

23. LB Davern Reserve and Say G'day Trail



The **Say G'day Trail** is a walking trail linking Wallan and Heathcote Junction. It follows corridors of vegetation along Dry Creek on the east side of **LB Davern Reserve** then along an unnamed tributary and over the Great Divide to North Mountain Road. Manna Gums along Dry Creek give way to a mix of eucalypts along the Unnamed Creek and Messmate on the Divide. The streamsides have dense layers of shrubs and tussocks, and the dry hilltop on the Divide has a rich variety of grassland species.

These streamside reserves and trails are on the land of the Taungurung people and contain sites of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#). We acknowledge their Elders past and present and emerging, and their care of Country over many millennia. We ask that all people respect this ancient heritage and care for the land we now share.

Directions

The Say G'day trail is a loop walk from Rail Street opposite the station, through the LB Davern Reserve, then upstream and over the Divide to North Mountain Road. The loop continues west down North Mountain Road and along Rail Street to the start. Access roads to the trail are off Rail Street on the eastern side of the rail line:

Dry Creek Crescent: runs to the LB Davern Reserve, with the main track access at the lower gate to the oval area.

Affleck Street: crosses the southern tributary of Dry Creek and becomes a dirt road (Dry Creek Road).

Kooralinga Drive: crosses the Say G'day Trail, then turns right into Baden Drive, which runs south to the top of the un-named creek, then up and over the Divide to North Mountain Road near the end of the Trail.

Walking Tracks

The Say G'day Trail is a shared foot and cycle pathway linking Wandong and Heathcote Junction. It was constructed after the 2009 bushfires.

Section 1: Rail Street to Dry Creek Road (1165m): The Say G'day Trail begins opposite the railway station with a sign on a laneway between 7 and 9 Rail Street. The Trail runs through to the northern end of Wandong Avenue, then steeply down between houses to playing fields, the site of the old timber seasoning works. The track runs around the edge of the playing fields near Dry Creek.

Detour: At 265m from Rail Street, a formed track runs left through a gate and follows an easement adjacent to Dry Creek downstream to the site of the old timber seasoning works and the remains of a terracotta brick dam wall. A second gate leads on to an unfenced but walkable grassy terrace following the 3m easement between the back of houses and private farmland. The track passes two magnificent old Manna Gums through to a small lane (395m from Trail). Return or turn left to the Broadford Wandong Road (long grass, no footpath) and back to Rail Street.

The Say G'day Trail continues south along the edge of the terrace overlooking Dry Creek and past the sports stadium and carpark to near the first exercise site. A road continues around the oval to Dry Creek Crescent but, at 520m, the Trail drops steeply down to a concrete causeway over Dry Creek. From here, the trail follows around higher ground with some low rises to a link track coming from the right (west) beside open grassland at 800m.

Detour: This second track runs back 150m across another concrete causeway to the gate on Dry Creek Crescent into the LB Davern Reserve.

The main Trail continues south adjacent to Dry Creek along the old timber Tramway last used by Jack Harper in 1929. The Trail crosses another bridge over Dry Creek where the Creek zig-zags from a narrow valley adjacent to the hills onto the wider floodplains of the Reserve. The Trail continues up a narrow terrace between Dry Creek on the east and an Unnamed Creek on the west, through a gate and then onto Dry Creek Road at 1165m.

Note: Dry Creek Road follows Dry Creek east into Wandong Regional Park (see *Natural Treasure Reserve Note 18: Mount Disappointment Forests*).

Section 2: Dry Creek Road to Kooralinga Drive (195m, 1360m from start): the Trail runs through Dry Creek Flora Reserve to Kooralinga Drive. A pipe carries the Unnamed Creek under this Reserve: all that is visible on the surface is a gentle swale with occasional grated inlets into the pipe. The Lions Club of Wandong Wallan built the timber walkway and planted some trees and Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group later planted the area with a wider variety of native trees and shrubs.

Section 3: Kooralinga Drive to Baden Drive (510m, 1870m from start): The Trail runs south from Kooralinga Drive, initially through open grassland over the pipeline. Sections of the Trail have been washed out. This Section has exercise equipment.

Note: A short side track runs from the top end of the grassland west to McDonald Drive.

The Trail then enters a forest corridor where the Unnamed Creek runs down a deeply incised gully with some narrow floodplains into the pipeline. This Section has an interesting variety of native eucalypts including Manna Gums, Silver-leaved Stringybarks and Narrow-leafed Peppermints with Silver Wattles and Blackwoods as understorey.

Note: About halfway to Baden Drive, a rough track runs west from the Trail and across a small bridge to a laneway between 39 and 41 McDonald Drive.

Further upstream is the bank of an old weir. The weir has been incised and overgrown, with a small wetland below the weir. This Section ends where the Unnamed Creek emerges from another pipeline under Baden Drive.





