

Williamstown

Summary

A beachside walk past contrasting sandy and rocky beaches as well as interesting geological features. Walk through this well-preserved historical area of early Melbourne with its fascinating naval artefacts and choose between picnicking in one of several parks or pausing for refreshment in one of its abundant cafes. Add on a self-guided walk past many early buildings.

Distance: 4km.

Time: About 1.5 hours.

Melway map: 56 B10 start; 56 E11 finish.

Level of difficulty: Easy.

Track surfaces: Sealed (except for short detour at Point Gellibrand) and suitable for prams and wheelchairs.

Facilities: There are seats in the parks; water and toilets at Williamstown Beach area, Fort Gellibrand Reserve, the Visitor Centre/Gem Pier and at Newport Station; barbecues; children's playgrounds; kiosks (Williamstown Beach area); and cafes around Nelson Place.

Visitor Centre: Open 9-5pm daily; ph 03 9932 4310, www.visithobsonsbay.com.au ; excellent self-guided walk maps available, including *Waterfront Williamstown*, *Community Williamstown* and *Seaside Williamstown*.

Best season: All seasons - shady trees for summer, many cafes for winter recovery. Point Gellibrand is exposed so bring sunscreen or rain gear.

Mobile phone coverage: Good.

Dogs: Some leash-free areas otherwise dogs permitted on leash.

Hazards: Note the warnings before swimming at Williamstown Beach. The tracks are shared with bicycles so be alert and considerate of other users.

Car parking: Street parking is ticketed but there is free parking at weekends on the corner of Nelson Place and Kanowna Street.

Public transport: Werribee train line to Williamstown Beach, changing trains at Newport. Alternatively, a ferry service operates from Southgate (City) to Gem Pier and the Visitor Centre.

For more information, go to www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au

Gellibrand site. (The Fort is not open to the public.) Keep following the path beside the beach, passing a very rocky Shelley Beach until a small gravel track detours off to the right (not suitable for prams and wheelchairs). It is marked by a large rock with information about the fascinating environment of Shelley Beach featuring visible lava blisters and large numbers of pelicans, cormorants and oyster catchers.

6. The gravel track rejoins the main sealed path beside Battery Road just before it becomes the Steve Bracks Promenade. Enjoy sea and City views as you promenade to the historic Time Ball Tower, Flagpole and Hulk Anchor. These are surrounded by information boards which are well worth reading.
7. Now you are passing modern working Williamstown: the Port of Melbourne is on your right with more information boards about the early piers that still exist but are not open to the public. Opposite the corner of Kanowna Street and Nelson Place another information board tells a fascinating tale about how the American Civil War came to Williamstown.
8. Wander along Nelson Place admiring the historic façades, some restored others visibly crumbling, and head for the Visitor Centre in the Commonwealth Reserve at Gem Pier. Pick up a brochure to do a short historical walk around Old Williamstown before returning home or continuing on (see Future Walk below). The many cafes might tempt you to stop for refreshments.
9. From the Visitor Centre cross Nelson Place to Thompson Street, walk three blocks past an eclectic mix of tiny old weatherboard houses and stunning new architect-designed dwellings. At the corner with Hanmer Street there is a very large block of apartments; cross Hanmer Street and take the diagonal path to the left of this large building, passing a children's playground and leading to Williamstown Station. Catch the train back to the City.
10. An alternative way back to the City would be via ferry from Gem Pier to Southgate. The Visitor Centre has information about this service.

Future Walk (or extension)

A pleasant walk is to continue along Nelson Place from the Visitor Centre to The Strand where the path becomes the Williamstown Foreshore Trail and follows the sea up to Newport. Take the train at Newport (*Melway* 56 K4).



The map illustrates the 10km walking route around Williamstown. The route is marked with a red dashed line and numbered 1 to 10. Key locations include Start W'town Beach, Garden St, Osborne St, Langford St, Hammer St, Parker St, Visitors Centre, Nelson Pl, Kanowna St, Timeball Tower, Bracks Promenade, Battery Rd, Cyril Curtain Reserve, Point Gellibrand Reserve, Hatt Reserve, Esplanade, Botanic Gardens, and Finish. A scale bar indicates 300m and a north arrow is present.

1. From Williamstown Beach Station turn right and walk through the underpass opposite Parker Street. Turn right then left to Langford Street – you can see the sea ahead. At the T-junction with Osborne Street turn right, then left into Garden Street past the bocce and bowling club. This leads you to the beachfront. Cross the Esplanade at the pedestrian crossing.
2. Williamstown Beach is a wide sandy area with a children's playground, cafes, and toilets. Read the Hazard Warning board before entering the water. Dogs are not allowed on this beach.
3. Turn left along the path beside the Esplanade past picnic tables, a shelter, free barbecues and drinking fountains. Opposite the Williamstown Anglers' Club and across the W. A. Parker Reserve is the entrance to the Williamstown Botanic Gardens – worth a detour. A number of old houses along the Esplanade, marked by plaques, are worth a look.
4. Continue along the path enjoying the sea air and sea views across the wide grassy expanse of the Hatt Reserve, taking note of the signs where dogs are allowed off leash. Opposite Thompson Street the path veers to the right, away from the road and beside some tennis courts. It passes through the Cyril Curtain Reserve behind a large cricket ground towards Point Gellibrand. As you round the Point you will have a startling and stunning view of Melbourne's skyline ahead. Here, the wide area between the path and the sea is rocky in contrast to the early part of the walk.
5. Opposite the junction of the path with Battery Road there is another park with a barbecue and a playground on the edge of the Old Fort

