Track) which is gated but provides a good space to set up. All these are within the activation zone.

There are no facilities but phone coverage is sufficient for self-spotting.

The Four Brothers Rocks are 300 m past the locked gate on Burgess Road.

To make a full day, combine it with **Mt Beenak**. To go to Mt Beenak return the way you came to Gembrook or continue up Link Road to Black Snake Creek Road and turn left, continuing to East Beenak Road and then turn right and follow it through to the Tower Road turnoff. This is the more scenic route.

#### 5 Mt Macedon VK3/VC-007 6 points and Pretty Sally VK3/VC-034 2 points.

##### 2wd rating.

**Mt Macedon** is another popular peak with a restaurant and viewing area and the well-known memorial cross. It also features the State's biggest survey cairn.

Take the Calder Freeway to the Macedon turnoff and continue to the township of Mt Macedon. Continue through the township with the road climbing to the signed turnoff on the left. Follow the road and signs to the car park.

It has a sealed car park for the tourists and public toilets and is wheel chair friendly.

The summit is within the **Macedon Regional Park VKFF-0972**.

Phone coverage is spotty and weak.

I recommend the BBQ area in bad weather or the North West car park (unsealed) if fine. These are far enough away from the many RF emitting towers beyond the cairn.

If it is not a weekend on the way home you may be able to squeeze into the Mt Macedon Hotel for a pizza and a beverage. Be warned it is very popular on Fridays with the locals packing the place out and tourists on the weekends fill it to overflowing.

Good distances can be covered on 2 m FM or SSB with a small beam.

**Pretty Sally** can be approached from Mt Macedon via Romsey to the Old Hume Highway and travelling north for a short distance or through Riddells Creek, Bolinda and Darraweit Guim to the Old Hume Highway and then north to the summit.

If travelling from Melbourne take the Hume Freeway and turn off for Wallan and continue up the old highway to the summit.

The peak has a big tower loaded with aerials and getting close to this is probably not a good idea. The majority of the activation zone is private land surrounding this tower. You may be able to get permission from the owner to enter his property or you can park at the high point of the road just past the owner's driveway and tie your antenna support to the fence. So long as you stay on the public side of the fence you should not annoy the owner.

There is a good VHF path to Melbourne if up on the hill but from the roadside it will be largely obscured, so HF is probably best.

There are no facilities and the site is open to westerly winds making it unpleasant in poor weather. Phone coverage is unknown.

**6 Mt Warrenheip VK3/VC-019 4 points, Mt Buninyong VK3/VC-018 4 points and VK3/VC-032 4 points.**

**2wd rating. Note: The last summit is best approached in an AWD after rain as the unsealed road can then be slippery in patches.**

This trio make a good day trip which can be concluded with dinner at the Ballan Hotel.

**Mt Warrenheip** is reached from Melbourne by travelling west on the Western Highway to Kyril Castle. Turn left off the highway and onto Forbes Road. Travel past Kyril Castle and turn left out of Forbes Road onto the Mt Warrenheip Road. Once on the summit you will see two towers. To the west of the first tower is a short track which offers some space to set up without intruding on any traffic. Another spot by the road side between the towers gives a view towards Melbourne and Geelong. A small beam would elicit some contacts in this area if you spot. Phone coverage is poor to OK and RF noise acceptable.

There are no facilities.

The summit lies within **Mount Warrenheip Flora Reserve VKFF-2402**.

**Mt Buninyong** from Mt Warrenheip is reached by descending to Forbes Road and turning left then right into Old Melbourne Road. About 2 km along turn left into Warrenheip Road. Turn left into Navigators Road then about 1 km along turn right into Yankee Flat Road. Follow this to the Mt Buninyong Road and turn left. Ascend the mountain.

The road leads to the summit where there are towers, public toilets and picnic facilities. Setting up amongst the picnic area is convenient if it isn't busy, otherwise a short walk will find a less intrusive spot. Phone coverage is OK and RF noise acceptable. Again a small beam would produce a good signal in VHF in Melbourne and Geelong.

Phone coverage is poor to OK and RF noise acceptable.

A good spot for lunch.

**VK3/VC-032** is on the north side of the Western Highway. Back track to the Highway and turn toward Melbourne. Turn left onto C141 the Ballan-Daylesford Road. Turn right into the Blakeville Road at Spargo Creek. Continue to Camp Road. Turn left and continue up Camp Road past Blackwood Ridge Road until you pass the Pumphouse Track. The summit is about 300 m further on. The summit is indistinct as it is broad and flat and covered in scrub and light timber. After passing the turnoff on the right you will arrive at the highest part of the road and within a metre or so of the summit. There is a handy clearing on the left in which you can park off road and then find one of several small clearings in which to set up. While the vegetation can limit VHF coverage beyond Ballarat the site can be very good into Europe on the long path on 20 m in the late afternoon.

It is an RF quiet area and mobile phone coverage is poor.

This peak is in the **Wombat State Forest**.

Return the way you came or follow Camp Road to Blakeville and thence to Ballan for dinner or home via the freeway.

## 7 Mt Alexander VK3/VN-016 4 points and Mt Tarrengower VK3/VN-023 2 points.

### Both 2wd rated.

These two peaks can be activated in either order.

Mt Alexandra is accessed off the Calder Highway from Faraday or Harcourt.