Baden Drive link (145m, 2015m from start): the Trail follows the footpath along Baden Drive to near the corner with Vista Court. From this intersection, the Trail runs south. There are two other branches of reserved land running north and east:

- the gas pipeline easement runs through an arm of reserved land (with creeping backyards) north to the crest of the ridge overlooking Dry Creek.
- the Unnamed Creek runs southeast and east from the corner of Baden Drive and Vista Court through a steep and densely forested arm of reserved land then into farmland.

Section 4: From Baden Drive to North Mountain Road (600m, 2615 m from start): The Say G'day Trail leaves the valley and runs steeply up the pipeline easement to the top of the Great Divide and down to North Mountain Road. The Trail passes many isolated and small patches of

Messmate and several planted and mulched beds of native species. In the higher and drier ground, the natural understorey and ground flora under the Messmate becomes very rich with a variety of native grasses, lilies and other wildflowers. Past the top of the divide is a playground and another exercise area (if you still need exercise).

Return to Wandong: A footpath runs down North Mountain Road to Heathcote Junction Railway Station (720m), then along Rail Street to Wandong (another 1820m). The total circuit is 5280m or 5230 if returning through the more interesting Reserve.

	<p>The trails have notices at Rail Street and the lower entry into the LB Davern Reserve. These specify grades for mobility access: some sections are mapped as for all abilities and some as requiring assistance. However, it should be noted that most tracks are currently (2024) in poor condition with broken asphalt often covered in coarse gravel and weeds. Assistance would also be required on the steep sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• from Wandong Avenue to the grassland area of LB Davern Reserve.• from the crossing of Dry Creek (near north end of the oval) south through low hilly sections to Dry Creek Road or back to Dry Creek Crescent.• from Baden Drive to North Mountain Road, the asphalt path is in good condition but the hill is too long and steep for unpowered wheelchairs.• the ramp down to North Mountain Road is steep and narrow for some wheelchairs, and the asphalt footpath down North Mountain Road is also broken up and gravelly.
	<p>Tables are near the two playgrounds in the LB Davern Reserve and near North Mountain Road. Seats are available at exercise areas (stars on map) and other places crossing the Divide.</p>
	<p>Toilets are available in the LB Davern Reserve (subject to opening) or in the town.</p>
	<p>No vehicles allowed on the Trail.</p>

Landform and Geology

The Reserve is along the valley of Dry Creek and tributaries cut into the Silurian to early Devonian *Humevale Siltstone* that formed in deep seas around 440 to 400 million years ago. These sediments were lifted above sea level 380 million years ago, and were then eroded, uplifted and eroded some more to create the Mount Disappointment Plateau and all the surrounding hills and valleys. Dry Creek emerges from the Plateau in Wandong, allowing the creek to slow down and spread, creating higher terraces of silt adjacent to the low hills and more recent floodplains still actively cutting into the steep edges of the higher terraces in some places.

The Unnamed Creek ran in natural valleys with floodplains and higher terraces. One part now runs in large pipes under Baden Drive and another from above Kooralinga Drive to below Dry Creek Road. In the second section, the ground has been smoothed to gentle grassy swales over the pipelines. Pits with grates open to the pipeline underneath.

The southern end of the Reserve crosses the Great Divide along a gas pipeline easement. The Divide separates the catchments of Dry Creek (a tributary of the Goulburn/Murray system) and Merri Creek (a tributary of the Yarra River).

Vegetation

Dry Creek runs from the Mount Disappointment Forests along a corridor of well-vegetated water frontages to LB Davern Reserve. The corridor is surrounded by private land that is partly cleared and partly regenerating. Downstream, the creekline runs into open farmland.



The floodplains along the Dry Creek (**Section 1**) are [*Riparian Forest*](#) with Manna Gums dominating the overstorey, an understorey of Silver Wattles, Blackwoods, Sweet Bursaria and shrubs, and ground layers of tussock grasses, Spiny-headed Mat-rush and bracken.

The 2009 fire travelled along the Dry Creek Reserve in Wandong. Many large trees were killed and some of these have been retained for habitat. The fire stimulated a dense regeneration of Manna Gums, Silver Wattles, Blackwoods and

many other species. Several large old Manna Gums with hollows survived the fire and now stand tall among this regrowth. Cleared and occasionally mowed patches are dominated by Sweet Vernal Grass, Yorkshire Fog, Flat Weed and other weeds, and show little regeneration.

The section through farmland (the old factory land) downstream from the LB Davern Reserve has some magnificent old Manna Gums but there is little woody regeneration. The area is fenced to the edge of the higher terrace on the opposite bank and this may encourage more natural regeneration along the creekline.

