

## Western Athletics' Pack Runs

By Phil Dunstone – Western Athletics Cross Country Team Manager

The purpose of the 'pack runs' is to train runners and athletes in an environment that get us away from the everyday track training and is an essential tool in developing athletes into competent cross country runners. The places visited offer many different terrains, trails and environments.

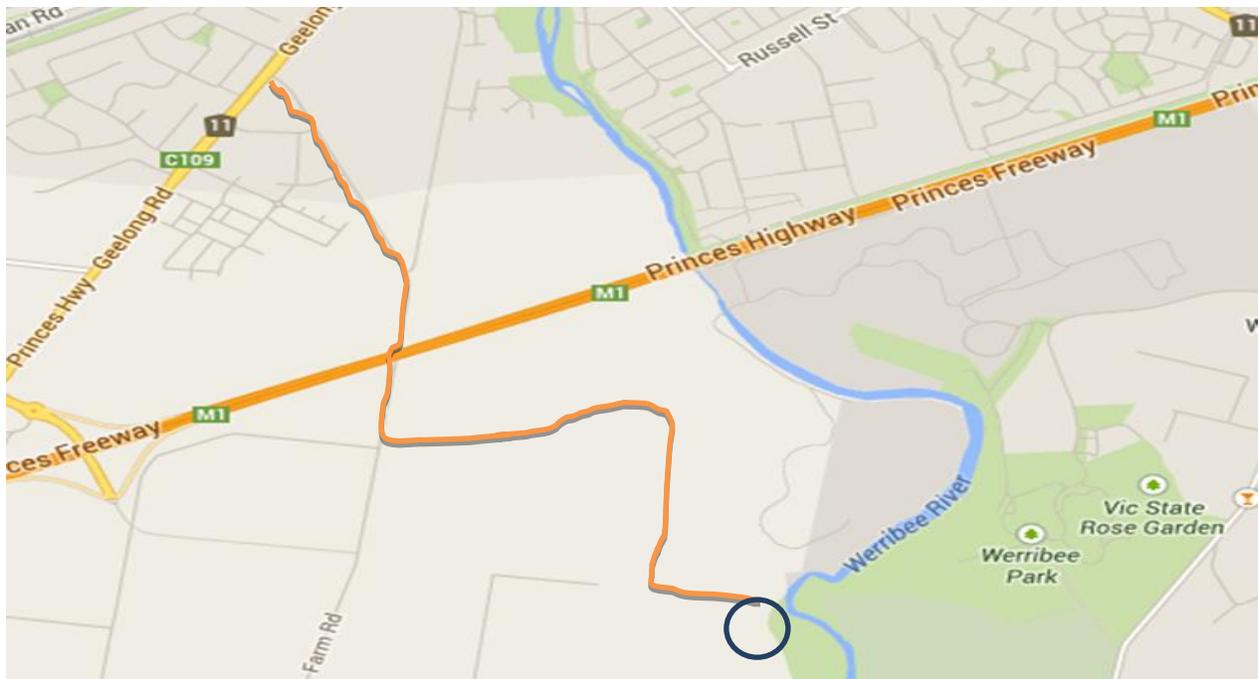
The pack runs are an ideal opportunity for athletes and parents of athletes to chat and socialise afterwards. They are timed to fit into the weeks when there are no Athletics Victoria competitions and in some caess will be timed to assist athletes with course familiarity of key races.

We typically meet at 2pm and set off in various groups, depending on the athlete's ability, and have a chat and a barbeque afterwards. In this year's pack runs we will visit the following locations: New Farm Rd, Brisbane Ranges, Brimbank Park, Bundoora Park, Ferny Creek, Woodlands Historic Park and The Tan.

### New Farm Road – Werribee Park

Just a short drive from Werribee, New Farm Road is the rear gateway to the Werribee River at Werribee Park. The trails around Werribee River are excellent for fast threshold runs or just a pleasant run around the river or the gardens and mansion of Werribee Park.