Take the B180 Pyrenees Highway turnoff from the Calder Freeway. Immediately turn right onto the old Calder Road now called Harmony Way. If you miss the turnoff take the next exit to the left and then turn right onto Harmony Way. This runs parallel with the freeway and then goes under the freeway to a road junction at Faraday. Take the Faraday-Sutton Grange Road to the right and continue to the Mt Alexander signpost. Turn left into Joseph Young Drive which takes you into the **Mt Alexander Regional Park VKFF-983** and to the summit of Mt Alexander.

Or from Harcourt take Mclvor Road off Harmony Way. Pick up the Harcourt-Sutton Grange Road past the reservoir and continue until on the left you reach Joseph Young Drive and head south.

There is a sign at the summit and a track on the left leads into a clearing between two Comms towers. A round stone cairn marks the summit. The TV towers are to the north. There are several places further along the road but within the activation zone and not immediately adjacent to the towers that can be used for an activation. However I have found it convenient to set up near either of these Comms towers to make use of saplings and the cleared area. I did not experience excess HF noise.

6 m SSB has been worked into Melbourne with both an HF dipole and a small beam.

Phone coverage is excellent. No facilities but a good VHF path into Bendigo.

**Mt Tarrengower** is at the west of the historic town of Maldon.

After activating Mt Alexander retrace your path to the B180 and turn right toward Castlemaine. This leads into the town. A sign indicates a left turn on the B180 to take you through the town and then to a right turn to Maldon on the C282. Continue on this into Maldon and diverge left rather than entering the town centre. Turn left into Franklin Street which becomes Mt Tarrengower Road. The access road is sealed and passes through a camping ground with toilets. At the summit there is a poppet head converted into a lookout tower (recently refurbished). There are tables at the edge of the car park and if it isn't busy they provide a convenient operating place. If you continue on the road is unsealed and makes a circle coming back to the main carpark. I suggest you park off road on this loop and either go a little left or right and find a suitable sapling or stump to last the squid pole to.

The summit is within the **Maldon Historic Reserve**.

There appears to be a shorter route which involves travelling north from Mt Alexander to Mclvor Road and onto the A300 and turning left onto Fogartys Gap Road at Ravenswood. This leads into Maldon via the C283. Turn left at the C282 junction and head to the Franklin Street turnoff on the right and on to the summit.

Phone coverage is good and allows self-spotting.

**8 Mt Strickland VK3/VN-030 6 points, Mt Gordon VK3/VN-027 4 points and Mt Mitchell VK3/VN-012 6 points.**

**2wd rating when dry, AWD otherwise.**

The three can be activated in a day trip with an early start and efficient activations. Or for an easy day with a coffee in Marysville, perhaps just the first two,

**Mt Strickland** is accessed via a good quality unsealed road that runs from over the summit and down into Marysville.

It can be accessed from the Acheron Way which branches off the Marysville Road just after that road branches off the Maroondah Highway. Pass the Mt Strickland Track turn-off on the left. Take Feiglins Road left off the Acheron Way, immediately crossing the Acheron River. Turn left to remain on Feiglins Road and climb to the junction with Road 8. Turn sharp left into Road 8 and climb the hill to the activation zone.

One cleared area which is to the south of the summit, but within the activation zone, provides a line of sight path to some of Melbourne. It has a convenient wattle tree to support a mast.

Continuing past the Mt Strickland Track on the left you come to the other clearing, across the road from the summit which is covered in thick regenerating bush and small trees. It too has been roughly harrowed and is open so an activator needs to be able to support his mast or set up against the forest edge and run the antenna in a vee into the field. Or the Mt Strickland Track signpost can be used as a mast support, but remember to provide clearance for the hard-bitten 4WD brigade who use the track.

Phone coverage is iffy at best but self-spotting is possible.

There are no facilities and only a little traffic on the road. The summit is within the **Yarra Ranges National Park VKFF-0556**.

**Mt Gordon's** left hand turn-off from the road to Marysville is easily missed. It is just past Anderson Mill Road on the right and just before the Marysville Trout and Salmon Farm on the right. The road travels to the summit and has a steep drop off the side so care on this road

is required. The mountain has a challenging bike trail down to the main road (Mt Gordon Track), so leave room for the BMX enthusiasts to go through. There is a comms facility on the summit so setting up a little distance away is recommended.

This peak is also in the **Yarra Ranges National Park VKFF-0556**.

There is phone coverage albeit not brilliant.

I have not activated **Mt Mitchell** but Tony VK3CAT has driven to the summit and camped overnight.

The easiest access is to take the Maroondah Highway, turn west just before Buxton into Dyes Lane, then Mill Creek Road, Uke Rd, then Black Range Rd to the junction with Jackson Beak – this is in the activation zone . It is all 2WD rating.

Phone coverage is sufficient for self-spotting.

If there is time after the other two peaks have been activated it would be worth doing. Otherwise mark it down as a stand-alone day trip.

To return home the quickest way retrace your path. The evening meal could be in Marysville if running late and a return home at a reasonable hour could be achieved.

The summit is in the **Marysville State Forest**.

**9 Mt Worth VK3/VT-066 2 points and Mt Hoddle VK3/VT-076 1point.**

**Mt Worth is rated 2wd. Mt Hoddle is also rated 2wd when dry, AWD recommended after rain.**

Either could be combined with another summit but this combination works as a day trip.