“Dry Creek Flora Reserve” (**Section 2**) has an attractive bush garden with a variety of native plant species, some local to Wandong (Tree Violet, etc) and some rarely if ever seen in local bushlands (Blue Gum, Ovens Wattle, Rough-barked Honey-myrtle, River Bottlebrush, etc). The rather sparse grassland is maintained by mowing here and south of Kooralinga Drive.



In the natural areas of **Section 3** along Unnamed Creek between Kooralinga Drive and Baden Drive, the vegetation is [Herb-rich Foothill Forest](#) but with elements of *Riparian Forest* and [Swampy Riparian Woodland](#). The trees include Manna Gums, Messmates, Narrow-leaved Peppermints and the uncommon and attractive Silver-leaved Stringybark. The understorey has many Blackwoods, Tree Violets and other shrubs and a ground layer with a mix of native grasses, Flax-lilies, Little Grass-trees, Chocolate Lilies, Violets and many other plants.

The dense shaded valley along the Unnamed Creek between Baden Drive and Vista Court has a denser wetter version of this forest with Messmate, Silver-leaved Stringybarks and Swamp Gum, Silver Wattles, Cherry Ballarts and a diversity of shrubs and understorey including large patches of Saw-sedge.



Section 4 rises over the Divide. It is mostly cleared and mowed particularly above the pipeline on the western side, with several mulched beds planted with native species that are flowering nicely. There are also many patches of natural vegetation. Isolated trees and patches of Silver-leaved Stringybarks and Messmate are probably several decades old. On the upper slopes, the ground cover is not mowed and is a remarkable mix of Kangaroo Grass, Silver-topped Wallaby-grass, Grey Tussock-grass and many different wildflowers including

Yam Daisies, Sun-orchids, Milkmaids and more. and looks like a very grassy version of Herb-rich Foothill Forest (verging on [Grassy Dry Forest](#)).

Plant lists are in preparation.

Wildlife

The Reserves in Wandong benefit for their position between the lowland hills and valleys and the Mount Disappointment Forests.

Surprisingly few species have been recorded but the range of species visiting Wandong would be rich. In particular, the delightful but endangered Gang-gang Cockatoo is a regular visitor. Platypus were seen in Dry Creek about two years after the fires, suggesting that the creek has become a

healthy stream creating food chains for many species probably including Rakali and River Blackfish. Echidnas, Wombats, Kangaroos are often seen, along with the occasional snake.

Species lists are in preparation as more survey results come in.

Aboriginal history

Dry Creek and the Say G'day Trail are on Taungurung land. They lived on this land harmoniously according to where the food was plentiful: the mountains in the hotter drier times and the valleys and creeklines in the cooler and wetter times of the year. The environs of Dry Creek are areas of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#) and there are several other sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity further up the Trail.

History after colonisation

The history of Wandong is closely tied to the timber industries in the Mount Disappointment forests from the 1850s and the arrival of the railway in 1872. Tramways were used to bring timber from several mills in the forest, and the Australian Seasoned Timber Company set up a timber-seasoning plant on the terraces beside Dry Creek. This plant only operated from around 1890 to 1902 but milling continued around Wallan until the 1970s. Sites of the seasoning works and terracotta lumber wall are listed on the Victorian Heritage Database.

The seasoning plant sites on Dry Creek evolved into sports grounds and the LB Davern Reserve was officially recognised as a recreation area in 1933. The urban areas of Wandong and Heathcote Junction have grown, leaving a narrow reserve for the Unnamed Creek and an easement at the southern end for the gas pipeline was installed in the 1980s. Dry Creek Flora Reserve was established in Section 2 by the Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group.

The edge of the 2009 fires ran along Dry Creek including parts of the Reserve. Grants from the 2009 Bushfires Recovery Authority enabled the community to construct a walking trail from the LB Davern Reserve up Dry Creek and along the easements to North Mountain Road. The purposes of the Trail were to promote community spirit after the fires and link Wandong with Heathcote Junction. The Say G'day Trail was opened in 2010. Many native species were planted beside the creek and along the Trail.

Management

Mitchell Shire Council owns and manages the LB Davern Reserve and the corridor of public land either side of the Say G'day Trail along the Unnamed Creek. The land running north and south from Baden Drive including Section 4 are an easement for the gas pipeline with Mitchell Shire managing the tracks and parklands. The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority is responsible for works in the stream channel (bed and banks).

The Seasoning Works Site and Terracotta Lumber Wall are listed on the Victorian Heritage Database.

The Crown land sections are included in the [Land Use Activity Agreement](#) which is a part of the [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#); the status of other sections is to be confirmed. Dry Creek is also a corridor of land designated as a site of [Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity](#), and there are a few other sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity further up the Trail.

Note: North Mountain Road rather than the Divide is the boundary with Wurrundjeri Woi-wurrung land in this area.

