

RGSSA Exclusive Tour of SE South Australia and Western



Districts Victoria 11-16 March 2025.

The enthusiasm of all speakers and guides buoyed the group, who mingled and shared experiences at the many delicious meals that were served. Joc and Gary made sure everyone was having a good time and had what was needed. The support and attention to detail was first class, making this the best bus tour we have ever been on. Small numbers allowed easy movement at the sites, and we were able to hear and see what was being pointed out. Comment from 2023 SE Tour

For those who missed out in 2023 we are offering another opportunity to experience this highly successful small group tour, taking in some of the very best Landscapes, History, Aboriginal Culture, Pre-history, Food and Wine of this diverse region of the southeastern part of Australia. Especially curated and led by RGSSA Head of Travel Joc Schmiechen this is a one-off experience including many behind the scenes gems not normally on the standard tourism offerings. We will be traveling around 200km per day with plenty of stops of interest and experiences along the way to meet with passionate local enthusiast and experts.

Day 1

On leaving Adelaide we head for Meningie and Lake Albert for some local history at the Cheese Factory Museum. After lunch we travel along the Coorong, one of Australia's unique ecosystems. At Kingston, the southern end of the Coorong lagoon we have a brief comfort and photo stop at one of Australia's 'Big Things', Larry the Lobster. Late afternoon we arrive in the crayfishing fishing port of Robe. After a brief scenic tour and settling into our accommodation we start our culinary experiences with a seafood banquet at Sails Restaurant.

Day 2

Robe now offers more than fine seafood, and after breakfast we visit Humpalicious, one of the few camel milking dairies in southern Australia followed by Transmutation, an innovative family created recycling centre.

I did especially like getting up close and personal when the camels were feeding a few centimetres away from our seats at the farm. That was a lot of fun. The whole trip was a huge learning



experience, and I feel privileged to have been a part of it. Thanks again. Comment from 2023 SE Tour

We follow the coast to lunch at the waterfront café in Beachport. As we continue south, we touch on the Southernmost extremity of South Australia at Cape Northumberland, noted for its many early shipwrecks all along this wild coast. Prior to our stop in Mt Gambier, we visit



the Little Blue Lake to meet Iain Lewis one of our local experts who will contribute his expertise to numerous locations along our journey. Our stop for the night is 'The Barn', an eclectic property in a garden setting at the edge of Mt Gambier, where we will have another top-class meal at their famous steakhouse restaurant. At a predinner lecture, local speleologist, cave diver, sink hole expert, Iain

Lewis will provide some fascinating insights into the amazing Kanawinka volcanic region stretching into Western Victoria.

Day 3

Today we will take in several key sites that are signature to South Australia's second most populated city. An early morning start will provide a firsthand look at the famous Blue Lake via the Aquafer tour, followed by the Umpherston Sinkhole and a pre-lunch viewing of an excellent film detailing the origins of the surrounding volcanic region at the Riddoch Centre. After lunch we continue along the coast through the SE plantation forests crossing the Glenelg River into the Western Districts of Victoria for our stopover in Portland. This was



Victorias first permanent European settlement. Established by the Henty family in 1834, it has an abundance of historical sites from the early colonial period, including one of our oldest Botanical Gardens. In Portland we meet local resident, Roger Haldane who will accompany us to the Cape Nelson lighthouse and provide insights into this busy port and the Western District. Before dinner, Blue Whale expert Peter Gill will present a lecture about the

important offshore marine environment of the Bonney Upwelling, one of only 12 world recognised areas where Blue Whales are known to feed in high numbers.

Day 4

Travelling from Portland to Hamilton we will spend the morning at the only World Heritage area in Australia proclaimed purely for cultural significance. In this amazing volcanic karst landscape, the **Gunditjmara** people established one of the world's most complex hydrological systems to trap the abundant eels in the wetlands.

BUDGE BIM CULTURAL TOUR was a highlight for us and with the very informative guide we saw the TAE RAK AQUACULTURE CENTRE of the Aboriginal fish and stone channels



for the eel traps, an eel smoking tree and evidence of occupation by Gunditjmara People. Comment from 2023 SE Tour

That evening we will dine at the Bunyip Hotel in Cavendish on the banks of the Wannon River at the edge of the Grampians. Chef James Campbell has established this local gem as one of the go-to eating destinations in regional Victoria.



The BUNYIP HOTEL IN CAVENDISH is unique, and the dinner was so special and delicious. What a cook! So tasty. All local food in season – loved the roasted cabbage and pork shoulder.

I'd raised the envy level of my family in Canberra when I raved about the Bunyip Hotel meal.

Comment from 2023 SE Tour

Day 5

From Hamilton we recross the border to Penola in the heart of the famous Coonawarra wine region. It is also a prime location for Mary McKillop, Australia's only saint. The Mary McKillop Centre offers a fascinating insight to her work and that of Father Tenison Woods. The early colonial houses in nearby Petticoat Lane also provide an interesting view into early colonial life. Of course, we would not pass up a stop and wine tasting at the historic Wynns Cellars!



We complete the afternoon with a private tour of Yallum Park Estate, once the main residence of the Riddoch family. It is considered the best-preserved Victorian country mansion in original condition in Australia.



YALLUM PARK IN PENOLA is a magnificent mansion with so many antiques and wonders

of yesteryear. Original furnishings and furniture have remained or re-purchased over the years.

Comment from 2023 SE Tour

Day 6

Our last day is a long one with a luncheon stopover in the World Heritage listed Naracoorte Caves. A guided tour of the Victoria Cave provides an insight into our prehistoric past displaying the extinct megafauna unique to Australia.

The Silo art at Coonalpyn provides one of our last photo stops before returning to Adelaide.



My mind is buzzing with the great experiences both intellectual and physical!

Comment from 2023 SE Tour

It is open to members and non-members so bring a friend. We will use a full 55-seater luxury coach limited to 20 participants.

RGSSA TRAVEL ~ 11-16 MARCH 2025

Southeast – Western Victoria 6 Days



Tae Rak Lake Condah – World Heritage Site – Lava Flow County, Eel Traps, Stone Huts

This is a tour not to be missed.

Last Chance New Years Booking.

Cost: Members \$ 2,380 – non-members \$ 2,480

Register Deposit: \$380

Balance: 24/01/25 \$ 2,000 - Non-Members \$ 2,100

Single Supplement \$ 250

It is open to members and non-members so bring a friend. We will use a full 55-seater luxury coach limited to 20 participants.



Blue Lake Mt Gambier



Dinner Bunyip Hotel



Silo Art Coonalpyn

Itinerary Details and Bookings Royal Geographical Society Web Site