Travel to Darnum on the Princes Highway. Take the Darnum-Allambee Road for roughly 10 km and turn right into McDonalds Track and continue for about 3 km. **Mt Worth** can be activated from the roadside of McDonalds Track as it skirts along the edge of the activation zone and in one sharp right handed bend is well within the zone. To be comfortably in the zone most activators climb a few metres to the fence line thereby also getting out of the way of vehicles and having a convenient support for the squid pole.

The actual summit and a comms tower are in a private property. I found the owner of the property amenable to allowing operation from a spot on their drive a few hundred metres from their house and the comms tower on the summit. It is a good site with a view across farmland if the weather is clear.

Much of McDonalds track is within the **Mount Worth State Park VKFF-771** but the summit and the private property are not.

Phone coverage was useable.

**Mount Hoddle** has been renamed by the local council under pressure from a local family, so the signage may say Mt Hoddle or something else. It is still officially Mt Hoddle. It is east of Fish Creek.

Fish Creek can be accessed from Leongatha via Meeniyan or from Inverloch. Take the Fish Creek-Foster Road and turn south into Mount Nicholl Road. It is unsealed and there is a small car park within 3 km of the turnoff. It is just outside the activation zone. I have always walked to the summit where there is a cairn and found plenty of places to fix a pole to. It is an easy walk although not suitable for a wheelchair in spots.

Mobile phone coverage is OK. There are no facilities.

An alternate summit combination for Mount Hoddle would be to combine it with Mount Fatigue. Travel to Fish Creek and Mount Hoddle, then down to Foster and up to Mount Fatigue.

## 10 Mt Hickey VK3/VN-015 4 points

### 2wd rated.

Take the B300 to Yea and then the B340 the Goulbourn Valley Highway. Turn left into King Parrot Creek Drive and then right into Fairview Road. On entering the Tallarook Forest it becomes Main Road. Take a left turn into Mt Hickey Road and drive to the summit. There is a Comms facility on the top so it would be best to move back a bit to reduce interference for the myriad of services there. Watch out for motorcyclists.

It is possible to come off the Hume freeway at Ennis road which becomes Main Road.

By taking the route back to the Hume Freeway you can then travel north to Euroa and thence to **Mt Wombat**.

This summit is within the **Tallarook State Forest**. No facilities but phone coverage is okay.

## 11 Mt Fatigue VK3/VT-057 2 points and Mt Tassie VK3/VT-046 4 points.

**2wd rated in dry weather, AWD after rain for Mt Fatigue.**

This can be a longish day trip from Melbourne but if staying in Morwell for GippsTech for example it is easy and can allow for a spot of sightseeing on the way.

**Mt Fatigue** is north of Toora and commands an excellent view of Wilson's Promontory and Bass Strait. VHF contacts into Northern Tasmania with a Slim Jim are possible with the right conditions.

Take the South Gippsland Highway to Leongatha and continue on to Foster and Toora.

From Toora take the Toora-Gunyah Road which branches off the Creamery Valley Road. This is to the left off the South Gippsland Highway between Mills Street and Stanley Street. The Foster-Mt Best Road joins the Toora-Gunyah Road at Mt Best and is an alternative route.

The road to the summit (right turn) is good and signposted – ignore the one with a goat track. The roads in the area are unsealed and slippery after heavy rain. Milk tankers and school buses frequent the area.

The Toora-Gunyah Road can also be accessed from the north off the Grand Ridge Road at Gunyah-Gunyah. The Grand Ridge Road commences at Mirboo North. This route is more scenic but slower than coming through Leongatha and Foster but may have more appeal if coming via Morwell.

There is a picnic shelter to the west of the trig point at the end of a short track from the car park but no other facilities. Although there is a tower with some active equipment nearby the site is fairly quiet.

Mount Fatigue is located in the **Mount Fatigue Scenic Reserve**.

Mobile phone coverage is OK.

**Mt Tassie** is accessed off the C483 Traralgon-Balook Road. If travelling from Toora along the South Gippsland Highway turn left into the C484 Road at Yarram and then left at the C483.

If coming from the north take the C482 from Traralgon and continue south.

The old sign post has been removed and the road in is not very imposing and easily missed. It is situated between the two TV towers which are at each end of the summit ridge. The entry road is pot holed and comes to a T intersection. To the left is one TV tower with picnic tables just beyond it. The activation zone cuts through the bottom of the picnic area. My favoured activation site was midway between the turnoff and the TV tower on the right of the T intersection. There is a brand new shiny Comms tower near there, so the old site may not be viable but a hundred yards or so from any tower on the ridge road should be OK.

I have found this site good for hearing DX even if not for working it on 5 W.

Phone coverage is not good. Apart from the tables in the northern picnic area there are no facilities. It can be very windy on this summit and drizzle is a common occurrence. There is evidence that in ancient times it had a small glacier and permanent snow. Now snow is infrequent but it often feels as if it is imminent.

## **12 Mt Hooghly VK3/VT-049 2 points.**

### **AWD rated.**

This could be substituted for Mt Fatigue and coupled with Mt Tassie or combined with Mt Worth or part of a separate trip.

Travel to Morwell and then south to Churchill. Continue through the town on Monash Way and just out of the town diverge left onto Junction Road and almost immediately onto the Jeeralang West Road. Pass the Jeeralang North Road and continue for 800 – 1,000 m. The road straightens slightly and a logging track will be seen on the right in the crook of the bend.

