Greater Alpine National Parks

Management Plan
August 2016

This Management Plan is approved for implementation. Its purpose is to direct all aspects of management of the parks and historic areas until the plan is reviewed.

A Draft Management Plan was published in June 2014. All submissions were carefully considered in preparing this approved Management Plan.

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Greater Alpine National Parks

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August 2016

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images, names, quotes and other references of deceased people.

Disclaimer

This plan is prepared without prejudice to any negotiated or litigated outcome of any native title determination applications covering land or waters within the plan's area. It is acknowledged that any future outcomes of native title determination applications may necessitate amendment of this plan; and the implementation of this plan may require further notifications under the procedures in Division 3 of Part 2 of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cwlth).

The plan is also prepared without prejudice to any future negotiated outcomes between the Government/s and Victorian Aboriginal communities. It is acknowledged that such negotiated outcomes may necessitate amendment of this plan.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this plan is accurate. Parks Victoria does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence that may arise from you relying on any information in the publication.

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Cover: Mt Howitt, Alpine National Park Photo: Daniel Brown.

Approved Management Plan

The Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan is a strategic guide for managing and protecting Alpine, Baw Baw, Errinundra, Mount Buffalo and Snowy River National Parks, Avon Wilderness Park, Tara Range Park, and Walhalla, Howqua Hills, Grant, Mount Wills and Mount Murphy Historic Areas. It takes a multi-park approach within a geographic landscape covering over 900 000 ha in eastern Victoria.

In developing the plan Parks Victoria has consulted widely with a range of interested community and stakeholder groups and individuals. Comments from over 500 written submissions on the draft plan made a substantial contribution to the proposals adopted in the plan. The contribution of members of the Alpine Advisory Committee, the Victorian Alps Traditional Owner Reference Group, the Environment and Scientific Advisory Group, and other groups and individuals who have participated and commented is much appreciated.

The plan gives a clear basis for future management of the national and other parks and historic areas that comprise the planning area and is approved for implementation.

The plan recognises the vital contributions and participation that Traditional Owners and the community make to park management and seeks to strengthen Parks Victoria's relationships with community members. All people are encouraged to continue to be involved with protecting and enjoying these remarkable areas by supporting management with their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm.

The plan gives a clear basis for future management of the parks and historic areas that comprise the planning area and is approved for implementation.

Bradley Fauteux
Chief Executive
Parks Victoria

Adam Fennessy
Secretary
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Mount Feathertop, Alpine National Park

Executive Summary

Greater Alpine National Parks
Management Plan
August 2016

The Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan guides the management of the Alpine, Baw Baw, Errinundra, Mount Buffalo and Snowy River National Parks, Avon Wilderness Park, Tara Range Park, and Walhalla, Howqua Hills, Grant, Mount Wills and Mount Murphy Historic Areas (map 1 and figure 1.1).

The fundamental intent of the plan is to protect and enhance the outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values within the parks. It applies landscape-scale cross-tenure approaches for managing fire, catchments, pest plants and animals, recreation and tourism. The plan enables active and evidence-based adaptive management and acknowledges the need to improve our understanding of the parks through innovative collection and sharing of scientific research and monitoring, and local community knowledge. The aspirations and rights of Native Title holders and Traditional Owners are a key consideration throughout the planning area. The plan respects the relationships that the Traditional Owners and broader communities have with the parks and seeks to strengthen these connections. The plan encourages community participation in managing the parks and aims to increase involvement of all groups and people including those with strong traditional ties through land-use, recreation and conservation in the High Country. The plan considers the parks in the broader context of the Australian Alps extending through NSW and the ACT, adjacent public and private land and seeks to maximise the social and economic benefits of the parks beyond their boundaries, including water supply, tourism and education.

The terms 'Greater Alpine National Parks' and 'parks' refer to the entire planning area. 'National parks' refers to the seven parks managed under the *National Parks Act 1975* (Vic.), and 'historic areas' refers to the historic areas reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (Vic.) or the *Forests Act 1958* (Vic.).

The parks

The parks protect Victoria's highest mountains, some of Victoria's most spectacular and intact natural country, nationally listed spectacular and distinctive landscapes and geology and a diverse range of flora and fauna. About one third of Victoria's native plant species, more than half of the terrestrial bird species and 40 per cent of the State's mammal species are found in the planning area. About one third of the State's total rare and threatened species are also found there, including a number of species found nowhere else, such as the Mountain Pygmy-possum.

With eight water basins, 22 special water supply catchments and 12 Natural Catchment Areas, the parks generate some of the most reliable and high-quality water to the State and the Murray–Darling Basin. The parks encompass the headwaters of many of Victoria's major rivers including the Murray, Snowy, Buchan, Goulburn, Ovens, King, Kiewa, Mitta Mitta, Jamieson, Mitchell, Delatite, Howqua, La Trobe and Thompson rivers.

The parks have a long and complex history including a rich and diverse Aboriginal heritage and over 170 years of mining, summer grazing, water and timber harvesting, recreation, scientific and artistic endeavour. This has created strong living connections between people and the land and a cultural landscape providing insights to the past.

The parks are among the State's most significant destinations for recreation, including bushwalking, camping, fishing, four-wheel driving, bird watching, rock climbing, cross-country skiing, horse riding and deer hunting. The appeal of much of the parks lies in its vast, remote and undeveloped nature, allowing for solitude and challenge. Appreciation of the natural and cultural surrounds enhances visitors' experiences and for some visitors is the key purpose of their visit.

The parks border other public land including State forest, Alpine Resorts, conservation reserves, Kosciuszko National Park in NSW, water storages, hydro-electricity and water production and have an extensive interface with neighbouring freehold land used for a range of purposes including primary production, settlements and tourism.

Zones are applied to the parks to show where different management directions and priorities apply:

- Conservation – almost 20 per cent of the planning area including much of vulnerable Alps Natural Ecosystem (in Alpine, Baw Baw and Mount Buffalo National Parks) and Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystem (in Errinundra, Snowy, Alpine, Baw Baw and Mount Buffalo National Parks, Avon Wilderness Park and Tara Range Park).
- Conservation and Recreation – almost 60 per cent of the planning area
- Wilderness – over 20 per cent of the planning area
- Recreation Development, Reference Area and Education – less than one per cent of the planning area.

Five overlays provide additional management direction to allow for special requirements: Visitor Experience Area, Heritage River, Remote and Natural Area, Natural Catchment Area, and Hunting Area (chapter 3 and maps 2A–H).

Meeting legal management arrangements

The national parks are managed consistent with the National Parks Act, to protect the natural environment, flora, fauna and features of scenic, archaeological, ecological, geological, historic or other scientific interest, water resources, wilderness and to maintain water quality. Subject to this, parks can be used for enjoyment, recreation, education and research.

The historic areas are managed to preserve and protect historic heritage, conserve their natural and other features, and provide for a broader range of activities and uses than the national parks.

New Guinea Cave within Snowy River National Park is jointly managed with the Gunaikurnai, areas with native title are managed in partnership with native title holders such as the Gunaikurnai and other areas are managed collaboratively with the relevant Traditional Owners. The Traditional Owners' connection to the land and their role as custodians of Aboriginal cultural heritage and places are respected.

Protecting the natural environment

A dynamic set of challenges confronts efforts to maintain or improve biodiversity and the health of the parks' natural systems, much of which is recovering from severe impacts from drought, and extreme fire and flood events over the recent

decades. Invasive plants and animals, a management priority in the parks for many years, continue to pose a major threat – partly due to the disturbance caused by extreme events and a changing climate, but also because of the compounding and adaptive nature of weeds and pests. Brooms, blackberries, and willows are serious threats, as well as newly emerging weeds such as hawkweeds. Extensive bushfires in 2003 and 2006–07 killed many mature weed plants, but also promoted mass germination from the soil-stored seedbank, negating the benefits of previous control work. Increasing numbers of pest animals, particularly feral horses and deer, are degrading sensitive alpine environments, water catchments and major recreation assets. Foxes, cats, pigs, goats and cattle also continue to be priorities. Wild dogs are a major concern at the parks interface with agricultural land.

In the face of climate change the risks from bushfire and the frequency of extreme events are expected to increase. Invasive plants, animals and pathogens are currently a major threat to biodiversity across the parks. Climate change is likely to exacerbate many of these threats and has the potential to fundamentally change the parameters of ecosystems and viability of species. An overall warming and drying of the environment is also anticipated. Alpine wetlands, rainforests and the critical water catchment role of the parks require protection and restoration to cope with climate change impacts.

Programs that reduce the impacts of threats will be delivered to maximise the resilience of Natural Ecosystems, catchments and ecological processes (as a priority in the conservation zone). Existing management programs are maintained and new programs and additional resources marshalled with a fresh approach to face the new and escalating threats that emerge. Park management benefits from greater support and involvement from an active community.

Across the planning area, eight strategies are identified as the highest priorities for urgent action. These strategies address the key threats to multiple parks, multiple natural ecosystems and catchments and aim to achieve the best outcomes for the parks at the scale required within the available resources:

1. Feral horse control – an integrated approach for public land in the Victorian Alps
2. Deer control
3. Targeted weed containment (brooms, blackberries, willows)
4. Fire management to protect and enhance ecosystems
5. Responding to climate change
6. Landscape-scale fox control
7. Integrated work with all the Traditional Owners
8. Benefits beyond boundaries — weeds and dogs.

Cooperating in landscape scale conservation using multi-region, multi-partner approaches across public and private land is essential for the future of the parks. A key approach is the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program, which enables complementary management of the alpine parks in NSW, Victoria and ACT. Programs such as ‘From the Highlands Down’ and ‘Protecting the Best’ across the parks and Victoria’s Eastern Highlands, Far East Gippsland and NSW are able to attract substantial long term investment. Involvement of locals, Landcare groups, other environmental interest groups and multi-agencies such as CMAs, DELWP, Alpine Resorts, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and local government and integration of efforts is having tangible results in meeting pest plant and animal priorities. Extreme events have brought broad scale impacts to the parks but they have also led to the development of new and stronger partnerships between land managers and communities.

Strong landscape and catchment-scale partnerships with agencies, neighbours and communities:

- maintain the health of catchments and the quality of ecosystem services that provide benefits to the community and broader environment
- reduce the establishment and further spread of pest plant and animal species and help reduce their increased risk anticipated to come with climatic change
- continue to be expanded and supported including coordinated programs.

Fire management

Fire is managed as part of the landscape with cross agency risk based approaches as specified in DELWP strategic bushfire plans and implemented through Fire Operations Plans, which are updated by DELWP annually.

Although fire is a natural process in nearly all Australian ecosystems, many ecosystems and species including Alpine, subalpine, rainforest and riparian communities are not reliant on fire for regeneration. Given that over 90 per cent of the planning area was burnt by multiple large-scale bushfires in the recent past, and most of the planning area is remote from communities at a high risk from bushfire, there will be an elevated emphasis on protecting the recovering ecosystems and ecological outcomes for the parks in fire management.

Fire is managed to:

- minimise the impact of major bushfires on human life, communities, infrastructure, economies and the environment with human life the priority
- maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems.

Cultural heritage

The parks' rich heritage has great social value for all Australians and the parks protect many highly valued places and remnants of the past. The Traditional Owners and many individuals, families, groups and volunteers have enduring connections with the high country.

- The Traditional Owners guide management of Aboriginal places.
- Peoples heritage and connections are strengthened and respected in the managing the parks.
- The cultural significance of historic areas and places is conserved, interpreted and appropriate compatible uses encouraged.

Community partnerships

The Traditional Owners have been caring for the area for tens of thousands of years and there are significant opportunities to recognise and integrate the Traditional Owners cultural and environmental knowledge into contemporary park management.

Many people have enduring connections and a strong sense of stewardship for the Alps, and have a deep knowledge of the planning area developed over many years of living, working and recreating in the Alps and this knowledge can enhance management. There are significant benefits for the parks from working together with surrounding land and catchment managers, with the local communities and local government and with recreation groups and the tourism groups to achieve shared management goals. For example, volunteer hunters are assisting in the delivery of pest control programs.

- Working with Traditional Owners is integral to the management of the parks.

- Volunteer programs and opportunities for involvement of recreational and other groups will be maintained and expanded.
- Responsive and effective park stewardship with the community is expanded.

People in the parks

The diverse range of destinations and recreation activities on offer in the parks is widely promoted, and supported by a range of access roads and tracks, facilities and services. Walking, camping, bike riding, horse riding, deer hunting and fishing are popular activities that attract many visitors to the parks. These activities, including four wheel driving and short journeys from local towns and Alpine Resorts, make significant contributions to the local and broader Victorian economy.

With the three extensive bushfires over recent decades and major floods, significant park infrastructure has been damaged and rebuilt. Subject to further events, the effort that was invested in recovery can be directed towards maintaining and improving access and facilities and protecting park values from impacts from visitor uses. Agreements with a number of recreation groups provide mutual benefits including assistance with hut and track maintenance.

Opportunities for visitors to appreciate, enjoy and use the parks are supported by:

- providing quality facilities, information and interpretive services with priority given to protecting key visitor experiences
- protecting the opportunity for challenging and self-reliant activities, particularly in remote areas
- maintaining the diverse range of recreation activities available
- maintaining access at a range of standards
- supporting walking experiences and maintaining four wheel drive touring routes.

The opportunities and attractions of the parks are central to many local communities' economies and the park experiences and services that complement the opportunities in adjacent Alpine Resorts and towns are sought by local and broader tourism bodies, the tourism industry and resort managers. Three Alpine Resorts – Falls Creek, Mount Hotham and Mount Baw Baw – and Dinner Plain Village and surrounding towns provide gateways to the parks and infrastructure for accommodation, food and other services that are not available in the parks. The plan seeks to provide a focus for a seamless journey from park to resort and improve access, manage visitors and ensure that the parks are protected and enjoyed. Information and interpretation for visitors and students:

- inspires a deeper and stronger understanding of the Alps and high country culture, history and environment
- Increases visitor awareness of potential risks
- enhances and supports the role of rangers and Licensed Tour Operators
- is improved with information facilities at gateway towns, and a range of natural and cultural values interpretation and targeted visitor information.

Research and evaluation

Directed research, including exploration of innovative approaches, and monitoring supports adaptive management, improves understanding of park ecosystems, cultural and other values, and visitor activities and the effectiveness of management programs.

The Razorback, Alpine National Park

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on Mount St Gwinear, Baw Baw National Park

1 Introduction

1.1 About the management plan

The Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan is a strategic guide for active management of seven parks reserved under the National Parks Act and five adjacent historic areas (figure 1.1 and map 1):

- **Alpine National Park** (661 777 ha)
  including 18 Reference Areas, six Wilderness Zones, eight Remote and Natural Areas, six Natural Catchment Areas and two Heritage Rivers
- **Baw Baw National Park** (13 530 ha)
  including one Reference Area, one Remote and Natural Area and one Heritage River
- **Errinundra National Park** (39 870 ha)
  including two Reference Areas, one Remote and Natural Area and two Natural Catchment Areas
- **Mount Buffalo National Park** (31 020 ha)
  including one Reference Area and one Remote and Natural Area
- **Snowy River National Park** (114 600 ha)
  including two Wilderness Zones; three Reference Areas; and three Natural Catchment Areas
- **Avon Wilderness Park** (39 650 ha)
  including part of Avon, Turton, and Dolondrook Rivers and Ben Cruachan Creek Natural Catchment Area
- **Tara Range Park** (7620 ha)
- **Grant** (7408 ha), **Howqua Hills** (1094 ha), **Mount Murphy** (626 ha), **Mount Wills** (8759 ha) and **Walhalla** (2581 ha) **Historic Areas**.

The five national parks are managed in accordance with the National Parks Act to preserve and protect the natural environment including wilderness and remote and natural areas, flora, fauna and features of scenic, archaeological, ecological, geological, historic or other scientific interest, water resources and maintain water quality, and for the study of ecology, geology and other sciences. Subject to this, the national parks may be used for enjoyment, recreation, education and appropriate study related to conservation of the natural environment of the parks. Avon Wilderness Park is managed consistent with the National Parks Act to the same protection goals and, subject to those, to provide opportunities for solitude and appropriate self-reliant recreation. Tara Range Park is managed in accordance with the National Parks Act to protect park values and provide for visitor and community use and enjoyment.

"Over time, protected areas [such as national parks] have moved from being places where management was frequently hands-off or laissez-faire to places where active management and restoration are done to conserve biodiversity and other key protected area values. Although protected area management aims first at protecting existing ecosystems, a combination of previous degradation and continuing external pressures mean that restoration is often needed."
— Keenleyside et al. (2012)

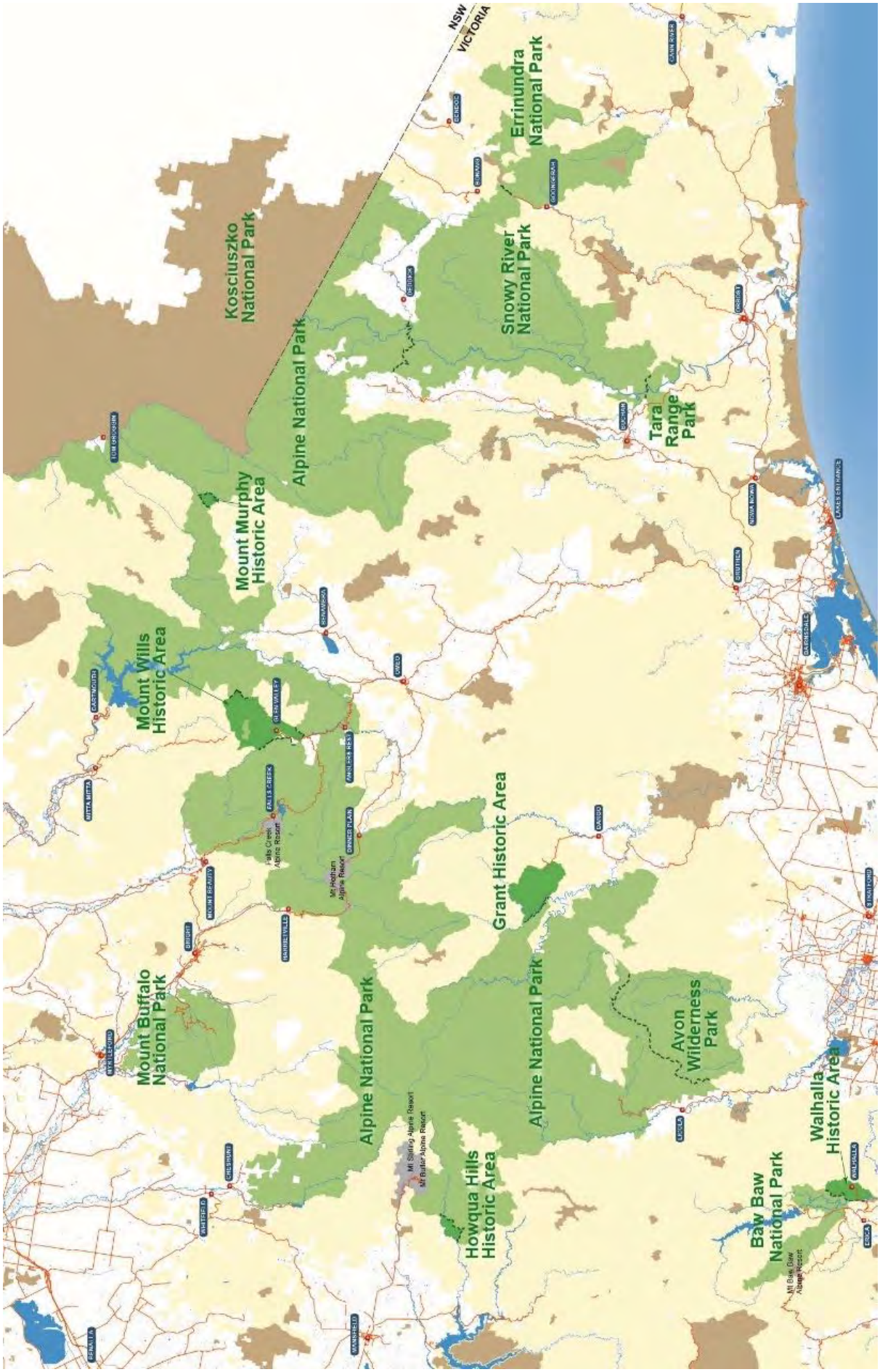


Figure 1.1: Overview of the Greater Alpine National Parks Planning Area (green and dark green areas)

Historic Areas are managed primarily to conserve and protect their significant historic values and cultural associations. Recreation and education activities that are consistent with the enjoyment and understanding of the areas' history and protection of natural and historic values are permitted. Historic areas are managed for a broader range of activities and uses than national parks including walking dogs, hunting, prospecting, horse riding and camping.

Reference Areas, Wilderness Areas and other legislated areas including Remote and Natural Areas, Heritage Rivers and Natural Catchment Areas in the parks are reflected in zoning for the parks (table 3.1 and maps 2A–H). Parks Victoria's management approach for all Victoria's parks and reserves sits within the context of State and Commonwealth legislation, international treaties, broader government public and private land policies and plans, best-practice principles, strategies and guidelines.

Native Title has been granted to the Gunaikurnai for Crown land from west Gippsland near Warragul east to the Snowy River, and north to the Great Dividing Range. Aboriginal Title has been granted to the Gunaikurnai for New Guinea Cave, within Snowy River National Park, and this area is subject to joint management and a separate joint management plan is being developed.

The aspirations of the Traditional Owners are a key consideration throughout the planning area. The plan respects and recognises the relationships of the Traditional Owners and the broader communities with the parks and is seeking to strengthen these connections.

The plan adopts the *Healthy Parks Healthy People* philosophy, which seeks to reinforce and encourage the connections between a healthy environment and a healthy society (Deakin University 2008). The approach encourages those from the health, environment, parks, tourism, recreation, community development and education sectors to work together to provide a better outcome for all.

The management plan adopts a landscape approach, acknowledging the broader context of adjacent public and private land. This approach is fundamental to achieving the vision for the parks. In Victoria such an approach 'will help maintain ecological processes and ecosystem services' (DSE 2009). The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) identifies such approaches as best practice. The alignment with broader State and Federal strategies for the use, management and conservation of land and water such as Regional Catchment Strategies and coordinating programs with other agencies and the community will be particularly important to managing the parks. This planning approach seeks to make direct links between management plans and annual programs and evaluation and reporting, such as State of the Parks.

The Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan will enable management of this world-class network of parks such that:

- the diversity of native species and ecosystems is maintained and enhanced
- natural ecological processes are maintained

The First People of the Victorian Alps

The Bidawal, Dhudhuroa, Gunaikurnai, Jaithmathang, Mitambuta, Monero-Ngarigo, Ngarigu-Currawong, Taungurung, Waywurru and Wurundjeri are the First People of the mountains and the rivers of the Victorian Alps.

For generations they have owned and managed the land. Traditional Owners' have never surrendered their connection to their Country; the cultural connection to the land has always been strong and continues to grow. As Traditional Owners they have the responsibility to protect their Country.

The collective aspirations of the Traditional Owners for the Greater Alpine national parks are a vision for constructive reconciliation and justice for First People and for all Australians. These aspirations are:

- That the land is owned by the Traditional Owners and managed as national parks for all Australians.
- That Traditional Owners apply their traditional land management practices on their Country, and that Country is flourishing with the natural balance of the land restored, culturally and environmentally.
- That Traditional Owners and Parks Victoria grow together, sharing knowledge and skills as co-managers, working together to meet present and future challenges of climate change, sustainable management of fire and water, and healing the legacy of inappropriate land management practices of the past.
- That Traditional Owners' connections to Country, values, places, languages and knowledge are recognised, acknowledged, respected and supported.
- That Reconciliation has grown from mutual respect and recognition between Traditional Owners and other stakeholders, and that all stakeholders have certainty in their good faith dealings for all matters impacting on the planning area.
- That Traditional Owners are involved at all levels of management of all aspects of Country and heritage, and that this is enshrined in law.
- That Traditional Owners have the capacity and resources to manage Country and to engage effectively with government, other stakeholders and the community.
- That there is a strong reconnection of Traditional Owners with Country and a genuine recognition of this connection within the whole community and within the people themselves.
- That Traditional Owners develop businesses and equitable partnerships aimed at acquiring land and creating sustainable economic projects which can provide services to Parks Victoria and visitors, including owning and managing their own facilities on Country.
- That Traditional Owners coming on to Country feel the Mother's heartbeat and know that the land is healthy and welcoming. They can see, feel and relate to their places and pathways through the cultural landscape and are able to freely access their Country and its resources.

- risks to natural values (via e.g. pest plants and animals; changed fire regimes; climate change; recreational activities) are mitigated
- appropriate activities within the parks are provided for.

This will be achieved by:

- communicating the outstanding values of the Alps parks to all Australians
- promoting the Healthy Parks, Healthy People philosophy
- understanding the natural environment through research and monitoring
- incorporating knowledge of Traditional Owners into park management
- promoting the education values of the parks
- evaluating management effectiveness.

The plan addresses the intent of future management. The plan articulates management outcomes for the parks over a 15-year time frame, starting with a vision for the area and zoning (chapters 2 and 3). Based on these, a series of goals have been determined and Strategies provided to direct management activities towards achieving those goals (chapters 4 to 9). Goals are statements of what management and the community are seeking to achieve for specific areas or aspects of park management (figure 1.2). A brief summary of background information and issues is included for each section of chapters 4 through 9.

Active adaptive management is an integral part of the planning approach enabling ongoing science and evidence based decisions. The Adaptive Management Framework allows for ongoing learning by continually assessing the success of actions in meeting management objectives, and allowing adjustment to management actions in the future. It is the integration of various components of management to provide a framework that systematically tests assumptions, promotes learning and continuous improvement, and provides timely information to support management decisions. The framework provides logical steps and a range of tools to guide the effective implementation and evaluation enables clearer connections to be made between goals and actions on the ground.

The terms 'Greater Alpine National Parks' and 'parks' refer to the entire planning area. 'National parks' refers to the seven parks managed under the *National Parks Act 1975*, and 'historic areas' refers to the historic areas reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* or the *Forests Act 1958*.

Figure 1.2 Management plan arrangement

MANAGEMENT PLAN		
Chapter 1	Introduction	Essential background and basis
Chapter 2	Vision	A description of how the parks will look to a future visitor. The ultimate result of management.
Chapter 3	Zoning	Geographic areas where different management directions and allowable activities apply.
Chapters 4 to 9	Goals	Statements that describe what management seeks to achieve.
	Strategies	Approaches, activities or methods to realise the Goals.

Active management and intervention

Since the world's first national parks were established in the late nineteenth century there has been debate over the extent to which the natural environment in those parks can be self-sustaining and the level of management intervention required. Few national parks are in pristine environmental condition when declared; some restoration is almost always needed. In many cases the removal of previous land-uses followed by some restoration allows natural processes to re-establish and continue in equilibrium; however, the changing environment in and around most national parks often leads to new pressures. Parks are not isolated from landscape-wide changes in fire regimes, weed and pest invasions, and development.