There are no barbeque facilities, but we are not too far from a café where we might indulge in a Latté and afternoon tea.



## Brisbane Ranges

Forty minutes west of Werribee, the environs of the Brisbane Ranges are very different from the rest of Victoria with grass trees and sandy, granitic soils - ideal for trail running. It is tricky to find the campsite that we run from, so if you have not been there before get a lift or follow behind someone who knows the way.

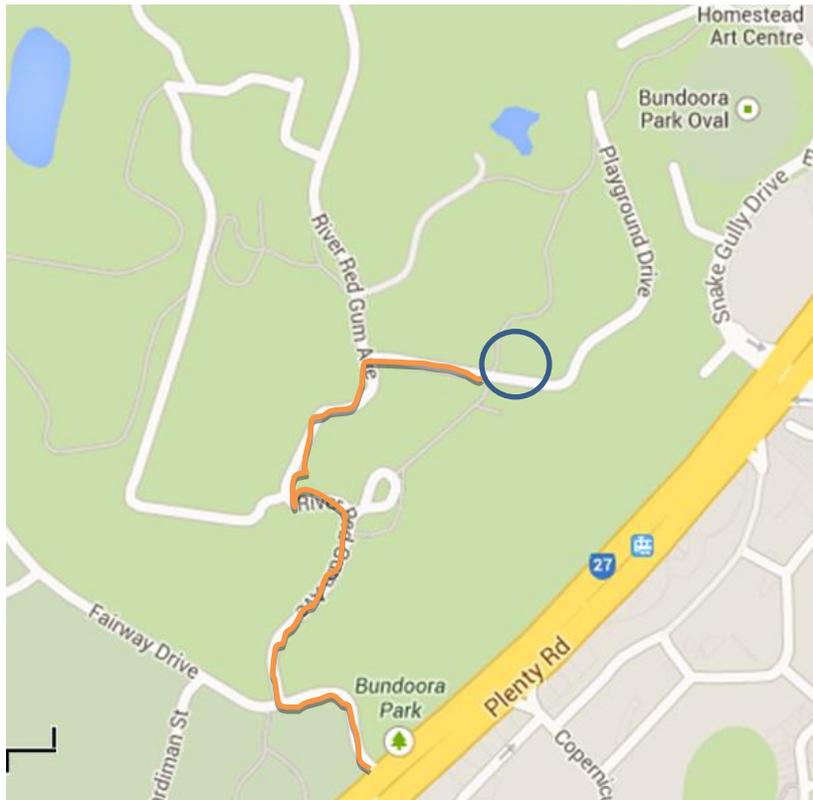
The trails are in a bushland setting and once you are off the main road the trails meander through small valleys and tight spurs with some some steep ascents and descents. These trails are not great for speed but they do sharpen up your cross country running skills and really test the calves!

It is easy to get lost, so if you have not been there before please run with someone who knows their way around.



