

33rd ASF Conference

CAVING IN THE MOONLIGHT

SECOND CIRCULAR



12-19 OF
JANUARY 2025

www.asfconference2025.com



WELCOME

CAVING IN THE MOONLIGHT

DEAR CAVERS, WELCOME

The 33rd ASF Conference Caving in the Moonlight, will be organised by the Victorian Speleological Association (VSA) and will be held in Buchan, Victoria between 12th and 19th of January of 2025. The ASF Biennial Conferences cover a wide range of subjects related to Speleology, and the conferences themselves serve as an important meeting point for caving enthusiasts, technical caving specialists and scientists with cave-related interests.

This conference was named after Frank Moon, one of the pioneers of caving in Buchan, discoverer of numerous caves.

"Moon was passionate about the Buchan caves and for him it wasn't just a matter of work but a way of life."

A Caving Pioneer Frank Moon - Dr Robert Haldane

THE ORGANIZERS



THE CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

The Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) was formed in 1956 and is a national body that represents the interests of 24 caving clubs with over 950 members and which represents Australia on the International Union of Speleology.

The Federation is registered as an Environmental Organisation by the Department of the Environment and Energy, Canberra. It maintains a Public Fund, authorised under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 item 6.1.1, subsection 30-55(1) to receive tax-deductible donations for its environmental purposes.

ASF and members played a leading role in environmental issues relating to Colong, Bungonia and Yessabah (NSW), Gordon-Franklin, Precipitous Bluff, Exit Cave & Mt Cripps (Tas) Mt Etna (Qld), The Potholes (Vic) and Sellicks Hill (SA). We took court action objecting to mining exploration at Cape Range (WA) and Mt Cripps (Tas) and at Timor (NSW). As well, ASF was retained as a consultant on specific management strategy issues at Jenolan (NSW), Nullarbor Plain (SA/WA), Yallingup (WA), Hastings Cave and Exit Cave (Tas), Cutta Cutta (NT), and elsewhere.

The Victorian Speleological Association (VSA) was formed in 1967 by the merger of Victorian Cave Exploration Society and Sub Aqua Speleological Society. The VSA today is the largest caving club in Australia with 110 members. Over the years, members of VSA have discovered and documented hundreds of caves on numerous trips and expeditions. In the seventies, members of the VSA have discovered Exponential Pot (3M-125) one of the best caves in Murrindal, have discovered the "dry bypass" in 7JF-4, formed the Rimstone Cooperative and organised a ASF Conference.

In the eighties a new extension was explored in Dalley's (3M-35), Friends of Buchan was formed and Potholes allotment was acquired by the government as a result of VSA's actions. In the following decades VSA has organised expeditions to New Zealand, Queensland, Northern Territory and an annual expedition to Nullarbor. Today VSA continues to document caves in Victoria, train and educate new cavers and protect caves discovered by previous generations.

WHAT IS THE ASF CONFERENCE

BY JANICE MARCH

The ASF conference is a week-long caving event held every 2 years run by a local organizing committee in a different state each time. It is usually held in a town close to a remote caving area, and attracts between 70 and 120 cavers from across Australia. Each conference has its own certain flavour depending on the location and the convenor's wishes. I have been lucky enough to attend ASF conferences in Launceston, Yeppoon, Dover, Galong, Exmouth, Devonport, Ceduna and Penrith (if you count the international congress). The attendees have a wide range of caving interests and before, during and after the social and scientific part of the week, there are caving trips run mostly by the local cavers. A wide variety of trips are usually on offer to all comers and this is an excellent way to experience caving in that area with the locals and meet like-minded cavers from other parts of Australia. Often the local cavers will have a special project or permit arranged exclusively for conference attendees. The event is held at a time of year conducive to caving in that area.

The conference organiser arranges for an interesting line up of speakers on a vast array of speleological topics, many by cavers who are attending the event. Relevant issues such as conservation campaigns, access problems, or standardising cave documentation systems are workshopped, and rescue preparedness is discussed and practised. The photographic and Speleosports competitions encourage active participation, plus there are often fundraising raffles and book sales. Posters and surveys are on show and the morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea breaks and the Cavers' Dinner and other fun evening social interludes allow ample opportunity for cavers to get to know one another or rekindle old friendships. The work of the ASF continues all year long and there are heaps of volunteers doing amazing work in the name of the ASF and for their clubs too. You can read about this in the ASF's publications however it is so much better when you can put a face to the names and get to know those keen people.

