Harrietville Bush Kinder

Family Information Booklet

Harrietville Bush Kinder

Base: 165 Great Alpine Road, Harrietville VIC 3741
Bush-site *(Term 2 & 3):* Pioneer Trailhead, Great Alpine Road, Harrietville
Bush-site *(Term 1 & 4):* Dredgehole Pine Plantation, off Feathertop Track, Harrietville
Phone: 03 5759 2533
Website: www.harrietvilleps.vic.edu.au
Email: harrietville.ps@education.vic.gov.au

2026

Harrietville Bush Kinder Organisation

Principal:	Samantha Pellegrini
School Council President:	Eleanor Pierce
Business Manager:	Nicole Walsh
Early Childhood Teachers:	Dianne Berton and Mica Corscadden

KINDER HOURS

9:00am	Kinder commences (3 & 4-year-old)
10:00am – 10:30am	Morning snack
12:00-12:30pm	Lunch
2:00pm	Kinder finishes (3 & 4-year-old)

2026

Term 1:	27 January (teachers)/28 January (children) to 2 April
Term 2:	20 April to 26 June
Term 3:	13 July to 18 September
Term 4:	5 October to 18 December

LOCATION

Bush days Term 2 & 3 – Pioneer Trailhead, Harrietville (map – Attachment 1)
Bush days Term 1 & 4 – Dredgehole Pine Plantation, Harrietville (map – Attachment 2)
* All bush kinder policies and risk assessments can be viewed upon request
Base days – Kinder room at Harrietville Primary School
*** Children must be signed in and out on the Attendance Record / iPad each session**

BUSH SESSION OVERVIEW

Prior to the commencement of each bush session, teachers will scan the bush space for safety and new areas of potential interest. Children will meet at the tin shelter at 9:00am, **they must be signed in**, wearing mud pants (and wet weather gear if necessary). Once the group meet, they will discuss what they would like to see/explore for the day. Teachers will allow children to decide on the space and set out boundary markers.

COMMUNICATION

Kinder mobile phone:	0456 611 709
Kinder room:	5759 2533

BUSH KINDER ATTENDANCE

We ask that parents/guardians exercise their own judgement in assessing whether it is appropriate for their children to attend Bush Kinder. Children should not attend Bush Kinder if they are unwell, excessively tired, or if a parent/guardian is concerned about their wellbeing due to forecast weather conditions.

BUSH KINDER CANCELLATION

Bush Kinder sessions will be cancelled if the forecast weather conditions are deemed extreme (see "Weather" and Extreme Weather Policy) or staff absence. Parents/guardians will be notified by 8:00am on the day, if a session is cancelled and Kinder will be held in the Kinder room at Harrietville Primary School.

WEATHER

Weather information is obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology Meteye website: http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/ (Harrietville)

As per the Extreme Weather Policy, Bush Kinder sessions will be cancelled where BOM forecasts:

WEATHER CONDITION	EXTREME WEATHER DETERMINANT CAUSING CANCELLATION
Forecast temperature	Greater than 35 degrees Celsius Note: there is no pre-set minimum temp. Total Fire Ban Days
Forecast wind speed	> 45km per hour
Forecast electrical storm activity	Thunderstorm or Electrical storm
Grounds flooded near or at Bush Kinder site	On inspection of the Bush Kinder site by teachers or alert from the Alpine Shire
BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions or excessive rainfall	On warning issued by the Bureau of Meteorology

CLOTHING

Parents/guardians are required to determine appropriate clothing based on weather forecast appropriate to their bush kinder session. It is recommended that children wear clothes that:

- Allows them to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing and running
- Keeps them warm in winter and cool on warmer days (loose, light fitted long sleeve tops and pants)
- Protects them from the damaging effects of the sun (UV rays) and from bites, scratches and stings
- Footwear that is enclosed, flexible and safe to climb and run in

The following table provides examples of recommended clothing, clothing which is not recommended and unacceptable clothing:

	WARM/HOT WEATHER	COLD/WET WEATHER
Recommended clothing and footwear	Light, loose fitting long sleeved top and long pants, broad brimmed or legionnaires hat, closed toe shoes.	Waterproof coat and pants, long sleeved top, beanie, waterproof gloves, warm socks and gumboots. Thermals in very cold weather.
Not recommended	Short sleeved tops, long skirts or dresses, shorts	Skirts, dresses (incompatible with waterproofs)
Unacceptable	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs, singlet tops	Non-waterproof outer clothing.