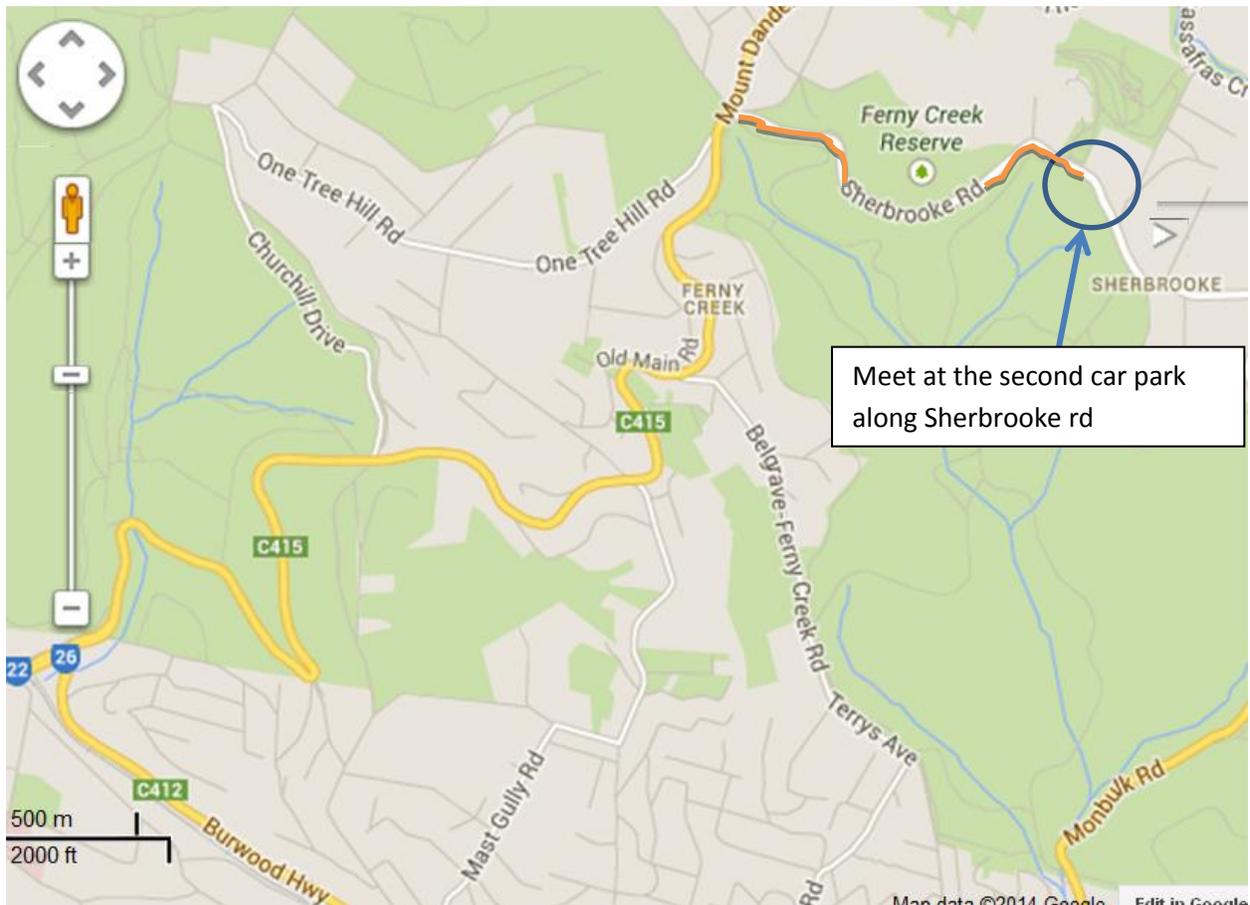
## Bundoora Park

Nestled in Melbourne's northern suburbia, is the rolling green hills of Bundoora Park, the home of cross country racing in Melbourne. Along with a spectacular view of the Melbourne skyline from Mt Cooper, Bundoora Park offers long sloping gradients and some short sharp pinches at the back of Mt Cooper. All running is on the grass, so very low impact and we typically head up there the weekend before the State All School's and Cross Country Championships.



