

## HISTORY

### HOPETOUN RAVENSTHORPE RAILWAY 1909-1935

Late in the nineteenth century gold was discovered in the Ravensthorpe Range. This initiated a gold rush with prospectors converging on the Range and in 1900 The Phillips River Goldfield was declared. Teamsters with horses, donkeys and wagons carted the gold from the Range down a muddy or dusty track, depending on the season, to the sea at Mary Ann Haven (later Hopetoun) for export.

The railway was completed in January 1909. In April it was ready for traffic and taken over by Western Australian Government Railways. It was 33 miles and 62 chains (54.70 kms) long, constructed of rail 45 lbs per yard with jarrah sleepers, earth ballast and narrow gauge. The route included two stations, one each at Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe. There were sidings at Three Mile, Seven Mile, Kulliba (until 28.1.1910. called No 1 Siding), Kundip, Desmond, 30 Mile, Junction at Smelters and a private spur and siding to Mt Cattlin Gold Mine.

The first locomotive, a Beyer Peacock 2-6-0, arrived by sea in 1908 from Kirup in the South West and was used by contractors. There were up to five locomotives used on the line including replacements used during overhauling times. The last locomotive, G233, was removed in 1944 to Midland Railway Workshops where it was restored and it is now the "Leschenault Lady" still in use by the Hotham Valley Tourism Railway.

Railway stock on the line included 12 WAGR four wheel wagons for construction work. In 1907 the 4-wheel wagon stock comprised one D-class covered van, four GB-class, two J-Class travelling tanks, 12 L-class ballast hoppers, 0-class explosives van and at least four other trucks. Further rolling stock was added until 1914, including in 1909 a cattle truck and two passenger coaches holding 21 and 32 passengers each. One coach has been restored privately in Hopetoun and the other plus the Guards Van are at the Ravensthorpe Museum. The 18 ton crane is still in use at the Ravensthorpe Railway Station site.

The locomotives were fuelled by coal which was shipped from Newcastle, New South Wales, and used in preference to Collie coal, the latter was used when shipments were delayed. The railway telephone, connecting Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun, was rented to the Post Master General's Department.

Mining dropped off by 1914 and from 1919 the railway serviced farms. Permanent service ceased in 1932 but wheat was carried at harvest until final closure in 1935. Then horse and man-power were used to pull the wagons along the jetty to meet State ships until 1938. In 1947 rails and sleepers were removed. The rolling stock was recovered by PWD during World War II for service on coastal tramways in the North West.

(Information taken from *The Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe Railway* by PW Nugent published in *The Australian Railway Historical Society Bulletin*).

## CODE OF CONDUCT

BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOURSELF AND THE ENVIRONMENT

