The Cape Otway Forest Railway opened on the 30th of June, 1871. The original station along the way were Brangarda, Gerangamette, Yaugher and Forrest. Where theyasons changed, Peninyroyal, Munroon, Barwon Downs, and Grovedale stations were common in the Eyre’s story. Today the station no longer exists. So come and enjoy the great nature reserve and a farm in which the road runs, and a farmland in which stands the great nature reserve.

When walking in the Otways
Look for the Otways rail symbol:
www.otwaysrailway.com
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These simple tips
- Make sure you follow the sign you follow
- Look for the Otways rail symbol

When you follow the sign you follow
- Look for the Otways rail symbol

Tiger Rail Trail

Otways Trails

Tiger Rail Trail
Forrest, the terminus of the line, was originally known as Vaughan until it was changed to Forrest, after Charles Forrest, the local Member of Parliament responsible for having the line built. Prior to 1890 there was no settlement at Forrest so the township was a creation of the railway.

This sounded the charge for settlers, who under section 32 of the Lands Act 1884 – 90 took up their acreage for the great expense of tuppence an acre. Sadly the local lands department interpreted the Lands Act to mean that settlers had to clear their acreage of all timber, when in reality they were only permitted to clear dead or useless timber.

Forrest was the largest traffic generator on the line for passengers and outwards and inwards freight. Passenger loadings were the highest overall on the line. Inwards freight was general supplies for the area, stock fodder, chaff and hay for the sawmill horses and road gravel. Outwards general loading was agricultural produce, root crops and hops.

District Saw millers were heard to comment in 1899 that the value of the timber cleared ‘would have paid the national debt’. The 1899 Royal Commission into the Management of State Forests found that settlement in the Otways was a great administrative blunder and that the majority of the land should be reserved for watershed purposes and for milling timber.

Rail facilities were the most elaborate on the line. There was a departmental residence, a four road layout, dead end siding for the split timber traffic, a siding for a locomotive turntable, a 60 metre passenger platform with office, parcels shed and waiting room, a goods platform, two goods sheds and a six tonne crane. The Post Office was operated from the railway station office for over fifty years, with the Post Master also being the Station Caretaker.

Six timber tramways, in use from 1892 to 1939, delivered large quantities of sawn timber to the railhead from the bush to the south and west. Bullock wagons also conveyed timber by road and, after 1934, motor trucks performed this function. The sawmill companies built loading skids, store sheds and locomotive service facilities in the yard. Timber loadings averaged 8700 tonnes per year (almost 7400 cubic metres sawn) from 1899 to 1950. The highest tonnages were despatched from 1901 to 1912 and 1938 to 1942, with peak years being 1905 handling nearly 15,000 tonnes (12,700 cubic metres sawn) and 1942 totalling almost 14,000 tonnes. From 1947 two sawmills (Sharps and Henrys) were established in the rail yard, and loaded their output direct into rail trucks until interruptions sent a large proportion via road transport.