History of ASF conferences

Back in 1956 when the ASF was formed there was no internet, so communication between Australia's caving clubs was by snail mail. For the first face-to-face meeting of the fourteen speleological societies of the ASF, cavers travelled from all states (probably taking public transport driving on unsealed roads in 1950s Landrovers) to Adelaide for the two day formal meeting and a few days of entertainment and educational talks, and then continued on expeditions to the Nullarbor and Kangaroo Island afterwards.

Official business of the ASF was handled at the Council meeting which is enshrined in the constitution as occurring at the conference, as far as practicable. These days much of the business is done by email between the ASF and clubs but with the advent of digital meetings (via Zoom), clubs can be represented by their delegates at the Council meeting without having to attend the conference.



THE HOST TOWN

BUCHAN

Originally named Bukan-Mungie, meaning 'the place of rocks with holes in them', the area was one of Victoria's earliest European settlements.

Buchan and its surrounding valleys have been the site of human habitation for thousands of years before European settlement in the late 1830s. The origin of the name 'Buchan' is ambiguous, with several meanings being attributed to it. A popular view is that 'Bukan-Munjie' translates to 'a place of rocks with holes in them' in the local Gunai-Kurnai language, with the spelling 'Buchan' being influenced by early Scottish settlers.

Buchan is one of Victoria's oldest European settlements and was founded by pioneers as they made their way south from the Monaro Tablelands in NSW. During an 1840 expedition to the area, surveyor and pastoralist Stuart Ryrie Junior entered a cave now known as "Garage Pot" and was the first European to see and describe the caves. It is important to add however, that indigenous occupation of local caves have been recorded as far back as 18,000 years.

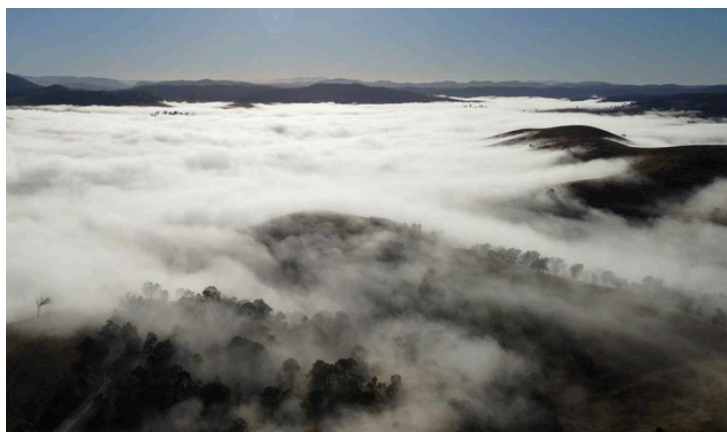
Today, Buchan is a popular tourist destination for its renowned Fairy-Royal-Federal Cave System which has been open for nearly 120 years and attracts over 120,000 visitors annually. The township has a population of 201 people according to the 2021 census, with much of the local area being utilised as pasture land and for limestone quarrying. The town has recently braved multiple natural disasters including the Black Summer Bushfires and the 2023 floods which have devastated tourism along with the local economy.



What to do

Explore Snowy River National Park's majestic landscapes including Victoria's deepest gorge, Little River Gorge, and the stunning 600-meter-high Little River Falls. Don't miss the awe-inspiring views from the cliff-top lookouts accessible via McKillops Bridge, built in 1936 and spanning 255m across the Snowy River. McKillops Bridge provides awe-inspiring views to the Snowy River valley below and is easily accessible by conventional car.

