

# 35. Tooborac Bushland Reserve



**Tooborac I167 Bushland Reserve** is a small (15.5ha) patch of forest on Middle Creek Road west of Tooborac. It has two hills possible relating to their geology, one with a great diversity of trees, shrubs and wildflowers, the other with tall trees and sparse understorey. The Tooborac Heathcote Aqueduct runs through the Reserve and the Tooborac Reservoir is on its eastern boundary.

*This reserve is on the land of the Taungurung People. 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

Middle Springs Road runs west from the Northern Highway in Tooborac with Tooborac Hotel on the corner. After 300m, veer left into the dirt road, then right up a hill to the Tooborac Reservoir. The entrance to the Tooborac Water Treatment Plant and Tooborac Bushland Reserve is 1.3 km from the Northern Highway.

## Walking Tracks

The Reserve has no made tracks but some old vehicle and animal tracks run through the Reserve, as well as the old aqueduct. The reservoir is closed to the public.

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**T** The Reserve has no toilets or other facilities.

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## Landform and Geology

Coming down the hill on the Seymour Tooborac Road towards Tooborac, the ridge on the opposite side of the McIvor Creek valley shows the line between *Rainy Creek porphyritic granite* and the adjacent metamorphic aureole. The aureole was formed around 360 million years ago when the hot granite intrusion baked the surrounding rocks into hornfels (= hard rock). The granite has large boulders visible on the right (north) side of the ridge and a metamorphic aureole has no visible rocks on the left (south). This is separate from the Pyalong Granite.

North of this *Rainy Creek Granite* is the band of incredibly old Cambrian chert (high in silica) with Ordovician sediments further west (see Spring Plains NCR for more information). Close to the granite these rocks have been metamorphosed as part of the aureole. Middle Springs Road runs through the aureole. The Tooborac Bushland Reserve comprises a hill of metamorphosed Ordovician sediment to the southwest and a higher hill of metamorphosed Cambrian rocks in the northeast (furthest from the road).

## Vegetation

The southwestern hill slopes are covered in [Heathy Dry Forest](#) dominated by Red Box with an understorey of low shrubs (Varnish, Hedge, Gold-dust and Snake Wattle, Grey Everlasting, etc), tussocks of Silver-topped Wallaby-grass and many wildflowers including Clustered and Sticky Everlasting.

The saddle between the hills is [Valley Grassy Forest](#) (status Vulnerable) with Yellow and Grey Box, some Lightwood but no other larger wattles, and ground-cover dominated by sweet vernal grass.



The northeastern hill is [Grassy Woodland](#) with a variety of eucalypts, low diversity of understorey and a sparse understorey of shorter tussock grasses, moss and leaf litter.

The reason for the difference between the two hills is not clear although. They are on quite different rock types and hence soils, but the northeastern hill also has lost topsoils leaving clay subsoils.

The Reserve contains one critically-endangered plant species. Plant lists are in preparation.

## Wildlife

The Reserve is a small island of bushland but has many connecting corridors along roads and several large old trees with hollows.

Few species are listed on databases. Species lists are in preparation.

## Aboriginal history

The Reserve is on the land of the Taungurung People.

## History after colonisation

The original purpose and uses of the Reserve are uncertain. There are lumps of quartz and traces of mining on the south-western hill.



The disused Tooborac Heathcote Aqueduct begins on McIvor Creek southwest of Tooborac and winds through farmlands to the Reserve. It can be seen between the road and the reservoir, then winding through the saddle in the Reserve before heading west and north, in and out of the Spring Plains NCR through to Heathcote.

The reservoir is part of the Tooborac water supply.

The ECC Box Ironbark Investigation 2001 recommended this Reserve be classed as a bushland reserve, stating that “these scattered

patches of remnant bush add scenic diversity to the landscape and are of increasing importance for nature conservation” (p242).

## Management

The Reserve is Crown land managed by Parks Victoria.

The Reserve is included in the [Land Use Activity Agreement](#), a part of the [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#).

## Further information

Parks Victoria: Parks Victoria can be contacted on 13 1963 or go to

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/contact-us>. Websites for Tooborac I167 Bushland Reserve is at <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/tooborac-i167-bushland-reserve>. It contains only general information on visiting reserves (at 30/6/2023). Parks Victoria. Site contains little specific information.

Taungurung Land and Water Council at <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>

Environment Conservation Council/Victorian Environment Assessment Council Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodlands Investigation—Resources and Issues Report and Final Recommendation. <https://veac.vic.gov.au/investigations-assessments/previous-investigations/investigation/box-ironbark-forests-woodlands-investigation-ecc-2001>

## Acknowledgements

This Reserve Note was prepared by BEAM Mitchell Environment Group. Thanks to Mitchell Shire Council for their assistance and support.

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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 Tooborac Bushland Reserve, please contact us at <https://www.beam.org.au/contact>



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