The track is narrow and at one point there is a spring creating a greasy piece of clay which has a slope away from the cliff toward the valley. Navigable in an AWD or 4WD. The road would continue from the base of the summit pyramid on to the north back onto the Jeeralang West Road but is for walkers only now as the roadside foliage has grown in too much to drive through without stripping off much of the paintwork.

One steep track to the summit is grassed now unused by vehicles which use another track which is a little less steep but with deep slippery wheel ruts. The usual AWD vehicles bottom out on this so it's walk or 4WD only.

The summit itself is cleared and grassed and has an adequate number of boulders breaking the surface.

The junction of the summit track and the old logging road is at the edge of the activation zone. It is not difficult to climb a few metres up the grassed track and find supports for a mast and ends of a dipole.

The summit was once used by VHF field day operators so a beam should yield VHF SSB contacts into the Latrobe Valley and the south east of Melbourne. Alerting and spotting would be essential for this.

Phone coverage poor at the road junction, fair on the summit.

There are no facilities.

### 13 Mt Skene VK3/VE-031 10 points.

#### **2WD rated.**

This can only be accessed in winter if part of an approved 4WD club expedition. The Jamieson – Licola Road is subject to seasonal road closure imposed by Shire of Mansfield. It is exposed, windy and potentially lethal in winter. During summer it is benign (well the weather in the Alps is always subject to sudden change) and apart from the inevitable huge march flies it is a pleasant spot and an easy drive.

Access is from Mansfield via the north part of Jamieson where the Jamieson to Licola Road commences. The road passes through the activation zone and there are grassed areas either side of the road. It is a short walk to the summit but it is flat and vegetated to the extent that there is no view.

It could be combined with Mt Matlock for a big day out or using Jamieson as a base these two plus the Mt Terrible trio could make for a couple of memorable days off the bitumen.

The summit is inside **The Mount Skene Natural and Scenic Features Reserves.**

Good distances can be covered on 2 m SSB with a small beam.

Don't expect facilities or mobile phone coverage.

**14 Mt Cowley VK3/VC-022 2 points and Crowsnest Lookout VK3/VS-049 1 point.**

**Mt Cowley AWD rated when wet. Crowsnest Lookout 2WD rated.**

**Mt Cowley** is the highest peak in the Otway range and accessible all year round although in winter the clay surface on the road turns to grease.

From Lorne take the Erskine Falls Road. Ignore the Access Road to the falls unless sightseeing. Turn left into the Benwerrin-Mt Sabine Road. The Mt Cowley Track is on the left.

The road goes to the summit which is in the **Lorne Forest Park**.

There are a large number of commercial radios on this peak so setting up a little distance from them will minimise noise problems.

The forest around the peak screens any view that might otherwise be seen.

A beam is necessary for VHF to make it to Geelong or Melbourne.

There are no facilities. Phone coverage is unknown.

Return by retracing your path in or continue along the Benwerrin- Mt Sabine Road on to the Wye Road and hence back to the Great Ocean Road.

**Crowsnest Lookout** overlooks Apollo Bay. Take the Great Ocean Road to Apollo Bay and turn off the Great Ocean Road north into Cawood Street. Continue into Tuxion Road to the end past the entrance to the Clearwen Retreat. The summit is on the left in private property but the road enters the activation zone.

No facilities and phone coverage not assessed.

## 15 Mt Wombat VK3/VU-002 4 points

### 2WD rated.

If heading north up the Hume Freeway diverge at Euroa into the Euroa Main Road, cross the Seven Creeks Bridge and turn right into the Euroa-Strathbogie Road. Drive easterly and turn right into the Mount Wombat Road, then right into the Mount Wombat Lookout Road and proceed to the summit.

An alternative route for those in the eastern suburbs is to take the Maroondah Highway to Merton and just past the “town centre” turn left onto the Merton-Strathbogie Road. Proceed through Strathbogie on to the Euroa-Strathbogie Road and turn right into the Mount Wombat Road and then left into the Mount Wombat Lookout Road. This road services the communications tower and its myriad services. The activation zone is small due to the steepness of this summit. There are extensive views from the lookout area.

There are no facilities and the phone coverage is unknown.

The summit is inside the **Mount Wombat-Garden Range Flora & Fauna Reserve VKFF-2403**.

## 16 Mt Ida VK3/VU-009 1 point

### AWD rated.

Head up the Hume Freeway and take the Wallan off ramp onto the Northern Highway B75. Drive through to Heathcote and follow the B75 to the right for about 5 km where on the right you will find the Mt Ida Lookout Road which leads to the summit. Apart from the lookout there are some comms setups so it may be prudent to move along one of the tracks to get a little space from these potential noise sources.

No facilities and phone coverage adequate for self-spotting.

The summit is inside the **Heathcote-Graytown National Park VKFF-0624**.

## 17 Mt Leura VK3/VS-050 1 point

### 2WD rated.

This peak is at the distance limit for a day trip. Take the Princes Freeway, the A1, to Geelong, then the B140 the Hamilton Highway to Cressy and just out of Cressy turn left into C164, the Foxhow – Camperdown Road. Or you can stay on the A1 from Geelong to Camperdown.