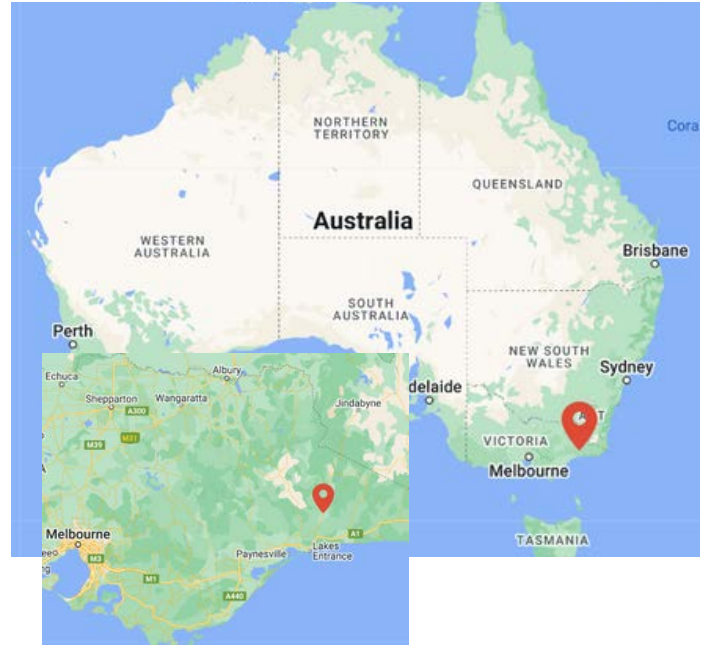
With a 4WD you can explore much more of the surrounding area. Eight km south-west of the town is Buchan South, the site of a black marble outcrop which was used in the construction of 16 huge pillars for Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance. 900 tonnes were also shipped to London for inclusion in Australia House. It is also the home of Buchan's war memorial – the Avenue of Honour. The Avenue consists of two rows of English Oaks planted in 1920 which formed the entrance to the then public school. Well worth a visit – follow the road signs. Follow the link for more attractions: <https://buchan.vic.au/visitor-information/>



THE HOST TOWN

HOW TO GET THERE

The easiest, simplest and most popular way to get to Buchan is by car. The town sits at the intersection of 3 major roads, which spoke out in opposing directions. Bruthen-Buchan Road enters from the south-west and is reachable from Bruthen in 40 minutes (50 km), Bairnsdale in an hour (75 km) and Melbourne in about 4 and a half hours (360 km). Buchan-Orbost Road approaches from the south-west, where the town of Orbost is 45 minutes away (60 km). The northern route does a large loop through the Snowy River National Park with no major towns, before reaching the Bonang Highway which heads into New South Wales.



Buchan Mean Maximum Temperatures



January days in Buchan are balmy, averaging around 25.8 °C. Sunscreen and hat recommended.

EAT AND DRINK



Buchan Caves Hotel



Buchan General Store



The Buchan Valley Roadhouse

Open 7 days a week during school holidays and long weekends.

Lunch: 12-2pm

Dinner: 6-8pm

www.buchanpub.com.au

Family owned local business.

WHAT TO DO

AND SEE

One of the oldest towns in Victoria, Buchan is rich in pioneering heritage and was first settled by Europeans around 1840 after East Gippsland explorer J.R. Wilkinson began the Buchan Station and Edward Bayliss started the Gelantipy Station. The Caves Reserve is the main visitor attraction but the district has many other activities and features at: <https://buchan.vic.au/visitor-information/>

BUCHAN SELF-GUIDED HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR



**MCKILLOPS
BRIDGE**



**THE SNOWY-BUCHAN
JUNCTION**



**SNOWY RIVER
NATIONAL PARK**



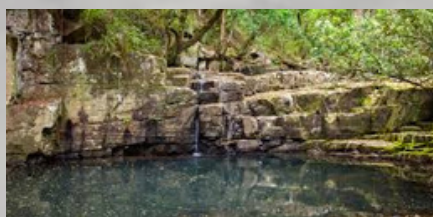
**TULLOCH ARD ROAD AND
GORGE/WALK LOOKOUT**



**BASIN CREEK
FALLS**



**THE BUCHAN
RIVER**



**THE BATALUK
CULTURAL TRAIL**



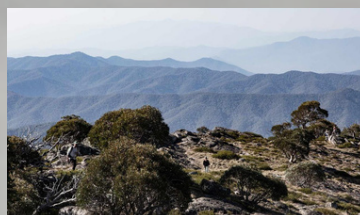
SUGGAN BUGGAN



**CANOEING AND
RAFTING**



JACKSONS CROSSING



ALPINE NATIONAL PARK



THE TIMBARRA RIVER

ACCOMODATION

WHERE TO STAY

Buchan is a small town and accommodation options are limited however there's more than enough camping for a true nature lover's experience. Please prioritise camping locations and leave indoor accommodation available for the ones that really need it.

Apart from accommodation directly in Buchan there are many close locations should you wish.

Nowa Nowa is 25min away, SIBA Retreat is 25min away, Lakes Entrance is located 45min away and Bairnsdale is just under an hour away.