* Waterproofs: Light rainproof hood jacket and pants which zip up over clothing

WHAT TO PACK

All children participating in Bush Kinder are required to bring a full change of clothes in their backpack. Spare clothing should include:

- Spare top and bottoms
- Spare underpants (and singlet in winter)
- 1 pair of socks
- A spare pair of shoes if gumboots not likely to be worn all session (it is not recommended that gumboots be worn during times when the weather is dry due to the restrictions they impose
- **On high UV days please ensure you apply sunscreen prior to the beginning of a session.**

Other things to pack in your child's backpack include:

- Named water bottle with fresh water. There will be access to drinking water to supplement this when required on site.
- Food: Parents/carers are required to provide a snack and their lunch in a sealed container for each session for their child to eat. We ask you to consider the environment by not including any packaging. We also ask that you continue to follow the centre's Healthy Eating Policy when selecting their food.

TOILETS

A camp toilet is provided for children to use which is housed in an appropriate tent with antibacterial hand wash available. Parents are requested to encourage children to use the toilet at home prior to their session.

MEDICATIONS

Parents and carers of children with anaphylaxis, asthma, or any other medical condition must ensure they discuss their emergency plans with staff prior to commencing kinder and Bush Kinder sessions. Children's medications and action plan will be stored with an educator at all times.

SAFETY AND AWARENESS

Bush Kinder is conducted as part of the Harrietville Bush Kinder four-year-old program. It is therefore governed by the regulations and procedures of the Preschool. Due to location and environmental factors, additional policies have been identified and specific procedures created for the Bush Kinder program to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and volunteers involved in the program. We ask parents to read through the policies regarding Bush Kinder (available on site) to ensure they understand the responsibilities of the Harrietville Bush Kinder, staff, volunteers and parents alike.

Bush Kinder Program Specific Policies include:

- Bush Kinder Delivery and Collection of Children
- Bush Kinder Emergency Evacuation
- Bush Kinder Extreme Weather
- Bush Kinder Protective Clothing
- Bush Kinder Snake Awareness and First Aid
- Bush Kinder Dog Awareness

Harrietville Bush Kinder Organisation

A Risk Assessment has been prepared and is available on site. Risk assessment, including benefit analysis, is an ongoing and continual part of the program. Evaluation of the Bush Kinder program will be constant and ongoing. We ask all participating families of the Harrietville Bush Kinder be actively involved in this process. Parent/guardians are encouraged to provide feedback, raise concerns and highlight any areas of improvement at any time.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Should an emergency situation arrive, Bush Kinder participants may be required to evacuate to a safer location to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the group. In this event, Bush Kinder educators will follow the procedures set out in the Bush Kinder Program: Emergency Evacuation Policy to move the children to designated safe areas and assembly points as detailed in the emergency evacuation maps (Attachment 3 and 4).

Harrietville Bush Kinder Pedagogy

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Following the five learning outcomes of the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework (VEYLF), Harrietville Bush Kinder aims to capture the integrated and complex learning and development of all children in our program. They are:

- Children have a strong sense of **identity**
- Children are **connected** with and **contribute** to their world
- Children have a strong sense of **wellbeing**
- Children are confident and involved **learners**
- Children are effective **communicators**.

PEDAGOGY FOR LEARNING OUTDOORS

Learning outdoors in a natural environment is strongly endorsed in the Early Years Learning Framework:
"Outdoor learning spaces are a feature of Australian learning environments. They offer a vast array of possibilities not available indoors. Play spaces in natural environments include plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud, water and other elements from nature. These spaces invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness and provide a platform for ongoing environmental education."
(EYLF: Learning environments, pages 15-16)

INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

Bush Kinder provides many rich opportunities to make connections to knowledge about country. By connecting with stories about the community and its first peoples, many understandings of the land, plants and animals can be revealed. We are fortunate to be able to employ Mica Corscadden as our indigenous teacher, to teach the children language and culture of the Dhudhuroa people.