The Western District town of Camperdown nestles at the foot of Mt Leura, a currently extinct volcano. A sealed road leads south of the town past a camping area and east to commence the climb to the car park close to the summit cairn. From the A1, turn left down the Camperdown – Cobden Road and left again at Lawrence St which becomes the Mt Leura Road.

There is a two sided and roofed picnic shelter (no table inside) which is handy as the south west wind seems to come non-stop from the Antarctic waters. There are good views of the township and farming land. It has been a favourite VHF field day site but a beam and reasonable power is required to make the long haul back to Melbourne or across to Mt Gambier.

There is phone coverage and the toilets and food outlets are in the town.

A handful of locals come there for their lunch mid-week and there are always a few tourists interested in “climbing” a volcano.

There are other SOTA peaks that are within easy reach if staying locally overnight or you are prepared for long day out. These include **Mt Napier VK3/VS-046** and **Mt Rouse VK3/VS-048** with the former requiring a walk from a locked gate. Mt Rouse adjacent to Peshurst has a gate too these days (usually open) but access can be asked for and is usually given. It has good phone coverage.

**Mt Elephant VK3/VS-047** is private property but access has been granted in the past. There may not be a road to the summit.

**Mt Clay VK3/VS-051** near Portland is a drive-into-the-activation zone peak and could be included in a three peak day if you spent a night or two at say Warrnambool. A suggested itinerary is: Mt Leura en-route to Warrnambool on day 1. Day 2, Mt Clay, Mt Napier, Mt Rouse. Overnight at Hamilton. Day 3, Ansett museum, Budj Bim (Mt Eccles) NP or Mt Elephant, then return home.

## 4WD RATED PEAKS

These peaks do not represent much of a challenge in a 4WD vehicle and also could be activated if a walk in from the end of the 2WD road were undertaken.

### 18 Gentle Annie VK3/VT-078 2 points.

#### 4WD rated.

Take the Princes highway and at Longwarry North take the Sand Road off ramp then right onto the Princes Way and then left into Labertouche Road. At Labertouche diverge right into Forest Road. This winds its way across the farmland into the forest and onward for some distance. Keep left at the multi-junction into Bunyip Road and almost immediately turn left into Gentle Annie Track. This is a bit rough and 4WD standard, rising some 200 m in 1.3 km. Several AWD vehicles have scraped their way to the top. There is a gate at the start of this track which is subject to seasonal closures.

A 2WD will get you to the gate and you can walk the steady climb to the summit.

The peak is in the **Bunyip State Park VKFF-753**.

There are no facilities and phone coverage is likely to be very iffy.

**Spion Kopje (definite 4WD), North Hells Gate** and **South Hells Gate** are nearby but all involve a bush bash.

Bunyip Road leads on to **Mt Beenak** or just after the track to Seven Acre Rock turn right into Learmonth Creek Road and arrive on the Yarra Junction – Noojee Road just west of Powell Town.

## **19 Mt Horsfall VK3/VT-028 6 points**

### **4WD rated.**

This is the highest peak on a ridge traversed by a road that is likely to be gated off in the winter which is usually deemed to be from QBWE to 1 November. The peak is on a road called The Forty Mile Break 4WD. For the most part the road is a good unsealed road.

Start on the Yarra Junction-Noojee Road C425. Take the sharp left turn into the Mount Baw Baw Tourist Road. At Noojee turn left into C418, the Loch Valley Road. At a Y junction take the right side – the Toorong Road. A sharp left turn at another Y intersection takes you onto the start of Forty Mile Break.

There are several false summits before reaching the real peak which the road passes over. There is a large grassed area at the summit – used for emergency helicopter flights. A trig is located at the summit proper on the southern side of the cleared area.

Note that roads in this area may be closed at any time due to logging operations.

There is spotty mobile phone coverage and no facilities.

This could be combined with an activation of Mount Toorong Range.

## **20 The Paps VK3/VE-205 4 points**

### **4wd rated.**

This peak requires a 4WD to drive to the top because of deep drains and its steepness in the last section.

Access is from C320 the Mansfield - Mt Buller Road. The turn-off is on the right about 9 km before Mansfield. There is a gate and the road runs through private property. The gate must be kept shut and should not be locked, but the gate to the Paps Scenic Reserve is sometimes locked in which case this requires a one hour hike in with a final steep climb of 90 m. The road to the reserve is sometimes in poor condition but can be negotiated in an AWD vehicle with reasonable ground clearance.

**The Paps Natural Features and Scenic Reserve** contains the summit.

Phone coverage is good.

**21 Mt Terrible VK3/VE-067 8 points, Mt Terrible Spur VK3/VE-134 6 points, Bald Hill VK3/VE-137 6 points.**

**4WD rated.**

This trio makes a juicy point score especially if you are able to access Mt Terrible for the bonus 3 points. Check whether there is a winter gate closure applying as there are gates on the road. The roads in to the area are slow travelling and instead of approaching from Eildon it may be faster to come from Mansfield leaving only 10 km from the Jamieson-Eildon turnoff to the Mt Terrible Road.

These three peaks sit on a ridge running north to south with Bald Hill at the north end just off the Eildon – Jamieson Road and Mt Terrible at the southern end.

**Bald Hill** access road is a hundred metres closer to Jamieson than the Mt Terrible Road and easily missed. There is a convenient clearing adjacent to the summit of Bald Hill but the road in has two large spoon drains and a gate which may be closed in winter.