**BUCHAN CAVES
CAMPGROUND**



CAVES HOUSE



GRANDVIEW SANCTUARY

Please contact Leanne on (03) 8427 2231 or book [HERE](#)



**THE RIVER
RETREAT**



**COTTAGE ON
MAIN**



**THE STOCKMANS
CAMP**



BUCHAN MOTEL



COSIEST COTTAGE



**BUCHAN VALLEY
LOG CABINS**

[MORE ON ASFCONFERENCE2025.COM](https://www.asfconference2025.com)

TICKETS

TYPES OF TICKETS

Full access to conference and 5 days of morning and afternoon tea, five lunches, welcome bbq and cavers' dinner, t-shirt, registration package and conference booklet.

EARLY BIRD

before 1st of November 2024

FULL PRICE

after 1st of November 2024

FULL PARTICIPANT	\$360	\$390
CONCESSION ANY PERSON WHO HOLDS AN ELIGIBLE CONCESSION CARD.	\$340	\$370
STUDENT	\$280	\$310
CHILD 10-18yo	\$220	\$250
SINGLE DAY	\$70	\$100

Attendance for a single day at the conference includes morning, afternoon tea and lunch, access to the events during that day and registration package. Does not include welcome barbecue, cavers dinner and t-shirt.

Tickets available online at:

<https://www.asfconference2025.com/event-details/33rd-asf-conference-2025>

ACTIVITIES

EXHIBITS

Photography salon

The 33rd ASF Photo Salon will celebrate the delicate beauty of images of caves, cavers, and caving. Cave-related images will be printed and put on display through the conference and then at the end given to the photographers. All details on the [website](#).

Speleo sports

- Srt course challenge - comprehensive ropes course for cavers to show off their skills.
- Speed Ascent - a single pitch rope ascending, the fastest caver wins.
- Squeeze Challenge - An artificial technical squeeze station will test caver's flexibility and composure.
- Speedy Crawl - a speed crawl challenge.
- Roof Sniff and Cave Diving Demonstration

Cartography salon

The Cartography Salon is an exhibition of cave and karst-related maps. The aim is to foster an interest in cave cartography as a technical skill and as an art form, to allow an exchange of techniques, ideas, and styles among the Society's surveyors and cartographers, to recognize cartographic excellence, and, to create a display that depicts recent or active exploration and mapping projects nationwide.

De-obstruction workshop

A qualified blasting technician will demonstrate techniques for removing large boulders and shaving rock walls.

PROGRAM

	THURSDAY 9TH	FRIDAY 10TH	SATURDAY 11TH	SUNDAY 12TH Day 1	MONDAY 13TH Day 2	TUESDAY 14TH Day 3	WEDNESDAY 15TH Day 4	THURSDAY 16TH Day 5	FRIDAY 17TH Day 6	SATURDAY 18TH Day 7	SUNDAY 19TH	MONDAY 20TH
Morning 1				Pre-Conference CAVING	Welcome Presentation Talks/Posters	Talks/Posters	ACTIVITIES DAY	Talks/Posters	Talks/Posters	SPELEO ACTIVITIES	Post-Conference CAVING	Post-Conference CAVING
Morning 2		Pre-Conference CAVING	Pre-Conference CAVING									
Afternoon 1				Registration OPEN		CAVING		CAVING	SPELEO ACTIVITIES			
Afternoon 2				Welcome BBQ					CAVE DIVING DEMONSTRATION	CAVE RESCUE OUTSIDE EVENT		
Evening	Debrief for Pre Caving				Evening Activity	Evening Activity Get to know your ASF EXEC & Commissioners	Evening Activity	Evening Activity	Evening Activity	Evening Activity CAVERS' Dinner		

A more detailed agenda will be published on the website and the social network closer to the date.

CAVING TRIPS

As part of the caving conference, we offer a series of guided caving excursions designed to complement the academic presentations with practical exploration. Each cave is categorised by accessibility and complexity to match diverse levels of experience and physical readiness. Detailed descriptions of each cave will be provided in subsequent communications, but here is an overview of the options available. To book a spot please contact Wayne Revell on wayne.revell@gmail.com

TOURIST CAVES –

These caves are either commercially developed for public tours or minimally equipped with basic lighting. They generally feature a combination of stairs, narrow passageways, and uneven terrain, which may present challenges for individuals with significant mobility limitations. The caves in this category include:

- Fairy Cave
- Royal Cave
- Federal Cave
- Lili Pilly Cave
- Murrindal Cave
- Shades of Death (Tourist Section)



Fairy Cave - Parks Victoria



Lili Pilly Cave - Photo by Tom Aberdeen

EASY CAVES –

These caves offer horizontal passageways and require moderate physical effort. They are accessible with minimal gear, typically just a helmet and headlamp, and are suitable for participants who are comfortable with some physical exertion and potentially muddy conditions.

