

Rokeby Crossover Circuit – Track Notes

Rokeby is a small community some 12km north of Warragul. The walk is based in the 192ha Crossover Regional Park Reserve stretching from Rokeby (town) to Crossover (area). Besides being a pleasant walk, the feature of the walk is the historic trestle bridge at Crossover.

Several walks of varying length and difficulty are possible:

1. The simple 8 km in and out walk along the rail trail. This is an easy walk, suitable for families with strollers and of course bicycles. It does make a pleasant walk for anyone.
2. A more challenging version is the 11km Ron Cann Circuit, which follows Pilgrim Creek Track/Road around the southern outside of the reserve with attractive open views of farmland on the one side and forest on the other; along Smith St, a short distance along Bloomfield Rd, then down Bridge Rd and finally back along the rail trail. It uses the gravel roads and the rail trail.
3. The 12km “Rokeby Crossover Circuit’ is the most ‘bushwalk’ friendly version using the extensive well-maintained mountain bike trails to spend most of the walk on paths and returning along the rail trail.
4. The nearby Rokeby Fauna and Flora Rail Trail is an additional 2.5-3.3km walk starting from Rokeby that can be done before or after the main walk.

This note covers Walk 3 and Walk 4

The park is a small remnant of an ecosystem that was widespread throughout West Gippsland. Unfortunately, what exists now is largely regrowth from extensive logging, there are very few large trees and the existing stand is even aged (that, is lacking a range of sized trees and hence differing habitats). Nevertheless, it is a pleasant walk and its railway/mining/logging/clearing history reminds of us of how early generations saw the land. The main vegetation is comprised of tall open and mid-range open forests with ferns, herbs, sedges, rushes or tussock grasses.

The central inner circuit bushwalk is a messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) forest dominated walk following the central part of the Crossover Reserve. It mostly stays on the well maintained and established mountain bike trails; it is not well signed or marked. However, navigation is relatively easy and as the site is a long narrow linear reserve bounded on all sides by significant roads or paths, any turn north or south will lead to Pilgrim Trk/Road or the rail trail. It would be difficult to become lost for any significant time.

The forest tracks and the rail trail are used by horse riders and mountain bikers. However, generally you would be lucky to meet anyone on the forest trails and few people on the rail trail. You are not far from two high speed main roads used by large trucks and some road noise is frequently heard over much of the walk.

- Water is NOT available on the walk, and that which may be found is largely runoff from surrounding farmland. Carry what you need. Water is available at the Rokeby Reserve (as are BBQs and a public toilet).
- Dogs on leads are permitted in this reserve.
- There is no shop in Rokeby, bring your lunch! But it does have a great Saturday market. <http://www.rokebymarket.org.au/>
- Mobile phone reception is generally available.
- The walk can be undertaken in either direction, anticlockwise leaves the easier/faster walk along the rail trail until last. The walk could just as well start from the eastern end at Bridge Track.
- Numerous quite prominent animal footpads exist throughout the walk and could leave to some confusion; however, the main paths are generally more strongly defined.
- The forest paths have been designed for mountain bikes and commonly have wide sweeping corners and switchbacks. In a few places the MTB tracks have small alternative paths to avoid steep gullies.

- As shown on the map numerous links lead back to either Pilgrim Track/Road or the rail trail. The walk can be shortened by using one of these links to the rail trail or Pilgrim Crk Track and returning to the carpark in Lavina Street.
- The Crossover Bridge makes a great place for a planned stop.
- The paths and rail trail are very well maintained, thanks largely to the active Rokeby Crossover friends' group. <http://www.rcfg.org.au/railtrail.html>

These track notes are designed to be used in conjunction with the map. Distance markers on the map reflect the track points below. The yellow path is the 12km circuit. The map is a georeferenced document and will work with Avenza or Paper Maps.