This peak is within the **Lake Eildon National Park VKFF-0625**.

**Mt Terrible Spur** is reached by travelling south on the Mt Terrible Road from the Eildon-Jamieson Road toward Mt Terrible. Check for gate closures. There are some grassy places next to the summit which is alongside the road where a doublet may be raised and a vehicle parked.

The road from there to **Mt Terrible** gets to be badly corrugated and has some deep spoon drains making life difficult for any vehicle other than a 4WD.

There is a fire spotting tower on the peak and limited facilities consisting of picnic tables and shelter and tank water. There is no toilet.

Good distances can be covered on 2 m SSB with a small beam.

The summit is inside **The Mount Terrible Natural and Scenic Features Reserves**.

Phone coverage from the car park does not exist. There are some impressive views and the steel welded sign is unusual.

## **22 Mt Matlock VK3/VC-001 8 points**

### **4WD rated.**

There is a 3 point winter bonus but the access road is normally gated off from the beginning of June to the end of October. For summer access travel to Warburton via Mt Evelyn and continue east on C511 the Woods Point Road. Turn right at the Cumberland junction and stay on C511. About 12 km before Woods Point turn left into Corn Hill Road. This road passes close to the summit of Mt Matlock after about 1.5 km from the turnoff. There is a comms facility on the summit so it is best to move back a few metres to reduce HF noise.

It is not a great distance from Melbourne as the radio wave goes but the road trip takes a while. Return the same way or continue on through Woods Point staying on C511. It becomes the Mansfield –Woods Point Road and passes through Jamieson. On the North side of Jamieson is the Jamieson-Licola Road which passes through the activation zone of Mt Skene. This road is closed in winter. It would be possible to activate Mt Skene, overnight at Jamieson or Mansfield and on the following day activate the three summits on the Mt Terrible Range or head for Mt Buller and Mount Stirling.

No facilities (Woods Point is some 20 km away) but there is patchy phone coverage.

## **23 Mt Vinegar VK3/VC-005 6 points**

### **4WD rated. (there is a 2WD option)**

There is a road that runs over the summit, starting and ending on the Acheron Way. The longer track (approach 2) seems to be favoured.

There are three approaches to Mt Vinegar:

1. Head south off the Maroondah Highway at Narbethong and onto the Acheron Way until the normally locked gate on Mt Vinegar Rd. Park here and follow Mount Vinegar Road to Road No 8 and follow the latter to the summit. 4WD is recommended.
2. Turn right into White Hill Track of the Acheron Way. Veer slightly left into Carters Gap Road. There is a large gate at the junction with Road No 8. If open, take the sharp left turn into Road 8. If closed, follow the route on foot – it is about 4.1 km to the summit. The gate here is locked in winter but may be closed at any time. There is a short section that may be boggy. 4WD is recommended. There is a gate 200 m from the summit which should be open in the summer. If not, park here and walk in. The gate is just outside the activation zone.

- Alternative vehicle access is possible via Dom Dom Saddle on the Black Spur. Gate access to Road No 8 at Dom Dom Road is subject to seasonal closure.

Tony VK3CAT reported the following in April 2017:

*Vehicle access to within 150 metres (10 m vertical) is possible via Dom Dom Saddle on the Black Spur; the gate at Dom Dom road is normally open but is subject to seasonal and sporadic closure. The road is a good gravel 2wd and although not marked on maps has been in existence for many years.*

*This road replicates No 8 Road running the spur line which is closed to vehicles.*

There are no facilities and phone coverage is reasonable

Part of the activation zone of Mount Vinegar is within the **Yarra Ranges National Park VKFF-0556**. You must be on the West side of the road.

## **24 Pyramid Hill VK3/VN-005 8 points.**

### **2WD rated with a walk or 4WD rated.**

This is a drive into the activation zone in a 4WD in summer. In winter gate closures necessitate a steep and long walk in.

Take the Maroondah Highway from Melbourne. Drive through Healesville and Buxton. At Taggerty turn right onto the C515 Taggerty – Thornton Road to Thornton. Turn right onto the B340, the Goulburn Valley Highway to Snobs Creek. Here turn right onto Snobs Creek Road and continue 16.5 km until reaching Road 5 on the right. After almost 4 km on Road 5 turn right into Royston Range Track. The gate just beyond this turn-off is closed in winter. Continue 400m until the road junction on the saddle. In the summer park your 2WD here and walk along the track for the last 400m. This part of the Royston Range track is steep in parts and is overgrown as you reach the activation zone. Royston Range track passes the summit (on the left) within the activation zone.

If you have a 4WD you could attempt a drive into the activation zone in summer

The area has recently been logged. Consult your GPS to ensure you activate the right peak as there is a second one, Bleak Hill, a little further along the track close to the same height as Pyramid Hill according to the SOTA Topo Map.

Logging may cause summer access to be closed at times. The summit is in the **Marysville State Forest**,

Phone coverage not assessed but likely to be poor at best.

## PART 2: SHORT WALK TO THE TOP SUMMITS

While some of these walks are steep in part they can be accessed by an activator of average fitness. By taking breaks and not rushing the climb even those unused to such exertion should be able to get there. There are more challenging walks for the fitter activator but they are not included here.

### 25 Flinders Peak VK3/VC-030 1 point

**2WD rated.**

This involves a solid 150 m climb from the car park on a well maintained path. It is an easy day trip from Melbourne and may be combined with other nearby attractions.