- Wilsons Cave
- Dicksons Cave A & B



Dicksons Cave



Wilsons Cave - Optional Letterbox

CAVING TRIPS

INTERMEDIATE CAVES –

Characterised by more technical features, these caves may include vertical climbs, narrow squeezes, and notable geological formations. Participants should be prepared for a higher level of physical and technical challenge. Caves in this category include:

- Dalley’s Cave – Wet Cave
- Honeycomb Cave
- Slocombes Cave
- Razor Cave
- Centipede Cave
- Shades of Death



Shades of Death



Shades of Death



Honeycomb

ADVANCED CAVES –

These caves require a high level of fitness, ability to move independently on (Single Rope Technique) SRT gear, have access to wetsuits for Scrubby Creek Cave and cope well with tighter squeezes

- Elk to stream
- Scrubby Cave
- Hades Cave



Elk Cave - Lower Section



Scrubby Cave

TALKS, POSTERS

AND CONTACTS

At the conference we plan to have 4 full days of presentations and any cave related talk is welcomed.

We invite you to submit abstracts for 15-20-minute oral presentations, or poster presentations. Submissions may be made on any subject relating to Exploration, Topography and Cartography, Geology, Biospeleology, Conservation, Communications and Electronics, Cave Diving, Photography, Archeology and Paleontology, etc. Talks are to be presented in-person.

We recommend compiling your title, authors, author affiliations, and abstract offline, before starting your submission online. Abstract body text should be no more than 250 words, and may be edited for length. Do not include citations or references. List all institutional affiliations and any additional authors in the main submission box.

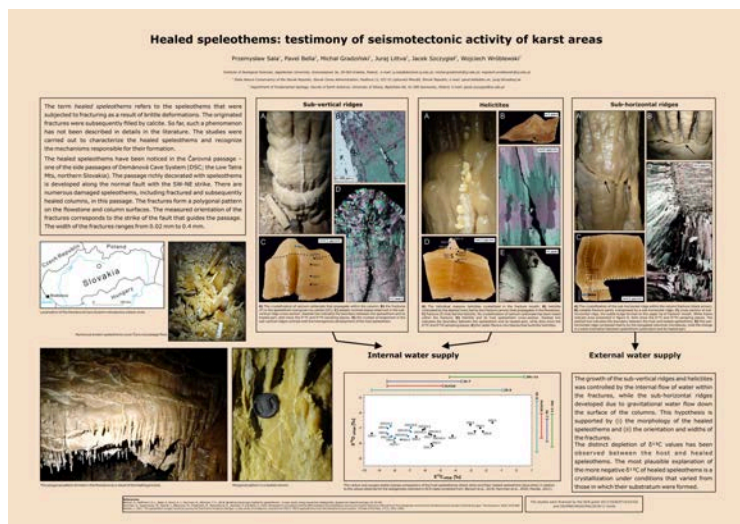
The submission deadline is 1 December 2024.

Submitting authors will be contacted by email for provisional acceptance of their abstracts. Inclusion in the programme is subject to registration for the conference. Not all submissions for oral presentations may be accepted due to limited capacity. In such cases, presenters will be asked to present a poster.

For any further assistance, or to send abstracts directly, please email asfconference2025@gmail.com, with title beginning ATTN: ABSTRACT.

Posters are a great option to highlight your chosen subject straight away. Illustrate your science, spread your knowledge, show off your new discovery or your recent trip and reach a greater audience with the power of images and few words.

Posters will be exposed over the duration of the conference and time will be allocated for owners to stand by their posters and tell the story. Have a quick search on the internet on "how to make a scientific poster" and you'll find it's not that hard. Posters will have to be printed by the owner and posters may be printed in portrait orientation at up to A0 size.



Example from <https://iks.zrc-sazu.si/en/posterji/>

Contacts

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asfconference2025@gmail.com

Caving trips pre, during and post: Wayne Revell
wayne.revell@gmail.com

Abstracts & Posters: asfconference2025@gmail.com