

Winter at Mount Buffalo 2022



What's on Offer

Toboggan & Snow Play Areas

There are two managed areas at Mt Buffalo National Park. Only plastic moulded toboggans are allowed in the patrolled areas (see note below regarding toboggans):

- **Dingo Dell** - Aimed mainly at family groups with young children, Dingo Dell has a great little toboggan slope with a safe run-out area at the bottom. There is ample space for children to build snowmen, snow angels and for running about throwing snowballs. The area is over-looked by a warm and friendly café and Day Visitor Centre within Keown Lodge.
- **Cresta Valley** – While the facilities at Cresta may be more basic than Dingo Dell the tobogganing is more diverse. There is a wide range of terrain and scenery on offer but also with a managed area designated for family-oriented fun on a safe and controlled slope. The opportunity for snow play is also expanded with large open spaces for exploration.



Tobogganing fun



Snow play

Toboggans



Only plastic moulded toboggans are allowed. Home-made toboggans using items like car inner-tubes and wheelbarrow buckets are not permitted. Neither are scooter/bike style devices.

Cross Country Ski Trails

Cresta Valley has three groomed ski trails plus a large untracked/unmarked area for the more adventurous and well prepared:

Groomed Trails – starting from Cresta Car Park

- The Horn Road - a wide and easy trail, the first 1 km is perfect for beginners as the terrain is wide and flat. The gradient becomes steeper leading up to the Horn, the pinnacle of Mt Buffalo. Conditions can become icy, and the road has tight corners. Therefore, the upper section of the Horn Road is recommended for beginner-intermediate skiers that know how to slow their speed and stop. It is 2 ½ km one-way.
- The Bogong Loop meanders out across the plains to the east of the car park and is approximately 1km return, marked with orange poles
- The Beginners Loop follows the old service road at Cresta Valley, great for the first timer on skis and is approximately 500m return, orange poles mark the old ski slope area.



The start of the Bogong Loop at Cresta Valley



The Horn

Ungroomed Trails

- The 4km trail is a marked ungroomed trail that heads out through the Giants Playground and back through the Valley of the Gods. It is marked with orange poles. If conditions allow, we will make every effort to groom this trail.

Unmarked Skiing-

- The Mt Buffalo plateau offers a blank canvas of opportunities for those wishing to explore on skis. With a packed lunch and appropriate safety gear you can have a great day of skiing and exploring.

Winter Walks and Snowshoeing

All walking tracks are open for walking during winter. There are marked walking/snowshoeing routes at Dingo Dell, Cathedral Saddle and Cresta for visitors to enjoy. Look for these signs.

Please stay off our groomed and marked cross country ski trails to protect the snow cover and to prevent injury to skiers from ruts caused by footsteps in the snow.

For the well-prepared visitor, many of our established walking tracks can be enjoyed during winter.



Blue for beginner



Red for intermediate

Facilities

Dingo Dell Café & Day Visitor Area at Keown Lodge

There is a large car park on Mount Buffalo Road adjacent to the snow play and toboggan areas at Dingo Dell. Visitors are advised to walk the short section of sealed road to Keown Lodge to avoid the boggy ground and hidden creeks when going cross-country from the car park to the toboggan area. The short section of sealed road leading into Keown Lodge is also used for car parking but tends to fill up very quickly and once full a Road Closed sign is erected at the entrance.

Inside Keown Lodge there is a heated Café and Day Visitor Area, toilet, change rooms, First Aid Room and large windows that look directly out on all the fun. Visitors can BYO food and drinks to enjoy in the warmth inside. The car park is a popular place to set up a BYO gas BBQ or stove for a sausage sizzle.

Dingo Dell Café Operation hours

Dingo Dell Café will operate 10am – 4pm, Wednesday to Sunday and everyday of the school holidays. (when there is snow). When the café is closed the building will remain open for visitor use. Ranger staff patrol the area during the day but are not guaranteed to be always there.



Picnic in the Dingo Dell carpark



Keown Lodge & Dingo Dell Cafe

Cresta Valley

Cresta Valley is serviced by a small car park area, with additional parking along the road, a long-drop toilet and a small non-heated room to change in or to escape the weather. Ranger staff patrol the area during the day but are not guaranteed to be always there. Telstra is the only mobile phone service provider on the mountain. An aerial booster has been installed to improve Telstra coverage at the site but weather can impair reception.



A day at Cresta Valley backcountry skiing and snowshoeing. Dress warm as not all days are sunny.