Successive large-scale severe bushfires and floods in recent years have significantly affected millions of hectares of eastern Victoria, including the majority of the planning area. In Victoria, increasing population, river regulation, a changing climate and other large- and small-scale changes have produced weeds, pests and other disturbances in parks. It has also become clear that the effects of past impacts and land-uses can persist for decades or even generations requiring on-going intervention. In some cases, previous land-use is also an important part of the cultural heritage of the park; management must take account of both environmental and cultural values.

There is also an extensive scientific heritage, and a long connection with writers, painters and photographers coming to the parks, and the early bushwalkers did not leave many traces, but are nevertheless also culturally significant.

Victoria's national parks, like most other parks around the world, are the subject of active management to deal with pest and other threats, manage fire, protect or restore threatened flora and fauna, and to maintain access and facilities. This work is intensive and extends across wide areas but must also be careful, based on evidence, and adaptive as the effectiveness of action becomes clear through monitoring. 'Do no harm' is a primary principle behind this management as is 'early control of threats'.

Today science and technical evidence help to guide active management, and engaging communities, employing their knowledge and strengthening their connections are increasingly being recognised as part of management. Nevertheless, as the climate warms a transformation of the temperate eucalypt forests at a landscape scale is looming, one that park managers will be powerless to prevent. Large fast growing trees such as Alpine Ash will grow more slowly, have shorter life spans and may never attain the majestic sizes found in today's forests (Prior and Bowman 2014).

The management plan facilitates sound management that meets statutory obligations, enables the community to take part in decision making, assists in the resolution of conflicts over uses and activities, and the continuity of management. All activities and programs in the parks and historic areas need to relate to the delivery of a plan goal or strategy. Hence the plan directs annual park programming and priority setting.

Annual operational planning details specific works or projects, budgets, accountabilities and timelines for completion each year at a regional or district level.

Although the plan has a 15-year timeframe, some goals may be achieved earlier. Delivery of programs, including targeting monitoring against agreed standards is reviewed and reported as part of routine organisational practice and progress also measured against the implementation priorities.

The management plan may be amended over the life of the plan. It may be necessary to manage or use the parks in a way that is a departure from or not covered in the plan or circumstances may require a change in management approach or goals, for example as a result of significant changes from fire, flood or visitation patterns or the results of monitoring. Proposed amendments to the plan will be subject to public consultation and, when approved, shown on the plan available on Parks Victoria's website. Amendments involving Alpine National Park will be tabled in parliament.

The approved plan replaces the following plans:

- Alpine National Park Management Plans; Bogong Unit (DCE 1992a); Cobberas–Tingaringy Unit (DCE 1992b); Dartmouth Unit (DCE 1992c) and Wonnangatta–Moroka Unit (DCE 1992d)
- Baw Baw National Park Management Plan (Parks Victoria 2005)
- Errinundra National Park Management Plan (NRE 1996a)
- Mount Buffalo National Park Management Plan (NRE 1996b)
- Snowy River National Park Management Plan (CNR 1995)

The approved plan supplements the following plan, which will continue to provide management direction regarding historic conservation within Walhalla Historic Area

- Walhalla Historic Area Management Plan (CFL 1988).

Plan evaluation

Many strategies in the plan will be implemented as part of day to day management of parks and historic areas. These are reported and recorded through an annual review of district and regional operations plans. For example, the costs and areas treated by activities such as spraying weeds are recorded. It is important to track progress of park management programs beyond completing activities and the success of the action such as reducing the area infested with the weed. It is also important to track progress towards achieving the goals for the park such as improving the extent of native vegetation communities or the condition of the habitat. The goals for key values and strategies to achieve the goals, including strategies that address the threats they face are identified in chapters 4 to 9. Completing and aggregating reporting on the strategies will ultimately realise the goals for the planning area.

There is an assumption that management actions such as on threats leads to an improvement in the value such as the extent of alpine wetlands. However, long-term monitoring of specific values is required to determine the validity of this assumption. Therefore, in addition to the regular monitoring of key threats, such as feral horses, and broom, key values are also monitored. For example, field assessments to measure the state of alpine peatlands commenced in 2012 and will be repeated, initially after five years, to determine if their state has improved or deteriorated.

Careful analysis is required to determine the cause of changes in values and uses; whether they can be attributed to park management or other effects. Given the timeframe of many ecological processes, measuring of values is undertaken at

timeframes ranging from five to ten years or longer and data compared with earlier assessments. Evaluation of management effectiveness uses information collected through monitoring programs to inform future management.

Long-term monitoring of specific values is costly. There are alternatives such as community-based volunteer science programs that can be explored, for example to determine trends in the abundance of 'common' species important to Traditional Owners. Community volunteers and Traditional Owners could benefit from learning new scientific skills and sharing knowledge while contributing to the management and knowledge of the parks.

The following measures are aimed at outcomes for the parks; at indicating the success of overall park management rather than of the specific strategies listed throughout this plan. They will generally be reported through the State of the Parks report, which is prepared every five years, and in Parks Victoria's Annual Report. These measures are expected to be refined and, subject to available funding, further measures identified with the development of Signs of Healthy Parks monitoring and other programs and as more information becomes available and techniques improve.

Key measures for park goals

Protecting the natural environment
The park goals are to maintain the diversity, extent and condition of ecosystems and habitats and populations of communities and species including Traditional Owner signs of a healthy Country.

- Condition and trend in condition of Alps, Wet Forests and Rainforest; Dry Forest and Woodlands; Heathland; and Inland Waters and Wetlands Natural Ecosystems – Alpine, Baw Baw, Errinundra, Snowy River and Mount Buffalo National Parks and Avon Wilderness Park
- Distribution and status of key threats to the ecosystems – Alpine, Baw Baw, Errinundra, Snowy River and Mount Buffalo National Parks and Avon Wilderness Park
- The extent and condition of alpine peatland and wetlands – Alpine, Baw Baw and Mount Buffalo National Parks
- Trend in populations of nationally and state threatened species including Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby – Snowy River National Park, Mountain Pygmy-possum – Alpine National Park and threatened flora species – Alpine, Baw Baw, Errinundra, Snowy River and Mount Buffalo National Parks
- Trend in abundance of 'common' mobile species important to Traditional Owners such as goanna, dingo, kangaroo, wallaby, emu, snakes – All
- Trend in catchment condition – All
- Trend in river health – All

Fire management
The park goals aim to reduce the risk of bushfires and maintain and improve ecosystem resilience, particularly in the face of climate change.

- Changes in ecosystem resilience including trend in proportion of ecosystems within desired tolerable fire intervals and trend in proportion of ecosystems within desirable range of growth stages – All
- Changes in residual risk – All

Cultural heritage
The park goals aim to recognise and respect peoples' heritage connections and protect heritage places.

- Involvement of Traditional Owners – All
- Involvement of community groups – All
- Condition of state and nationally significant heritage places – All

Community partnerships
The park goals aim to strengthen people's connections and increase community stewardship of the parks.

- Level of Traditional Owners Involvement in park management – All
- Level of volunteers and community group participation – All

People in the parks
The parks goals include maintaining a range of inspiring visitor experiences while protecting the environment.

- Number of visits to parks – All
- Level of visitor satisfaction (surveys) – Alpine, Baw Baw, Mount Buffalo, Snowy River NPs
- Condition of visitor facilities – All
- The extent and condition of the road and track network – All
- Trend in walking track condition (meeting standards) – All
- Level of participation in education and interpretation programs – All
- Level of participation in Licensed Tour Operator tours – Alpine, Baw Baw, Mount Buffalo, Snowy River NPs

Open House community meeting at Bright during the preparation of the draft management plan

1.2 Community input

Three advisory committees have provided expert advice which has contributed significantly to the development of this plan. The purpose of these committees was to gather a wide range of viewpoints and knowledge from different interests and areas of expertise. While all aspects of the plan may not have the complete endorsement of any individual committee or committee member, all of the comments and issues raised were carefully considered.

Alpine Advisory Committee
The Alpine Advisory Committee (AAC) is appointed by the Minister under Section 32AE of the National Parks Act. The AAC works in partnership with Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP) to provide guidance in developing principles, goals and strategies within the plan.

Environment and Scientific Advisory Group
The Environment and Scientific Advisory Group (ESAG) was established in 2009 to provide frank and independent environmental scientific advice to Parks Victoria in developing the draft plan.

Victorian Alps Traditional Owner Reference Group
The Victorian Alps Traditional Owner Reference Group (VATORG) was established in 2006 to advise Parks Victoria on a range of issues relating to the management of Aboriginal cultural values in the Alps. The group included representatives of the Bidawal, Monero-Ngarigo, Gunaikurnai, Jaithmathang, Taungurung, Mitambuta, Ngarigu-Currawong, Dhudhuroa, Waywurru and Wurundjeri Peoples. This group advised Parks Victoria in preparation of the plan.

Community meetings, stakeholder and online discussions
In addition to the Advisory Committees, the draft plan was developed with extensive community consultation through community meetings, discussions with stakeholders and on-line via Parks Victoria's website. A series of blogs, discussion papers and fact sheets generated considerable comment. This consultation identified a number of matters which have been addressed in the plan.

An on-line mapping project in 2009 allowed the community to identify areas which they value for the experiences they provide. This information helped to define the

parks' zones including the Visitor Experience and Hunting Area Overlays which protect those experiences.

Comment on the draft plan

The draft plan was released for community consultation from June 2014 to 25 August 2015. A total of 508 written submissions were received including 278 reiterating six issues among a number raised by the Victorian National Parks Association: lack of information on how important natural values will be protected; aspirations of users overly considered; concern about a collaborative working relationship only with the Mountain Cattlemen's Association; opposition to the trial on using cattle grazing for fuel reduction; opposition to promoting private developments; and concern about high levels of fuel reduction burning.

The main comments received in submissions and the main changes from the proposals in the draft plan are summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Issues and response to public submissions

Issue raised	Response
General	
Plan was not based on science; need to show reasoning behind decisions.	Additional background material has been added to the plan, much of which was previously in the Review of Information document. References to scientific and other sources added to text.
Plan does not meet the requirements of the National Parks Act and readers could not see how it applied to individual areas.	Parks Victoria and DELWP believe the plan meets the requirements of the National Parks Act. The Plan now indicates specific parks where strategies apply.
Environmental management	
Plan not focused strongly enough on environment protection as a management priority.	Protecting the environment is a fundamental priority throughout the plan; descriptions and goals expanded for the five broad natural ecosystems and priority strategies highlighted including for climate change.
Concern about management of feral horses, including methods of control; some submissions questioned whether control is actually needed.	The National Parks Act requires action to be taken on feral species. Humane feral horse control will be implemented based on consultation with the community and consideration of lethal and non-lethal techniques. Small, isolated populations will be removed and larger populations reduced in size. Management will be based on science and considerations of animal welfare.
Fire	
Concern that 1) burn targets are too high and too much burning takes place 2) burn targets are too low and not enough burning takes place and 3) ecology should be a key consideration.	Fire management takes a risk based approach replacing the previous area burnt target. Plan reflects DELWP Strategic Bushfire Management Plans. Given that most of the planning area was burnt by multiple large-scale bushfires in the recent past, the plan has an elevated emphasis on ecological outcomes for fire management and includes goals for ecological burning based on science.
Opposition to a trial using cattle grazing for fuel reduction.	Plan is consistent with legislation, cattle grazing is not permitted in Alpine NP.
Recreation and tourism	
The use of Visitor Experience Areas (VEAs) was not raised in submissions. However, Parks Victoria has further developed this program since the draft plan was released and the final plan reflects this.	Sixty-seven VEAs developed (destinations and journeys). Greater detail provided for each VEA, with each having a description, goals and strategies.
Support for tourism development from Shires and tourism bodies, opposition for developments in parks from individuals and conservation groups.	Facility development for recreation and tourism will be consistent with protection of natural and cultural values.

Table 1.1 (continued)

Issue raised	Response
General opposition to Around the Lake Trail proposed at Falls Creek.	Support maintained for improved bike–walk trail circuit starting and finishing at Falls Creek. Round the Lake Trail concept may be considered as a shared trail option for the start of the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing subject to resolution of feasibility, impact and cost concerns (Biosis 2015).
Falls Creek to Hotham Alpine Crossing not supported by some groups.	Retained.
Victorian Alps Centre proposed at Falls Creek dam wall area. No submissions commented directly but proposal altered.	Falls Creek Master Plan proposes a similar centre within the resort, which will be supported. Proposal for a Victorian Alps Centre at the dam wall area removed. PV will collaborate on visitor facilities and park orientation at Windy Corner/dam wall area.
Proposal for seasonal road closures to be more flexible was generally supported by hunters but opposed by other users.	Seasonal closures to remain on set dates to allow consistent management across land tenures and ease of communication. In special circumstances, as is past practice, dates may be varied.
Cycling on Management Vehicle Only tracks (MVOs) to be considered.	Cycling to be generally permitted on MVOs subject to any seasonal road closures operating in the general area.
Permitting bikes on seasonally closed roads in response to community feedback was supported by hunters but opposed by others including Four Wheel Drive Victoria.	Seasonal road closures will generally apply to bikes – some exceptions are noted where cycling will be permitted on seasonally closed roads (appendix 3).
Shared trails to be created.	Existing shared tracks (walking–cycling–horse riding) to be maintained. Further shared use tracks subject to assessment and public consultation will be considered (appendix 2).
Hunting	
Proposed shorter hunting season not supported as it didn't meet the aim of managing potential hunter–non-hunter conflicts.	Proposal to shorten season removed. Baw Baw NP hunting season extended to match other parks (15 March to 15 December). Education and awareness of hunting in parks to be improved.
Requests in public submissions to allow recreational hunting of feral species in the national parks.	While all deer species will be made available for hunting in designated areas, recreational hunting of feral species is not permitted in national parks by legislation. Hunting groups may be used in authorised control programs.
Concerns from neighbouring landholders on effect of the additional hunting areas on tourism and education businesses.	Proposed additional areas around Tom Groggin and Wabonga Plateau will remain as no hunting areas. Other proposed additions to hunting area to be made available.
No camping with firearms areas were not supported by many hunters; support for the concept in other submissions.	No camping with firearms areas removed from the planning area; Parks Victoria and hunting groups will develop education programs to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.
It was noted that deer are not a feral species but a game species. Submissions ranged from deer are part of the environment, deer need to be recognised as economically important and agreement that existing population is causing environmental damage.	Deer will be recognised as a legal game species and also a feral species with environmental impacts and managed as such.
Horse riding	
Rider numbers to be restricted in certain areas.	Pass system to be implemented as per draft plan in The Bluff–Mt Howitt and Howqua River areas.
Commercial horse riding on Mt Bogong.	Limited commercial access over Mount Bogong to continue subject to monitoring of environmental and social impacts.
Community engagement	
Opposition in submissions for highlighting specific user groups for involvement.	Parks Victoria values community involvement and social equity demands that all users and interest groups are welcome to express opinions and assist in management.

Surrounding land uses,
Mount Buffalo National Park

1.3 The parks and their regional context

The plan covers five national parks, one wilderness park, one other park and five historic areas totalling over 900,000 ha within Victoria's alpine and eastern highlands areas (figure 1.1 and map 1). The national parks and historic areas extend across approximately 250 km from east to west.

These areas are Alpine, Baw Baw, Errinundra, Mount Buffalo and Snowy River National Parks, Avon Wilderness Park and Tara Range Park, which are reserved under the National Parks Act, and Walhalla, Howqua Hills, Grant, Mount Wills and Mount Murphy Historic Areas, which are unreserved and reserved Crown land under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act or Forests Act.

Land tenure

Land tenure determines the primary objectives for management. In relation to national and wilderness parks, the National Parks Act requires the preservation and protection of the natural condition of the parks and their environment, flora, fauna and features of scenic, archaeological, ecological, geological, historic or other scientific interest. Protection of water resources, maintenance of water quality, protection of wilderness and appropriate research activities are also provided for under the Act. Subject to this, parks are to provide for use by the public for enjoyment, recreation and education.

The five historic areas are managed in accordance with LCC recommendations accepted by the State Government, primarily to preserve and protect historic heritage, to conserve their natural and other features, and for their use. The historic areas are generally able to accommodate a broader range of activities and uses (section 8.3 and table 8.3).

The Gunaikurnai people hold native title under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cwlth) for Crown land within part of the planning area from West Gippsland near Warragul east to the Snowy River, and north to the Great Dividing Range (Map1). In addition, New Guinea Cave (within the Snowy River National Park) has been granted as Aboriginal Title under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Vic.) to the Gunaikurnai people and is subject to joint management under the control of the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board.

Aboriginal Title does not affect existing use and access, which will continue to be managed under the National Parks Act. Joint management means the State and Gunaikurnai share responsibility for managing the cave. The State will continue to carry out fire management and general day-to-day management (section 7.1).

Regional context

The parks are surrounded predominantly by State forest. State forest is managed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to balance a variety of purposes, including providing timber for sustainable forestry, conserving flora and fauna, protection of water catchments and water supply, protecting landscape, archaeological and historic values and providing recreational and educational opportunities.

The parks border other public land including Alpine Resorts, conservation reserves, Kosciuszko National Park in NSW, water storages, and hydro-electricity and water production areas and have an extensive interface with neighbouring freehold land used for a range of purposes including primary production, settlements and tourism.

Eleven national parks and reserves across State and Territory borders are recognised as the Australian Alps National Parks (AANP). The AANP includes five parks in Victoria; Baw Baw, Alpine, Snowy and Mount Buffalo National Parks and Avon Wilderness Park. Victoria is a signatory to the Australian Alps Memorandum of Understanding with NSW, ACT and the Commonwealth. The Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) was formed to ensure that the national parks and reserves in the AANP are managed as one biogeographic entity to protect the nationally important values for generations to come. An inter-governmental cooperative management program aims to work in partnership to best manage the Australian Alps natural and cultural values and sustainable use through cross-border cooperation (AALC 2016). For example, the Australian Alps Walking Track Strategic Plan and the Operational Plan supports jurisdictions co-operatively in managing the range of walking opportunities and the route as a continuous entity (AALC 2014).

Parks make a significant state and regional economic contribution through ecosystem services such as water, and through tourism, employment and other uses.

The parks fall within seven local government areas: Alpine, Baw Baw, East Gippsland, Mansfield, Towong and Wellington Shires and the Wangaratta Rural City. The major regional centres of Wodonga, Bairnsdale, Benalla, Traralgon, Sale and Wangaratta are within a one to two hour drive to the Greater Alpine National Parks. Smaller towns such as Bendoc, Bonang, Briagolong, Bright, Buchan, Cann River, Cheshunt, Dargo, Dartmouth, Deddick, Ensay Erica, Falls Creek, Goongerah, Heyfield, Licola, Mansfield, Mitta Mitta, Mount Beauty, Myrtleford, Porepunkah, Omeo, Orbost, Swifts Creek, Tubbut, Wairewa, Walhalla and Whitfield are closer.

Parks make a significant state and regional economic contribution through ecosystem services such as water, and through tourism, employment and other uses. Tourism accounts for around 10 per cent of employment in Visit Victoria's high country and around four per cent in the Gippsland tourism region although this will vary within regions from Shire to Shire.

As part of the Avon, Thomson, Tanjil, Tyers, Macalister and Wellington River Catchments in the south, the Mitchell, Tambo, Nicholson, Buchan and Snowy

Catchments in the east, and the Upper Murray, Kiewa and Ovens basins in the north, the national parks and historic areas are strongly influenced by the activities of the West Gippsland, East Gippsland, Goulburn–Broken and North East Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs). The CMAs are responsible for ensuring the protection and sustainable use of land, vegetation and water resources within regions covered by the planning area including Heritage Rivers.

Cooperating in landscape-scale conservation

Much of the planning area is part of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves, the importance of which is recognised in their National Heritage listing (section 1.4). It is imperative that land managers collaborate across boundaries to solve problems and use resources efficiently. A key mechanism for collaboration is the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program established under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Victorian, NSW, ACT and Commonwealth Governments.

'From the Highlands Down' and 'Protecting the Best' are examples of cooperative initiatives that focus on priority weeds and pest animals that threaten high-value areas of Victoria's Eastern Highlands, Far East Gippsland and NSW. Using a multi-region, multi-partner approach, the initiatives aim to develop integrated, cross-tenure, strategic programs that have long term tangible results. Acting now to reduce the establishment and spread of pest plant and animal species in these areas will help reduce the increased risk anticipated to come with climate change.

This landscape-wide response is required to attract substantial long term investment and maintain a persistent focus on priority weeds and pest animals. It allows significant headway to be made against pest plant and animal priorities, which, under existing programs, are continuing to spread and gain a foothold.

The multi-agency approach, involving CMAs, DELWP, Parks Victoria, Alpine Resorts, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and local government also involves Landcare groups, other environmental interest groups and private landowners. This maximises integration of effort, enables a diverse set of skills to be utilised, and allows pest plant and animal programs to be implemented concurrently with fire and flood recovery works.

Focal areas occur not only within the Greater Alpine National Parks, but also in downstream catchments, on both sides of the Great Divide, and east of the Snowy River into NSW. Priority weed species include willows, Blue Periwinkle, English Broom, Cape Broom, Himalayan Honeysuckle, Sycamore Maple, Wandering Creeper, blackberries, Spanish Heath, Ragwort, Paterson's Curse, St John's Wort, Pampas Grass, Kikuyu, hawkweeds and a number of other prohibited and significant weeds. Priority pest animals include foxes, pigs, goats, wild dogs, feral horses, rabbits, cats and deer. The results of ongoing monitoring will determine the level of success and the need for targeted re-treatment.

Recreation is another area where collaboration assists park management. Working with adjoining lane managers means that visitors can be directed to the most appropriate area for their activity.

Bluff Hut,
Alpine National Park

1.4 Significance of the Greater Alpine National Parks

'Although occupying less than 0.3 per cent of the continent, the Australian Alps represent to the world a large and irreplaceable sample of Australian natural history with the prospect that it can be preserved for a very long time.'
— A.B. Costin, 1988

The five national parks in the planning area are assigned to IUCN World Conservation Union's 'Category II National Park' in the United Nations list of National Parks and Protected Areas. Category II areas are managed to protect natural biodiversity along with its underlying ecological structure and supporting environmental processes, and to promote education and recreation. The Avon Wilderness Park is assigned to IUCN Category Ib Wilderness Area, and is managed to protect the long-term ecological integrity of wilderness so that current and future generations have the opportunity to experience such areas. The historic areas, with their legacy of mining and non-conforming activities, are not categorised in the UN list of National Parks and Protected Areas.

The concept of a Victorian Alpine National Park was first put forward in 1949, when the then Town and Country Planning Association, a community-based advocacy group, proposed a park of over 500 000 ha in the State's north-eastern highlands. Twenty years later, the Association's successor, the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA), made a detailed submission to the State Government for an Alpine National Park. In 1974, the VNPA published a case for a park extending from Mount Baw Baw to the New South Wales border in its book The Alps at the Crossroads (Johnson 1974). Subsequently, the Land Conservation Council (LCC) recommended the creation of a series of national parks and other reserves in the alpine area (LCC 1979). In a further review in 1983 the LCC recommended the creation of a single Alpine National Park (LCC 1983). Both of these investigations resulted in the creation of parks. Avon Wilderness Park followed in 1987 with continuing use recommended in the Wilderness Special Investigation (LCC 1979).

Mount Buffalo is one of Victoria's oldest national parks, dating to 1898 when the government reserved 1165 ha around Eurobin Falls. The park now covers over 31 000 ha. Snowy River National Park, initially proclaimed in 1979 and substantially expanded in 1988 and 2010, Errinundra National Park, proclaimed in 1988 and linked to the other parks in 2010, complement the Alpine National Park with high scenic and recreation values and Victoria's largest forest wilderness, ancient Mountain Ash forests, old growth forests and rainforests. Old growth forest was further protected in 2010 with the creation of Tara Range Park.

National heritage

In 2008, the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves were included on the National Heritage List of Australia, providing protection under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation 1999* (Cwlth) (EPBC). The listing covers 11 national parks and nature reserves, including Alpine, Baw Baw, Mount Buffalo and Snowy River National Parks and Avon Wilderness Park in Victoria, Kosciuszko National Park in New South Wales and Namadgi National Park in the Australian Capital Territory (DEWHA 2009; Parks Victoria 2009b). The parks and reserves were listed as a National Heritage place for their significance from the abundant and unique natural environment, Aboriginal and historic values related to human interactions, historic grazing, mining and water harvesting associations, the longevity and diversity of recreation use, and their importance as part of the Australian identity and the long history of scientific study and importance for science (section 4.3).

Many have long considered the outstanding values of the Australian Alps National Parks to be of potential World Heritage value; an investigation in 1993 found the Australian Alps to have more outstanding universal value than four existing Australian World Heritage areas (Busby 1990; Kirkpatrick 1994a; Mosley 1988, 1999). In 2013 the Alpine Parks and forests of south-east Australia were again included as potential for world heritage nomination (Australian Committee for IUCN 2013).

Natural values

The parks are especially important for the conservation of a diverse range of flora and fauna. About one third of Victoria's native plant species, more than half of the terrestrial bird species and 40 per cent of the State's mammal species are found in the planning area. About one third of the State's total rare and threatened species are also found there, including a number of species found nowhere else, such as the Mountain Pygmy-possum. These include many species with limited distribution and highly specialised habitat requirements that are reliant on specialised ecosystems that occur wholly or predominantly within the planning area. The alpine and subalpine ecosystems in particular support flora and fauna species that have evolved in the harsh conditions of the high altitudes. Many of these species are endemic.

A key feature is the expanse and diversity of the vegetation communities, from the rainshadow woodlands of the Snowy River area to the Mountain Ash and Alpine Ash forests, Snow Gum woodlands and treeless areas of the peaks and high plains. In contrast to many parts of the State the vegetation in the parks is largely unfragmented and buffered by surrounding native vegetation.

More than 60 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) are recorded in the planning area, over half of which are classified as endangered, vulnerable or depleted. Six of the 37 communities listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic.) are within the planning area. Most of Victoria's alpine and treeless subalpine vegetation is within the planning area, including alpine and subalpine grasslands, shrublands and heathlands, wetlands and rare alpine peatland and snowpatch communities. Errinundra National Park includes the largest contiguous area of Cool

Temperate Rainforest in Victoria, and Snowy River National Park contains three types of rainforest: Cool Temperate, Warm Temperate and Dry Rainforest.

As part of the Australian Alps, the planning area's diverse geology and geomorphology has international significance. Eight geological sites are of national significance, and more than 80 sites are important at a state, regional or local level.

The parks include the highest mountains in Victoria, a diversity of topography and encompass many of Victoria's major rivers, including the headwaters of the Murray, Buchan, Ovens, King, Kiewa, Mitta Mitta, Mitchell, Delatite, Howqua, La Trobe, Avon, Macalister and Thomson rivers. The area contributes a steady flow of water to the catchments and significant quantities of snow melt to the river systems of eastern Australia.