Harrietville Bush Kinder Pedagogy

COMMUNICATION & LITERACY

Experiencing play in natural environments allows children a unique opportunity to remove themselves from the distraction of toys, media and activities that are more formal. We encourage children to use their imaginations, communicate their ideas, negotiate, develop their thinking and oral language skills, tell and listen to stories. The natural materials offer the children a variety of new ways to explore and express themselves including; drawing with sticks and rocks, weaving, threading and constructing and using mud for sculpting, cooking and creating.

MATHS & NUMERACY

Numeracy is the ability to reason and to apply simple numerical concepts. We become numerate as we develop the knowledge and skills to use mathematics across our lives, and this applies in the outdoors just as much as in the early childhood classroom. Questions can form the basis for intentional teaching as children interact with the natural environment.

SCIENCE EDUCATION OUTDOORS

Many aspects of science can be included when outdoors. Intentional teaching opportunities exist every time children are taken outside. Children make many discoveries on their own, however the experiences will be richer and learning deeper when staff are involved in drawing children's attention to their environment and providing them with knowledge and opportunities.

RISK PLAY

Taking risks is an important element of children's play and provides many learning opportunities. It provides a unique opportunity to experience thrill and exhilaration. Children who engage in challenging play in nature areas show improved physical skills and spatial awareness. Risk-taking in play allows children to learn to assess risk which is part of transitioning to mature self-regulation.

