

Kinglake National Park

We may not be able to travel far but we are fortunate to have some great parks right on our doorstep which we are now allowed to visit.



The forecast was for another cool but lovely sunny autumn day in Melbourne so we set out through Diamond Creek, Hurstbridge, St Andrews to Kinglake. There are a couple of cafes on the main road in Kinglake if you need a coffee or lunch, but we took our own.

Continuing on the Whittlesea-Kinglake road we were heading for Wombelano Falls. Just past the Kinglake oval we saw the sign to the falls – 6 kms. We turned right down Extons Road looking for another sign to the falls. We drove until the bitumen finished, then drove some more, past a dirt bike area, the road got worse and worse. Fortunately we were in a four wheel drive. We must have missed the turn off; we were now in a State Forest area. With some difficulty we turned around but then stopped and listened. Nothing but bird sounds.

So we decided it was time for coffee, to sit and just appreciate the beautiful bush around us. We had climbed to 600metres and were now sitting in low clouds which gave an ethereal feel to the surrounding bush. The birds were well hidden and hard to identify by their sounds, except for the distinctive call of the whip bird.

The road side was coloured with *Epacris Impressa*, Common Heath, also sometimes known as Erica – the Victorian State Floral Emblem. The various shades of pink and white took me back to my university days when I helped a friend mark out quadrants and count how many of each colour as part of her honours Botany thesis.



Kinglake National Park



We headed back along Extons Road and found the turn off to the falls. We drove the 2 kms down Captains Creek Road to the car park. It is a dirt road but in good condition so doesn't need a four wheel drive. It was a Friday so we surprised to see 5 other cars in the small car park. The sign told us it was a 1.5km circuit to the falls. So off we set along the narrow track – starting with a very gradual slope it got a steeper as we went.

Good walking shoes are definitely recommended. It had not rained for 4 days but was still quite damp and slippery. After stopping occasionally to admire the amazing array of mosses, lichen and fungi we reached the falls which had a good flow of water, helped by all the recent rains.

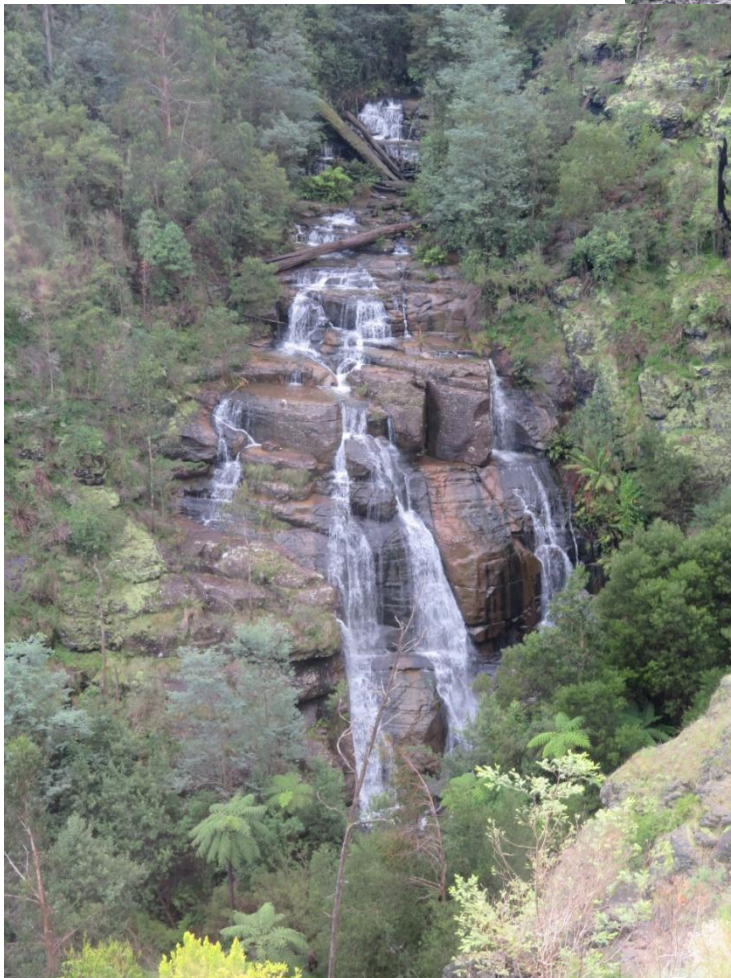
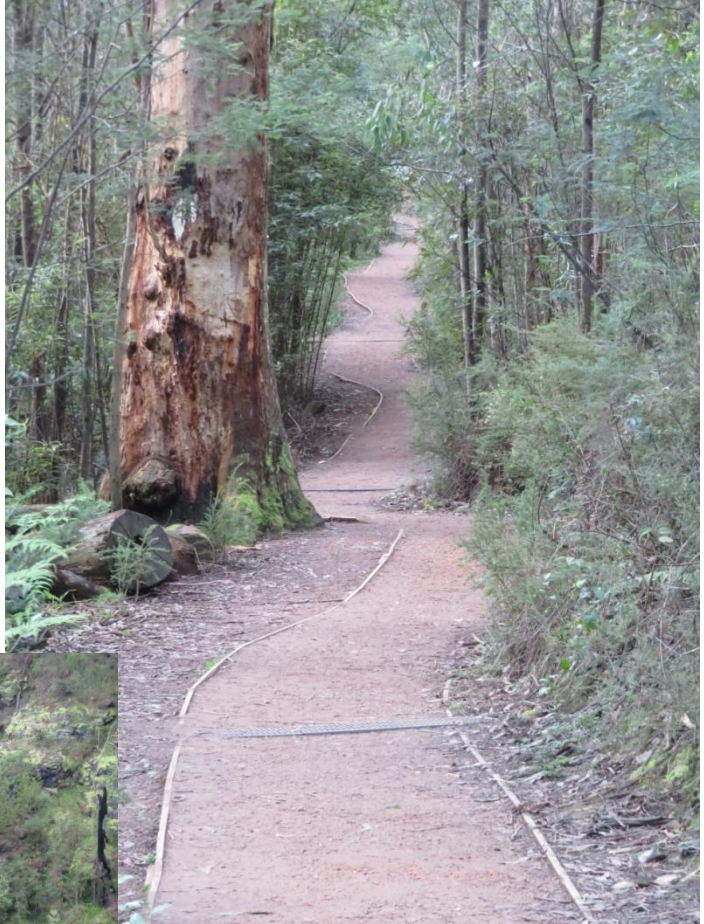


Kinglake National Park

Back in the car we head further along Whittlesea-Kinglake Road and turned left at Pheasant Creek, following the signs to Masons Falls picnic ground. We were again surprised to find so many people – there were only a few car parks left and a large number of people with picnics at the tables – all well spread out for social distancing. The public toilets were open, but best to take some hand sanitiser with you.

There are 8 different walks in the area with clear signs on length and difficulty. They range from 7.8km one way to a 500m circuit. So there is something for everyone. We chose the walk to the falls (700m one way) which was an easier walk than the first one to Wombelano Falls, but also more crowded.

We had come down to only 400m so were no longer in the clouds, and appreciating the sun breaking through. The falls were flowing well and ended in a deep gorge dotted with flourishing tree ferns.



There are still signs of the 2009 fires here with many dead trees in the area. But there are also signs that Spring is just around the corner.

The wattles are developing small green flowers and ferns are unfurling delicate new fronds.

A lovely spot for a day trip to escape from the confines of our home after weeks of isolation.

We are so fortunate to live in such a beautiful area.

Kinglake National Park