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) has classified a number of the alpine, subalpine and other landscapes and trees in the planning area for their significance.

Cultural heritage importance

The Traditional Owners of the planning area have a rich culture that is embodied in the land, environment, languages, oral histories, cultural lore and customs, and their Dreaming stories. The Traditional Owners managed the alps for thousands of years; this management shaped the landscape. Learning and teaching is still practiced and maintained by the Traditional Owners so that this heritage continues for Aboriginal people today, for those in the future, and for all Australians.

The planning area has a post-settlement history that encompasses a number of historic themes. Most of the five historic areas and many other parts of the planning area are associated with the gold mining era of the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century and provide unique insights into settlement of remote mountainous areas and the tough working and living environments at the turn of the century. There are many sites with relics associated with early timber harvesting and huts, ruins and other infrastructure associated with early tourist activities, recreation, scientific research and the utilisation of water resources. This network of historic sites, many connected by trails and water races, combine to form important cultural landscapes.

Seasonal high country livestock grazing has a long history within Baw Baw, Mount Buffalo and Alpine National Parks. Grazing developed a connection between the graziers and the park, as well as bush skills and knowledge. Huts and other structures associated with grazing and other activities have important cultural significance. Many are still in use and are part of an enduring culture. The stories of the mountain cattlemen are embodied in Australian folklore.

There is a long history of the scientific research that has taken place since the 1830s, and literary and artistic heritage in the parks. The outstanding heritage value is demonstrated by the density and continuity of scientific endeavour.

Recreation and nature-based tourism benefits

The high country of the alpine parks has long been an attraction, offering inspirational settings and year-round opportunities for outdoor adventure. The parks play an important role in creating a healthy environment that helps to fulfil

people's cultural, physical and spiritual needs. The spectacular Australian Alps, of which many of the national parks are part, are among 16 national landscapes recognised by Tourism Australia as places of great cultural, natural and spiritual significance (Tourism Australia 2011).

A wide variety of recreation activities are available, ranging from ski touring, fishing, hiking and camping to scenic and four wheel driving. While some take place in larger, organised groups, these activities are undertaken largely in a self-reliant manner. Many activities are run by a range of tour operators supporting local economies.

Aspects of the planning area have social value because of their special association with a particular community or group. Many communities around the planning area have strong links to the gold rush and grazing days or long associations with the parks through visitor activities.

Ecosystem services and economic benefits

Ecosystem services are the tangible benefits that people receive from nature. The ecosystem services derived from the parks include:

- provisioning services, such as the supply of clean water
- regulating services, such as flood and drought regulation and maintaining liveable climates
- supporting services, such as air and water purification, nutrient cycling, absorbing and storing carbon and preventing soil erosion
- cultural services, such as the fulfilment of peoples' spiritual, educational and recreation needs
- biodiversity services, such the vast gene pool as a resource for research into medical, industrial, agricultural and other applications.

There are extensive catchment areas in the parks including several proclaimed water supply catchments. These catchments and rivers provide quality water that is vital for irrigation, urban, industrial, stock and domestic use in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, as well as for power generation.

Some of the most reliable and highest quality water is generated in the parks. Alpine National Park has the largest mean annual water flow of any park in Victoria, which equates to 19 per cent of Victoria's total run off.

The Greater Alpine National Parks support the local and wider economy. They make a significant contribution to recreation expenditure and provide indirect economic benefits to the businesses that support those industries. They also provide direct employment in park management and operation. In addition, parks provide savings in health services through improved community health and wellbeing from participation in recreation activities in parks.

The Bogong Plateau from Mt Jaithmathang,
Alpine National Park

2 Vision

The vision describes the intended outcome of management and the future state of the parks.

The parks protect most of Victoria's unique alpine and high country with its extraordinary diversity of plants and animals, and rare alpine and vast forested environments. Pest plants and animals and other key threats are targeted using evidence-based adaptive management to ensure the highest values are given the greatest protection. A strong emphasis is given to understanding and mitigating the possible effects of climate change, particularly in alpine and other ecosystems at most risk, and improving the effectiveness of management actions.

The rivers that rise in the mountains and plateaus are recognised as vital to the health of the parks and the supply of water to much of Victoria and the Murray–Darling Basin. Throughout the area, riparian vegetation is intact, enhancing corridors for fauna. Environmental flows are maintained ensuring the long-term viability of aquatic ecosystems. Unregulated rivers such as the Wonnangatta and Ovens, and major rivers including the Snowy, Macalister, Mitta Mitta, Kiewa and more, sustain communities and ecosystems across the landscape.

Fire is a natural part of the Australian environment; however, severe fires have affected 90% of the parks in the recent past and much of the area is recovering and will take many decades to recover fully. Fire management is reducing the risk fire poses to communities and active management is maintaining ecosystem resilience and biodiversity, including areas of Mountain Ash and Alpine Ash forest that were burnt several times within a decade.

The parks' endowment of special Aboriginal places, travel routes and stories is recognised and appreciated. The area's history of forestry, grazing, mining, science, art and recreation, and use for water and electricity production are also recognised and celebrated. Heritage values are maintained and many with long connections to the parks use their knowledge to benefit the parks and communities.

Traditional Owners, as custodians of their culture, are actively engaged in the parks' management and their Native Title rights and interests are fully recognized. Traditional knowledge is better understood and reflected in programs, including environmental and burning programs, and understanding of the area's cultural importance is enhanced.

Park management programs are extended beyond the park boundary wherever possible to obtain the greatest benefit to the broader environment and the community. This involves working with other land management agencies and the community through partnerships, joint programs, sharing knowledge and providing opportunities for volunteers.

The parks remain one of Australia's greatest recreation areas. Visitors are welcomed and enjoy a range of activities in spectacular, essentially undeveloped landscapes. A diverse range of experiences are on offer from easily accessible views at Mount Buffalo to remote and challenging guided or self-reliant remote adventure experiences.

Australian Alps Walking Track,
Baw Baw National Park

Supporting and supported by nature-based tourism, the parks focus on accommodation options in keeping with an outdoor, bush experience, with more developed options in the neighbouring resorts and townships, providing an economic benefit to those communities.

Local communities provide important gateways to the parks and assist visitors to learn about the area – how they can experience it and the parks' history and ecology. This is supported with park information that helps connect people with nature and culture.

Management is based on the best available science, and insights gained from monitoring programs and communities are used to adapt and improve management. Innovation in exploring ways to enhance management effectiveness is encouraged.

Razor–Viking Wilderness

3 Zoning

A number of zones are applied to the planning area where different management priorities apply (table 3.1 and map 2A–H). A number of overlays have also been developed to provide additional management direction where required to allow for particular requirements. Two zones and three overlays are established by legislation and dictate the scope of the management plan: Wilderness and Reference Area Zones and Heritage River, Remote and Natural Areas and Natural Catchment Areas Overlays. The zones and overlays and their management purposes are outlined below (figure 3.1 and map 2A–H). The details of the visitor activities allowed in each zone are shown in table 8.3.

It is important to note that many other areas have additional protection through legislative means, such as species and communities listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and Special Water Supply Catchment Areas declared under Schedule Five of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (Vic.). Such areas have not been mapped or zoned but will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

A number of small localised areas are managed for permitted uses such as public infrastructure including pipelines, powerlines and telecommunication towers, huts, apiculture sites and park depots. These areas are managed in accordance with licences, leases and other legislative means.

3.1 Zones

Conservation Zone

- Areas of high natural value defined through mapping of sensitive ecological communities, such as alpine bogs, habitat for threatened and rare species and other important environmental attributes where a very strong management emphasis is on protection of the environment. The majority of the Alps Natural Ecosystem is zoned conservation as well as other areas with high conservation value.

Recreation and nature-based tourism are permitted subject to close management to ensure minimal impact to values and minimal interference to natural processes. This usually involves ensuring recreation is low key and dispersed with small-scale facilities.

Conservation and Recreation Zone

- Areas where the management emphasis is on protection of environmental and cultural values while allowing for minimal impact recreation.

Dispersed recreation and nature-based tourism activities are encouraged. The level of activities and small-scale recreation facilities are provided without significant impact on natural processes.

Recreation Development Zone

- Small areas with a high level of facility development catering for a high number of visitors.

Development of high level visitor facilities is permitted. Within the planning area this zone covers small areas in Mt Buffalo National Park (map 2B).

Wilderness Zone

- Areas of wilderness value proclaimed under Schedule Two A (Wilderness Parks) or Five (Wilderness Zones) of the National Parks Act and managed to protect wilderness values.

Self-reliant recreation and solitude is encouraged in the absence of facilities and public roads, the construction of which are prohibited. In addition, with certain exceptions commercial activity and developments, the use of any form of motorised or mechanical transport, and the use of non-indigenous animals are prohibited. This means that visitors can only travel by foot, ski, canoe or raft and have minimal impact. Wilderness Zones within the planning area are: Avon Wilderness Park; Buchan Headwaters, Cobberas, Indi, Mount Darling–Snowy Bluff and Razor–Viking wilderness zones in Alpine NP; and Bowen and Snowy River wilderness zones in Snowy River NP.

Reference Area Zone

- Areas proclaimed under the *Reference Areas Act 1978* (Vic.).

Reference areas are areas where all human interference is kept to the essential minimum so that, as far as practicable, the only long-term change results from natural processes. No access is permitted except that associated with protecting natural processes, emergency operations and approved research. They may then be used for comparative studies against land where human interaction and activities happen, showing the effects of human utilisation of land. The following reference areas are included in the planning area. Alpine NP: Beehive Creek, Blue Rag, Boiler Plain, Buenba, Burnside, East Caledonia, Forest Hill, Hollonds Knob, Lagoon Plateau, Mount McAdam, Mount Pleasant, Porphyry Hill, Shepherds Creek, Tingaringy, Tom Groggin, Whiterock Creek, Wombat Creek, and Wonnangatta River; Baw Baw NP: Baw Baw; Mount Buffalo NP: Mount Buffalo; Snowy River NP: Gelantipy Plateau, Mountain Creek and Zig Zag.

Education Zone

- Small relatively undisturbed areas as recommended by the former LCC and accepted by Government.

Education Zones are available for environmental and cultural education activities. There are two Education Areas in the planning area: Mount Tamboritha Education Area in Alpine NP and Sunnyside Education Area in Mount Wills Historic Area.

Overlays

- Areas where specified activities or values require special management.

Visitor Experience Area (VEA) overlay covers areas totalling 9189 ha (Alpine NP 6596 ha, Mt Buffalo NP 1530 ha Baw Baw NP 754 ha, Howqua Hills HA 125 ha, Grant HA 4 ha, Walhalla HA 180 ha) that are of value for a notable experience, from remote hiking and camping to highly developed areas catering for large numbers of visitors.

The Chalet,
Mount Buffalo National Park

They provide a management focus for ensuring that the visitor experience can continue without damaging underlying environmental and cultural values. These are a priority for visitor management programs and actions to protect their unique settings which support a range of defined visitor experiences. (table 8.1 and map 2A–H).

Deer hunting. A number of areas in Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP, Avon WP and Tara Range Park are defined where deer hunting is permitted in accordance with Section 37 of the National Parks Act (map 5).

Heritage Rivers overlay covers areas listed under Schedule One of the *Heritage Rivers Act 1992* (Vic.) and managed to protect their significant nature conservation, recreation, scenic and cultural heritage values, maintain or improve water quality, and retain unimpeded river corridors without any new water diversions (maps 2A–H). In the planning area this includes Suggan Buggan and Berrima, Howqua, Mitta Mitta, Wonnangatta and Upper Buchan Heritage rivers are in Alpine NP; Snowy Heritage River in Alpine NP and Snowy River NP; Bemm, Goolengook, Arte and Errinundra Heritage Rivers in Errinundra NP and Thomson and Aberfeldy Heritage rivers in Baw Baw NP; Part of Howqua Heritage River is also in Howqua Hills HA and part of Mitta Mitta Heritage Rivers is also in Mount Wills HA.

Remote and Natural Areas overlay covers areas listed under Schedule Six of the National Parks Act, and managed to protect the area's remote and natural attributes; prevent new and incremental developments, including the construction of vehicular tracks and new structures (maps 2A–H). In the planning area these areas total 135 900 ha comprising include Bogong, Bundara–Cobungra, Dandongadale (part), Davies Plain, Macalister Area, Suggan Buggan, The Governors and Upper Snowy Area in Alpine NP (totalling 115 200 ha); North Buffalo in Mt Buffalo NP (6500 ha); Baw Baw Plateau in Baw Baw NP (6500 ha); Brodribb in Errinundra NP (7700 ha).

Natural Catchment Areas overlay covers areas listed under Schedule Two of the Heritage Rivers Act and managed to maintain or enhance the area's essentially natural condition and preclude certain activities, including making and upgrading new roads (maps 2A–H). The Natural Catchment Areas in the planning area are Avon, Turton, and Dolondrook Rivers and Ben Cruachan Creek (part), Blue Rag Creek, Gattamurh Creek, Pinnacle Creek- East Branch, Wallaby Creek, Wongungurra River headwaters in Alpine NP; Brodribb River Headwaters, Errinundra River –East Branch in Errinundra NP; and Mount Gelantipy Creek, Musk Creek Rodger and Mountain Creek in Snowy River NP.

Table 3.1: Summary of planning area zoning

Reserve	Park Area*	Conservation Zone	Conservation and Recreation Zone	Reference Area Zone	Wilderness Zone*	Education Zone
Alpine NP	661 729 ha	119 400 ha	413 026 ha	9 713 ha	117 800 ha	351 ha
Mt Buffalo NP**	27 450 ha	6 103 ha	20 180 ha	1 167 ha	—	—
Baw Baw NP	12 790 ha	8 500 ha	4 155 ha	135 ha	—	—
Snowy River NP	114 504 ha	18 940 ha	50 690 ha	2 624 ha	44 500 ha	—
Errinundra NP	38 600 ha	22 530 ha	15 050 ha	1 020 ha	—	—
Tara Range Park	7 620 ha	1,310 ha	6 311 ha	—	—	—
Howqua Hills HA	1 093 ha	—	1 093 ha	—	—	—
Mt Wills HA	9 913 ha	617 ha	8 177 ha	—	—	519 ha
Grant HA	7 321 ha	—	7 321 ha	—	—	—
Mt Murphy	630 ha	—	630 ha	—	—	—
Walhalla HA	2 583 ha	—	2 583 ha	—	—	—
Avon Wilderness Park	39 540 ha	—	—	—	39 650 ha	—
Planning Area total	923 143 ha	177 400 ha	529 216 ha	14 659 ha	201 950 ha	870 ha

* Park areas stated above are based on spatial analysis and may vary from areas stated in legislation, wilderness areas are as stated in legislation.

** Small areas in Mt Buffalo National Park are zoned Recreation Development (see map 2B).

The Crosscut Saw, Alpine National Park

4 Protecting the natural environment

The parks protect most of Victoria's unique alpine and high country with its extraordinary diversity of plants and animals, and rare alpine and vast forested environments. Pest plants and animals and other key threats are targeted using evidence-based adaptive management to ensure the highest values are given the greatest protection. A strong emphasis is given to understanding and mitigating the possible effects of climate change, particularly in alpine and other ecosystems at most risk, and improving the effectiveness of management actions.

4.1 Environmental management

The parks are especially important for the conservation of a diverse range of species, communities, habitats and ecosystems. More than 1700 native plant species – about one third of Victoria's native plant species – and more than 300 native vertebrate animal species are found in the planning area and tens of thousands of lesser known organisms, such as invertebrates, fungi and other life forms. More than half of the State's terrestrial bird species and 40 per cent of Victoria's mammal species occur in the parks. Many species and communities are rare, endemic and iconic such as Mountain Pygmy-possum, Baw Baw Frog and Alpine peatland. Some 575 rare and threatened flora and fauna species have been recorded in the parks, including many specially adapted species found nowhere else.

The planning area encompasses parts of eight of Victoria's 11 bioregions and includes over 60 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs). Over half of the EVCS are threatened in their bioregions, a third of which are rare in Australia. Many of the ecosystems, such as Snow Gum Woodland and Rainforest, have an appeal beyond their ecological value. The parks protect land that is culturally important to the Traditional Owners for the whole of the environment including nature and heritage, and material and spiritual elements. Many 'common' species are recognised as particularly important culturally and for food and medicine.

Park managers face a high degree of complexity and considerable uncertainty in managing the natural environment (Caffrey & Thompson 2009). The plan adopts a landscape-scale approach for protecting natural values so that complementary, effective and responsive action can be taken over the wide area. Many private properties border the parks and the extensive interface with private property, State forest, Australian Alps National Parks and Alpine Resorts highlights the need for close cooperation between Parks Victoria, DELWP, AALC, resort managers, catchment managers, local governments and neighbours. There are opportunities to enhance connectivity between biolinks and flagship areas by strengthening regional-scale biolinks links in the north and south of the planning areas (DSE 2009) and supporting larger scale connectivity as part of the Greater Eastern Ranges Corridor (Mackey, Watson & Worboys 2010; Worboys, Francis & Lockwood 2010).

The rivers that rise in the mountains and plateaus are recognised as vital to the health of the parks and the supply of water to much of Victoria and the Murray–Darling Basin. Throughout the area, riparian vegetation is intact, enhancing corridors for fauna. Environmental flows are maintained ensuring the long-term viability of aquatic ecosystems. Unregulated rivers such as the Wonnangatta and Ovens, and major rivers including the Snowy, Macalister, Mitta Mitta, Kiewa and more, sustain communities and ecosystems across the landscape.

Strong program and research partnerships will be required to deliver priority and other strategies in the plan to conserve ecosystems, water and biodiversity effectively.

For planning purposes, the 60 plus EVCs are grouped into five broad Natural Ecosystems – Alps; Wet Forests and Rainforest; Dry Forest and Woodlands; Heathland; and Inland Waters and Wetlands (figure 4.1). While much of the area is Dry Forest and Woodlands (48% of the planning area), the parks are characterised by Alps (28%) and Wet Forests and Rainforest (23%) Natural Ecosystems. Heathland and Inland Waters and Wetlands Natural Ecosystems comprise less than 1%. Nine EVCs of the 20 grouped in the Alps Natural Ecosystem occur mostly in the parks and 13 (Alps and Wet Forest and Rainforests Natural Ecosystems) have half their state-wide distribution in the parks.

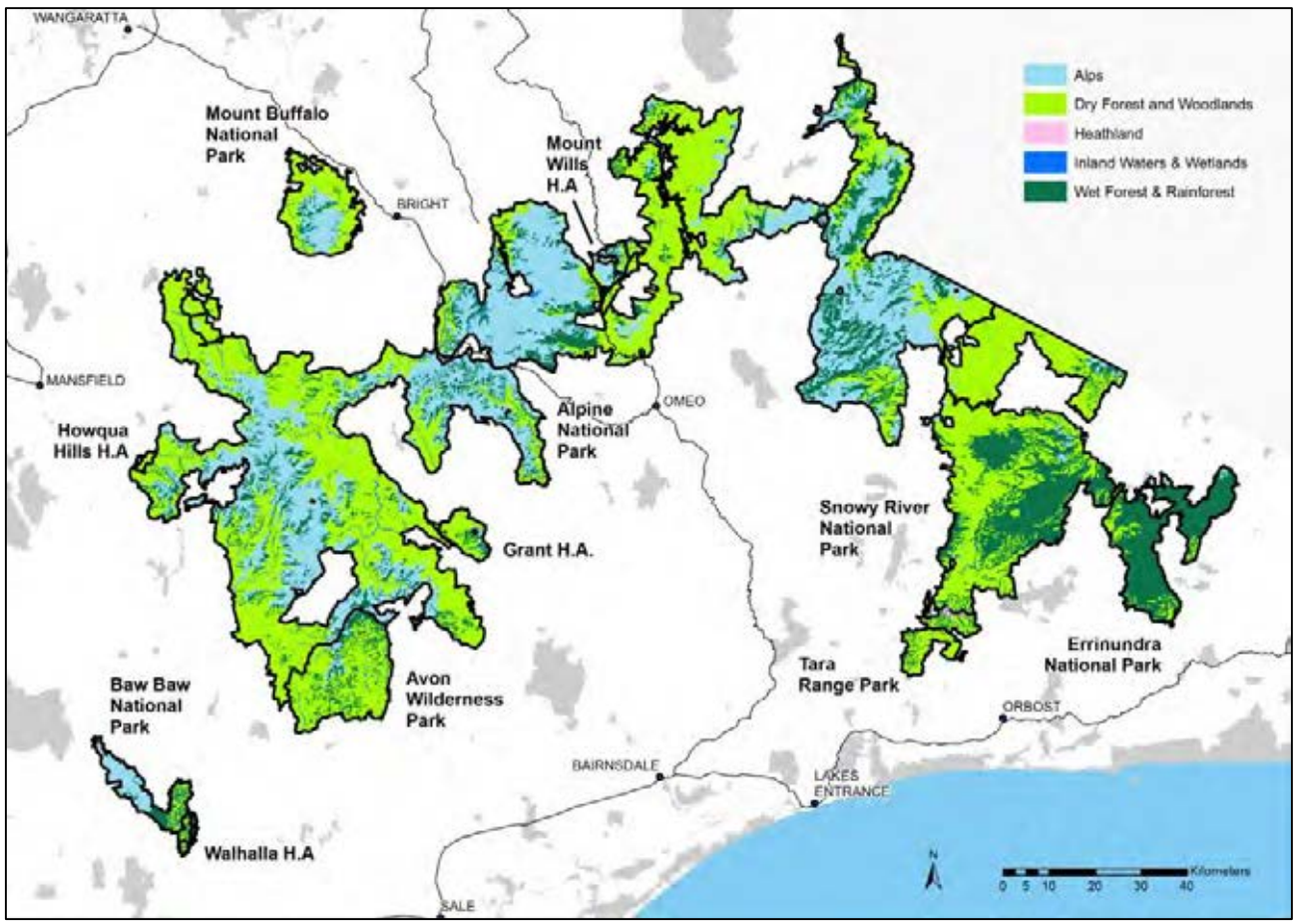


Figure 4.1: Distribution of Natural Ecosystems in the planning area

Vegetation on the southern Buffalo Plateau is still recovering from a wildfire in 2003

Extreme fires, droughts and floods from 1998 to 2014 have damaged and disturbed large areas of the parks and many areas are still recovering from past uses such as logging and domestic stock grazing. Assessments of environmental condition (Parks Victoria 2013) indicate that:

- feral horse impacts are major and increasing in the Eastern Alps area and deer impacts are major and increasing in the Bogong, King-Howqua and Upper Murray areas of Alpine National Park
- weed impacts have been major or moderate in many parts of the parks and there are major and increasing blackberry impacts in the King–Howqua and Upper Murray areas of Alpine National Park, moderate willow impacts despite significant control efforts in the Wonnangatta–Moroka area and broom impacts in Baw Baw National Park
- the Alpine Ecosystem is recovering slowly from the long term impacts of grazing and areas increasingly affected by feral horse and deer impacts; areas in Alpine National Park are recovering well following past fires, especially mossbeds, grasslands, heathlands, and threatened flora
- some areas of the Dry Forest and Woodlands Natural Ecosystem is in poor condition in Mount Buffalo National Park, and Alpine Ash stands in Alpine National Park are also in poor condition, both as a result of the cumulative impacts of repeated major bushfires
- pest animal impacts are major and increasing in most areas of Alpine National Park and are moderate and increasing in the Snowy River National Park and Mount Buffalo National Park
- environmental water allocations to the Snowy River are expected to improve condition
- increased shrubbiness and regrowth is evident in most areas burnt by the severe fires that have occurred since 2003.

The plan enables adaptive management by specifying goals for key values, using a risk-to-values based approach to determine priority threats and strategies for their management. The plan informs decisions about resource allocation by identifying the highest priority strategies for the optimum mix of threat treatments — treatments that will achieve multiple goals and objectives across multiple ecosystems.

Orange Hawkweed , a highly invasive weed in the Australian Alps

'The likely changes present a significant challenge to any societal aspiration to preserve biodiversity in its current state, for example, to maintain a species in its current abundance and distribution. Preserving biodiversity 'as is' may have been feasible in a stationary climate (one that is variable but not changing), but this will not be possible with the widespread, pervasive and large ecological changes anticipated under significant levels of climate change. This makes the impacts of climate change quite unlike other threats to biodiversity.'

— Dunlop et al. (2013)

Management goals for the ecosystems are broadly summarised as follows: to maintain and improve their ecological character, extent and diversity for the long-term protection of dependent species and communities and to reflect the Traditional Owners' signs of healthy Country.

There are serious and continuing threats to the parks' environment (AECOM 2010). Climate change is likely to exacerbate many of these threats and has the potential to fundamentally change the parameters of ecosystems and viability of species. Large-scale severe fires, inappropriate fire regimes (chapter 5) and impacts from extreme events are a major risk. Invasive plants, animals and pathogens are considered the most severe threat to biodiversity including new and existing weed invasions by hawkweeds, Gorse, willows, broom species, blackberries and Himalayan Honeysuckle. Most species of willows, for example, are considered to have invaded only five per cent of their potential range (Mackey, Watson & Worboys 2010). Impacts from pest animals include grazing and trampling by feral and introduced herbivores including horses, goats, pigs and rabbits, trampling and grazing from and the escalating number and extent of deer, predation by introduced pest animals including foxes, cats and wild dogs. The presence of pathogens, including *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, *Armillaria luteobubalina* and Myrtle Wilt, can cause vegetation dieback, and Chytrid Fungus is threatening survival of frogs (Skerratt et al. 2016).

Other concerning threats to the parks' ecosystems and biodiversity include fragmentation (DSE 2009), impacts from recreation (section 6.3), water pollution and inappropriate water regimes and disturbance to catchments (section 4.2).

Managing for climate change

The parks are already facing challenges from a changing climate. Both the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments recognise the serious threats posed by climate change.

Evidence of slow-onset changes has been mounting for several decades, and extreme weather is becoming more common. The most concerning of these are heatwaves and subsequent bushfires; heavy precipitation; and storms. Climate change is increasing bushfire risk and lengthening the average fire season in Victoria and projections indicate that Victoria is likely to have up to 70% more Severe, Extreme and Code Red days by 2050 (DELWP 2015a). Expected increases in average temperature with more hotter days and reduced average rainfall, fewer rainfall days (with heavier rainfall) can lead to very large changes in the intensity of extreme events. Storms and fires over the past decade have already led to changes in the way we manage parks and surrounding public land in Victoria. Management interventions that were once periodic have become part of ongoing operations. Park closures are becoming increasingly necessary during extreme events. Park facilities are being impacted, particularly roads, walking tracks and visitor facilities in bushfire prone areas, and coastal infrastructure.