The Gorge

During winter the car park at The Gorge is not cleared by Vic Roads and at times access is restricted to foot traffic only. There is limited car parking up near the Chalet. Visitors are advised that the sealed surface of the road and car parks can become icy and very slippery. The cold conditions also freeze the water pipes at the toilet block and to avoid bathroom disasters, the toilet block at the Gorge may be closed for periods of time. Visitors will need to 'hang on' until they reach the facilities at either Dingo Dell, The Cathedral Saddle or Cresta Valley.

Stone Hut at The Gorge

First Aid

There are basic first aid facilities at both Dingo Dell and Cresta. Ranger staff patrol the toboggan and snow play areas during the day but are not guaranteed to be always there. If a medical emergency occurs visitors are advised to call 000.

There is a medical centre and hospital in Bright:

Bright Medical Centre – ph 5755 1000. 115 Gavan St, Bright

Bright Hospital –ph 5755 0100. 32/36 Cobden St, Bright

Licensed Tour Operator Activities

Licensed tour operators will be offering cross country ski instruction and snowshoeing during the winter season. Enquire at local visitor centres or at Dingo Dell or search on-line.

Fuel

There is no fuel available at Mt Buffalo. Porepunkah is the nearest fuel station to the mountain. If you are driving a diesel vehicle fill up with Alpine diesel before visiting alpine areas as diesel goes gluggy in very cold conditions.

Phone Coverage

Telstra provides good phone coverage for Telstra customers at Dingo Dell and Cresta, and in most other visitor areas on the mountain. Other phone service providers have poor or non-existent coverage at Mt Buffalo.

Rubbish

Parks Victoria spends a lot of time and money each winter to have rubbish removed from the mountain. This year we are encouraging our visitors to take their rubbish off the mountain with them and dispose of it responsibly.

Media and Reports

We aim to communicate conditions at Mt Buffalo in many ways:

Daily Updates

Updates are sent via email to all those who request it. The emails contain information on snow conditions, road conditions, requirement to carry/not carry chains, condition of toboggan areas, café opening hours, weather forecasts etc. Information on winter fun is also on Tourism Northeast website www.visitmountbuffalo.com

Snow Cam

<http://ski.com.au/snowcams/australia/vic/buffalo/buffalo1.html>

Snow Clearing and Snow Chains

Snow clearing

Vic Roads manage the Mt Buffalo Tourist Road so they will again be managing the snow clearing and chain fitting this year. As always after a big snowfall the priority for the crews will be to clear to Dingo Dell, when that is safe and clear they will proceed to clear to Cresta and finally to the Chalet car park.

Carrying Snow Chains

The requirement to carry snow chains is assessed daily by staff at Mt Buffalo. When it is identified that there will be an extended period of fine weather, that will not produce icy or snowy road conditions, the requirement to carry chains will be revoked. This will be communicated via signage at the entrance to the park as well as by the email sent out every morning.

When staff assess there is a weather change that will affect the requirement to carry chains an additional email will be sent out at 4pm, notifying the change for the following day.

Winter Camping

There are a couple of options for those interested in coming to camp at Mt Buffalo over winter. Camping is only permitted in three designated sites: Rocky Creek, Mt McLeod and Lake Catani. Rocky Creek and Mt McLeod require a booking and fee, Lake Catani is free and although a booking is not required, park staff would appreciate a call if visitors are planning to camp – please call the park office on 03 8427 2045.

Mt McLeod and Rocky Creek campsites are open during winter however the walk into those campsites is made longer because the Reservoir Road closes. Therefore, anyone intending to camp out there needs to be well prepared for camping in Alpine areas and a long walk/ski. A fee for use is required, book on-line at www.parkstay.vic.gov.au/book-your-stay

Lake Catani Campground

Free camping is available **only during the declared snow season**, beginning the Friday of Queens Birthday weekend until the end of August. Access is via a 1km walk/ski off the main road along the Lake Catani Rd or a 2km walk/ski from The Gorge along the Gorge/ Catani track. No vehicle access is available. Camping is permitted on sites within the campground when there is no snow, otherwise on snow cover around the stone hut. Fires may be lit only in the fireplaces provided and fuel stoves are recommended. Firewood cannot be collected within the national park but is for sale from the Parks Office - \$15 cash per bag. Campground showers and flushing toilets are closed during winter, but the pit toilet located behind the stone hut is open. Water is available from Lake Catani but is not potable – boil or treat to drink. No camping fees or bookings apply although we appreciate a call if visitors plan to camp. Phone the Park Office on 03 8427 4025.

Hazards



Visitors to Mt Buffalo need to be aware of the following hazards.

Hidden creeks – across the snow plains at Dingo Dell and Cresta Valley there are numerous creeks and boggy areas that can be covered by a thin layer of snow that can collapse under weight.

Visitors are encouraged to heed signs and stay on defined tracks.

Lookout at The Gorge