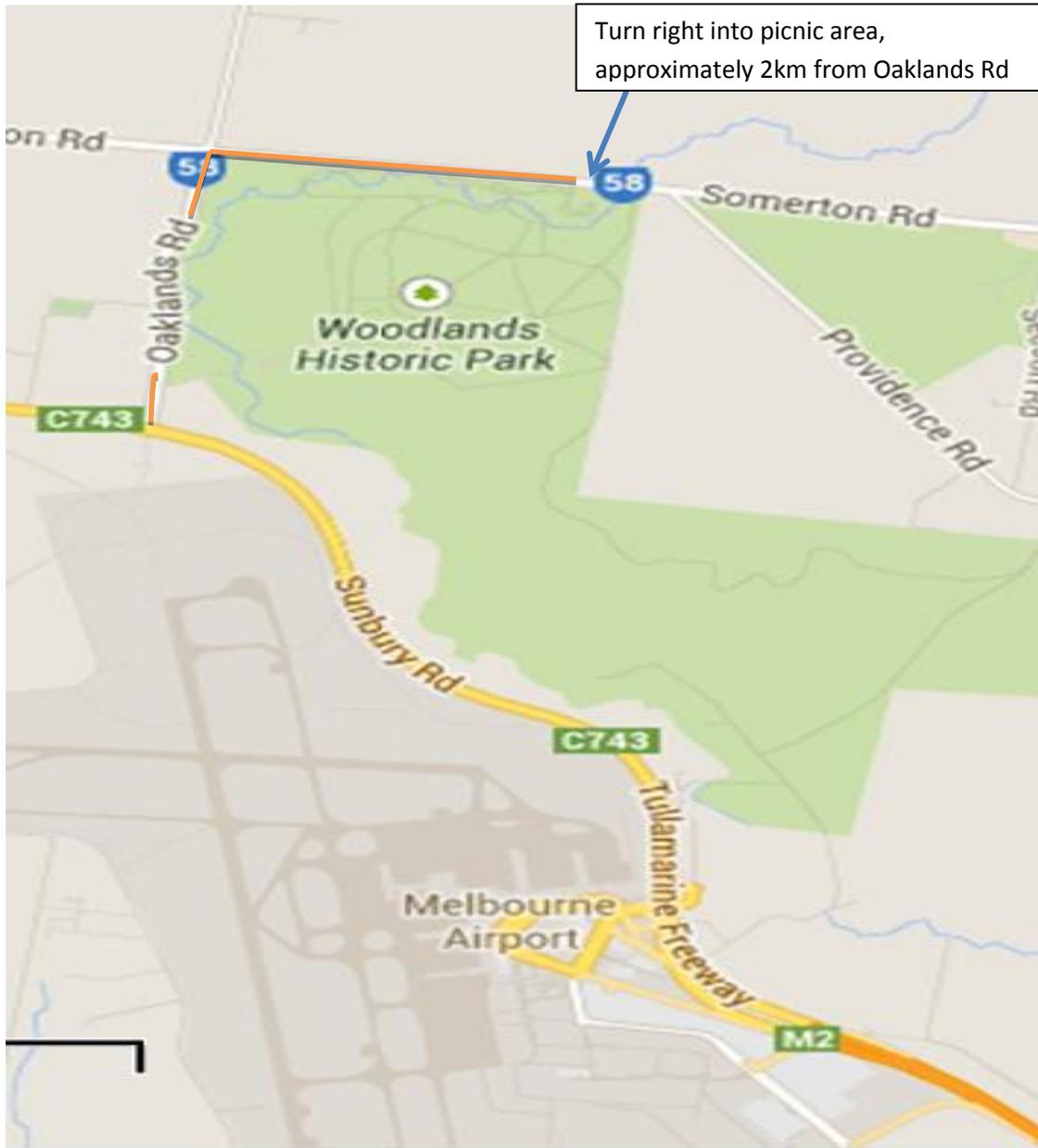
## Ferny Creek – Sherbrooke Forest

Muddy, watch your step! The Ferny Creek run is potentially a very cold place to run and if it has been raining, or is raining, some parts of the trails turn to creek beds! Whilst this may sound off-putting, if you are up for the challenge it is a very rewarding experience. But make sure you bring a change of clothes, it's a long way to drive and even longer if you're soaking wet!! Amongst the majestic Mountain Ash trees the Ferny Creek trails are narrow with steep ascents and descents and lots of obstacles to sharpen the reflexes and the cross country senses.