A Statewide Risk Assessment highlighted five key areas of risk and four ecosystems in the parks under particular threat (Parks Victoria 2010a). The key risks are:

- Increased bushfire with fire regime changes, increasing emergency management demands, asset loss and tourism disruption.
- Increased flood and storm impacts, increasing emergency management demands, asset loss and tourism disruption.
- Hotter, drier recreation conditions.
- Increased and generalised ecosystem stress with new weeds and pests, changes in species' geographic range, and altered flowering seasons.
- Increased financial and economic costs and impacts on organisational effectiveness.

Alps, and Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystems are two of the four ecosystems most at risk from an increase in the frequency and intensity of bushfires. Altered fire regimes (frequency, intensity, season, scale and patchiness) are leading to increased disturbance of the Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystem. While most eucalypts develop shoots from the trunk following fire, Alpine Ash regenerates from seed and requires a high intensity fire to burn the vegetation completely so that there is a clean seedbed for germination. The saplings then require a fire-free period of more than fifteen years to allow them to mature to a point where they can flower and set seed. In some parts of the alpine parks and surrounding state forest, Alpine Ash stands have been burnt three times in ten years and the young Ash has been killed before setting seed. Managers undertook direct seeding to ensure these stands do not disappear.

Increased temperatures will also reduce the extent of alpine flora and fauna due to their limited opportunity to retreat to higher altitudes. The decrease in the amount and duration of snow and subsequent lower runoff will also affect the population dynamics and survival of a number of mammals. Climate change is likely to alter the attributes and availability of habitats, and magnify loss of habitat such as hollow bearing trees and existing threats including fragmentation and spread of invasive species (DELWP 2015a).

With a changing climate, many existing environmental weeds and pests may move into areas from which they are currently excluded and invasions by new pest species may increase. Control of invasive species is costly and difficult, particularly of highly reproductive species and in remote areas; however, this will become increasingly important.

Climate change will alter the way people use the parks. Decreased snow cover and shorter snow seasons may also mean greater pressure from tourism and recreation. Access may be easier, and seasonal road closures could be shorter. Summer visitation may increase as Alpine Resorts provide for greater numbers of visitors outside of the snow season, putting pressure on facilities and activities close to the resorts. Alternatively, increased inland temperatures and fire risk may see people avoiding these areas in favour of coastal destinations.

Damage caused by feral horses, Pretty Valley, Alpine National Park

Across the planning area many of these threats are considered high priority threats to multiple ecosystems and environmental values (section 4.1.1). By reducing the impacts of manageable threats, ecosystems and communities may be more resilient to, absorb and recover from these increasing threats. Eight strategies are identified as the highest priorities for urgent action. These strategies address the key threats to multiple parks and multiple natural ecosystems and aim to achieve multiple goals — the best outcomes for the parks at the scale required within the available resources:

1. Humane feral horse control – an integrated approach for public land in the Victorian Alps
2. Deer control
3. Targeted weed containment
4. Fire management to protect and enhance ecosystems
5. Responding to climate change
6. Landscape-scale fox control
7. Integrated work with all the Traditional Owners
8. Benefits beyond boundaries — weeds and dogs.

Specific goals for the natural ecosystems values are presented in sub-sections 4.1.2 to 4.1.6 with other strategies to address issues specific to those ecosystems and threats to be addressed over the life of the plan with additional resources and partnerships. Priority areas are those which are considered to be in good condition and those with high-value natural assets or biodiversity are included in the conservation zone (much of the Alps and Wet Forests and Rainforests Natural Ecosystems). Other areas in good condition such as riparian corridors or populations of rare or threatened species and communities are also considered a priority for management focus and environmental programs. In addition, areas within Visitor Experience Areas are a priority for managing the impacts of visitor uses, particularly where these overlays occur within conservation zones (map 2A-H). Research and monitoring goals and strategies are detailed in Chapter 9.

Feral horses in the Alps

The high level of public interest and concern over feral horse management is significant (Chapple 2005). The success of feral horse management will depend largely on whether the community is well informed about the issues and find humane and effective control methods acceptable.

Horses were first introduced to the Australian Alps by early European settlers and some people retain strong cultural and emotional attachments to horses in the Victorian Alps. However, feral horses are an environmental threat to the area's values and land managers need to reduce their impact. Parks Victoria, in partnership with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, is planning to humanely remove small, isolated feral horse populations, substantially reduce core populations to reduce impacts and prevent horses spreading to new areas of the Victorian Alps (figure 4.2).

There are two disjunct populations of feral horses in the Victorian Alps. The largest population occurs in the eastern Alps (east of Omeo) and continues into Kosciuszko National Park, NSW. Aerial surveys of horses in the Australian Alps were conducted in 2001, 2003, 2009 and 2014. The 2014 survey indicated approximately 2350 horses in the eastern Victorian Alps (Cairns & Robertson 2015). Although there are fewer horses present than previous modelled estimates indicated, the amount of damage is not reduced. Fewer horses than previously expected are causing the extensive damage that is occurring. A separate survey conducted in 2015 counted a smaller, separate population of around 63 horses occurs in the Bogong High Plains/Cobungra area.

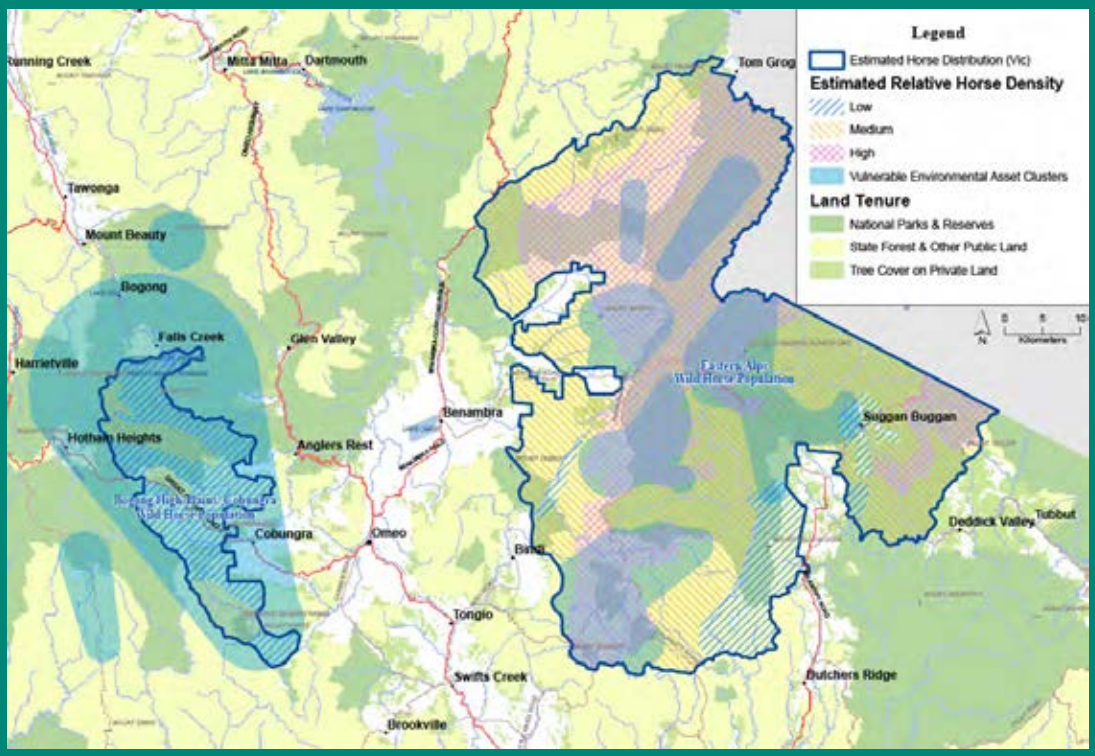


Figure 4.2: Density of feral horses in the planning area

Feral horses have serious catchment and environmental impacts including soil loss, compaction and erosion, trampling of vegetation, reducing plant species richness, inducing mortality of native trees, damage to threatened peatland habitat and waterbodies, and weed dispersal (Nimmo 2005; Nimmo & Miller 2007). The condition of treeless drainage lines, including nationally endangered alpine peatlands, is significantly worse in horse-occupied areas (Robertson et al. 2015). Horse impacts are substantial when considered as part of the total grazing pressure of herbivores. Damage and loss of habitats caused by feral horses (*Equus caballus*) is listed as a potentially threatening process under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. Parks Victoria has a responsibility to ensure the long-term health of sensitive alpine environments, water catchments and major tourism assets in the Australian Alps.

Many people have an attachment to horses in the alpine area and do not wish to see their complete removal. It has been argued that because feral horses 'evoke greater animal welfare concerns than most other pest animals' the control techniques available to managers may be limited (Dawson 2008).

Animal welfare and humane control methods are central issues in management of all feral animals, including horses. All control methods have some degree of impact, stress and risk of injury to the horse. Experience from control programs in other parts of Australia and New Zealand demonstrates that in order to minimise suffering, the most humane options available, lethal and non-lethal, must be employed. Options must also be efficient and feasible.

There are a range of different techniques for managing horses, each with their advantages and limitations. Exclusion fencing has been used to protect relatively small, sensitive areas in the alps. Exclusion fencing, however, can be impractical and cost prohibitive to apply across wide areas. Fertility control is a non-lethal option that is currently only feasible for managing small, contained populations where maintaining a small population is desired. Available control techniques that can be conditionally effective and humane are mustering, trapping and shooting (Sharp and Saunders 2011). Trapping and mustering can provide for rehoming of horses where conditions and horses are suitable to facilitate this. Humane euthanising of captured animals that are not suitable for transport and re-homing or where transport from remote areas introduces poor animal welfare conditions is a consideration in using these techniques. Live capture techniques can be resource intensive. Trapping, roping and other live capture techniques have substantial risk of stress and injury to horses. These techniques if used alone may not be able to achieve large reductions required in horse numbers in the Alps.

Ground or aerial shooting are considered by technical experts and some stakeholders to be humane and effective techniques particularly for control over extensive areas of rugged terrain such as the eastern Alps. Technical experts and some stakeholders consider shooting to be a more humane control option compared to live capture techniques as animals are not subject to the stresses of capture, yarding and long-distance transportation. They also make the case for aerial shooting as a humane and effective method when carried out by highly skilled and experienced shooters and pilots using the correct equipment and procedures. However, negative public perceptions around the use of aerial shooting for horses have influenced decision making on use of the technique for humane horse control in south eastern Australia. An approach involving trapping, mustering and shooting may be able to provide meaningful outcomes for the environment, and subject to community consultation, potentially acceptable management of Victoria's feral horses.

Feral horse integrated approaches will guide delivery of humane feral horse control programs. Parks Victoria undertook initial community consultation on feral horse management in the Alps in 2012–13. Expert advice on potential approaches has been sought from a skills based technical reference group established to provide specialist environmental, cultural, social and animal welfare advice on management strategies and their implementation. Victoria will continue to consider all control methods and select the most humane and effective ones in consultation with the community.

Sambar Deer stag in a mud wallow, Alpine National Park

Managing deer in the Alps

Established populations of Sambar deer are widespread and appear to be continuing to grow across eastern Victoria. Fallow deer also occur in parts of the Alpine National Park.

While there is little monitoring of the trend in population size of deer, anecdotal reports of deer impacts and deer sightings by rangers, hunters and land owners that suggests an escalating problem across a wide area. Community awareness of deer, particularly in north-eastern Victoria, appears to be rising with growing public perception that deer numbers are increasing and causing greater impacts.

The impacts of deer on the natural environment primarily include browsing, grazing, pugging, antler rubbing on trees and wallowing. Agricultural properties may be impacted through damage to fences, reduction in productivity through loss of crops and the risk of livestock disease.

Recreational hunting for deer occurs in much of the planning area. A 2013 survey of hunters estimated that Victoria's 27 286 licenced deer hunters spent around $138 million during the 2012–13 hunting season. This includes all deer hunting — stalking and hunting with hounds — throughout Victoria; the survey does not provide an estimate of what proportion of this relates to hunting within the planning area (DPI 2014).

The Game Management Authority estimated that in the period July 2013 to June 2014, 28 305 licenced recreational deer hunters harvested around 58 000 deer across Victoria. The most commonly harvested species were Sambar (47 000) and Fallow Deer (9000). The state-wide harvest of deer has increased from 2009 where 16 261 hunters were estimated to have harvested approximately 40 000 deer. Stalking on public land without dogs (the only hunting permitted in the planning area) accounted for around one third of this harvest; the remaining two-thirds was harvested by either stalking on private land or hunting with dogs (GMA 2015).

It is not well understood whether recreational hunting pressure reduces deer numbers or impacts in parks in eastern Victoria. Further innovation and targeted programs are needed to understand the potential role and contribution of the recreational hunting harvest to integrated deer management in parks. Studies in New Zealand have indicated recreational deer hunting has a greater impact in reducing deer densities in areas within 3 km of access points, such as vehicle tracks.

Parks Victoria aims to understand and where required manage the impacts of deer on high value natural and cultural assets and ecological processes while continuing to provide deer hunting opportunities.

Management will focus on reducing deer impacts, containing established populations, and removal of new and emerging populations. Parks Victoria also aims to be a good neighbour. This includes working with adjacent landowners to deal with deer impacts on park boundaries. Where loss of infrastructure or productivity can be attributed to deer ranging from the parks, Parks Victoria will work collaboratively with the landowner to reduce impacts.

'Reduction in biodiversity of native vegetation by Sambar' is listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act as a potentially threatening process to several FFG listed vegetation communities, many of which occur in the planning area's high elevation wetlands and rainforests. The localised protection of the high value vegetation communities identified in the FFG Act listing is therefore a key driver for the management of Sambar in the planning area. Equally, there will be areas where management of deer is not feasible or the relativity low impacts do not warrant investment in the short term.

Where deer control is required, the method and approach used will provide for a high degree of animal welfare, and be appropriate to the terrain and scale of the problem and aim to minimise impacts of control on recreational hunting where it is permitted. The use of volunteer hunting and professional hunters may form part of an integrated control program. The Sporting Shooters Association Australia and the Australian Deer Association and other hunting organisations may be engaged to support control programs where practical, including in the design and implementation of coordinated hunting control programs.

4.1.1 Highest-priority strategies

Goal Direct management activity, resources, investment and partnerships to deliver priority strategies that are of most benefit to ecosystem goals at high-value areas.	
Strategies	**Park**
1. Implement humane feral horse control in consultation with the community to:	
• prevent new populations of feral horses establishing across the planning area where they do not currently occur	Alpine NP
• remove isolated populations of feral horses where eradication is feasible	Bogong and Wonnangatta areas, Alpine NP
• contain and reduce feral horse numbers in core, larger populations in Alpine National Park to prevent spread and minimise impacts on high-value vegetation communities and fauna habitats	East Alps, Alpine NP
• consider all control options and use the most humane and effective techniques, including lethal and non-lethal methods	Alpine NP
• cooperate with DELWP and NSW NPWS to remove populations from adjacent forest areas and Kosciuszko NP.	Bogong High Plains Wonnangatta–Moroka and King–Howqua areas, Alpine NP
2. Prepare and implement a Deer Action Plan. Key directions of the plan will include:	
• preventing the establishment of new deer populations in areas where they do not currently occur (with priority to preventing other deer species becoming established)	All
• removing isolated or emerging deer populations where eradication is feasible	All, with priority to Red, Rusa and Fallow Deer
• managing the impacts of deer on high-value vegetation communities and habitats in established Sambar populations	All
• managing the impacts of deer on high-value vegetation communities and habitats in established Fallow deer populations	All
• controlling deer through an adaptive program including partnerships with volunteers and recreational hunters. Consider all control strategies such as female only harvest areas, targeted hunting areas and hunter incentives, and use the most effective and humane techniques.	Bogong High Plains, Alpine NP, All
3a. Eradicate new and emerging weeds, including hawkweeds, and prevent new infestations by improving boundary biosecurity, public education and growing cooperation with resort managers, other adjacent land owners and nurseries.	All, Alpine NP
3b. Manage area-wide weed threats including:	Mitta Mitta and Wonnangatta areas Alpine NP, Mt Wills HA , Mt Murphy HA
• containing broom species to prevent spread and reduce impacts on high-value areas and riparian vegetation	Howqua and Wonnangatta valleys, Buffalo Ck, Mt Buffalo NP Alpine NP, Errinundra NP
• containing established infestations of blackberries to prevent the spread to higher elevations, and relatively blackberry free catchments and reduce impacts on riparian vegetation, access to key river visitor sites and other high-value recreation sites	Bogong and east alps area, Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP, Errinundra NP, Snowy River NP, Mt Buffalo NP
• removing willows from alpine peatlands and containing willows to prevent spread into willow-free catchments, and reduce impacts on riparian vegetation and gullies.	

4.	Protect ecosystems and other natural values recovering from major bushfires, flood and other impacts. Undertake planned burning, improved rapid attack capability and other preparedness activities to protect ecosystems and environmental values from potential impacts of severe large-scale bushfires and inappropriate fire regimes.	All
5.	Use climate science to inform adaptive management to ensure flexible and effective responses to emerging threats. Continue programs to protect areas from anticipated changes in recreation, weeds, and pest animal distribution and fire regimes. Identify and protect areas that can act as climate change refugia.	All
6.	Manage area-wide pest animal threats including:	All
	• reducing fox abundance (minimising off target impacts of baiting) to levels that allow increasing distribution and abundance of susceptible fauna and ground dwelling mammals	Snowy River valley, Snowy River NP, Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP, Errinundra NP, Walhalla HA
	• reduce the impacts of pigs	Snowy River, Errinundra NP, Alpine NP
	• reduce the impacts of cats.	All (localised areas)

Goals	
Traditional Owners partnerships and signs of a healthy Country strengthen management.	
Strong strategic partnerships with other land managers, agencies and authorities improve program effectiveness, ecosystem and habitat connectivity and reduce fragmentation.	
Strategies	**Park**
7. Actively recognise the value of environmental information, knowledge and expertise held by Traditional Owners and partner with Traditional Owners to enhance conservation management and associated cultural benefits. Investigate measures and indicators of Traditional Owners Healthy Country.	All
8a. Strengthen relationships with other land managers to improve cross-tenure management and efficiencies in program delivery.	All
8b. Increase collaboration with other land managers to improve ecosystem and habitat connectivity.	All
8c. Support landscape-scale, cross-tenure and cross-organisational partnership programs.	All
8d. Incorporate the Australian Alps National Parks Cooperative Management Program priorities into the parks programs.	Alpine NP, Avon WP, Baw Baw NP, Mt Buffalo NP, Snowy River NP
8e. Contain populations of wild dogs to protect threatened fauna such as Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby and Spot-tailed Quoll and neighbouring properties.	All, Alpine NP, Snowy River NP
8f. Cooperate with neighbouring landholders to manage weeds, pest animals including wild dogs (see page 80) and other major threats to private and public land (table 4.1) and in relation to any other management actions that may affect them.	All

Subalpine heathland,
Baw Baw National Park

4.1.2 Alps Natural Ecosystem

The Alps Natural Ecosystem includes alpine, subalpine and high altitude montane communities. This Natural Ecosystem is represented in the planning area as follows:

Park	Area (ha)	Percentage of reserve area	Percentage of ecosystem*
Alpine NP	230 822	35%	44%
Mt Buffalo NP	7 684	28%	1%
Baw Baw NP	5 469	43%	1%
Mt Wills HA	3 721	42%	< 1%
Snowy River NP	1 916	2%	< 1%
Avon WP	2 227	6%	< 1%
Errinundra NP	978	3%	< 1%
Grant HA	646	9%	< 1%
Mt Murphy HA	294	51%	< 1%
Planning Area total	230 822	35%	14%

* Percentage of total area of this ecosystem in Victoria (526 000 ha)

Alpine refers to high mountain areas where extreme cold, frosts, wind or persistent snow prevents tree growth. Within the planning area, this includes grasslands, heathlands, and peatland communities that occur above the tree line or below the inverted tree line in areas of cold air drainage and heavy frost. Subalpine communities include the Snow Gum Woodlands that are found below the alpine communities. High altitude montane communities include communities that occur at elevations above 1000 m and comprise unusual combinations of species that can tolerate exposed montane and wet conditions.

The 35 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) that comprise the natural ecosystem are grouped in three Ecological Vegetation Divisions (EVDs) as follows.

The alpine and subalpine communities include the EVCs grouped as High Altitude Wetland and Alpine Treeless EVDs and occur mostly only in the parks, with the largest areas mostly in Alpine National Park.

- **Ecological Vegetation Division 15 – High Altitude Wetland**

  Montane Sedgeland (148); Fen (171); Montane Wet Heathland (184); Subalpine Damp Heathland (204); Subalpine Wet Heathland (210); Subalpine Wet Heathland/Fen Mosaic (211); Subalpine Damp Heathland/Subalpine Wet Heathland Mosaic (301); Subalpine Wet Heathland/Subalpine Grassland Mosaic (317); Montane Swamp (318)

- **Ecological Vegetation Division 16 – Alpine Treeless**

  Treeless Subalpine Mosaic (44); Feldmark (170); Snow Patch Herbland (202); Subalpine Grassland (206); Subalpine Treeless Complex (209); Montane Grassland (702); Disturbed (Irrigated) Subalpine Grassland (841).

The alpine and subalpine communities are very rare in Australia and support many species that are rare and endemic to the parks, including species and communities protected under Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG) and Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC), such as Alpine Sphagnum peatlands and Snow Patch communities and iconic species such as Mountain Pygmy-possum, Baw Baw Frog and Alpine Bog Skink. The peatland and associated fen communities play an important role in the water cycle (Wahren et al. 2001; Western et al. 2008).

The high altitude montane communities include the High Altitude Shrubland/Woodland EVD.

- **Ecological Vegetation Division 14 – High Altitude Shrubland/Woodland**

  Montane Dry Woodland (36); Montane Grassy Woodland (37); Subalpine Shrubland (42); Subalpine Woodland (43); Subalpine Shrubland/Subalpine Damp Heathland/Subalpine Wet Heathland Complex (60); Blockstream Coniferous Heathland (156); Montane Shrubby Woodland (183); Subalpine Dry Heathland (205); Subalpine Grassy Shrubland (207); Subalpine Riparian Shrubland (208); Mountain Epacrid Scrub (304); Montane Herb-rich Woodland (319); Montane Grassy Woodland/Montane Grassland Mosaic (703); Disturbed Montane Herb-rich Woodland (843); Disturbed Montane Shrubby Woodland (846); Weedy Montane Dry Woodland (849); Ferny Woodland (853); Montane Grassy Woodland/Rock Outcrop Mosaic (859); Disturbed Montane Grassy Woodland (861).

Much of the Alps Natural Ecosystem in the national parks and Avon Wilderness Park is recovering from the impacts of cattle grazing and bushfires with recovery, especially in the eastern alps, compromised by the impacts of feral horses. Many peatlands will take decades to recover from fire and past grazing impacts. The ecosystem is in medium condition and declining on Mount Buffalo (Parks Victoria 2013). A large proportion is zoned Conservation Zone.

This natural ecosystem is considered particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change: the relatively low height of the Australian Alps compared with most mountain areas of the world means that species have little opportunity to migrate to higher altitudes, there is potential for invasive species and native herbivores – kangaroos and wallabies, which are currently absent from alpine areas – to extend uphill and there is limited knowledge about alpine species ability to adapt. The Alps Natural Ecosystem contains many rare and endemic species and communities that take a long time to recover from bushfire (chapter 5). There areas of nationally protected old-growth forest in the high altitude montane communities), with old-growth values varying largely depending on time since fire, with recovery times ranging to 300 years. Recent experimental research on the effects of warming on alpine vegetation in Alpine National Park indicates that is relatively resilient to direct warming effects but is vulnerable to associated disturbances such as increased fire frequency.

The goals and the strategies for environmental management (section 4.1.1) and fire management (chapter 5) also apply to this Natural Ecosystem.

Controlling the impact of weeds and pests after fire

The 2003 Alpine Fire and 2006–07 Great Divide Fire burnt over two million hectares, and post-fire floods caused massive erosion. The creation of vast, bare areas and the flush of nutrients from the ash beds and deposited sediment promoted rapid growth of many weeds and invasion by predators.

Extensive restoration work across the fire affected area included predator control, eradicating new and emerging weeds, preventing the establishment of new invasive species, reducing the threat of established high-risk, fire-responsive weeds such as brooms, willows and hawkweeds, reducing the threat of established weeds on the highest value areas at risk, removing willows and other weeds from peatlands, and decreasing the impact of fire responsive weeds and blackberries along the interface with private land (Pascoe 2007).

Weed control efforts after the severe fires of the last decade have had significant success and are a prime example of the need for active intervention and intensive management.

Broom control to prevent the spread and reduce the impacts of infestations has been underway for many years in the parks, particularly in the Mitta Mitta catchment and along the Wonnangatta River. English Broom and Cape Broom seeds remain viable for many decades and can be widely dispersed by water, animals, vehicles, machinery, walkers and in materials used for road and track construction and maintenance. While the fires of 2003 and 2006–07 killed many mature plants, they also promoted mass germination from the soil-stored seedbank. As new seedlings mature they set seed, replenishing the seedbank and negating the benefits of previous control work.

An English Broom Adaptive Experimental Management Program was established in 2004. The program used an experimental network of one hectare plots to compare control techniques and the response of native vegetation to control programs by measuring broom cover, other plant cover, canopy tree stand structure and species diversity. Treatment frequency, herbicide use and spraying efficiency have all been modified in the light of this program.