Getting to the Rokeby Crossover walks. Drive to Rokeby township, at the western end of the recreation reserve that dominates the centre of town is Lavina Street; there is a gravel car park 100m down the road, or just park near/in the reserve and walk the little extra.

Rokeby Crossover Circuit 12km

The walk covers 12km, mostly on paths through the forest or on the rail trail. Total ascent is 320m and descent 320m. These track notes are based on an anticlockwise circuit. The marked distances are based on averaged GPS readings.

0.0km – The track starts in the carpark.

0.06m – Walk north down the gravel road for 60m where a small but well define footpad (MCG Trk) turns right (east). Follow this path through a small stand of Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*) into the forest. You will soon cross a small bridge (0.5km) followed by a gradual climb; on this climb you will pass a large tree (few are left in the park) and under more great examples of Cherry Ballarts which superficially looks similar to a cypress or even pine trees. You will briefly break out on the reserve boundary giving a good view of the rich cleared farmland; follow the track back into the forest.

0.75km – You will meet the Pilgrim Crk Track; head directly east across the track to the footpad on the other side (Traverse Trk)...do not go up the rough badly eroded 4x4 track. This path largely follows the contour.

1.1km – A small path turns off to the right/west (easily missed), continue straight ahead along the more defined path. Although this path can be used for a variation, it heads south and further up the hill through a few young pine trees and doubles back onto the circuit track. It also has a side path leading up to Pilgrim Track.

1.25km – T junction. The Soiled Olly Trk left (nth) leads down to the rail trail. Turn right then immediately take the left fork and 30 metres later take the path to the left (stump with arrow). You should still be on Traverse Trk and be heading across the slop not up the slope. The track to the right (sth) will take you to Pilgrims Track.

1.5km – The small path to the right is a loop that leads around the gully ahead of you and joins back into the main track in 50 metres (on your right). Its use appears to be to allow bikes to avoid the steep gully.

1.9km – The track comes with a few metres of Pilgrims Track. Follow the path around to the left and back into the forest.

2.0km – This is an easy junction to miss. The more dominant path heads straight ahead and leads to the rail trail, however it is important to stay high and continue on to the track bearing right.

2.1km – The main track goes straight ahead, but there is a small pad leading to the right which runs around the gully ahead and joins back in 70m.

2.3km – T junction. Turn left following the main footpath, the smaller path on the right (south) links to Pilgrims Track.

2.5km – Track junction just past an interesting line of trees marking the water course. The path going down and left merely leads down to the north south track. Stay to the right path following the contour around the hill.

2.9km – Traverse Track breaks out onto Pilgrims Track, bear left up the hill and underneath the transmission lines, until you see the forest begin again on the other side of the cleared easement. You will pass track on the left 40m after first joining Pilgrims Track, this follows the powerline easement down to the rail trail.

3.3km – At the start of the forest turn left at the fence line and then immediately right onto Sebs Track (do not follow the fence line – Jones Trk). Shortly along Sebs Trk a path branches off to the left, it runs back to the fence line, stay to the right dropping down the hill. Sebs Track is one of the most pleasant parts of the walk and unlike the previous section has few intersecting paths. Towards the top of the hills it is quite open and cleared, and you will notice the trees getting taller and denser as you head down towards the gullies. Jones Track is a lovely open walk and using it to cut down to the rail trail makes a nice short circuit walk.

4.1km – Turn left (North) following the more dominant path, the track straight ahead links to the nearby 4x4 track that this section of Sebs Trk mirrors. From now on the landscape becomes wetter and is more dominated by ferns and the tree species mix starts to change with less Messmates and more Ribbon Gums. The trees are noticeably taller too. There is a lovely tree fern walk in this section.

5.0km – Y junction. Keep left (north) along The Link Track; 50 metres after the Y junction continue straight ahead do not turn left (west) onto The Right Hander Trk. The path that heads right (east) leads to the 4x4 track.

5.25km – Four-way junction, to the left and right is a 4x4 track. Continue straight ahead onto the path leading straight down the hill (Single Pinch Trk) until you reach the rail trail.