Signage is reasonable and the Melways shows a couple of possible routes.

One suggestion is to take the Princes Freeway from Melbourne and take the Little River exit. Take Edgars Road across the railway line and turn left into You Yangs Road. Turn left at Farrars Road and then right into Branch Road. The entrance to the **You Yangs Regional Park VKFF-982** which encompasses the summit is on the right. Follow this road, signed as Turntable Drive to the elevated car park.

There is a toilet at the car park and phone coverage is OK.

The summit has a lookout deck and below it a couple of seats. While you can use the deck railing to fix a pole, I prefer to set up so that the deck and its access is clear as this can be a busy peak. There is not much space here so some thought is necessary before deploying the antenna.

The views are excellent.

## 26 Mt Piper VK3/VN-028 2 points

### 2WD rated.

Take the Hume Freeway and exit at Broadford and on to the C311 the Broadford Kilmore Road. Turn right onto Jefferies Lane then into Mt Piper Lane and on to the car park. The walk can be steep and short if you follow the direct track or

less steep on the longer more leisurely track. Follow the sign posts.

The views are excellent and there is good phone coverage

It could be combined with Pretty Sally and/or Mount Hickey.

## 27 Mt St Leonard VK3/VC-006 6 points

### 2WD rated.

This requires a 2 km walk in up Road 10 with a grade of easy to moderate. Take the Monda Road (accessible from Healesville off the Myers Creek Road) and keep an eye out for the humungous gate on the south side. You could take the Melba Highway, turn right onto the King Lake-Healesville Road through Toolangi and on to Myers Creek Road and then onto Monda Road.

At the gate there is space for parking several vehicles. Once at the summit it is best to operate a hundred or more metres away from the facilities building at the base of the tower. The peak is notorious for being a noisy HF location and the noise comes from the facilities building. There is a small clearing adjacent to Track 11 which heads down to Donnellys Weir near Healesville. It is far enough away from the noise sources and the power lines but you will be amongst the trees.

Phone coverage is OK and the view is worth the walk if the weather is clear.

The summit is within the **Marysville State Forest**. The fire spotters are usually friendly and it would be courteous to say "Hi" if setting up within their line of view.

There are no publically available facilities other than a lookout deck.

## 28 Mt Beenak VK3/VC-016 4 points

**2WD rated when dry, AWD otherwise.**

This can be accessed either from Launching Place or Gembrook. When combined with another peak such as VK3/VC-037 it makes a good day out.

From Launching Place continue along the Warburton Highway to Yarra Junction. Turn right onto C525 the Yarra Junction- Noojee Road. After 11 km the Mt Beenak Road sign post will be seen. Turn right and follow this unsealed road for about 9 km at which point a junction will be reached. The road to the left, Fifth Dam Track is gated as is the road ahead, Tower Track, but the road continues to the right as East Beenak Road. Park near Fifth Dam Track junction and walk up Tower Track.

This track was recently graded (October 2018). It is about 1.6 km long and the grade is from moderate to steep.

Access from Gembrook is off Gembrook-Launching Place Road via Pack Track onto East Beenak Road, or further north left into Soldiers Road, Tomahawk Valley Road and then East Beenak Road. Or continue up Gembrook-Launching Place Road and turn right into Beenak Road reaching East Beenak Road at Basan's Corner. Turn left.

East Beenak Road passes through "the squeeze", a narrow opening between boulders that has been widened for logging trucks, so not so squeezey now.

East Beenak Road meets Bunyip Road and swings hard left. About a km along Tower Track is reached on the right.

The peak is in the **Beenak State Forest**.

There are three towers, one with a fire spotters hut. There are solar cells and a diesel generator set, however the noise level is tolerable and the summit is clear of trees. I prefer to set up down the hill on the side of a track, Settlement Road track. It is about 10 – 15 m below the peak so well within the activation zone. Keep in mind that trail bike riders may appear on it without notice. It is also close to some regrowth either side of the track.

At the summit there is phone coverage but no facilities.

## 29 Mt Disappointment VK3/VC-014 4 points

### **2WD rated.**

There is a not too hard walk to the summit from Blair's Hut Picnic Ground. The distance is 3.5 km return. Blair's Hut is a modern recreated log cabin with galvanised iron roof providing some shelter in inclement weather.

From Whittlesea take the Whittlesea – Wallan Road C727. Turn right onto C729 then right into South Mountain Road until it joins with the North Mountain Road and becomes Main Mountain Road. At a three way intersection of Lords Road, Mt Disappointment Road and Main Mountain Road take the Mt Disappointment Road.

While this road continues past the summit, within 10 vertical metres, most activators who have described their activation have walked in from the picnic ground along the marked walking track.

There is a cleared area and a picnic table at the summit.

A small part of the activation zone is in **Mt Disappointment State Forest**.

An alternative approach is to take the Hume Highway and turn off at Heathcote Junction. Take the North Mountain Road and proceed as above.

There are no facilities except the picnic area, phone coverage not known.

## 30 Mt Beckworth VK3/VC-024 2 points

### **2WD rated.**

There is a climb of about 130 m over a track about 3 km long so not too steep.

From Melbourne travel through Ballarat on the Western Freeway and exit onto the C287, the Ballarat- Maryborough Road, through Miners Rest.