Goals	
The ecological character, extent and condition of the Alps Natural Ecosystem is maintained including alpine grassland and heathland mosaic, Snow Gum Woodlands and wetlands. Alpine and subalpine wetlands in good condition are maintained and damaged wetlands that have potential capacity to recover are recovering. Loss in extent of threatened alpine and subalpine wetlands due to climate change is minimised. The extent of populations of rare and threatened alpine flora is maintained and their viability is improved.	
Strategies	**Park**
Humanely control feral horses and deer to reduce their impacts; including removing small, isolated populations and preventing spread into new areas. Reduce the likelihood and impacts of damaging fire regimes on these fire sensitive communities. Continue to build resilience of the ecosystem to climate change.	See section 4.1.1
Eradicate hawkweeds.	Bogong High Plains Alpine NP
Control new and emerging weeds.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP, Mt Wills HA, Walhalla HA
Control Soft Rush in high-value vegetation communities and habitats for rare and threatened species.	Bogong, East, Wonnangatta–Moroka Areas Alpine NP, Mt Buffalo NP
Reduce impacts of existing weeds.	Baw Baw NP
Remove willows from alpine peatlands, high-value vegetation communities and habitats for rare and threatened species.	Alpine NP, Mt Buffalo NP, Errinundra NP, Grant HA, Mt Wills HA, Mt Murphy HA
Protect and where feasible restore natural hydrological regimes of waterways, and groundwater dependent ecosystems.	Baw Baw NP, Avon WP, Grant HA, Howqua Hills HA, Mt Wills HA Mt Murphy HA
Control and where possible eradicate populations of small introduced herbivores (hares, rabbits) to densities suitable for natural regeneration of understorey flora of high-value vegetation communities.	Alpine NP, Mount Buffalo NP.
Minimise undesirable impacts of visitor activities to reduce loss of soils and vegetation and contain impacts to established footprints and levels of acceptable modification.	VEAs in Alpine NP, Mount Buffalo NP, and Baw Baw NP).
Avoid development in Snow Gum Woodland, alpine grassland and heathland communities, avoid impacts on populations of threatened or rare flora and fauna, maintain habitat connectivity and protect aquatic habitats.	VEAs in Alpine, Mount Buffalo, and Baw Baw NPs

Goals	
Healthy and viable populations of rare, threatened and characteristic alpine fauna are maintained (including specialist species such as Mountain Pygmy-possum). Suitable habitat for rare, threatened and characteristic alpine fauna, including specialist alpine herpetofauna and invertebrates, is maintained.	
Strategies	**Park**
Control fox and dog populations to reduce impacts. Continue to build resilience of the ecosystem to climate change.	See section 4.1.1
Reduce fox and cat presence to levels that allow increasing distribution and abundance of susceptible alpine specialists and threatened species such as Mountain Pygmy Possum.	Alpine NP, Mt Buffalo NP, Snowy River NP
Prevent or contain the spread of Chytrid Fungus.	Mount Buffalo NP

4.1.3 Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystem

The Wet forest and Rainforest natural ecosystem is represented in the planning area as follows:

Park	Area (ha)	Percentage of reserve area	Percentage of ecosystem*
Alpine NP	99 578	15%	7%
Snowy River NP	51 542	45%	4%
Errinundra NP	32 977	85%	2%
Avon WP	10 726	27%	< 1%
Baw Baw NP	5946	46%	< 1%
Mt Buffalo NP	2021	7%	< 1%
Walhalla HA	2014	78%	< 1%
Mt Wills HA	1643	19%	< 1%
Grant HA	1581	22%	< 1%
Tara Range P	1545	20%	< 1%
Mt Murphy HA	270	47%	< 1%
Howqua Hills HA	1	1%	< 1%
Planning Area total	209 848	14%	14%

* Percentage of total area of this ecosystem in Victoria (1 458 101 ha)

The Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystem includes the tall mist and moist forests dominated by Mountain Ash and, at higher altitudes, Alpine Ash, and the closed-canopy rainforests which include Dry, Warm Temperate, and overlap communities, and the FFG listed Cool Temperate Rainforest. This Natural Ecosystem is dispersed; in areas with high rainfall, sheltered wet sites such as gullies and southerly slopes, and deep soils that may remain saturated for long periods.

Rainforest mosses and liverworts, Errinundra National Park

Errinundra National Park has the largest remaining stand of Cool Temperate Rainforest in Victoria. Some of the other parks have small areas of rainforest which are important as they protect the only example or area in best condition of a particular type of rainforest.

The Wet Forest and Rainforest is particularly important for carbon sequestration, the provision of genetic and population sources and drought and fire refugia (Lindenmayer et al. 2011). The Natural Ecosystem supports many rare and threatened species including Broad-toothed Rat and FFG listed Leadbeater's Possum, Long-footed Potoroo, and Sooty Owl and is also important for most frog species including the EPBC and FFG listed Green and Golden Frog, Littlejohn's Tree Frog and Giant Burrowing Frog and areas of nationally protected old-growth forest. Areas of the Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystem are recovering after bushfires throughout the parks. Over 10,000 hectares of Alpine Ash stands in Alpine National Park are in poor condition as a result of repeated major bushfires. A large proportion of this Natural Ecosystem has been zoned Conservation Zone.

This natural ecosystem is also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change with the predicted increases in bushfire frequency and severity. The wet forests require periods of around 20 years between fires to allow the tree species to set seed. The rainforests do not rely on fire for regeneration. Old-growth values vary largely depending on time since fire, with recovery times ranging to 300 years. The rainforests are also vulnerable to the impacts of deer grazing and trampling.

The goals and the strategies for environmental management (section 4.1.1) and fire management (chapter 5) also apply to this Natural Ecosystem.

Goals	
The extent, diversity and condition of rainforest EVCs is maintained. An adequate mosaic of rainforest structure and growth stages is maintained including sufficient densities and range of tree hollows to provide suitable habitat for arboreal fauna and rainforest birds, owls and microbats and viable populations of rare rainforest flora species are maintained.	
Strategies	**Park**
Control deer to reduce their impacts. Control new and existing weeds. Reduce the likelihood and impacts of damaging fire regimes on these fire sensitive communities. Continue to build resilience of the ecosystem to climate change.	See section 4.1.1
Contain willows to prevent spread into willow-free catchments.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP
Minimise impact of visitor activities to reduce loss of soils and vegetation and contain development to established areas, particularly in old growth areas.	Baw Baw, Errinundra, Snowy River and Alpine NPs, Avon WP, Tara Range Park
Prevent the spread of pathogens, particularly in old growth areas.	Alpine NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Tara Range Park
Contain and reduce extent of Myrtle Wilt in rainforest communities.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP
Improve connectivity between habitat patches and ensure forest structure includes tree hollows and woody ground debris.	Alpine NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Snowy River NP
Maintain structural integrity and prevent increased fragmentation of rainforest and buffers.	Baw Baw, Errinundra, Snowy River and Alpine NPs, Avon WP, Tara Range Park
Maintain large intact areas of old growth forest.	Alpine NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Snowy River NP, Tara Range Park

Goals	
The diversity and condition of Wet Forest EVCs is maintained and contraction of Wet Forest communities minimised. The extent of Wet Forest communities is increased and condition is maintained including viable buffers (unburnt areas with rainforest understorey) around rainforest patches. An adequate mosaic of wet forest structure and growth stages is maintained including sufficient densities of tree hollows to provide suitable habitat for arboreal fauna and wet forest birds, owls and microbats.	
Strategies	**Park**
Humanely control feral horses and deer to reduce their impacts. Control new and existing weeds. Reduce the likelihood and impacts of inappropriate fire regimes. Continue to build resilience of the ecosystem to climate change.	See section 4.1.1
Continue to restore multiple burnt areas of Alpine Ash and protect from planned burns.	Alpine NP
Contain willows to prevent spread into willow-free catchments.	Alpine NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Snowy River NP

Goals	
The viability of ground-dwelling fauna populations and threatened mammals is enhanced, including maintaining woody debris to provide habitat and shelter for ground-dwelling and ground-foraging fauna. The distribution and abundance of viable populations of large forest owls is enhanced, and viable populations of wet forest dependent birds and suitable growth stages of habitat for both birds and food resources is maintained. The distribution and abundance of viable frog populations are enhanced and maintained, including threatened species, and the condition and connectivity of suitable habitat is improved.	
Strategies	**Park**
Control fox and dog populations to reduce impacts. Continue to build resilience of the ecosystem to climate change.	See section 4.1.1
Contain willows and spread into willow free catchments.	Alpine NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Snowy River NP.
Reduce fox and cat presence to levels that allow increasing distribution and abundance of susceptible fauna, including threatened species such as Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby and Long-footed Potoroo.	Snowy River NP, All

4.1.4 Dry Forest and Woodlands Natural Ecosystem

The Dry Forest and Woodlands Natural Ecosystem is represented in the planning area as follows:

Park	Area (ha)	Percentage of reserve area	Percentage of ecosystem*
Alpine NP	314 526	48%	9%
Snowy River NP	59 579	52%	2%
Avon WP	25 816	65%	< 1%
Mt Buffalo NP	16 732	62%	< 1%
Tara Range P	5 963	78%	< 1%
Errinundra NP	4 529	12%	< 1%
Grant HA	4 801	67%	< 1%
Mt Wills HA	3 357	38%	< 1%
Howqua Hills HA	861	99%	< 1%
Walhalla HA	537	3%	< 1%
Baw Baw NP	297	2%	< 1%
Mt Murphy HA	14	2%	< 1%
Planning Area total	437 012	48%	48%

* Percentage of total area of this ecosystem in Victoria (3 572 529 ha)

The Dry Forest and Woodlands Natural Ecosystem includes foothill forests, grassy and herb-rich woodlands, rainshadow woodlands and the FFG listed Devonian Limestone Pomaderris Shrubland Community. This Natural Ecosystem is the most widespread in the planning area. The Natural Ecosystem is important for many rare and threatened species including Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby, Spot-tailed Quoll and Powerful Owl. There are also areas of nationally protected old-growth forest with values varying across the designated areas largely depending on time since fire, with recovery times ranging to 300 years.

The Dry Forest Natural Ecosystem is considered to be in good condition and generally stable throughout the national parks although in poorer condition and recovering from cumulative impacts of repeated bushfires on Mount Buffalo and medium and declining in Snowy River National Park (Parks Victoria 2013). A relatively small proportion of this Natural Ecosystem has been zoned as Conservation Zone. The goals and the strategies for environmental management (section 4.1.1) and fire management (chapter 5) also apply to this Natural Ecosystem.

Goals	
The characteristic composition and structure of rainshadow woodlands and the FFG-listed shrubland is maintained and appropriate growth stage diversity is restored and natural regeneration processes are promoted. The extent, species richness, and heterogeneity in growth stages of grassy and herb-rich woodlands is maintained and enhanced. The diversity and abundance of characteristic and dependent flora species and communities is enhanced including the diversity of understorey flora of grassy and herb-rich woodlands and restoration of populations of threatened flora species.	
Strategies	**Park**
Humanely control feral horses and deer to reduce their impacts. Control new and existing weeds. Reduce the likelihood and impacts of inappropriate fire regimes. Continue to build resilience of the ecosystem to climate change.	See section 4.1.1
Maintain the extent of long-unburnt dry forest EVCs and use planned burning strategically to provide a mosaic of dry forest habitats and to maintain extent and improve growth stage diversity and key ecosystem components such as woody debris, tree hollows and understorey species, with a focus on rainshadow woodlands, grassy woodlands and herb-rich woodlands (section 4.2).	Alpine, Mount Buffalo, Errinundra, Snowy River NPs, Avon WP
Protect high-value areas by reducing weed impacts: • Noogoora Burr • Himalayan Honeysuckle • St Johns Wort, Paterson Curse, Oxeye Daisy.	 Snowy River NP Mt Buffalo & Alpine NPs Snowy River NP
Eradicate populations of feral goats to permit regeneration of understorey flora and high-value vegetation.	Alpine NP, Snowy River NP
Maintain large intact areas of old growth forest.	Alpine NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Snowy River NP

Fox predation is a listed threatening process under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

Goals	
The diversity and abundance of characteristic and dependent fauna species and communities is enhanced including: • maintenance of the diversity, distribution and abundance of ground-dwelling and threatened mammals including Spot-tailed Quoll, and Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby and, where appropriate, restoration to viable populations • maintenance of an adequate mosaic of dry forest and woodland structure and growth stages including suitable densities of tree hollows to provide habitat for fauna such as arboreal fauna, microbats and forest owls • maintenance of woody debris to provide habitat and shelter for ground-dwelling and ground-foraging fauna • maintenance of distribution and abundance of large forest owls and maintain suitable growth stages of habitat for both owls and food resources • enhancement and maintenance of diversity and abundance of woodland birds, including birds of rainshadow woodland • maintenance of ground flora and cover including debris for habitat connectivity for long-term viability of dry forest and woodland herpetofauna.	
Strategies	**Park**
Control fox and dog populations to reduce impacts. Continue to build resilience of the ecosystem to climate change.	See section 4.1.1
Reduce fox and cat presence to levels that allow increasing distribution and abundance of susceptible and threatened species such as Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby.	Alpine NP, Snowy River NP
Use planned burning to maintain an appropriate range of age classes and a diverse range of ecosystem components such as woody debris, hollows and understorey species, with a focus on Rainshadow Woodlands, Grassy Woodlands and Herb-rich Woodlands.	Alpine, Mount Buffalo, Errinundra, Snowy River NPs, Avon WP
Eradicate populations of feral goats to permit regeneration of understorey flora and high-value vegetation.	Alpine NP, Snowy River NP

The Giant Stonefly depends on high-quality water for its survival

4.1.5 Inland Waters and Wetlands Natural Ecosystem

The total area of the Inland Waters and Wetlands Natural Ecosystem in the planning area by 11 648 ha, representing about 2% of the total area of this ecosystem in Victoria (664 915 ha). The parks individually have between 1 ha and 7800 ha of this ecosystem, representing less than 1% of this ecosystem in Victoria, and 8% of Baw Baw NP, 2% of Grant and Mount Wills HA and less than 1% of the other parks.

The Inland Waters and Wetlands Natural Ecosystem includes all the planning area's rivers, waterways and waterbodies and their associated vegetation with the exception of the alpine peatland and fen communities, which are included within the Alps Natural Ecosystem. Although this Natural Ecosystem covers only about one per cent of the planning area, it has high conservation value and its often linear distribution increases its susceptibility to threats. This Natural Ecosystem contributes significantly to the high quality of water runoff, which supplies various uses, both in parks and downstream, including the environment. It is important for aquatic species including threatened crayfish, fish and frog species.

The Inland Waters and Wetlands Natural Ecosystem is considered to be in good condition and generally stable throughout the national parks, although medium and declining in Snowy River National Park (Parks Victoria 2013). Inland Waters and Wetlands Natural Ecosystem is distributed across all management zones.

Many highly invasive weeds are found in and spread via the rivers and streams throughout the parks. Damage to native riparian vegetation along rivers is listed as a threatening process under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act. Two frogs, Baw Baw Frog and Spotted Tree Frog, are considered at high risk of extinction (Skerratt et al. 2016) and many others threatened by Chytrid Fungus.

Parks Victoria works closely with CMAs to maintain or improve river health consistent with broader catchment and river strategies (section 4.2). The goals and the strategies for environmental management (section 4.1.1) and fire management (chapter 5) also apply to this Natural Ecosystem.

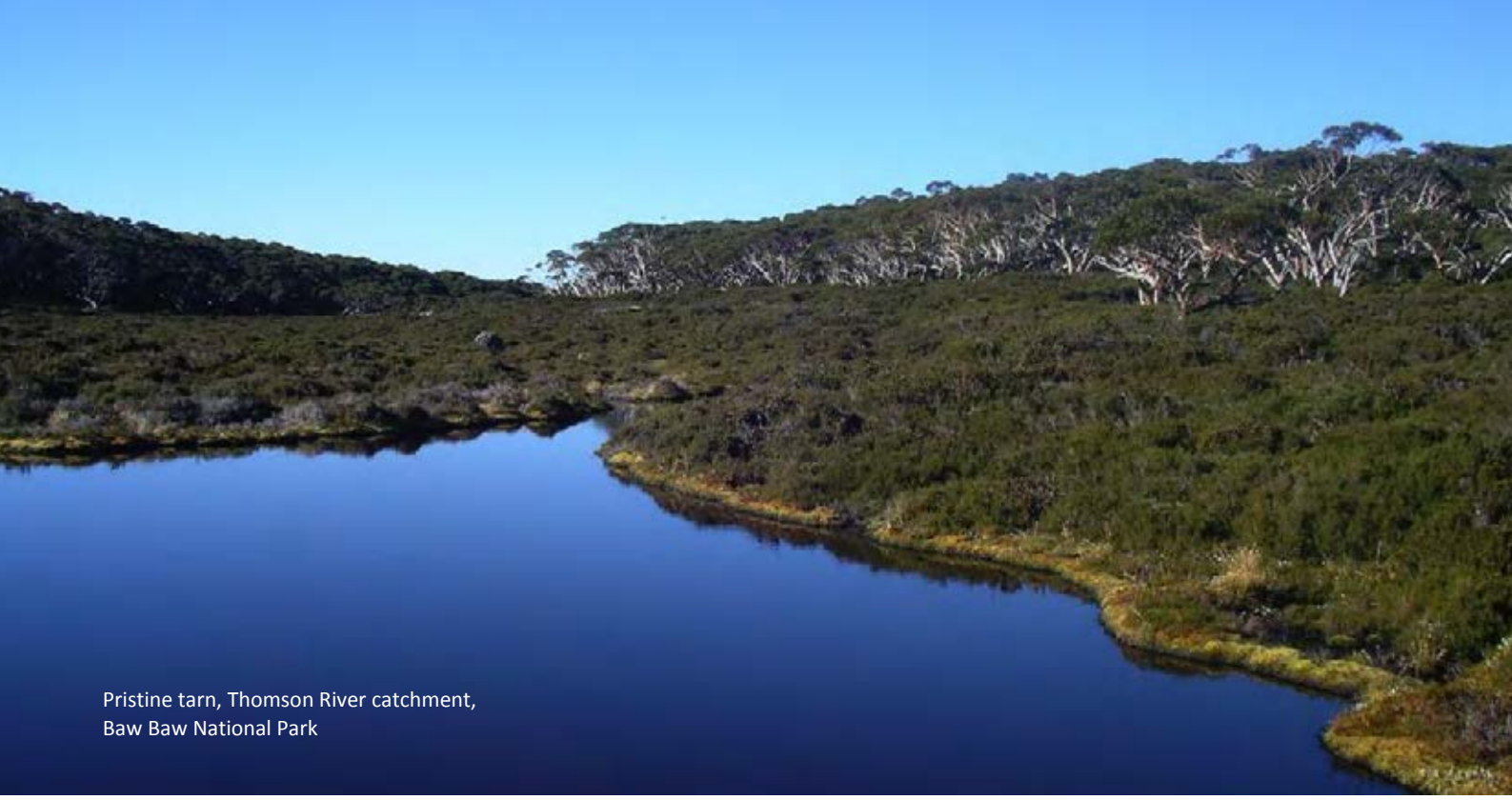
Goals	
The vegetation cover and condition of riparian EVCs, especially of headwaters and streamside habitats of riparian fauna, including significant frog and reptile populations and waterbirds, is maintained and enhanced. The condition of instream habitats and the extent of instream connectivity are maintained and the distribution and abundance of platypus and native fish species and the distribution of viable aquatic invertebrate populations is enhanced.	
Strategies	**Park**
Humanely control feral horses and deer to reduce their impacts and reduce the impacts of pigs. Eradicate new weeds. Continue to build resilience of the ecosystem to climate change.	See section 4.1.1
Avoid planned burns of riparian vegetation and habitats.	All
Contain willows to prevent spread into willow-free catchments.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP, Errinundra NP, Snowy River NP
Control willows and Soft Rush to protect habitats for rare and threatened species in riparian communities.	Alpine NP, Mount Buffalo NP, Baw Baw NP.
Protect high-value areas by reducing weed impacts:	
• Noogoora Burr and Blue Periwinkle	Snowy River NP
• Himalayan Honeysuckle	Mount Buffalo NP, Bogong Alpine NP
• Contain blackberries and prevent spread to weed-free areas.	Snowy River NP, Errinundra NP
Maintain woody debris to provide habitat and shelter for instream aquatic fauna.	All
Prevent the spread of introduced fish into streams free of those species and prevent the spread of trout into trout free streams such the upper Rodger River in Snowy River NP through agency and community partnerships.	Alpine NP, Avon WP, Errinundra NP, Snowy River NP
Support research, survey and monitoring of frogs, development of husbandry protocols, and translocation and recovery programs to mitigate frog extinction from chytridiomycosis. Work with other agencies to coordinate research and management efforts to abate the threat of chytridiomycosis and implement the threat abatement plan (DEH 2006).	All
Prevent or contain the spread of Chytrid Fungus.	All
Minimise the impact of controllable threats, such as frog habitat loss and degradation and retain high-quality, connected frog habitat.	All

Goal The extent of intact native vegetation corridors enabling connectivity along and between riparian habitats is maintained and enhanced.	
Strategies	**Park**
Contain willows to prevent spread into willow-free catchments.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP
Eradicate populations of feral goats to permit regeneration of understorey flora and high-value vegetation.	Alpine NP, Snowy River NP, Errinundra NP
Where required, enhance riparian areas through revegetation and protection of instream habitat, with a focus on high-value frog, fish and reptile habitat.	All
Manage planned burns to prevent connectivity impacts to riparian corridors.	All

4.1.6 Heathland Natural Ecosystem

The Heathland Natural Ecosystem is represented by around 570 ha of Clay Heathland EVC, which occurs in wet areas in the southern part of Snowy River National Park. This area represents less than 1% of the natural ecosystem in Victoria and less than 1% of the park. The ground layer is dense and the vegetation requires fire at intervals of between 5 and 30 years (chapter 5). The majority of this Natural Ecosystem has been included in the Conservation Zone.

Goal The compositional integrity and natural regeneration of the Heathland EVC, and habitat in good condition is maintained.	
Strategies	**Park**
Eradicate new and emerging weeds and eradicate encroaching feral goats and cattle.	Snowy River NP
Prevent the introduction and spread of pathogens by undertaking surveillance, quarantine and hygiene precautions and community education.	Snowy River NP
Work with DELWP to use planned burning frequency to protect habitat and maintain ecosystem resilience to climate change.	Snowy River NP



Pristine tarn, Thomson River catchment, Baw Baw National Park

4.2 Catchments and water

Some of the most reliable and high quality water in the Victoria is generated in the planning area. While the majority of catchments within the parks are largely intact and more than half were considered to in good to moderate condition (VCMA 2007), with some areas recovering from impacts of pasts uses and most now recovering from the impacts of bushfire (Parks Victoria 2013). Across the Australian Alps catchments almost all those that were considered to be in poor condition are in Victoria (Worboys, Goode & Spate 2011). The future condition of catchments is likely to be impacted by higher temperatures due to climate change and expected changes in the quantity and timing of snow and rainfall. This will impact on water supply and quality with increased periods of low or no flow in rivers, along with altered timing of flows and changes to areas of wetland inundation (Dunlop & Brown 2008).

Parks Victoria works closely with the North East, Goulburn–Broken, East Gippsland and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) to improve the health of parks and rivers consistently with broader catchment and river strategies (NRE 2002). Nine Heritage Rivers and 12 Natural Catchment Areas proclaimed under the Heritage Rivers Act fall wholly or partly in the planning area. Twenty-two Special Water Supply Catchment areas proclaimed under the Catchment and Land Protection Act are managed in consultation with water authorities including Melbourne Water and Gippsland Water.

Maintaining a high level of indigenous vegetation cover outside the parks affords a high degree of catchment, soil and diversity conservation protection. Building resilience of catchments to climate change requires reducing the threats of most concern to the catchments in the parks: invasive weeds, the impacts of increasing feral animals, especially feral horse and deer, inappropriate fire regimes and fire suppression, which are addressed in sections 4.1 and chapter 5.

Tourism developments and infrastructure such as camping areas, roads and tracks has the potential to effect water quality if badly sited or designed. Fire management – including fire prevention works, planned burning, fire suppression activities and post-fire recovery works – also has the potential to affect water quality if not carefully managed.

Restoration work in a burnt mossbed, Alpine National Park

Goal The condition of catchments and river systems is enhanced and maintained, and the quality of ecosystem services is maintained.	
Strategies	**Park**
Humanely control feral horses and deer to reduce their impacts; including removing small, isolated populations and preventing spread into new areas.	All
Continue to build resilience of the catchments to climate change.	All
Protect catchments from severe bushfires through strategic bushfire management.	All
Liaise with Catchment Management Authorities to achieve Natural Ecosystem goals (section 4.1) and maintain long-term water yield within natural variations.	All
Minimise the impact of water diversion and water harvesting on waterway health, particularly any impacts on wetland and river hydrology.	All
Prioritise environmental programs in catchments and riparian communities in good condition in Conservation Zones, Heritage River corridors and Natural Catchment Areas.	All
Identify locations that retain water through drought and manage these as aquatic refugia.	Alpine and subalpine areas
Improve understanding of the effects of climate change, particularly on the timing and magnitude of snowmelt.	All
Protect and where feasible enhance natural hydrological regimes of waterways, riparian areas and groundwater dependent ecosystems through partnerships with CMAs.	All
Minimise sedimentation impacts on water quality after major fires.	All
Ensure protection of water quality is a key consideration in design and location of visitor facilities, such as camping areas and track–river crossings, and in fire management.	All

Columnar basalt, Basalt Hill, Alpine National Park

4.3 Landscape and geological features

The landscapes of the planning area have long been recognised as valuable and requiring protection (Johnson 1974). Many have long considered the outstanding values of the Australian Alps National Parks to be of potential World Heritage value (section 1.4) The National Heritage listing of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves in 2008 recognised the importance of the spectacular and distinctive landscapes. The National Trust has also listed many sites within the planning area for their landscape value.

Much of the area in the western section of the alpine chain of national parks, between the western boundary of Alpine National Park and Baw Baw National Park is considered to have features of national significance and inclusion as park would improve overall regional connectivity, improve protection for the Australian Alps Walking Track and the catchment area of the Thomson Dam.

Individuals, groups and the broader community have special associations with places which extend beyond the boundaries of individual sites. The cultural importance that landscape features hold for Traditional Owners is increasingly being recognised.

The Australian Alps, of which the planning area is a part, is recognised for its international significance (Kirkpatrick 1994b). The Mount Howitt fish fossils site in Alpine National Park has international significance (Vickers-Rich & Rich 1993; Cook 2007). A number of Victorian features contribute to the National Heritage significance of the Australian Alps including the periglacial deposits on the Bogong High Plains, the nivation cirque at Mount Howitt and the block streams at The Cobberas, Big Hill and Mount Wombargo. In addition, the Geological Society of Australia has rated eight sites within the planning area as nationally significant – Bogong High Plains; The Cobberas, Big Hill and Mount Wombargo blocksteams; Mount Howitt nivation cirque; Tali Karng; Baw Baw Plateau; Mount Buffalo Plateau; Little River and Boundary Creek Gorges; and caves formed in the Palaeozoic limestone of Snowy River National Park's New Guinea area – and over 80 sites as important at a state, regional or local level (McRae-Williams 1981; Rosengren 1984; Rosengren 1988; Rosengren & Peterson 1989; Rosengren & White 1997; Rosengren et al. 1981; White et al. 2003).

Landscape values can be affected by inappropriate activities and development within the parks and on adjacent land, particularly summits and view sheds, and by sudden natural changes such as fire, storm damage and erosion. Geological features can be affected by erosion and vegetation loss, which are expected to be exacerbated by climate change, inappropriate activities and fire.

The variety and number of caves and karst features in the parks, and in particular in Snowy River National Park, is notable and their recreation and geological values are carefully managed (Davey & White 1986; DCE 1991). Public access to some caves and other features (section 8.3) and the collection of rocks and fossils is not permitted.