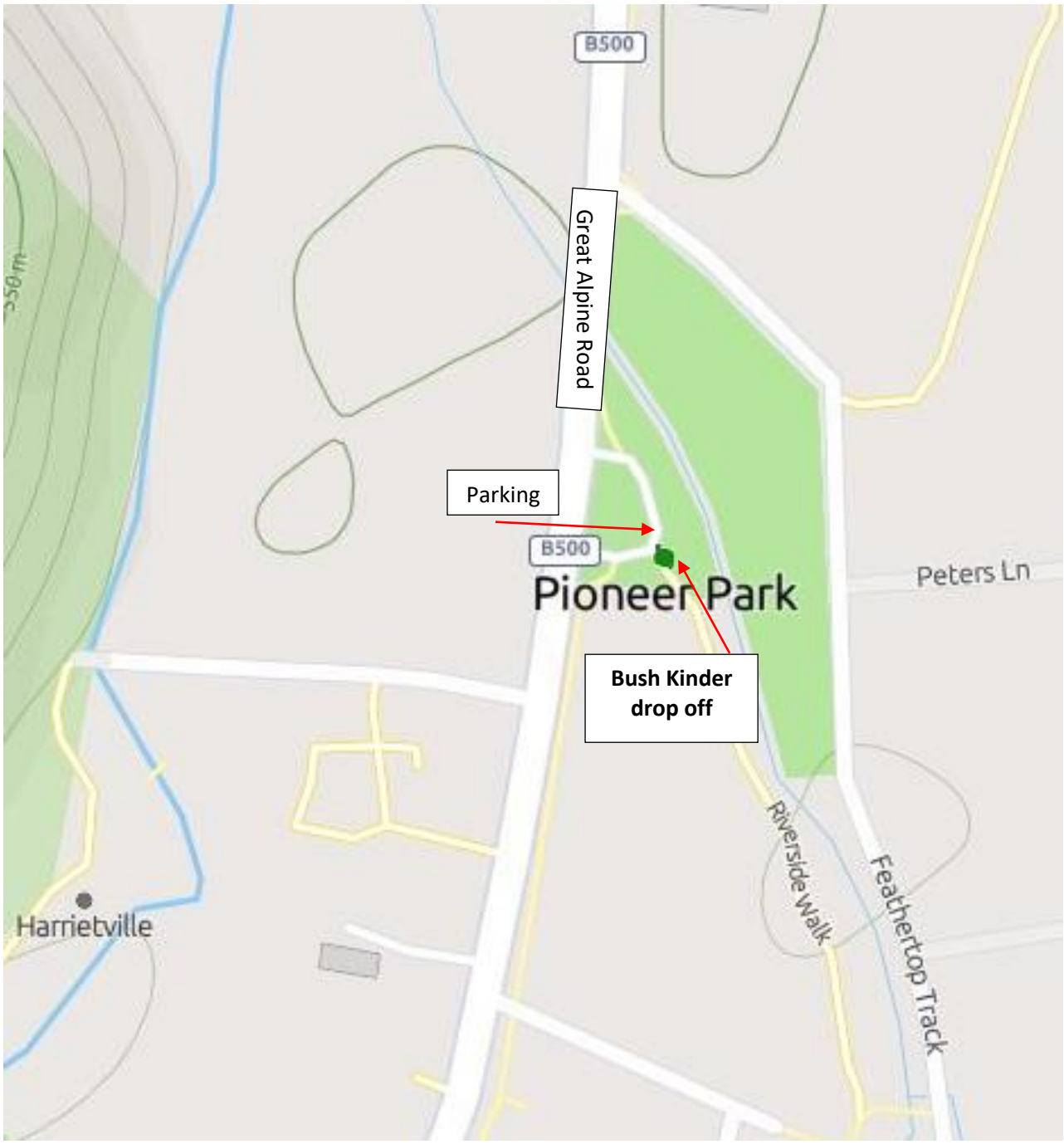
SUSTAINABILITY

Our Bush Kinder program is one of the strongest and most obvious ways to meet our obligations to teach children about sustainability.

Outdoor play in parks, gardens or the bush allow children to observe and interact with nature. They can experience life cycles and observe the wondrous variety and change of the natural world. They can find mini-beasts and trace the activity of animals. They can help tend the spaces they use. Outdoor learning can involve gardening, including growing and harvesting plants for food, rainwater harvesting, composting and worm farms. Play in wild nature provides opportunities to get to intimately know indigenous environments. This play provides a solid foundation of experiential learning to build on when we add language and conceptual learning about sustainability to our indoor programs as well.

ATTACHMENT 1

BUSH KINDER MAP (Pioneer Trailhead – Term 2 & 3)



ATTACHMENT 2

BUSH KINDER MAP (Dredgehole Pine Plantation – Term 1 & 4)

ATTACHMENT 3
Safe Zone Assembly Points and Routes

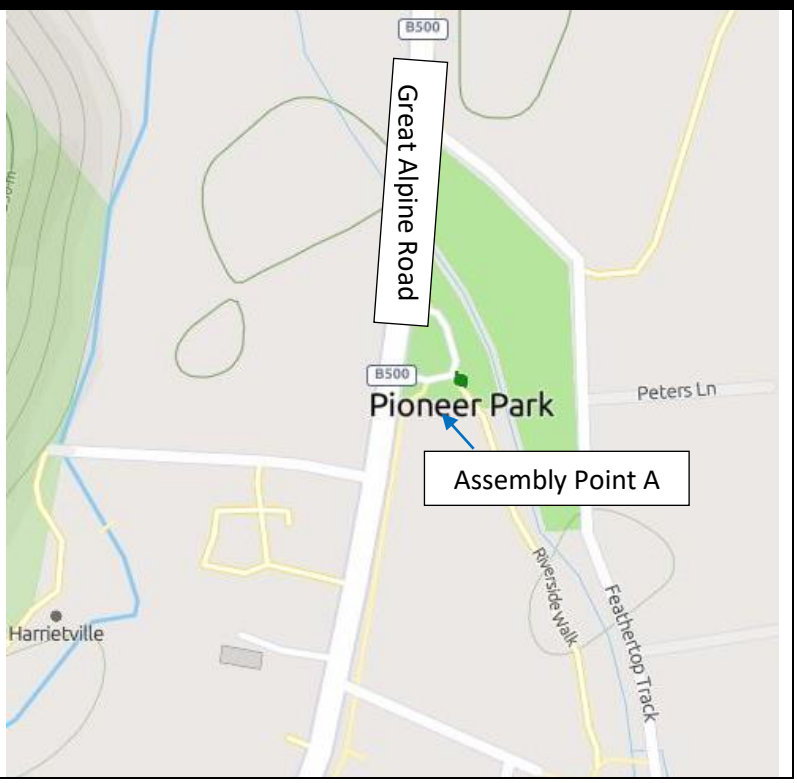
The safe zone assembly points will differ depending on the nature of the emergency:

A. TORRENTIAL RAIN, HAIL

Assembly Point A: **Tin Shelter** – wait here until torrential rain and/or hail has passed and it is safe to resume normal activities.

Shelter may be sought at HV Kitchen if the weather shows no signs of abating (see Assembly Point B below).

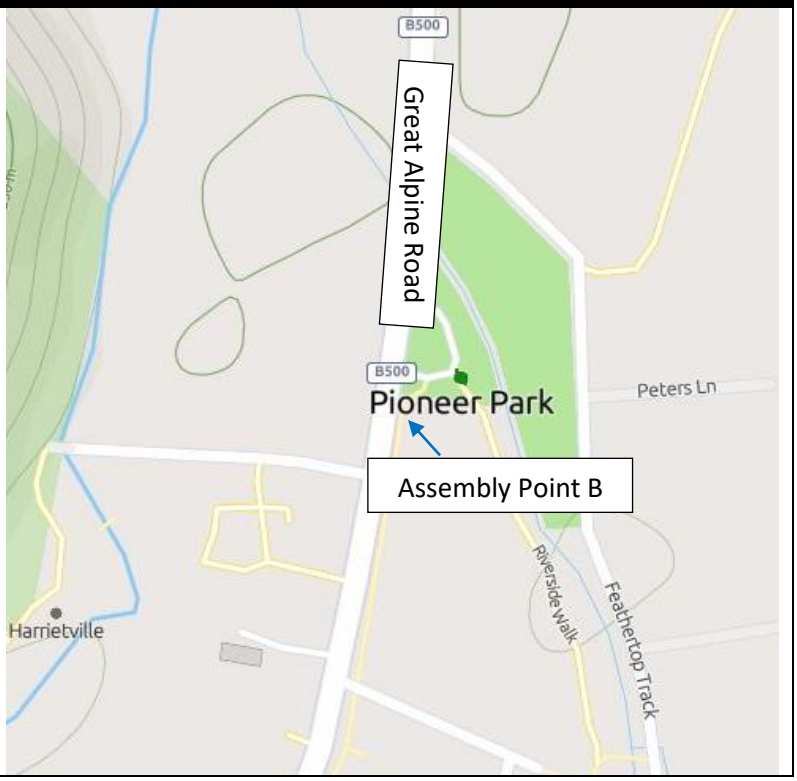
Route: Take shortest safe route possible



B. ELECTRICAL STORM, EXTREME WINDS

Assembly Point B: **HV Kitchen** – wait here until storm passes and safe to resume activities (recommend 30 minutes after electrical storm activity has ceased)