THE RAILWAY HERITAGE TRAIL IS DESIGNATED AS A SINGLE USE TRAIL, IN THIS SECTION, FOR WALKERS ONLY

WEAR SUITABLE CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

CARRY WATER WITH YOU

IT IS ADVISABLE TO INFORM SOMEONE OF YOUR WHEREABOUTS BEFORE COMMENCING THE TRAIL

WALKING THIS TRAIL IS NOT ADVISABLE AFTER HEAVY RAIN

BE CONSCIOUS THAT THERE ARE MANY UNFENCED MINE SHAFTS IN OLD MINING AREAS PLEASE KEEP OUT

BEWARE OF BEES AND SNAKES

PLEASE DON'T LIGHT FIRES AND IF YOU SMOKE MAKE SURE ALL CIGARETTES ARE EXTINGUISHED PROPERLY

CARRY ALL RUBBISH AWAY, BUT NO ARTEFACTS OR WILDFLOWERS

IN FACT TAKE NOTHING AWAY BUT YOUR MEMORIES, LEAVE NOTHING BEHIND BUT YOUR FOOTPRINTS

ENJOY YOUR WALK

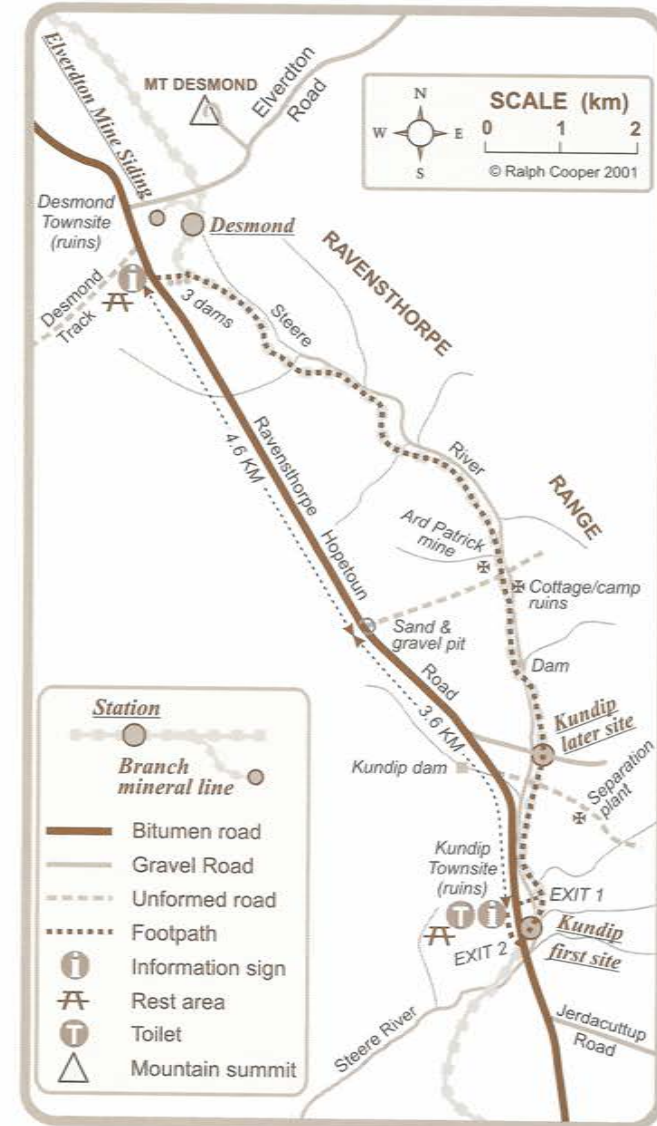


USERS WALK THIS TRAIL AT THEIR OWN RISK  
PLEASE KEEP TO THE DEFINED TRAIL

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# Welcome to Hopetoun Ravensthorpe Railway Heritage Walk Trail

DESMOND TO KUNDIP SECTION  
9 KMS ABOUT 3-4 HOURS



## DIRECTIONS

Desmond is 11 kms south east of Ravensthorpe and 38 kms north of Hopetoun.

Start from **DESMOND REST AREA** situated in the abandoned townsite, which is on the west side of the Ravensthorpe Hopetoun sealed road. To access the Railway Heritage Trail cross the road to the east and follow the signed pathway for about 400 metres until you reach a dam. Follow the pathway on the left of, and parallel to, the dams and you will reach the railway track. Turn right towards the south along the short dam wall and then continue on the defined railway track.

This access is necessary as a short section to the north of the above described start of this section has been lost under the tailings dump of the Elverton copper mine. The mine area is private property and very dangerous. **STRICTLY NO ADMITTANCE.**

There are markers where the trail crosses bush tracks. If you wish to walk parts of the trail and not all of it, it can be entered or exited by 4 wheel drive tracks shown on the map.

The Desmond to Kundip section of the scenic Hopetoun Ravensthorpe Railway Heritage Trail is about 9 kms of easy walking and takes about 3-4 hours, depending on your walking speed and how much you stop to enjoy the natural bushland, geology, flora, fauna, and historic sites. Some of these are marked by 20 plaques en route and on the interpretation bays at the two rest areas.

The wilderness trail for most of the way runs close and parallel to the Steere River (East) course which is usually a dry creek bed. On the trail there are small wet creek crossings during and after heavy rain.

At Kundip 2 signed places, shown on the map, indicate a choice of where to cross the sealed road and direct you to **KUNDIP REST AREA** in the abandoned townsite on the west side of the sealed road (19 kms south of Ravensthorpe and 30 kms north of Hopetoun). Exit 1 directs you west for about 180 metres where you cross the road opposite the **KUNDIP** wooden sign, then walk south a short way to the rest area. Exit 2 is at the verge of the sealed road which you cross, then walk north up the old unsealed Hopetoun road for about 400 metres to the rest area.

Should you wish to commence your walk from Kundip and walk in a northerly direction to Desmond then please follow the map and above directions in reverse.

This project was carried out by a sub-committee of Ravensthorpe Hopetoun Area Promotions with assistance from the Shire of Ravensthorpe and financial assistance from Department of Local Government Community Facilities Grants Program and Western Australian Tourism Commission Development Fund.



## A TRAIL RICH IN WILDFLOWERS, NATURAL BEAUTY AND HISTORY

The Desmond to Kundip section is the first stage of the Hopetoun Ravensthorpe railway to be developed into the heritage walk trail.

Along this section of the trail you will experience the natural bushland of the Ravensthorpe Range and the valley of the Steere River. Ravensthorpe is renowned for its extensive concentration of Eucalypts and is noted for having the largest diversity of flowering plants for its size in the world. The area embraces many rich landforms ranging from ancient rocky hills to vast sandplains and rich red soils. The vast number of plant species is probably due to the wide variation of rocks, soil nutrients and climate over a small area.

You can expect to see the wildflowers all the year round but spring boasts the largest number of exhibits. Look up and into the bush to see and hear some of the birds. Look down and in the undergrowth to see the small creatures like lizards and geckos. You may be lucky and see kangaroos, emus, snakes and goannas as well.

Should you wish to read more of the flora and history of the area there is a good selection of books for sale and free leaflets at the Ravensthorpe Tourist Bureau.

The annual Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show is held for the first two weeks of September with usually (depending on the season) over 800 labelled local species on display.

The 54 km abandoned railway is to be converted in stages, the Hopetoun Trailhead 14 km circular route commencing from the old jetty site is also complete.

## HOPETOUN RAVENSTHORPE RAILWAY HERITAGE WALK TRAIL

(54 kms when complete)