Goal The parks' unique and inspirational landscapes and geological features are preserved and protected from avoidable damage.	
Strategies	**Park**
Support investigation of establishing a link between the western part of Alpine and Baw Baw National Parks.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP
Work with Australian Alps Liaison Committee, shires, Alpine Resorts, other land managers, user groups and the community to minimise impacts on the parks' scenic values, especially at summits, major viewing areas and Visitor Experience Areas.	All
Work with user groups and the community to manage access and ensure recreation has a minimal impact, visitors are aware of key values and improve monitoring of impacts from recreation activities on significant geological features.	All
Mitigate the impacts from large-scale events such as bushfires and floods as soon as practicable.	All

Goal Partnerships between park managers and Traditional Owners in the protection of cultural landscapes and features are strengthened.	
Strategies	**Park**
Work with the Traditional Owners to identify, protect and where appropriate interpret cultural landscapes and features.	All
Include significant landscapes and features in cultural values mapping (chapter 6).	All
Investigate renaming features and areas to reflect Traditional Owners' connections.	All

2014 Orbost Complex fire,
Snowy River National Park

5 Fire management

Fire is a natural part of the Australian environment; however, severe fires have affected 90% of the parks in the recent past and it will be decades before many areas can withstand another bushfire. Fire management is reducing the risk fire poses to communities and active management is maintaining ecosystem resilience and biodiversity, including areas of Mountain Ash and Alpine Ash forest that were burnt several times within a decade.

Fire is a natural process in nearly all Australian ecosystems and south-east Australia is one of the most fire-prone areas in the world. Natural fire from lightning and Aboriginal burning practices over tens of thousands of years means that fire regimes – the frequency, severity, season and extent of fire over time and across the landscape – have shaped the ecology of many species. The pattern of fire in any given landscape changes over time making the extent to which fire can be predicted and managed complex and variable. Climate change is increasing bushfire risk, and lengthening the average fire season and is likely to exacerbate these challenges with hotter and drier conditions and other expected changes (Lucas et al. 2007; Dunlop & Brown 2008).

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for managing bushfire on Victoria's public land in accordance with the Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land (DSE 2012). The Code requires DELWP to undertake strategic bushfire management planning. DELWP uses a strategic risk-based approach to bushfire management planning. Bushfire modelling is used to quantify the risk bushfires pose to human life and property, ecological and other values across the landscape. Modelling considers bushfire history, vegetation type (i.e. fuel type) planned burns and other fuel treatments to assess and compare bushfire risk profiles under a range of fuel management and weather scenarios (DEPI 2013a). DELWP and Parks Victoria work together in planning to reduce bushfire risk in accordance with the Code.

Parks Victoria supports DELWP to prepare for, respond to and recover from bushfires in Victoria's parks estate and on other public land (figure 5.1). Approximately 70 per cent of Parks Victoria's workforce is trained to support Victoria's fire management effort – from fighting fires in parks and forests across the state to fire management planning. Fire Operations Plans (FOPs) are updated by DELWP annually. These are rolling schedules of fuel treatments identifying locations of burns and other fire risk mitigation works such as slashing and fire break maintenance, guided by strategic bushfire management plans and ongoing analysis of long-term strategies. FOPs are prepared by local planning.

Bushfires have affected over ninety per cent of the planning area in the last two decades. Into the 1990s the success of bushfire suppression enabled most bushfires to be controlled while small (DSE 2008). With more than a decade of drought conditions extending into 2010, there was a dramatic increase in the number, size and severity of bushfires in the planning area and surrounding areas as evidenced by the 2003 Alpine, the 2006–07 Great Divide and the 2009 Black

'Bushfire risk has increased with increased human settlement and development. Throughout the latter part of the twentieth century, successful suppression efforts kept most bushfires to a small size, removing much of the natural fire from the landscape, resulting in unnatural fuel hazard.'
— *Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land* (DSE 2012)

Saturday fires. Over 1.3 and 1.2 million hectares were burnt in the 2003 and 2006–07 bushfires respectively. Extensive restoration work across the fire affected area included priorities to reduce the rapid growth and impact of many weeds (section 4.1).

Cross-agency bushfire risk landscape teams, with input from key stakeholders and the community, have developed Strategic Bushfire Management Plans for landscapes that cover the planning area: Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Alpine and North East (Mount Buffalo and part Alpine NPs and Howqua Hills, Mount Wills and Mount Murphy HAs), Strategic Bushfire Management Plan Alpine and Greater Gippsland (part Alpine, Snowy and Errinundra NPs, Avon WP, Grant HA and Tara Range Park) and Strategic Bushfire Management Plan East Central (Baw Baw NP and Walhalla HA) (DELWP 2015a; b & c). These plans adopt a risk-based approach to identify towns and settlements and environmental and social values at risk from bushfire. The plans also identify bushfire catchments and pathways, priorities for protection, and long-term fuel management strategies to protect the landscape as well as other strategies for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. To reduce the risk to a range of values from bushfires, planned burning is targeted to areas where bushfires start, spread and have the potential to do damage. It is accepted that more frequent planned burning and intensive fuel management in targeted areas provides greater risk reduction than broad-scale fuel reduction burns (Cary et al. 2009; Gibbons et al. 2012; Price et al. 2015).

Four zones define fuel management broad objectives across the landscapes to implement the landscape–scale strategies for Asset Protection, Bushfire Moderation, Landscape Management and Bushfire Exclusion Zones. These zones assist with fire operations planning and individual burn planning (figure 5.2).

Given that over ninety per cent of the planning area was burnt by multiple large-scale bushfires in the recent past, many ecosystems and species including Alpine, subalpine, rainforest and riparian communities are not reliant on fire for regeneration and most of the planning area is remote from communities at a high risk from bushfire, there will be an elevated emphasis on ecological outcomes for the parks in fire management.

Growth stage diversity and long-unburnt areas are now particularly rare in the planning area. Vast areas of forest, particularly those areas burnt with high-intensity, remain in the early stages of regeneration and regrowth with a dense understorey and shrub layer that is likely to persist for many years Alpine Ash is susceptible to being killed by fire. When this occurs the forest is dependent on soil-stored seed for regeneration. In a number of areas, tracts of regenerating Alpine Ash forest were burnt a second and third time before the trees matured to a point where they had set seed. These areas were seeded to ensure the forest regenerated in a trial program. These areas are still immature and susceptible to being lost if another fire occurs before the trees have set sufficient seed to allow regeneration.

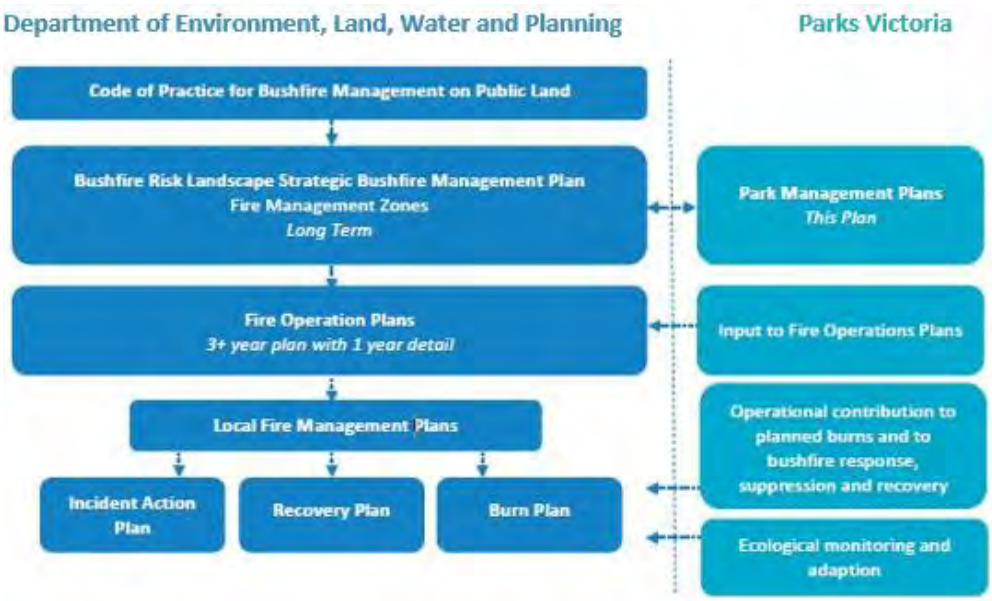


Figure 5.1: Bushfire management on public land in Victoria

Figure 5.2: Bushfire management zones

Bushfire on Black Possum Spur, 9 January 2003
Alpine National Park

The possibility of detrimental cumulative ecological impacts as a result of too-frequent fire is particularly pertinent in Alps, Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystems, and riparian communities, which can exist for long periods without fire and recover slowly after fire. This includes many important vegetation communities such as Alpine sphagnum bogs, alpine snowpatch and rainforest, often in small, isolated patches, which makes protection from bushfire more difficult. Similarly, there are areas of nationally protected old-growth forest in the Alps (high-altitude montane communities), Wet Forest and Rainforest, Dry Forest and Woodlands Natural Ecosystems, and within riparian communities. Old-growth values vary across these designated areas largely depending on time since fire, with recovery times ranging up to 300 years. The application of fire in these areas, particularly in unburnt areas, is not an appropriate management response over the next fifteen years and in the longer term. An increase in fire in these Natural Ecosystems may also have negative effects on dependent animals and plants, water quality and quantity, and carbon sequestration.

Fire regimes shape ecosystems and influence species composition and distribution. Key ecological fire management goals include achieving ecologically appropriate fire regimes based on knowledge of species and ecosystem requirements through a number of ecosystem resilience measures. Fire management strategies will be refined and improved with further research and monitoring. Operations will be improved with the development of guidelines and operational protocols such as those being developed for peatland fire mitigation based on peatland mapping and modelling, and will inform future bushfire response and planned burning operations (UTAS 2015, VAPPP 2016).

Increasing our knowledge on the effects of fire and research into fire behaviour, ecological fire management and Traditional Owner knowledge will help guide future fire management.

Goals

Fire is managed as part of the landscape in accordance with the Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land:

- to minimise the impact of major bushfires on human life, communities, essential and community infrastructure, industries, the economy and the environment. Human life will be afforded priority over all other considerations
- to maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver services such as biodiversity, water, carbon storage and forest products.

Strategies	Park
Increase rapid attack capability and other preparedness activities to reduce the risk of bushfire impacts.	All
Work with DELWP to continue to refine long-term bushfire strategies and undertake planned burning to maintain and improve ecosystem resilience in ways which:	
• where possible exclude bushfire from the Alps Natural Ecosystem, rainforests and other vegetation communities unable to tolerate fire such as peatlands, Alpine Ash forests, Snow Gum woodlands	Alpine NP, Snowy River NP, Mt Buffalo NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Avon WP, Grant HA, Mt Murphy HA
• largely exclude planned burning in the Alps Natural Ecosystem, Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystem and riparian communities to protect and these sensitive and too frequently burned vegetation communities from inappropriate fire regimes	All
• avoid and protect large intact areas of old growth forest	Alpine NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Snowy River NP
• monitor protection of communities and species.	All
Work with Traditional Owners to better understand traditional Aboriginal fire management.	All
Continue to collaborate with DELWP and research partners to develop guidelines and operational protocols for critical assets including peatlands, Mountain Pigmy Possum and Brush Tailed Rock Wallaby habitat.	Alpine NP and Snowy River NP
Consider active intervention to ensure persistence of high-value vegetation communities where natural regeneration may not be possible as a result of too frequent bushfires.	All
Monitor reseeded Alpine Ash forests and continue adaptively manage as required.	Alpine NP
Where possible undertake fire suppression activities away from the Alps Natural Ecosystem, Wet Forest and Rainforest Natural Ecosystem, riparian communities and known habitats or populations of threatened species. Where this is not possible, undertake in accordance with DELWP's 'Preferred Fire Suppression Tactics in Sensitive Areas' and use techniques that minimise ground disturbance and risk of exposure to fire retardants.	Alpine NP, Snowy River NP, Mt Buffalo NP, Errinundra NP, Baw Baw NP, Avon WP, Grant HA, Mt Murphy HA
Seek specialist local knowledge to identify environmental values and select appropriate fire suppression methods in the fire area where possible.	All
Commence post-fire restoration work as soon as practicable to minimise spread of weeds and risk of erosion.	Alpine NP
Work with local governments to maximise bushfire safety options for local communities and park visitors, promote an understanding of fire management and minimise impact on local interests and economies.	All

Fire and flood in the Alps: 1998–2016

Over the past two decades, Victoria's alpine area has experienced successive severe bushfires and floods over millions of hectares of public and private land (figure 5.3). Following the prolonged drought associated with an El Nino the 2003 Alpine fires and 2006–07 Great Divide fires burnt an unprecedented 2.4 million hectares of Victoria's high country. Since 1997, over 841 000 ha of the planning area (92%) has been impacted by bushfires, including 233 000 ha (25%) that has burnt multiple times (figure 5.4). The 2007, 2010 and 2012 floods across Gippsland and North East Victoria again severely impacted the recently burnt catchments. These extreme events have major impacts on the parks' built assets, cultural heritage sites, and environments and catchments as well as economic and social impacts on the community. The events have caused widespread soil erosion and major damage to plant communities and wildlife. The scale and impact of severe bushfires and floods in this period has dramatically increased the level of activity required to manage the parks.

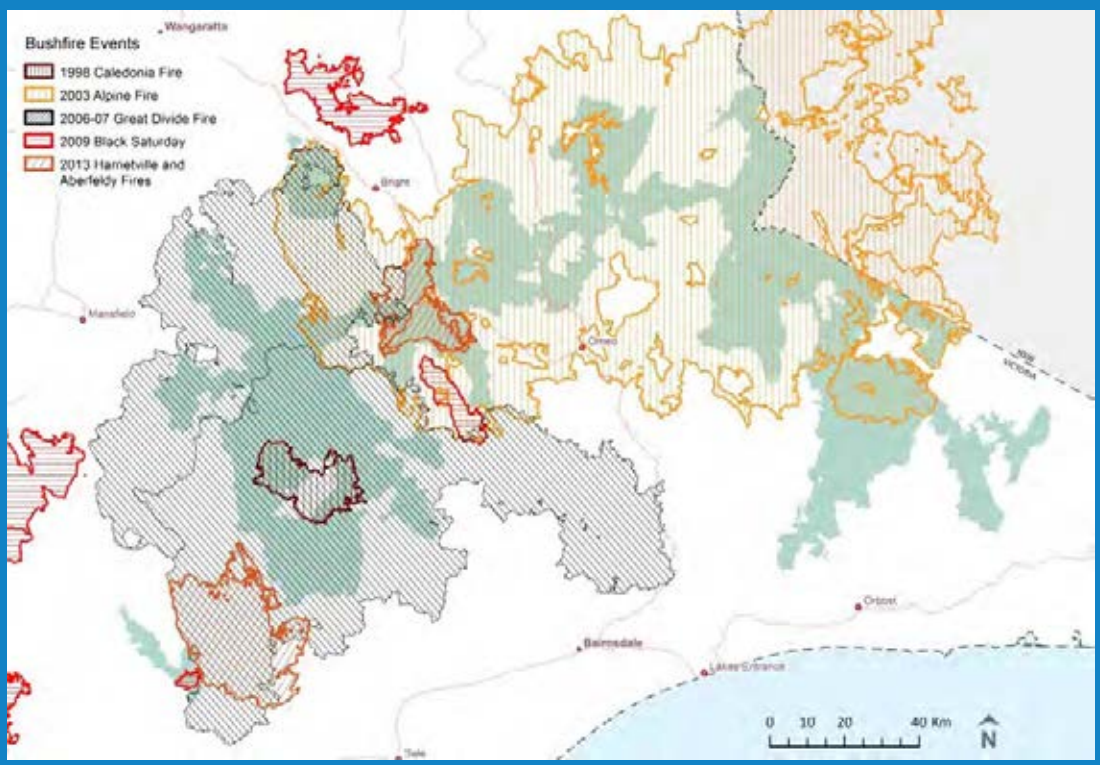


Figure 5.3: Recent bushfire history across the planning area

Recent bushfire history across the planning area

1998 Caledonia fire

In January 1998 the Caledonia bushfire burnt for 10 days across 35 000 ha in the Snowy Range – Mount Wellington area. This was the most extensive fire in the alpine area since the 1939 bushfires.

Burnt landscape in the Greater Alpine National Parks

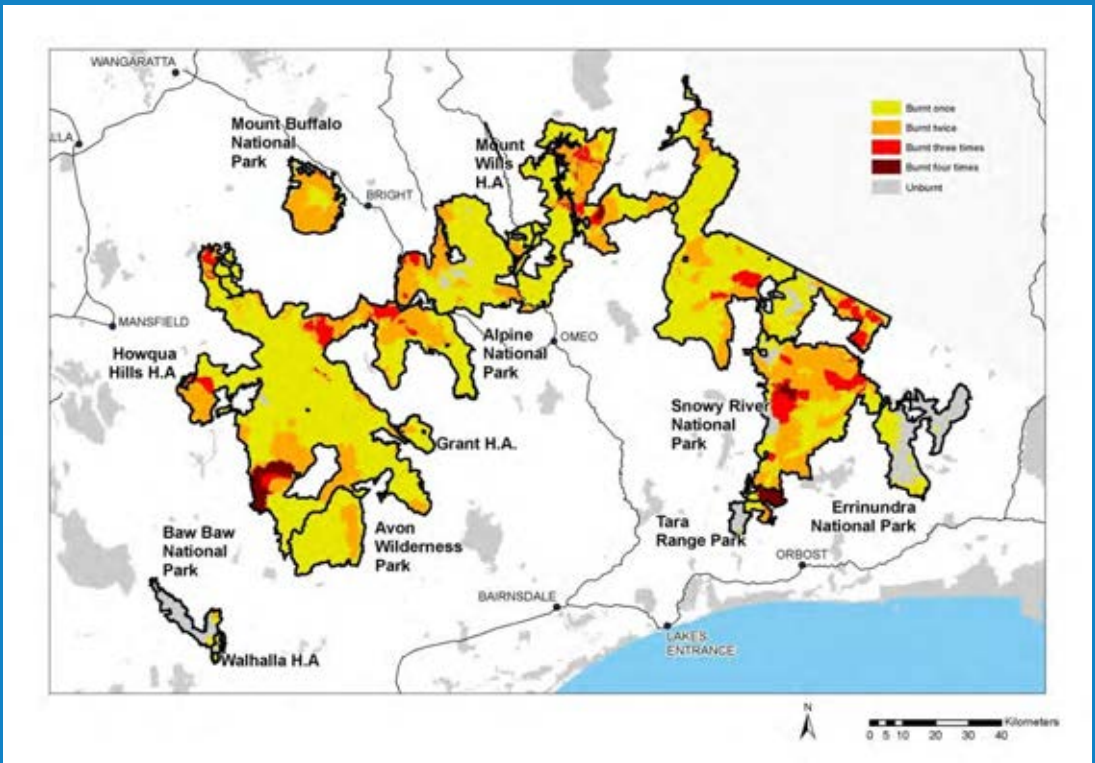


Figure 5.4: Burning frequency across the planning area 2003–2016

2003 Alpine Fire

On the 8th January 2003, after nearly seven years of drought, lightning strikes started over 80 fires in Victoria's alpine area. While many were extinguished, some were unable to be contained and joined to become a single bushfire that burnt for 59 days across 1.3 million hectares of park, State forest and private land mainly in North East Victoria and East Gippsland. Fires in NSW and ACT, also started by lightning strikes on 8th January, burnt a further one million hectares.

2006–07 Great Divide Fire

On 1st December 2006, after a further three years of drought, lightning strikes in Victoria's North East and Gippsland started bushfires which lasted 69 days and burnt 1.2 million hectares of State forest and park, mainly in the western part of the Alps and Central Gippsland.

2007 Gippsland Floods

In June 2007, over 200 mm of rain fell in one day across eastern Victoria with much of the rain falling on areas burnt by the 2006–07 Great Divide Fire, such as the Thomson, Macalister, Wellington, Wonnangatta, Mitchell and Avon river catchments. This resulted in the largest flood in Gippsland since 1990.

2009 Black Saturday Fires

In February 2009, during the Black Saturday Bushfires, a fire burnt 1700 ha in Baw Baw National Park and Walhalla Historic Area. The Baw Baw plateau was unaffected by this fire and large areas of the plateau remain unburnt since 1939, some of the longest unburnt alpine and subalpine

2010 Victorian Floods

In late 2010 Victoria experienced extensive flooding. High rainfall occurred across many of the planning areas catchments in the North East such as the King and Ovens Rivers.

2012 Gippsland Floods

In 24 hours in June 2012, between 100 mm and 150 mm of rain fell across Gippsland. A further 150 mm to 200 mm of rain fell across the area in the following 24 hours causing flooding. Catchments in the planning area impacted included the Macalister, Snowy, Avon, Thomson and Mitchell Rivers, with major downstream impacts on farm properties and the community.

2013 Alpine (Harrietville) Fire and the Aberfeldy Fire

In January 2013 lightning strikes started a bushfire in Alpine National Park about four kilometres north-east of Harrietville. It escaped initial containment lines and burnt for 55 days across 36 000 ha in the Feathertop area of Alpine National Park, Mount Hotham Alpine Resort and surrounding State forest. Areas of Alpine Ash forest have therefore been burnt multiple times by these events which has affected the regeneration of these forests. A direct seeding trial was undertaken in 2013. Another bushfire started near Aberfeldy and burnt 86 000 ha, mainly in State forest.

2014 –15 Far East Gippsland Fires

In January 2014, lightning strikes started bushfires north and north-east of Orbost. The fires burnt for almost two months in the Deddick Valley, Goongerah, Combienbar, Club Terrace, Goolengook, Jacksons Crossing and Buchan areas, impacting 174 000 ha of mainly national park including Snowy River National Park, Errinundra National Park and Tara Range Park.

Learning from the history of fire in the Alps

The frequency of large-scale, high-intensity bushfires in the last decade across the region is widely accepted as being historically unprecedented. Over 841 000 ha (92%) of the planning area has been burnt by bushfire since 1997, prior to which such significant bushfires had largely been absent from the area since 1939 (figure 5.3). Long term droughts and extreme weather conditions during these fires were a major factor in the scale and intensity of those bushfires. There has also been community concern that the scale and intensity of these bushfires were worsened due to a build-up of fuel loads in areas where significant planned burning for fuel reduction had not occurred in the years prior to these events. Fire weather is increasingly being recognised as the prime contributor to fire in the landscape and severe fire weather is predicted to increase under climate change (Price et al. 2015).

The Bogong Moth is a culturally significant species for Traditional Owners.

6 Cultural heritage

The parks' endowment of special Aboriginal places, travel routes and stories is recognised and appreciated. The area's history of forestry, grazing, mining, science, art and recreation, and use for water and electricity production are also recognised and celebrated. Heritage values are maintained and many with long connections to the parks use their knowledge to benefit the parks and communities.

The parks have a long and complex history including a rich and diverse Aboriginal history that has shaped the land, and less than 200 years of mining, summer grazing, timber and water harvesting, and recreation. This has created a layered cultural landscape providing insights to the past and the connections between people and the land. For many visitors, cultural heritage is the key visitor or tourism experience. The historic areas are particularly rich in historic values and cultural associations. Here and throughout the parks there are many opportunities to discover, experience and promote public awareness of the history of gold-mining and settlement of the Alps.

The parks were included in the National Heritage listing of the Australian Alps National Parks in 2008 (section 1.4) in recognition for among other things their cultural history significance.

Traditional Owners

Aboriginal people have lived in the high country for thousands of years. Although there was occupation all year in some areas of high elevation, when snow covered the higher peaks and plains, occupation moved to the hinterland, river valleys and plains associated with lower elevations of Country. The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic.) recognises the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage as an integral part of land management and recognises Aboriginal Traditional Owners as the primary guardians of their heritage. Physical evidence of occupation – 600 places and objects are recorded on Aboriginal Victoria's site registry – along with stories, language and memories continue to link Aboriginal people to the parks. Only a small percentage of the planning area has been surveyed and it is likely that many more sites exist. Traditional Owner access to the land and resources is important to enable these connections to continue.

Post-settlement

The post-settlement history of the parks encompasses a number of themes: grazing, interactions with Aboriginal people, surveying, communications, access, mining, forestry, hydro-electricity, settlement, recreation, and tourism. There are many historic places of state and regional significance in the planning area and many are included on the Victorian Heritage Register, including Mount Buffalo Chalet and a number of historic huts and mining sites.

Ritchies Hut, Howqua Hills Historic Area

Historic places are managed to conserve their cultural values consistent with the *Heritage Act 1995* (Vic.), guidelines (Parks Victoria 2006), the National Heritage Charter (AHC 2002) and the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 2013). The locations and details of historic places are listed in the Parks Victoria Asset Information System to help to protect them in the event of any proposed works or fire suppression activities in the area.

Individual heritage action plans guide management of Mount Buffalo Chalet (Allom Lovell & Associates 2002), Howqua Hills Historic Area (Long & Lovell 2001), and Red Robin Mine and Battery (Kaufman 2005). The information in the Walhalla Historic Area management plan (NRE 1998) relating to historic places remains relevant to their management.

Huts

Mountain huts play an important role in the identity of Victoria's high country and are valued by communities as a physical expression of the cultural history of the area. Over 80 huts (and some sites of former huts) have historical connections with the area's grazing and mining legacy. Public authorities such as the State Electricity Commission and Country Roads Board also developed huts to provide refuge for workers. Other huts, such as Cope Hut and Federation Hut, were constructed for recreation. Many huts are popular destinations for campers and day visitors. It is recognised that visitors use many huts for shelter, refuge, cooking, drying clothes and camping gear and similar activities. The Australian Alpine Liaison Committee has developed a Code for Hut Use.

The use of some existing huts and potential new huts for accommodation, similar to how some huts in some Tasmanian and New Zealand parks are used, was raised during development of the plan. The possibility of booking huts for accommodation and recovering costs was also suggested. As the existing huts provide for refuge, those seeking refuge cannot be denied access and so a booking system cannot guarantee exclusive use or space. Visitors also need to remain self-sufficient in case circumstances prevent them from reaching a hut. Historic and cultural values also need to be protected. It is therefore not considered feasible for any of the existing huts to be managed in such a way.

Many people have personal connection with huts; seen through the work of the volunteers from the Victorian High Country Huts Association (VHCHA). Parks Victoria has an agreement with the VHCHA covering management of huts within Alpine National Park.

The parks also include a range of other historic features, from cattle yards to cairns, such as those constructed in the survey of the Victoria–New South Wales Border, known as the Black–Allan Line after the two surveyors who undertook the task.

Threats to places and objects include bushfires, extreme weather, visitor activity, pilfering, inappropriate improvements or management activity, and vandalism. Involving the community in planning and decision making is essential to respect and strengthen ongoing connection and cultural values.