Route: Take shortest safe route possible



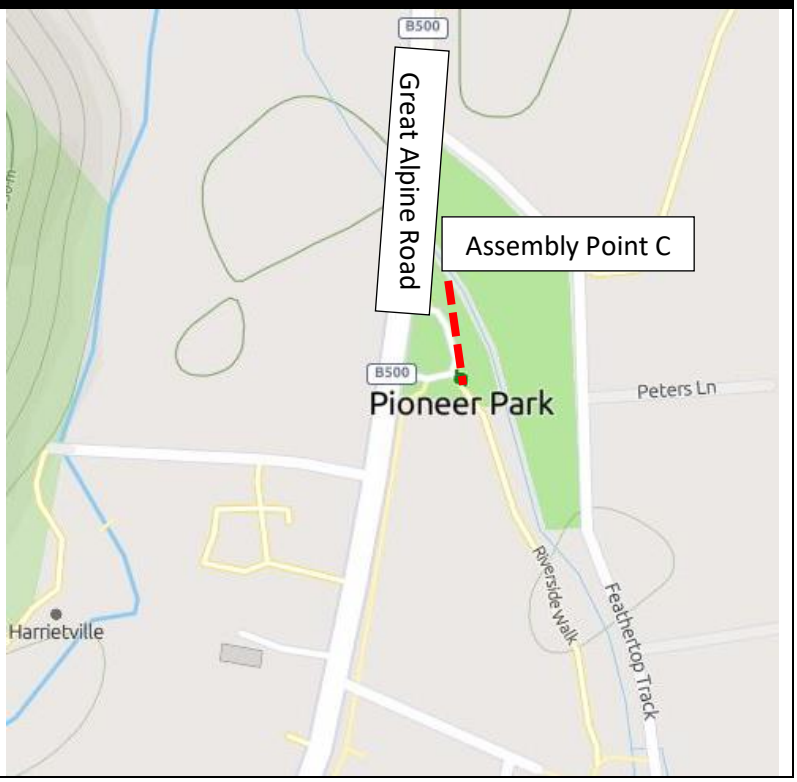
ATTACHMENT 4

C. ALL OTHER EMERGENCY EVACUATION SITUATIONS (when NOT necessary to evacuate Pioneer Park altogether)

If it is not necessary to evacuate Pioneer Park altogether:

Assembly Point C: Tavare Park Gazebo

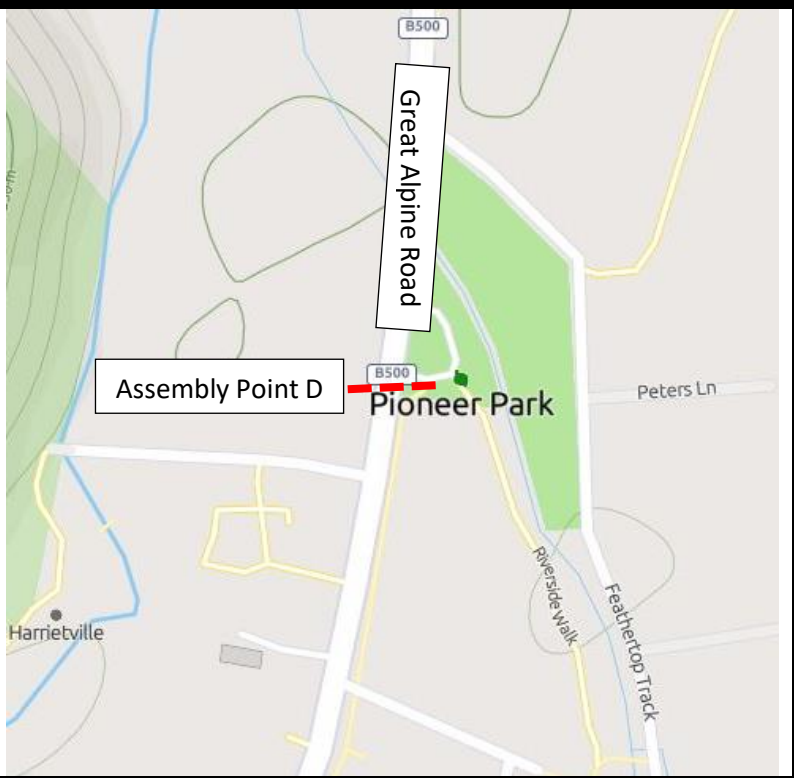
Route: Cross the bridge across the Ovens River and take shelter in the Gazebo at Tavare Park.



D. OTHER EMERGENCY EVACUATION SITUATIONS (when NECESSARY to evacuate Pioneer Park)

If it is necessary to evacuate Pioneer Park:

Assembly Point D: Mountain View Retreat

Route: Walk through Pioneer Park car park and cross the road directly to Mountain View Retreat.

(see red lines on map for route)