5.6km – Information shelter, seat and the 3km marker on the rail trail. Turn right (east) up the rail trail for 200m.

5.8km – At the start of a cutting and small rise take the small track to the right (The Fat Yak Trk).

6.1km – Y junction. Keep to the left and head down the hill. The right track leads to Smith St.

6.45km – Through some dense vegetation and break out onto Smith St (4x4), turn left heading towards a small gully and creek. Immediately after the creek at 6.5km leave Smith St joining a distinct path (Chris's Corner Trk) to the right (east) that follows the creek along and winds back up the hill re-joining Smith St. You can shortcut the walk here by continuing along Smith St and not taking Chris's Corner Trk, but the path is a nice part of the walk.

7.0km – The footpad re-joins Smith St, turn left down the hill. The right turn leads out to the main Bloomsfield Rd).

7.2km – Junction where Smith St continues left, take the right track (north) down the hill, after another 70m there is a small carparking area where the MVO track continues left. Take the less distinct path right directly onto the rail trail. If you miss this turn, in 50m you will pass a gate and shortly after that you are back on the rail trail (turn right).

7.3km – Rail trail (again), turn right towards the Crossover Bridge (0.7km).

7.5km – Signpost/Trail Marker. Straight ahead leads to a huge cutting and the bottom side of the Crossover Bridge. Continue along this path and over/around the small fence to stand under the bridge, this short section of tracks is more overgrown, but it is worth a look at the bridge from this angle, and appreciate just how much work would have gone into hand digging the cutting.

7.9km – Signpost/Trail Marker. After viewing the underside of the bridge retrace your steps the to this point and head up the gravel path to see the top part of the bridge.

8.1km – Bridge Road just near crossover bridge. You can also start the walk from here (Bridge Rd comes off Bloomsfield Rd). From here return to the rail trail and follow it west 4km back to the car park. There are several information boards, seats and track markers at one-kilometre intervals along the rail trail.

9.1km – Information Shelter and 3km track marker.

9.5km – Middle 4x4 Track junction.

10.1km – 2km to go track marker, nearby seat and information panel with some lush open farmland on the right and nice tree fern gullies on the left.

10.7km – Underneath power lines.

11.1km - 1km to go track marker.

11.6km – Gateway. 50 meters pass the gate, junction with Pilgrims Creek Trk.

11.8km – Remains of old bridge.

12.0km – Turn left and up the hill to the car park!

Rokeby Fauna and Flora Rail Trail 4.4km

If the circuit walk was not enough of a walk, the nearby Rokeby Fauna and Flora Rail Trail is a pleasant added walk that can be accessed from the same car park. The area near the Tarago River has a table and seat and on a nice day a good spot for a short break. The main rail trail feature is the sheer size of the cutting and the huge amount of soil that was removed to obtain the required grade for the railway.

The walk can be done as either an in/out walk or if you do not mind walking alongside the road it can be completed as a circuit by walking along Old Telegraph Road to Brandy Creek Road and through the town to the car park, (it is a similar distance).

0.0km – Start in carpark, walk west along/across the Rokeby Recreation Reserve and cross to the south side of Brandy Creek Road. Walk down the hill until the beginning of the bend in the road, the walk starts just under some pine trees, the sign is somewhat hidden.

0.8km – Walk down the well-defined linking track, at the base of the hill turn left onto what is observably the rail trail!

1.0km – Y Junction. The right hand takes you down the hill to a pleasant reserve on the Tarago River. After this short side trip, walk back to the Y junction and turn right to continue along the rail trail. The path is wide, long and linear and much of it is in a deep cutting.

2.2km – A gate marks the end of the track and its junction with Old Telegraph Road. Either turn around and follow your path back to the car park or turn left and follow Old Telegraph Road to Brandy Creek Road turn left and through the town to the car park. Brandy Creek Road is quite a busy road so care is required if returning via this route.