Goal Traditional Owners guide the protection of Aboriginal features, places and objects of cultural significance.	
Strategies	**Park**
Manage New Guinea Cave jointly with the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners in accordance with the joint management plan.	New Guinea Cave, Snowy River NP.
Collaborate with and assist Traditional Owners to protect, enhance and interpret significant places such as at Tali Karng.	All parks
Work with Traditional Owners to prepare cultural values mapping to assist with management decisions and public education.	All parks
Provide annual operations programs to Traditional Owners and Registered Aboriginal Parties for review to prevent proposed works affecting cultural values.	All parks

Participants at the naming ceremony for Mount Jaithmathang, December 2008

Goal Heritage and connections are recognised and respected, and understanding of heritage values and places are enhanced.	
Strategies	**Park**
Ensure park information acknowledges Aboriginal culture and, where appropriate, Aboriginal names of features.	All
Support where appropriate, renaming of features with Aboriginal names.	All
Support Traditional Owner communities through supporting cultural events, activities and gatherings.	All
Use community knowledge and skills and facilitate volunteer involvement in managing historic places and promoting appropriate use, such as the historic cattle yards at Tawonga Huts, Campbell's Yards and Rocky Plain and identify the location and significance of horse trails, including investigating their possible reinstatement.	All
Liaise with groups with long associations with the parks such as mountain grazing families and walking and skiing clubs to enhance the recognition and interpretation of their cultural heritage.	Alpine NP, Historic Areas
Investigate ways of facilitating access for Traditional Owners to undertake cultural practices and traditional use of natural resources.	All
Improve understanding of historic areas and cultural landscapes and support use for cultural research and education.	Walhalla and other Historic Areas
Enhance cultural heritage visitor and tourism experiences with park visitor information and interpretive facilities.	All
Involve the community with interpreting the parks' heritage and record the community's knowledge of heritage values and connection.	All

Kiln at Glendart historic site

Goal The cultural significance of historic areas and places is conserved and appropriate compatible use permitted.	
Strategies	**Area**
Prepare Heritage Action Plans for Grant, Mount Wills, Mount Murphy, and continue to implement the Howqua Hills Heritage Action Plan and the sections relevant to heritage places in the Walhalla Historic Area Management Plan and, subject to resources, review the latter.	Walhalla and other HAs
Develop heritage action statements for priority heritage places.	All
Support management of Mount Buffalo Chalet in accordance with the Heritage Act to enhance visitor experience and conserve heritage.	Mount Buffalo NP
Manage huts to ensure that values are protected by: • appropriate maintenance works and access • recognising and promoting their value as a distinct heritage tourism experience • encourage visitors to adhere to the Code of Hut Use, including not using of huts for accommodation and ensuring visitors are aware of the need to be self-reliant • continuing to keep huts open for temporary shelter, except where safety or risk to values deems otherwise • ensuring visitors who do use huts for shelter, refuge and other purposes do so in a safe and appropriate manner.	Alpine NP
Work with the Victorian High Country Huts Association, Mountain Cattlemen families and other groups with an interest in huts to maintain and record the cultural significance, condition and the risks facing huts.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP, Howqua Hills HA
Ensure all cultural and heritage sites, places and features are noted in Parks Victoria databases to ensure protection in the event of works or fire suppression activities in the area.	All
Seek appropriate heritage listing of sites and places.	All

Volunteers carrying out restoration
of Wallaces Hut, Alpine National Park

7 Community partnerships

Traditional Owners, as custodians of their culture, are actively engaged in the parks' management and their Native Title rights and interests are fully recognised. Traditional knowledge is better understood and reflected in programs, including environmental and burning programs, and understanding of the area's cultural importance is enhanced.

Park management programs are extended beyond the park boundary wherever possible to obtain the greatest benefit to the broader environment and the community. This involves working with other land management agencies and the community through partnerships, joint programs, sharing knowledge and providing opportunities for volunteers.

7.1 Managing with Traditional Owners

The planning area covers the traditional Country of the Bidawal, Monero-Ngarigo, Gunaikurnai, Jaithmathang, Taungurung, Mitambuta, Ngarigu-Currawong, Dhudhuroa, Waywurru and Wurundjeri communities. These communities have been caring for this land for tens of thousands of years and their connections to Country remains strong.

There are significant opportunities to recognise and integrate the Traditional Owners' cultural and environmental knowledge into contemporary park management. Parks Victoria recognises the benefits of working with Traditional Owners and incorporating their knowledge into management and Traditional Owners and Parks Victoria have established and continue to strengthen their working relationships, share knowledge and develop approaches to build capacity and resources. The Traditional Owner communities also continue to strengthen their relationships with each other, working collaboratively and co-operatively in regard to mutual interests and aspirations across the planning area.

The Gunaikurnai people were formally recognised as Traditional Owners of an area in Gippsland and recognised as holding Native Title over areas of Crown land in the region. As part of a settlement agreement with the State of Victoria, ten parks and reserves of cultural significance were transferred to the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation. This includes one site in the planning area; New Guinea Caves within the Snowy River National Park. The Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board has been established and is responsible for preparing a joint management plan for the ten parks and reserves and for advising on implementation of the joint management plan.

Agreements between the State and the Gunaikurnai

On 22 October 2010, the Federal Court of Australia recognised that the Gunaikurnai holds Native Title over much of Gippsland. On the same day, the Gunaikurnai and the State of Victoria entered into the first Recognition and Settlement Agreement under the State's new Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010. This granted Traditional Owner rights to the Gunaikurnai people including:

- rights of access and use
- the right to take resources for personal, domestic or communal needs
- the right to protect and maintain places of importance
- the right to camp
- the right to engage in cultural activities, meetings, rituals and ceremonies
- the right to teach about places of importance.

As part of the settlement, the Gunaikurnai entered into a number of agreements with the State of Victoria. These agreements include recognising Gunaikurnai's Traditional Owners' rights over all public land within the determined area, granting Aboriginal Title over ten parks and reserves, including New Guinea Cave II within Snowy River National Park and a number of other parks and reserves outside the planning area, to be jointly managed, and right of access to Crown land for traditional purposes, such as hunting, fishing, gathering and camping.

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) was established to further these ends and to represent the Native Title holders from the Gunaikurnai's Brataualung, Brayalkaulung, Brabralung, Krauatunggalung and Tatungalung clans. In July 2015, GLaWAC released their Whole of Country Plan to outline the aspirations of the Gunaikurnai people (GLaWAC 2015). The plan outlines a number of goals that the Gunaikurnai are working towards:

- To have a strong, healthy and happy mob.
- To heal our Country.
- To protect and practice our Culture.
- To be respected as the Traditional Owners of our Country.
- To have the right to use, manage and control our Country.
- To be economically independent.
- To have a strong focus on learning.

Parks Victoria supports the goals outlined in the Gunaikurnai Whole-of-Country Plan and the interests outlined in those agreements.

It is envisaged that other Traditional Owner groups will reach similar agreements over their Country in the future. When such agreements are struck, they will offer those groups a range of rights and interests. Parks Victoria will support those rights and interests.

Gunaikurnai people are actively involved in fire management in the Greater Alpine National Parks

Goal Traditional Owners caring for their Country is an integral part of park management.	
Strategies	**Park**
Work with the Gunaikurnai to implement the Settlement Agreement, particularly with respect to joint management of New Guinea Caves. Implement Settlement Agreements with other Traditional Owners as they arise.	New Guinea Caves, Snowy River NP and all areas with Native Title
Facilitate knowledge sharing and cooperation between Traditional Owner communities.	All
Support Traditional Owners' participation in strategic partnerships and programs with adjacent land managers and other agencies including involvement with the Australian Alps Liaison Committee.	All
Provide opportunities for Traditional Owners and park staff to share knowledge and maintain strong collaborative working relationships in managing Country.	All
Integrate Traditional Owner knowledge into park management, including knowledge of healthy country, resources and use, and fire and water management practices.	All
Involve Traditional Owners in consultation arrangements.	All

Managing wild dogs with adjacent landholders

Wild dogs are declared 'established pest animals' under the Catchment and Land Protection Act and are a major pest threatening livestock and production on private land in rural Victoria. Wild dog control is a priority for the Victorian Government, which collaborates with affected landholders to reduce the economic, social and environmental impacts of wild dogs in Victoria.

The control of wild dogs on public land is undertaken mainly by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) through the Victorian Feral Dog Management Program (DEPI 2013b). DELWP works with owners of land bordering public land and with the community to help reduce incidences of feral dog attacks on livestock.Parks Victoria supports DELWP in the delivery of the feral dog control program in the context of minimising the impacts of feral dogs on agricultural productivity and to encourage dingo conservation in broader areas of public land where dingoes exist (section 4.1.1).

By providing local knowledge and information, landholders add significant support to the management of feral dogs across the State. They have a key role in ensuring that reports of dog attacks are provided to the relevant agency for inclusion in the DELWP database.

The dingo is the largest terrestrial predator in Australia. It is both culturally important to Aboriginal people and valued as an iconic Australian species. Dingoes are thought to play an important role in the natural environment as a top-order predator by suppressing populations of large herbivores (e.g. kangaroos) and introduced medium sized predators, such as foxes through direct predation, harassment and competition for resources. The management of feral dogs on public land is complex, partly due to the existence of both feral dogs and dingoes in some areas of the State, including the Alps. Dingoes are visually indistinguishable from feral dogs, making it very difficult to ensure they are not inadvertently destroyed in feral dog control programs in any area where both exist.

In Victoria, the dingo (*Canis lupus dingo*) is listed as a threatened species under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic.) and is protected under the Wildlife Act 1975 (Vic.). In order to allow the continued control of wild dogs and dingoes where they threaten livestock, an Order was made in October 2010 under the Wildlife Act 1975 declaring the dingo as unprotected wildlife in certain areas of the State. The Order is in place to enable protection of livestock from wild dogs and dingoes on private land and along the boundaries of public land in specific areas, while also ensuring the conservation of the dingo on most public land.

7.2 Working with communities

Enduring community connections and stewardship

Many people have strong connections to special places in the Alps — connections that contribute to a personal, family or community sense of identity. Some people and groups have enduring connections with the Victorian high country through their participation in industries such as grazing, mining and timber harvesting, or from associations with visitor activities such as bushwalking, cross country skiing, four-wheel driving, horse riding, fishing and deer hunting. There remains a formidable tradition of environmental and scientific work in the Alps that continues today. For many there are active social connections to the parks that continue to be passed down through the generations in many families.

Many of these people hold a deep knowledge of the parks, much built up over generations. Their diverse backgrounds and experience brings unique perspectives and knowledge about the parks. Many have land management skills and detailed knowledge of the area's local geography, micro-climates, ecology, history, and how the parks are used. The community's knowledge is a valuable asset for park management. Understanding and sharing the knowledge held by these groups is critical for the management of the parks. There are benefits for all in recognising and respecting the significant social associations and enduring cultural connections that these groups have with the parks. There are increasing opportunities for people to strengthen their connections, share knowledge, participate in operational park management and become active park stewards.

Working with volunteers and communities

Volunteers are welcomed in all Victorian parks. There are a number of friends groups and other organisations active in the planning area. These include the friends of Baw Baw, Bogong, Errinundra, The Cobberas and the Wonnangatta Valley, St Gwinear Ski Patrol and Walhalla Heritage League. These groups have an active interest in park management and volunteer to help. A number of schools, recreation groups, field naturalists and other conservation groups are also active volunteers within the planning area.

Volunteer campground hosts reside in selected camping areas during peak season and provide advice and information to visitors. Volunteer track rangers at Mount Buffalo and Mount Feathertop undertake a similar role.

Parks Victoria works cooperatively with adjacent landholders (section 4.1.1) and a range of recreation peak bodies to improve land and recreation activity management in parks. The numbers of activities undertaken by groups and volunteers continues to expand and their considerable contribution to activities such as maintaining walking tracks, huts and other historic infrastructure, volunteer ski patrols, managing, is greatly valued. Agreements have been prepared to assist many of these relationships and formalise the active involvement of groups in park management.

Goal Community skills, knowledge and assistance are incorporated in park management and stewardship.	
Strategies	**Park**
Provide opportunities for people and groups with a deep knowledge of the parks to work together and with parks staff, and use their knowledge to improve park and operational decision making.	All
Provide opportunities for those with strong connections and knowledge, such as neighbours, walking clubs, scientists, mountain grazing families, to share knowledge and develop strong collaborative working relationships.	All
Support events that promote the communities ongoing connections with the parks.	All
Promote volunteer involvement in park management and investigate the application of access agreements to recognised recreational bodies as part of volunteer park management.	All
Extend the campground host and volunteer walking track ranger programs.	All
Increase involvement of recreation bodies to promote minimal impact codes and improve recreation management.	All
Promote and support opportunities for Friends, volunteers and community groups to collaborate with each other and Parks Victoria.	All
Continue to use recognised hunting organisations to assist with deer, goat and pig management.	All
Support an extension of the Victorian High Country Huts Association Memorandum of Cooperation across the planning area and to adjacent public land.	All

7.3 Authorised public uses

Many parts of the planning area are important for a range of uses such as apiculture, forestry and mining, public utilities such as communications and water supply infrastructure, and private occupancies.

Apiculture

Many areas of the planning area are important for the production of honey. The Victorian Government recognises the importance of the honeybee industry and supports beekeeping and allows establishment of bee sites under licence on public land except, depending on the site category, within 0.8 and 1.6 km of Reference Area and Wilderness Areas boundaries. The government's Apiculture (beekeeping) on public land policy (DEPI undated) describes how apiculture is managed on public land.

Feral honeybees can pose a threat to native fauna through competition for nesting hollows. 'Threats to native flora and fauna arising from the use by feral honeybees of nesting hollows and floral resources' is listed as a potentially threatening process under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

Earth and timber resources

There is a long history of mineral exploration and mining in the planning area, mainly in historic areas. Exploration and mining can be considered in the historic areas subject to licence and protection of reserve values. Areas reserved under the National Parks Act are not available for mining or exploration unless provided for under Section 40 of the National Parks Act. The significant and longstanding mining and quarrying operations, Red Robin Mine and Basalt Hill Quarry, have ceased. Gravel and stone extraction for park management purposes occurs occasionally within the planning area. These sites are rehabilitated when no longer required.

Timber harvesting subject to consultation with Parks Victoria is permitted in Grant, Mount Wills, Mount Murphy and Walhalla Historic Areas away from the visual corridor of the Australian Alps Walking Track and the Bicentennial Trail.

Public and private occupancies

Communications, water supply and other public services require a range of infrastructure to be located within the planning area, such as towers, weirs, reservoirs, aqueducts, pipelines and power lines. The National Parks Act has specific provisions for power generation, some freeholder access and cattle movement. There are also a number of private occupancies, such as Rover Scout Chalet and Gardner Hut in Alpine National Park, and Noonans and Pickerings Huts in Howqua Hills Historic Area. These occupancies are subject to licences and conditions to protect the area's values.

Other uses

The Defence Forces, State Emergency Service, Victoria Police and other groups occasionally use the planning area for training purposes. Education is also an important use, with schools using the parks independently or with specialist education providers. The parks are also subject to a range of other uses, such as research, and commercial filming. Organised events, such as cycling races and tours, are also increasing in popularity.

Goal Authorised uses of the parks are managed to minimise the effect on park values and visitors.	
Strategies	**Park**
Manage all uses and occupancies in accordance with the appropriate policy, procedures and legislation.	All
Liaise with apiculturists to assist in identifying and removing feral bee populations as soon as practicable.	All
Permit timber harvesting away from the visual corridor of the Australian Alps Walking Track and the Bicentennial Trail where it does not conflict with protection of the area's historic integrity and, in particular, specific sites that contain relics and artefacts associated with gold mining and early settlement and sites that provide opportunities for recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of their history.	Grant, Mount Wills, Mount Murphy and Walhalla Historic Areas
Review all uses and occupancies to: • ensure an appropriate licence or permit is or has been issued and maintained, such as for JW McMahon Scout Lodge • ensure and promote equitable private occupancies use including opportunities for use by Traditional Owners, schools, clubs and other groups with cultural connections.	All

Walkers crossing Cowombat Flat,
Alpine National Park

8 People in the parks

The parks remain one of Australia's greatest recreation areas. Visitors are welcomed and enjoy a range of activities in spectacular, essentially undeveloped landscapes. A diverse range of experiences are on offer from easily accessible views at Mount Buffalo to remote and challenging guided or self-reliant remote adventure experiences. Supporting and supported by nature based tourism, the parks focus on visitor experiences in keeping with an outdoor, bush experience, with more developed options in the neighbouring resorts and townships, providing an economic benefit to those communities.

8.1 Visitor experience

The broad patterns and management of recreational use in the parks have been established by past policies, plans and practice. Monitoring of visitor numbers and satisfaction levels provides information on contemporary visitor activity, profile and attitudes. An on-line mapping project (Brown, Weber and Zanon 2009) allowed the community to identify areas that they valued for particular recreational experiences.

Within the parks there are 67 Visitor Experience Areas (VEA) mapped as VEA overlays in the park zoning scheme (map 2A-H). Most VEA are described in table 8.1 with defined goals and strategies that focus on preserving the defined experiences while protecting natural and cultural values from the impacts of use. A number of VEA that relate to journeys are described in section 8.3. The overlays provide the blueprint for managing the majority of recreation and tourism in the parks, conditions for activities and uses are summarised in table 8.3.

With anticipated visitation increases focused around resorts, community preferences to retain the parks' undeveloped character, ageing infrastructure and some community expectations for quality facilities, there is the need to manage the parks sustainably, maintain the existing experiences and complement the services and experiences provided on adjacent land by the Alpine Resorts and other land managers and within local communities, prioritising those within the Visitor Experience Areas. The adjacent Alpine Resorts and towns offer a wide range of accommodation options and services that support park visits.

Local communities provide important gateways to the parks and assist visitors to learn about the area – how they can experience it and the parks' history and ecology. This is supported with park information that helps connect people with nature and culture.

Camping area at Howqua Hills Historic Area

Goals A diverse range of opportunities for visitors to experience parks is maintained. Improved visitor facilities are provided in the areas where they are needed.	
Strategies	**Park**
Protect and enhance visitor experiences throughout the parks with priority to the experiences defined for each Visitor Experience Area.	All – refer to table 8.1
Work with community groups, user organisations and volunteers in managing visitor facilities, roads and tracks.	All – refer to table 8.1
Minimise the impact of visitors on environmental values, giving priority to Visitor Experience Areas and Conservation Zones.	All – refer to table 8.1
Ensure facilities within Visitor Experience Areas are in keeping with the visitor experiences offered and their setting.	All
Support Healthy Parks Healthy People programs, particularly those people who may benefit most from a healthy parks experience.	All
Provide park information and liaise with the Falls Creek Alpine Resort in development of a visitor and cultural centre within the resort for park and resort visitors.	Alpine NP
Actively collaborate with the Alpine Resorts' provision of all season visitation, including promoting appropriate access to tracks and trails in park areas adjacent to resorts.	Bogong High Plains and King–Howqua areas, Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP

Table 8.1: Visitor Experience Areas

BAW BAW NATIONAL PARK (map 2A)

Baw Baw Plateau VEA

Baw Baw Plateau is an alpine and sub-alpine area including the key area of Mt St Gwinear, a popular location for snow play and cross country skiing along marked ski trails, complemented by the Mt Baw Baw Alpine Resort, which offers downhill skiing. Summer provides opportunities for camping, walking and hiking along the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT), which is an integral part of the Great Walhalla Alpine Trail, and Mount St Gwinear–Baw Baw Resort link track. Much of the VEA is a declared 'Remote and Natural Area' (chapter 3).

Goal

Provide the opportunity for short walks and day visits, including a snow experience, at Mt St Gwinear visitor site, and for remote walking and cross-country skiing, including overnight trips.

Strategies

- Protect the area's remote and natural values.
- Permit dispersed camping.
- Maintain Mushroom Rocks as a basic camping area.
- Maintain Mt St Gwinear, Mt Erica and Baw Baw Alpine Resort as key access points.
- Seek partnership with Baw Baw Alpine Resort regarding sustainable management of visitor activities, ski trails and facilities.
- Maintain ski-trail network and Mt St Gwinear toboggan runs (table 8.3).

Aberfeldy VEA

Aberfeldy is a base for visitors accessing an extensive network of four wheel drive tracks through the park and adjoining State forest, where camping and deer hunting are popular activities.

Goal

Provide a basic camping base for hunting and four wheel drive exploration of the broader park and State forest area.

Strategies

- Maintain Aberfeldy River Camping area as a basic camping area complementing camping sites in State forest, while protecting the environs of the Aberfeldy River.
- Ensure visitors are aware of hunting and firearms provisions in the area.
- Work with DELWP to ensure visitors are aware of the range of four wheel driving, hunting and camping opportunities available in the park and adjacent State forest.

Thomson Reservoir VEA

Thomson Reservoir Park is parkland surrounding the Thomson Reservoir and catchment, providing viewing and picnicking opportunities. Access is two wheel drive.

Goal

Provide opportunities for picnicking and sightseeing in a parkland setting, highlighting the importance of Victoria's parks and reserves in protecting Melbourne's water supply.

Strategies

- Maintain day visitor area and facilities at Thomson Reservoir Picnic Area, including providing information on the role of the park in protecting Melbourne's water supply.
- Maintain viewing area on dam wall.

MOUNT BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK (map 2B)

Buffalo Plateau VEA

Mount Buffalo Plateau has long been a popular area for visitors seeking scenic drives and short walks providing easy access to views, supported with facilities that cater for a family orientated experience, such as camping at Lake Catani or, in the past, accommodation and meals at Mt Buffalo Chalet. Although winter snowplay is still popular, after the closing of The Chalet and loss of Tatra Inn in 2006, the major visitation to Mt Buffalo has changed to non-winter and shorter stays. The Gorge and a number of other areas on the plateau are popular visitor destinations. A project looking at detailed future strategic directions for the area commenced in 2016 and will consider future visitor opportunities.

Goal

Provide a range of opportunities in sub-alpine and alpine environments for all season day visit and overnight experiences with benefits for local tourism.

Strategies

- Undertake detailed planning for defining future visitor activities and services consistent with zoning for the area (map 2B).
- Provide facilities and information that allow a high level of access, including disabled access where possible, to viewing areas and short walks.
- Provide for a range of adventure activities such as hang-gliding (The Gorge launch site), paragliding (Reeds Lookout) and climbing and abseiling.
- Maintain Lake Catani as a serviced campground over summer and provide limited services for camping over winter.
- Provide for cross-country skiing and snowplay in winter. Remove downhill ski infrastructure at Cresta Valley.
- Maintain a walking track network suitable for short to medium walks.
- Investigate and support a range of cycling opportunities.
- Investigate potential for provision of commercial and tourism services.
- Investigate opportunities for share use of existing walking tracks (walking /cycling).

Mount McLeod – Rocky Creek VEA

The northern section of Mount Buffalo includes the North Buffalo Remote and Natural Area around Mount McLeod and offers visitors a remote natural experience for extended hiking and camping. Basic facilities are provided at Mount McLeod and no new tracks, structures or facilities that will adversely affect the remote and natural condition are permitted within the declared Remote and Natural Area (Chapter 3). To the west, the VEA provides remote walking, cycling and cross-country skiing supported by basic facilities at Rocky Creek.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for semi-remote and remote experiences.

Strategies

- Maintain basic camping areas at Mount McLeod and Rocky Creek.
- Do not permit dispersed camping; investigate options for snow camping during the declared snow season.
- Provide for self-reliant recreation consistent with the area's declared remote and natural values.
- Investigate developing a basic camping area in the vicinity of Saltlick Plain.
- Permit cycling on Management Vehicle Tracks.

ALPINE NATIONAL PARK: WONNANGATTA – MOROKA (map 2C)

Howitt – Snowy Plains VEA

Traversed by the two wheel drive Howitt Road, the VEA includes popular visitor destinations such as Howitt Hut and Bryces Gorge. The area also provides access to trailheads for Mt Howitt and the Wonnangatta Valley. Howitt Road forms part of the Wonnangatta Icon Drive (section 8.3).

Goal

Provide the opportunity for two wheel drive sightseeing, short walks, camping and access to remote hiking trails and four wheel drive tracks.

Strategies

- Maintain Howitt Road as two wheel drive between Arbuckle Junction and the Howitt Plains carpark.
- Provide information at key locations in Licola, Dargo and Heyfield for drivers using the Wonnangatta Icon Drive or travelling through to Mansfield.
- Maintain Howitt, Vallejo Gantner and Guys Huts; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies.
- Maintain Bryces Gorge, Guys Hut, Dimmicks Lookout and Macalister Springs as day visitor areas.
- Permit dispersed camping.
- Maintain area around Vallejo Gantner Hut as a fuel stove only area (table 8.3)
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.
- Provide trailhead information at Howitt Plains carpark for walkers venturing to Mount Howitt and beyond; including for walkers venturing into the Razor–Viking area.

Wellington River VEA

Riverside camping areas which are accessible for two wheel drive vehicles from Tamboritha Road. Some of these camping areas are suitable for larger groups, including horse riders. Associated activities include fishing, horse riding, hunting and four wheel driving. The area is also a trailhead for hiking to Lake Tali Karng and The Crinoline. The area has notable Aboriginal cultural values.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for accessible basic camping, including large group camping and camping with horses. Cater for large numbers of visitors during peak periods.

Strategies

- Protect Aboriginal values and riparian and in-stream flora and fauna through careful management of camping areas and river access.
- Maintain designated camping areas as shown on map 3D with camping with horses permitted at Red Box Camp, and some areas suitable for larger groups.
- Provide information for hikers at Tali Karng and The Crinoline trailheads.
- Ensure visitors are aware of the range of available activities, including deer hunting.
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.
- Work with Wellington Shire in promoting Heyfield and Licola as southern gateways to the park.

Tali Karng VEA

Tali Karng is a natural lake that has long been a popular hiking destination. The area is very important to the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners, who have cultural restrictions regarding visiting the lake; non-Aboriginal people, however, may visit. The VEA includes the major walking routes to the lake (via Wellington River, Wellington Plains and Mt Margaret). The lake is listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for semi-remote, self-sufficient walking, cycling, horse riding and basic camping. Respect the rights of the area's Traditional Owners in managing visitation to Tali Karng.

Strategies

- Permit walking access only in the vicinity of the lake.
- Permit camping throughout the VEA except within 500 m of Tali Karng.
- Support the Gunaikurnai's views in managing visitors to Tali Karng.
- Provide visitor information at Macfarlane Saddle and Wellington River Bridge trailheads.
- Maintain basic camping areas at Nyimba Camp (Riggal Hut site) and at the junction of Riggal Spur and Wellington River tracks.

The Crinoline VEA

This VEA covers an area that attracts a smaller number of walkers who are seeking a more challenging experience. The area includes The Crinoline (Mt Ligar) and Mt Tamboritha, the track along Long Plain linking the two, access tracks from the Wellington River and a section of McMillans Walking Track (Section 8.3).

Goal

Provide the opportunity for walkers seeking a semi-remote, self-sufficient and challenging experience.

Strategies

- Maintain as a lower use walking area with trailhead information at Wellington River and Tamboritha Saddle trailheads.
- Permit dispersed camping.

Wonnangatta Valley VEA

Wonnangatta Valley is a remote area making it a popular, challenging area to visit by four wheel drive. The area is also popular with hikers, horse riders and deer hunters. The valley has notable historic values including the homestead site, which is a major attraction. It is a key attraction of the Wonnangatta Icon Drive (section 8.3).

