

Mt Howitt and The Crosscut Saw

Mt Howitt and the Crosscut Saw is one of the great yuppy walks of the high country but despite this it is still a great place to hike and meet people. The region is very undeveloped despite it's proximity to Mt Buller and is probably saved by the fact that there is no sealed road between Buller and Howitt.

The Crosscut Saw is perhaps the best known walk but a quick glance at the map will show that there are many other walking tracks branching from it. If you stick to the main tracks you will spend most of your time walking through open snowgum forests or above the tree line so apart from some steep grades the walking is generally quite easy. Most people underestimate the altitude changes along The Crosscut Saw and discover that it is harder than it looks on



The Viking from Mt Howitt

the map. Most of the walk is above the tree line and you are very exposed to the weather (so hope that it's good weather)

Macalister Springs offers the most reliable water in summer and a small spring at Mt Speculation is also usually running but you may need to walk downstream a little. Water from Speculation has been polluted from the campsite and you should boil the water before drinking.

Vallejo Gantner Hut is something of a hotel as far as alpine huts go and is often quite full but there is ample camping around the hut. Many people use Macalister Springs as a base for day walks.

While not shown on this map, the walking track extends across to The Viking and it is 'possible' to do a circuit walk of Howitt - The Crosscut Saw - The Viking - Zeka Track but it includes a lot of altitude changes and some dense blackberries around the Wonangatta River.



The Wonangatta Spur and Devil's Staircase from Mt Speculation

The map (page 2) is redrawn from the Howitt-Selwyn 1:50 000 map (Vicmap 8223-N) and shows 100m contours, roads, walking tracks and the main creeks and rivers. It should be used as a guide only. Virtually all tracks are closed during winter.



The Devil's Staircase and The Viking

Access

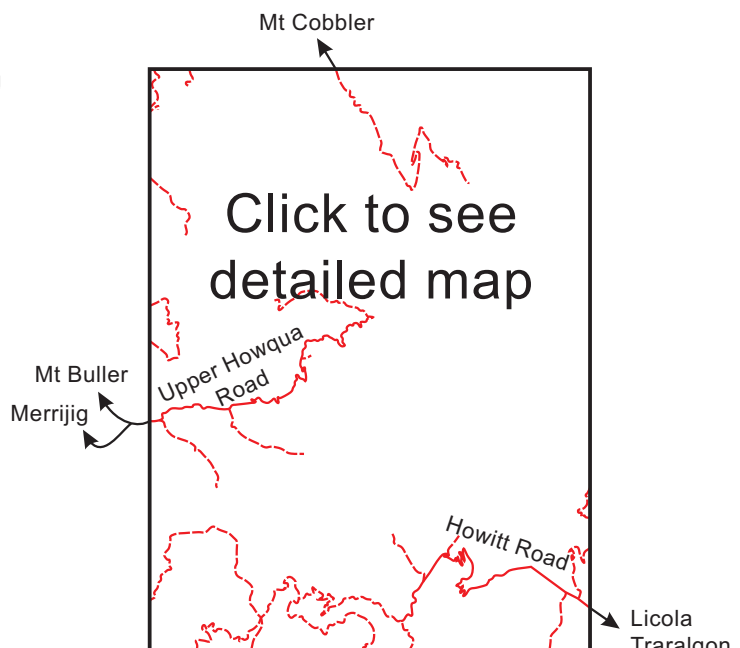
The Howitt car park is a good 6 - 6½ hour drive from Melbourne through Traralgon and Licola. The road is seasonally closed (third week of June to October 31) about 36km from the car park making the only the Upper Howqua Road the only reasonable access route during winter.

The Sheepland track from Merrijig takes only 3.5 hours to get to Refrigerator Gap from Melbourne (including stopping to put snow chains on) and is open throughout the year. I am yet to see how much snow builds up on the road or how close you can safely get to the bottom of the Howitt Spur but I'm planning a trip sometime in August.

Another option is the Upper Howqua Road but this really is a long drive across potentially snow covered mountain roads. It begins near the toll gate to Mt Buller and circles around.



Mt Speculation from Mt Howitt



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