Further information

Mitchell Shire Council sites:

<https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/l-b-davern-reserve-wandong>

<https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/points-of-interest/say-gday-trail> with walking map.

Taungurung Land and Water Council: <https://taungurung.com.au>. Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement>

Victorian Heritage Database lists the Seasoning Works Site and Terracotta Lumber Wall at <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/201556/download-report>

Goulburn Broken CMA Revegetation Guide: information on different ecological vegetation communities, plant communities and plants in the Sugarloaf zone at <https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/revegetation/zones/sugarloaf>

Acknowledgements

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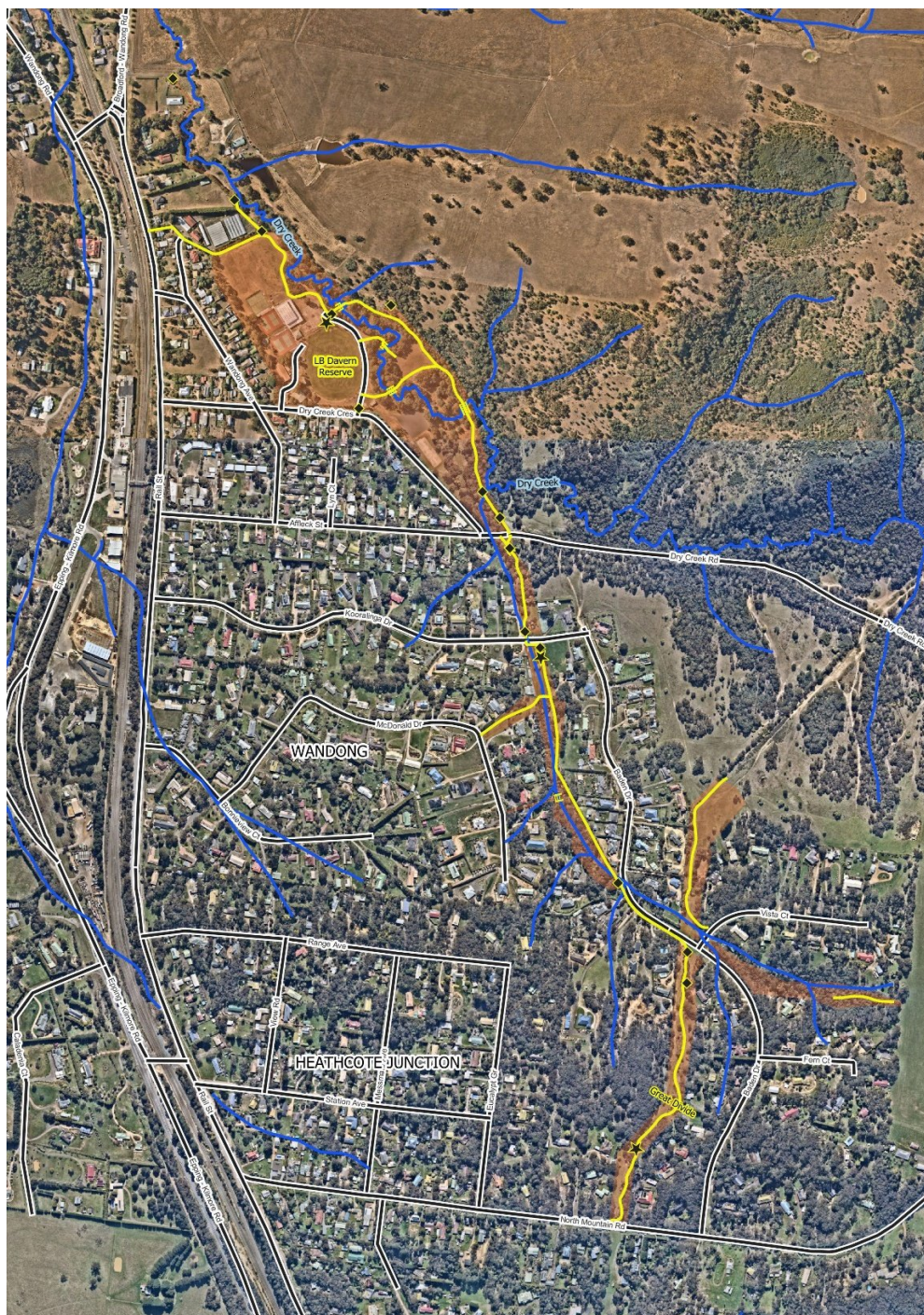
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These notes are a work in progress. If you have any comments or additional information on the nature and ecological history of the creeklines and walking tracks of Wandong, please contact us at <https://www.beam.org.au/contact>



LB Davern Reserve and the Say G'day Trail, Wandong



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|--------------------|--------|-----------------|---------------|
| Reserved land | Roads | Footbridge | Exercise area |
| Creeks and gullies | Tracks | Gates, bollards | |