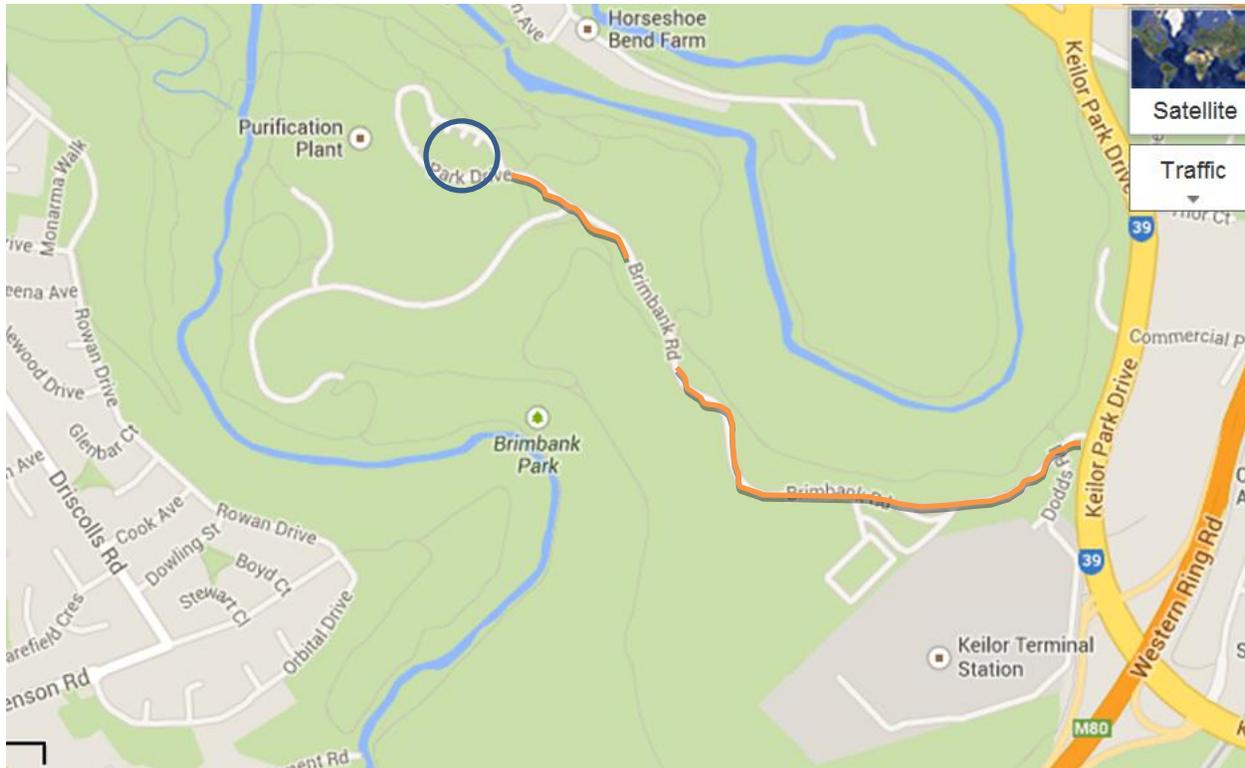
## Woodlands Historic Park

Just thirty minutes from Werribee, Woodlands Historic Park offers a mixture of dirt road and trails and is ideal for threshold runs with some hills - ideal cross country training. Also, for the sprinters, there are some long straight even surfaces with steady climbs. If you are not quite ready to run, why not go for a walk, have tea and scones at the homestead, then visit the 'living legends' of horse racing at the Historic homestead.



## Brimbank Park

Just 25 minutes from Werribee, Brimbank Park offers all types of running experiences from open flat grass and paths to incredibly steep dirt trails. This is the site for the Athletics Victoria 'Heritage race', where athletes are encouraged to wear their uniforms and running apparel of yester-year, it's the fancy dress party of cross country!!



## The Tan – Botanical Gardens

The spiritual home of running in Melbourne, The Tan is a mixture of wide, firm sandy surfaces, turning to a steep asphalt ascent up Anderson Street, gentle undulations through the southern side then a steady 1km descent back to the start. This is a fast course and is used as a benchmark for athlete's performances as the distance is accurately known, unlike most other courses. We would typically visit this location in the week before the Tan Relays in September.

