

A DAY OUT WITH DINOSAURS

Come on a day walk in South Gippsland, 125 million years in the making!



The view from the upper coastline.

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THERE'S a stretch of sand where the tide lifts and lowers stories. With each ebb and flow, the passage of time etches in stone and escapes through estuaries. On the rapidly shifting shores of Inverloch, 150km south east of Melbourne, sandbanks stretch long, with stories spanning over 125 million years.

Setting out from The Caves carpark at low tide, a story of geological impact, erosion and earthquakes has formed the sandstone caves carved 7000 years ago into the coastline. At the shore platform 100m north of the stairs, a Cretaceous age, larger-than-life dinosaur footprint, solidified in the ancient river bed, swallows our footprints. The Dinosaur Dreaming team spend summer days digging and hammering, diligently uncovering bones from the fossil layer.

Flowing outwards, the tide exposes the passage of storms, battered dunes, smashed tea tree and a shipwreck. At Wreck Beach, before the Surf Life Saving Club, mossy green remnants of the Amazon barque, beached in 1863, prompt its mystery and conceal salted meat cargo deep below the surface.

Along Pensioners Point, hooded plovers breed vulnerably during August to March. The Ayr Creek estuary meets the sea shifted sands. Moving water margins creating a magnificent sanctuary. Black swans, pelicans and eastern curlew celebrate a reshaped coastline.

Anglers, rods and whiting lead to the top of the yacht club ramp. Walking right, the jetty boasts stories of trade and transport, when coal and passengers entered and exited the bygone port. Down onto the beach, below the council campground, mangroves point towards Screw Creek's dunes and track. Saltmarsh plants embellish the boardwalk and below the bridge crabs explore the estuary mudflats flowing into Tarwin River of Anderson Inlet.

Melaleuca thickets trail to the right up towards Townsend Bluff loop. Sheoaks droop, observing Anderson Inlet views across to Wilsons Prom, Cape Liptrap, and Eagles Nest in the West. The Aboriginal Dreamtime spirit, Loh-ern, guards our return loop through the paperbark forest; retracing steps over the bridge and boardwalk along to the carpark and across the campground.

At the Esplanade, windy days see wetsuit-clad kiteboarders braving gusts and strong tides. Beyond the jetty and lawn bowls club, the *Ripple* ketch replica was once the local supply and passenger service to Inverloch, Maher's Landing and Tarwin Lower. Its backdrop, the Inverloch Rocket Shed, tells of Rocket Brigade volunteers ready for rescue with the gunpowder charged 'Boxer' rocket and launcher. Dedicated to saving seamen one person at a time.

Passing The Glade, catch a weekend market, or pause in town. A visit to the South Gippsland Conservation Society & Shell Museum showcasing local geological and environmental highlights lies along our

homeward track. The tide dictates the return route of path and road or beach, with Eagles Nest as distance and direction marker. At the Bunurong Marine Park boarder, weathered rock faces return us to the tapestry of the sea. To a reality that we rise and fall on the same tides, walk the tracks of ancients, and leave our own imprints of time, place and passage. ⚙️

More info: Inverloch is 143km SE of Melbourne via the South Gippsland Highway. south-gippsland.com/bunurong-marine-park

WALK NOTES EAGLES NEST TO TOWNSEND BLUFF, INVERLOCH, VIC

Time: 4-5hr | **Distance:** 18km | **Grade:** easy