Take the left fork into Coghills Creek Road. Turn sharp right into Coutts Road (it may now be signposted as Mt Beckworth Road) and park at the end of the road. Walk up the Southern Ridge Track into the Clunes Plantation. The summit has a few trees and plenty of open space.

The summit is in the **Mt Beckworth Scenic Reserve**. An alternative walking track comes in from the north side from the Cork Oaks Track car park

No facilities other than a picnic table. Phone coverage is good.

### 31 Mount Bride VK3/VC-009 4 points

**AWD rated.**

Travel along the Warburton Highway until 3 km east of Yarra Junction. Turn left into Blacksands Road. Then turn left onto Mt Bride Road. Then turn right onto Burns Road and park at the high point. There is a 60 m climb over half a km to the summit along a rough track. Note that Burns Road is closed in winter so that extends the walk.

No facilities and phone coverage is good.

### 32 Mt Oberon VK3/VT-060 2 points

**2WD rated.**

Another longish day trip but one that rewards with great views. Take the Wilsons Promontory Road off the South Gippsland Highway at Fish Creek.

At the end of the road turn right for Tidal River or left to drive to the car park at Telegraph Saddle where the walk commences. In busy periods you may have to take the shuttle bus from Tidal River to this car park. The walk to the summit is up a steep sealed road and about 3½ km and the altitude gain is about 340 m. It is one of the harder walks in this section. There are comms facilities just below the actual peak and it can be crowded in peak times. I recommend avoiding these times.

No facilities on the summit but there are limited facilities in Tidal River.

This summit is within the **Wilsons Promontory National Park VKFF-976**.

Phone coverage should be OK.

There are other SOTA peaks in the region but I've not assessed those.

One that is in this document is **Mt Hoddle** and it could be paired with this.

### **33 Mt Buller VK3/VE-008 10 points**

**2WD rated.**

This could be a day trip but involves a short but quite steep walk from the car park to the activation zone. The 10 points in summer makes it tempting. The road out of Mansfield through Merrijig right through to the Alpine village is well sign posted. When reaching the village turn right past the Monash Uni annex and take the road to the summit car park.

Do not set up within 25 m of the fire spotters hut. One of the spotters gets upset at the sight of a squid pole. If you walk to the summit continue along the ridge and you will encounter a steel pipe set up here. The ridge is narrow, rocky and steep on both sides. A fall is likely to result in serious injury.

The alternative area is to the right of the summit track on a mini summit. The activation zone encompasses this and everything from a metre or two below a small saddle at the start of the summit ridge track.

Phone coverage can be variable. All facilities are in the village centre.

There is a winter bonus but you will need a ski tow pass and ski's to ride the ski lifts to the top and then ski back.

### 34 Federation Range VK3/VN-029 8 points

#### 2WD rated.

Travel to Marysville and take the Lake Mountain Road. Park in the sealed area at the ski resort centre. In winter cross country skis will be required but the reward is 3 bonus points and some great scenery. Snow shows may be a possibility, depending on the snow depth.

Take the Royston Gap Road on the west side of the buildings. This is closed to private vehicles all year round. The track to the Crossways intersection is the steepest bit. At the intersection take the Boundary Trail which verges slightly right. Pass Keppel's Hut Walking Trail on the left. Now you are in the activation zone. There is a track of sorts to the summit or you can set up on the side of the track. The ants here can be very aggressive so pick your spot carefully. The map shows the track circling the summit and back on itself and if you take the right fork before Keppel's Hut Walking Trail you walk over the peak. There is a ruined stone hut at the peak.

Because of the flatness of the general area with small rises and valleys a good GPS is invaluable in finding your way for the first time especially.

It is possible to work stations in Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley on 2 m FM with 5 W and a Slim Jim.

The walk is about 5 km in each direction.

The Summit is within the **Yarra Ranges National Park VKFF-0556**.

Retrace your steps to the car park. The canteen may be open for a coffee otherwise Marysville can offer anything a hungry or thirsty activator would desire.

## 4WD RATING

### 35 Mount Toorongo Range VK3/VT-026 8 points

**4WD rated. AWD may be possible.**

Unfortunately the closet approach of the road to the summit is just outside the activation zone and there is no well-made walking track.

Take the C426 Yarra Junction - Noojee Road which becomes the Mt Baw Baw Tourist road at Noojee.

Stay on this until about 2.5 km before Tanjil Bren you will find the Toorongo – Tanjil Link Road.

Turn into this and continue for about 6 km. Here it meets the Mt Toorongo Track and according to some maps the 4WD section begins however an AWD will negotiate this road. Swing left at the junction with Mundic Road. The road heads roughly south-west and passes within 250 m of the summit at the 1,220 m contour.

There is seasonal road closure gate just beyond the saddle on the approach to the final climb towards the summit. If the gate is closed park and enjoy the extra 1 km walk to the high point on the track. There is a climb of 40 m to the summit with an indistinct animal track leading off the road. Parking space is limited. It is only necessary to ascend 15 m from the road to be in the activation zone. Look for the rocks as a guide. If the undergrowth has become less penetrable than is desired the full climb need not be made, although it is always satisfying to do so.

There is a road to a sign posted Mount Toorongo Summit on the maps but that peak is 9 m lower than the actual summit and the saddle between the two peaks dips 50 m so this peak is not in the activation zone.

Consider combining this with an activation of Mt Horsfall.