Goal

Provide the opportunity and maintain the Wonnangatta Valley as a remote and challenging destination for four wheel drivers, hunters and walkers.

Strategies

- Protect and interpret the historic values of the Wonnangatta Valley and homestead site.
- Maintain vehicle access as four wheel drive only and walking and horse riding access via Dry River Track.
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.
- Maintain designated camping areas within the valley, including Wonnangatta Station, as suitable for camping with horses (map 4E).

Moroka – Pinnacle, Caledonia, Macalister River and Eaglevale VEAs

Opportunities for camping in semi-remote locations with little or no facilities. These areas provide a base for four wheel driving, hiking, fishing, camping and deer hunting.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for remote, four wheel drive based camping and associated recreation activities.

Strategies

- Maintain limited basic to very basic camping facilities.
- Permit dispersed camping, including car-based dispersed camping.
- Maintain walking tracks to Moroka Falls and Moroka Hut.

ALPINE NATIONAL PARK: KING – HOWQUA AREA (map 2D)

King Valley VEA

This area caters for day visitors as part of King Valley tourism region, which has a focus on wine and food, sightseeing, short walks and picnicking. The region has high visitor numbers – largely family groups – visiting popular locations such as Powers Lookout, which has connection to area's bushranging history, and Paradise Falls, which has notable Aboriginal cultural values, and Whitfield Scenic Reserve and Wabonga Bushland Reserve (outside the planning area).

Goal

Provide the opportunity and maintain as a two wheel drive accessible day visitor area. Protect and highlight Aboriginal values.

Strategies

- Work with King Valley Tourism Association to integrate management of this area with other local attractions.
- Upgrade viewing platforms at Powers Lookout.
- Working with Traditional Owners, ensure protection of Aboriginal values at Paradise Falls.
- Work with Traditional Owners to provide appropriate information on Aboriginal cultural values at Paradise Falls.
- Maintain basic day visitor facilities at Powers Lookout and Paradise Falls.

Upper King River VEA

Popular base for deer hunting, hiking, horse riding, fishing and four-wheel driving in King River, Mt Cobbler, Mt Stirling and Mt Speculation areas and provides opportunities for camping in a remote location with basic facilities. The area has evidence of its strong cultural connection with the area's Traditional Owners and grazing history.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic and dispersed camping, including camping with horses, and cultural heritage experiences.

Strategies

- Provide trailhead information at King River Hut regarding hiking, horse riding and four wheel driving in King River, Mt Cobbler, Mt Stirling and Mt Speculation areas.
- Permit dispersed camping.
- Maintain Pineapple Flat and King River Hut as designated camping areas.
- Permit horse riding and camping with horses a shown on map 4E.
- Liaise with DELWP and Mt Buller–Mt Stirling Alpine Resort regarding enhancing management of visitation to the area and maintaining signage, access and visitor information.

Lower King VEA

Covers camping areas at Sandy Flat and Top Crossing, which are largely used as base camps for activities such as walking, four wheel driving and fishing. The area also has a high use by outdoor education groups. A day visitor area at Lake William Hovell, managed Goulburn Murray Water, is part of the visitor use in this area.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping, accessible only by four wheel drive, south of Lake William Hovell.

Strategies

- Maintain walking track on western side of Top Crossing.
- Provide basic camping areas at Top Crossing and Sandy Flat.
- Do not provide for camping with horses.
- Maintain four wheel drive access south of Lake William Hovell.
- Liaise with Goulburn Murray Water regarding management of the visitor areas at Lake William Hovell.

Bennies VEA

A small basic camping area on the Rose River and a popular base camp with deer hunters. It is accessible by two wheel drive.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for two wheel drive accessible basic camping. Provide basic camping including camping with horses.

Strategies

- Manage Bennies Camping area as available for camping with horses, with horse yards.
- Maintain basic camping facilities with two wheel drive access.
- Provide visitor information regarding available activities including deer hunting.

Cobbler – Speculation VEA

Basic camping experience at Lake Cobbler with two wheel drive (summer only) access via Lake Cobbler Road and four wheel drive access beyond Lake Cobbler to Mount Speculation and King River, popular destinations for car-based visitors. From Lake Cobbler camping area there is walker only access to Cobbler Plateau, Mount Cobbler and Dandongadale Falls. The VEA is also notable as an off-track hiking area (Mt Speculation, King River, Lake Cobbler, Mt Koonika) providing a remote to semi-remote experience.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for four wheel driving, basic camping and remote hiking.

Strategies

- Maintain Lake Cobbler Rd as two wheel drive (summer) four wheel drive (winter) access to Lake Cobbler; manage other tracks as four wheel drive only.
- Maintain basic walking tracks on Cobbler Plateau, Mt Cobbler and, subject to suitable risk management, Dandongadale Falls.
- Maintain Cobbler Hut (Lake Cobbler) with involvement from key stakeholders; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies.

Razor – Viking VEA

Extends from Mt Howitt along the Barry Mountains, including part of the Razor – Viking Wilderness Area (map 2D), Mounts Buggery and Speculation, The Crosscut Saw, The Razor and The Viking. The area is a popular hiking and cross-country skiing destination in a remote, alpine environment.

Goal

Provide basic to very basic camping and self-reliant walking and skiing experiences in a remote environment.

Strategies

- Permit dispersed camping.
- Maintain The Viking – Terrible Hollow – Blue Hills area as untracked.
- Do not permit horse riding or cycling.

Upper Howqua VEA

Accessible on foot from Eight Mile Flat and rough summer-only two wheel drive from Mount Stirling Circuit Road. The area is popular with four wheel drivers touring The Bluff, Lake Cobbler and Mt Stirling. The area is also a hiking trail head for Mount Howitt, Mount Speculation and The Bluff. Horse riding through Ritchies Hut, Pikes Flat and Bindaree and Upper Howqua on to Mt Howitt is a popular activity. Deer stalkers and fishers use the area for camping, fishing and hunting.

Goals

Provide the opportunity for basic camping, horse riding, hiking, four wheel driving, fishing and hunting. Manage and maintain Ritchies and Bindaree Huts as popular destinations.

Strategies

- Permit camping with horses at Pikes Flat and, for up to eight horses at Ritchies Hut.
- Maintain Ritchies Hut, Pikes Flat, Bindaree Hut and Upper Howqua Camping Area as designated basic camping areas.
- Permit dispersed camping.
- Manage recreational and commercial horse rider numbers between Sheepyard Flat and Pikes Hut via a horse pass system. Monitor to assess and manage impacts of horse riding and restrict pass numbers if required.
- Maintain Ritchies Hut and Bindaree Hut; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies.
- Working with key stakeholders, remove Pikes Flat Hut.
- Ensure horse riders attempting the High Track between Eight Mile and Ritchies are aware of the track's difficulty and associated risk; direct riders to Low Track as preferred horse rider access.
- Provide trail head information at Sheepyard Flat for four wheel drivers and walkers venturing to The Bluff, Mt Howitt, Mt Stirling and beyond.
- Liaise with DELWP and Mt Buller–Mt Stirling Alpine Resort regarding enhancing management of visitation to the area and maintaining signage, access and visitor information.
- Recognise and work with Mansfield Shire to support Mansfield as the key gateway to the area.

Bluff – Howitt VEA

Provides for hiking, four wheel driving and horse riding. with a number of areas of interest – The Bluff, Mt Howitt and King Billy – and access beyond to The Crosscut Saw and Howitt High Plains areas. There are a number of huts reflecting the area's grazing history and a number of grazing families are active in the area as licensed tour operators. A popular section of the Australian Alps Walking Track passes through the area.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping, horse riding, hiking, four wheel driving and cross-country skiing.

Strategies

- Provide visitor information on the area's past use as a high country grazing area.
- Permit horse riding and camping as shown on map 4E.
- Permit dispersed camping.
- Manage recreational and commercial horse riding numbers on The Bluff and Mt Howitt (as per horse pass area on map 4E) through issuing of horse passes. Monitor to assess impacts of horse riding and restrict pass numbers as required.
- Do not permit horse access between Bluff Summit and Refrigerator Gap Carpark.
- In liaison with the Stoney family, manage Bluff Hut as a key visitor destination.
- In liaison with the Lovick family, manage Lovicks Hut as a key visitor destination.
- Maintain designated camping areas at Lovicks Hut, Bluff Hut and Macalister Springs.
- Maintain Lovicks and Bluff huts; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies.
- Permit cycling on roads only; do not allow on walking tracks or on vehicle tracks during period of seasonal closure.
- Provide trailhead information on walking and horse riding at Howitt Plains Carpark, Eight Mile Flat, Refrigerator Gap and Upper Howqua Camping Area.
- Retain Helicopter Spur as a Grade 5 Walking Track (route only) and advise walkers it is unmarked and requires skills in navigation and that visitors need to be self-sufficient with respect to safety.
- Maintain Howqua Feeder Track (High and Low tracks and Howitt Spur) and Mt Howitt Track as walker access tracks to Mt Howitt and AAWT.

Eagles Peaks VEA

Covers The Governors Remote and Natural Area (map 2D) and approaches from Howqua Hills, Upper Jamieson Hut and Eight Mile Gap. The area caters for self-reliant hiking without designated camping areas.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic to very basic hiking and camping experiences in a remote environment.

Strategies

- Maintain as a remote walking area where visitors require skills in navigation and need to be self-sufficient with respect to safety.
- Permit dispersed camping.

Barry Mountains VEA

This area is used for four wheel driving, providing access to the Wonnangatta Icon Drive, Mt Selwyn and Mt Hotham. Camping and other activities associated with four wheel driving include hunting and fishing in the upper reaches of the Buckland and Buffalo rivers. The area is also traversed by the Australian Alps Walking Track.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for four wheel driving and basic camping.

Strategies

- Provide basic camping areas in upper reaches of Buckland and Buffalo rivers.
- Maintain Australian Alps Walking Track (section 8.3).
- Maintain Twins Road as providing four wheel drive access to Mt Selwyn and Mt Hotham.
- Maintain Van Dammes Track as providing four wheel drive access to Wonnangatta Track and Wonnangatta Icon Drive.

ALPINE NATIONAL PARK: BOGONG AREA (map 2E)

Mount Feathertop VEA

Mount Feathertop is regarded as one of the finest mountain experiences in Victoria due to its expansive views and remote and natural character. The mountain draws people for challenging overnight hikes and long day walks. In winter it is a popular backcountry ski touring and snowshoeing area. The lower slopes in forested country around Harrietville provide cycling opportunities.

Goals

Maintain Mount Feathertop as a premier hiking and winter destination, retaining its remote and natural character. Investigate linking Mount Feathertop into the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing while protecting the area's character.

Strategies

- Provide facilities to support self-reliant walkers and cross-country skiers.
- Permit dispersed camping.
- Maintain Washington Creek, Bon Accord Hut site and Old Feathertop Hut site as very basic (no facilities) camping areas.
- Maintain basic camping areas at Federation Hut and MUMC Hut.
- Maintain Federation and MUMC Huts; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies.
- Maintain as a fuel-stove only area, with the exception of Washington Creek Camping Area.
- Promote and support Harrietville, Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain as key bases for exploring Mount Feathertop area.
- Work with Harrietville community to explore options for shared walking and cycling trails on lower slopes.
- Maintain The Razorback, Bungalow Spur, Diamantina Spur and North West Spur walking tracks as key walker and skier only access tracks to Mount Feathertop.
- Investigate feasibility of including Mount Feathertop as part the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing. Ensure development of new facilities for the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing are sympathetic to the area's landscape (section 8.3).

Fainters – Jaithmathang VEA

This is an area for walking, cycling, horse riding and camping and winter ski touring. The absence of facilities makes this a more challenging, remote experience than that provided in other alpine areas.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for hiking, cycling, horse riding and passive winter recreation experiences, with remote camping.

Strategies

- Permit dispersed camping.
- Maintain area north of Mount Jaithmathang summit to Little Plain as untracked.
- Ensure Pretty Valley Pondage and Bogong Village trailheads include information for users of Fainter Firetrail.
- Maintain Fainter Firetrail south of Bogong Jack Saddle as a multi-use track suitable for hiking, horse riding and cycling.
- Permit horse riding as shown on map 4F.
- Provide for basic camping, including camping with horses, at Bogong Jack Saddle.
- Maintain as a fuel-stove only area, with the exception of provided fireplaces.
- Investigate feasibility of linking to Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing.

Red Robin VEA

Covers the upper reaches of the West Kiewa River and includes a number of sites – Blairs Hut, Diamantina Horse Yards, Westons Hut and the historic Red Robin Mine and Battery. The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing and Australian Alps Walking Track pass through the area. The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing has camp platforms at Dibbins Hut. The

area also provides access to the base of Diamantina Spur, which is used by some walkers as an approach to Mount Feathertop.

Goal
Provide the opportunity for walking, basic camping, cycling and horse riding, with some camping with horses.

Strategies
- Maintain Dibbins Hut, Blairs Hut and Westons Hut; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies.
- Permit dispersed camping except within 100 m of Dibbins Hut camping platforms.
- Protect the heritage values of the Red Robin Mine and Battery while allowing for compatible uses, including potential use of the area as part of Falls to Hotham Crossing (section 8.3).
- Maintain designated camping areas at Dibbins Hut, Blairs Hut and Westons Hut.
- Maintain Diamantina Horse Yards as a designated camping with horses area, with four wheel drive access from West Kiewa Logging Road.
- Investigate feasibility of linking to Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing; including alternative link between Diamantina Horse Yards and Diamantina Spur Track.
- Allow for horse riding access to Westons Hut and to Dibbins Hut only via Cobungra Gap (refer to map 4G).

Bogong High Plains VEA

Based around Falls Creek, this area is a valued alpine setting among snow gums, high plains and the peaks of Mount McKay, Mount Cope, Mount Jim and Mount Nelse. It is a popular destination for sightseeing, short to medium length walks and horse riding in summer including some camping with horses, and ski-touring and snowshoeing in winter, including groomed trails managed by Falls Creek Alpine Resort. Alpine huts and historic connections to alpine grazing play a central role to the visitor experience in this area. The Bogong High Plains north of Falls Creek has no vehicle access providing remote self-reliant recreation opportunities in an alpine environment.

Goals
Provide the opportunity (non-winter) for scenic driving and a range of easily accessible recreation opportunities, such as short to medium walks to areas with significant historic values. Provide the opportunity for cross-country winter recreation.

Strategies
- Support the development of the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing, including new types of accommodation and linkages between Falls Creek Alpine Resort and the park.
- Promote Falls Creek Alpine Resort and Bright and Mount Beauty townships as the major gateways to the area; promote as an area for visitors to Falls Creek to explore.
- Maintain start of Heathy Spur Track as a key visitor gateway and trailhead. Maintain Pretty Valley Pondage area as a secondary trailhead.
- Support promotion of Alpine Discovery Drive as a non-winter tourist circuit.
- Maintain Bogong High Plains Road as two wheel drive, summer access to popular visitor sites, including facilities and information that allow a high level of access with disabled access where possible.
- Maintain winter closure of Bogong High Plains Road.
- Protect and interpret the area's significant historic features, with priority to Wallaces Hut – Cope Hut and Tawonga Huts and Yards precincts.
- Do not permit use of Wallaces Hut for shelter or accommodation. Discourage use of other huts for shelter except in emergencies.
- Permit dispersed camping except within 200 m of Bogong High Plains Road, 200 m of Wallaces Hut or within 100 m of designated Falls–Hotham Alpine Crossing camping areas.
- Maintain Tawonga Huts, Pretty Valley and Langford West as designated camping areas, including facilities to allow camping with horses.
- Permit horse riding as per map 4F.

- Permit Falls Creek Alpine Resort ski-trail grooming consistent with agreement on trail locations and standards.
- Permit cycling on MVOs including some tracks during the seasonal track closure period (appendix 3).
- Fires may only be lit in fireplaces provided.

Mount Bogong VEA

Mount Bogong, a declared Remote and Natural Area, is the highest peak in Victoria and attracts walkers and skiers. The two most direct approaches are from the north along The Staircase and Eskdale Spurs. From the south the summit can be reached via Cleve Cole Hut off the Australian Alps Walking Track or via Quartz Ridge. Other access routes include Granite Flat and Long Spur. Regardless of the route, walking up Mt Bogong is strenuous and a high level of fitness is required but visitors are rewarded with spectacular views from the summit.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for remote hiking and skiing with basic camping areas and restricted horse riding.

Strategies

- Maintain self-reliant walker and skier access.
- Rationalise and rehabilitate low use tracks that do not form part of the main access network.
- Maintain key access routes to Mount Bogong summit (Staircase, Eskdale, Quartz and T spurs); maintain short walks around Mountain Creek camping area.
- Permit dispersed camping.
- Maintain basic camping areas at Cleve Cole Hut, Bivouac Hut and Michell Hut and mid-level facilities at Mountain Creek.
- Permit camping with horses in Cleve Cole Hut – Camp Valley area.
- Permit recreational horse riding along Long Spur to Cleve Cole Hut.
- Restricted commercial horse riding to continue over Mt Bogong using Long and Eskdale Spurs (refer to Section 8.5 for details).
- Permit cycling on MVOs including some during the seasonal track closure period as indicated in appendix 3.
- Maintain as a fuel stove only area with the exception of Mountain Creek Camping Area.

Hotham – Dinner Plain VEA

A popular visitor area; features include trailheads for Mount Feathertop, Mount Loch and the Australian Alps Walking Track. Notably, many of these trailheads are within Mt Hotham Alpine Resort but lead to features within Alpine National Park. The road is open through winter providing access to Dinner Plain and Mount Hotham from Gippsland. Active snow recreation activities are available in the adjacent alpine resort.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for scenic driving, cycling, basic snow activities and short walks.

Strategies

- Provide skiing, cycling and walking access through the park between Dinner Plain and Mount Hotham.
- Maintain visitor facilities between Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain.
- Support the Alpine Discovery Drive as a non-winter tourist circuit drive.
- Work with Mount Hotham and Dinner Plain Alpine Resorts in managing visitation and trailheads to features in the park.
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.

Mitta Mitta Valley VEA

Mitta Mitta Valley offers camping, day visitor sites and rafting experiences. There are four campsites and two day visitor sites, which are located north of Anglers Rest; all are accessible by two wheel drive. All sites are positioned along the Mitta Mitta River providing ideal opportunity for fishing, swimming, bird watching and photography. The area is a highly desirable area for both day and overnight rafting and kayaking with key access points being Big River, Bundara Picnic Area and Jokers Flat.

Goal

Provide opportunity for basic camping, white water rafting, kayaking and other outdoor activities.

Strategies

- Maintaining designated camping and day visitor areas as basic sites including access tracks.
- Upgrade touring maps and maintain interpretive material at information shelters, including rafting information.
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.
- Investigate formalising Tombstone Walking Track giving consideration to the area's environmental and cultural values; rehabilitate if formalising the track not feasible.

Dargo High Plains VEA

Opportunity for camping in remote locations with little or no facilities. This area provides a base for fishing, camping and deer hunting and is a popular four wheel driving experience.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for remote, four wheel drive based camping and associated self-reliant activities.

Strategies

- Maintain limited basic to very basic camping facilities.
- Permit dispersed camping, including car-based dispersed camping.
- Provide information about activities available in the area, including four wheel driving.
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.

ALPINE NATIONAL PARK: DARTMOUTH – DAVIES PLAIN AREA (map 2F)

Glen Dart VEA

Glen Dart is an historic area with relics and artefacts associated with gold mining.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for heritage appreciation experiences and protect the area's historic features.

Strategies

- Provide day visitor facilities.
- Protect and interpret the area's historic features.

Bunroy – Pinnibar VEA

A seasonally accessible four wheel drive area along the Murray River that includes a number of sites for basic camping, horse riding and some walking. Mt Pinnibar is a popular destination.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for seasonal four wheel driving, hiking, horse riding and basic camping.

Strategies

- Maintain seasonal four wheel drive access to Mt Pinnibar and connection to Davies Plain Icon Four Wheel Drive route.
- Provide basic camping facilities.
- Maintain Harringtons Track as a walking track and bridle trail.

Gibbo River VEA

Along the Gibbo River there are multiple campsites that can be accessed by two wheel drive. The campsites are located along the river edge and its pristine waters are ideal for fishing, bird watching and photography. This area provides a gateway to four wheel driving and trail bike riding to surrounding roads in Alpine National Park.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping with basic facilities, providing access for two wheel drive vehicles subject to snow cover.

Strategies

- Maintain Ah Syes as a basic camping area; maintain the remaining camping areas as very basic sites.
- Provide interpretation of the historic values at the Ah Syes camping area.
- Maintain two wheel drive access to the camping areas.

Wombat Creek VEA

Access to the Wombat Creek is by four wheel drive only and has camping at two locations: Wombat PO and Quart Pot Flat. Some key features of these campsites include the Wombat PO Hut and Quart Pot Hut. The available activities include fishing/fly fishing, bird watching, horse riding, camping, and deer hunting. The area also provides opportunity for scenic driving with an expansive track network.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping and outdoor activities including walking and hunting.

Strategies

- Maintain basic camping area, including toilet, at Wombat PO.
- Continue work with Victorian High Country Huts Association to preserve Wombat PO Hut and Quart Pot Hut; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies.
- Maintain four wheel drive track access to the area.

Limestone VEA

The Limestone VEA covers three designated campsites, Native Dog Flat, Limestone Creek and Poplars. All campsites are dispersed camping however Limestone Creek and Poplars are only accessed by four wheel drive while Native Dog Flat is accessible to two wheel drive vehicles. Native Dog Flat also offers a designated horse camping area. This area forms part of the Davies Plain Icon Drive which is one of the seven Victoria's Iconic four wheel drive touring route.

The area also provides visitors with the first vehicle access point to the Murray River and is a popular fishing location. This area forms part of the Bicentennial National Trail which is primarily designated for horse riding and the Australian Alps Walking Track (section 8.3).

Goal

Provide access to undertake a variety of activities including camping, four wheel driving, walking and horse riding.

Strategies

- Maintain vehicle track network to ensure access to Davies Plain Iconic Drive.
- Maintain basic camping/facilities at Limestone Creek, Native Dog Flat and Poplars.
- Maintain and upgrade interpretive and directional signage.

Mitta Mitta – Kellys VEA

Kellys is accessible by two wheel drive from the south to Ferny Flat campsite and four wheel drive only north of this point. Ferny Flat campsite, located on the Mitta Mitta River, is the only campsite within this area. The area provides a number of opportunities for four wheel driving including accessing the Wombat Creek area. Key activities of include fishing, bird watching and camping.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping and outdoor activities.

Strategy

- Maintain Ferny Flat as a basic camping area with two wheel drive access.

Taylors Crossing VEA

Taylors Crossing VEA can be accessed by two wheel drive on the southern and eastern side of the Mitta Mitta River. Access to the western and northern side of the Mitta Mitta River can only be accessed by four wheel drive. It offers the opportunity for camping at Taylors Crossing (both sides of Mitta Mitta River) and Kennedys Hut, and both sites can also cater for day visitors. As the sites are positioned on the Mitta Mitta River they provide the ideal opportunity for fishing, swimming, bird watching and photography. This area also forms a part of the Australian Alps Walking Track with the swing bridge linking the east and west side of the river.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping and outdoor activities.

Strategies

- Maintain basic camping areas and day visitor facilities at Taylors Crossing and Kennedys Hut.
- Continue work with Victorian High Country Huts Association to preserve Kennedys Hut; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies.
- Maintain two wheel drive track access to the area.

ALPINE NATIONAL PARK: COBBERAS – EAST ALPS AREA (map 2G)

Tingaringy VEA

This remote area can be accessed by four wheel drive and offers very basic facilities at Wattle Camp and Taylors Camp.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for remote four wheel driving, basic camping and horse riding.

Strategies

- Permit horse riding except within the Wilderness Zone (map 4I).
- Provide very basic camping facilities at Wattle Camp and Taylors Camp.
- Permit dispersed vehicle-based camping.
- Maintain four wheel drive access to viewpoint on Mount Tingaringy; prevent vehicle access to summit area.
- Liaise with Tubbut community in relation to visitation and management.

Willis VEA

Willis provides opportunities for camping and day visitors. There are a number of basic campsites available which provide easy access to the Snowy River. All sites are accessible by two wheel drive vehicles. Willis provides the opportunity for rafting, kayaking, fishing, horse camping and four wheel driving. A unique feature of the area is the abundance of White Cypress and its associated vegetation community.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping, including camping with horses.

Strategies

- Maintain as a basic camping area.
- Provide for horse camping area at Willis and Gattamurh Ford camping areas (map 4I).
- Maintain Willis Loop Track as two wheel drive access
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.

ERRINUNDRA NATIONAL PARK (map 2H)

Errinundra VEA

The main visitor hub, Errinundra Saddle, attracts visitors seeking a rainforest experience. The area also attracts small number s of hikers, horse riders and campers.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for day visits, hiking, horse riding and basic camping.

Strategies

- Maintain Errinundra Saddle Rainforest Walk as the area's key visitor site; maintain day visitor facilities and rainforest interpretation.
- Provide basic camping at Frosty Hollow, accessible by two wheel drive; encourage use of camping areas in adjacent State forest and reserves.
- Maintain access as two wheel drive, generally dry weather only.
- Permit horse riding on public roads; do not allow camping with horses (map 4J).

SNOWY RIVER NATIONAL PARK (map 2H)

Upper Snowy VEA

This area provides camping with two wheel drive access, four wheel drive access to more basic campsites, and day visitor experiences with access to short to medium length walks. Horse riding is permitted on designated tracks. The Snowy River Icon Drive, a two to three day four wheel drive route graded as difficult, passes through the area and links it to Buchan Caves Reserve.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping, canoeing, hiking and horse riding. Promote the use of the Snowy River Icon Drive.

Strategies

- Permit horse riding on designated tracks (map 4J), camping with horses is not permitted.
- Maintain basic camping facilities at MacKillops Bridge (two wheel drive) and Little River Junctions (four wheel drive).
- Protect and interpret heritage values of MacKillops Bridge.
- Maintain Little River Falls, Little River Gorge and MacKillops Bridge as key visitor sites.
- Provide a range of short to longer walking opportunities – Silver Mine Walking Track, Snowy River Nature Trail and access to gorge and falls.

Lower Snowy VEA

This area provides mainly basic camping with four-wheel drive access, and day visitor experiences. Horse riding is permitted on designated tracks. The Snowy River Icon Drive, a two to three day four wheel drive graded as difficult, passes through the area and links it to Buchan Caves Reserve. Balley Hooley is at the junction of the Buchan and Snowy Rivers and has two wheel drive access.

Goals

Provide the opportunity for basic camping, day visits, canoeing, hiking and horse riding. Support the use of the Snowy River Icon Drive.

Strategies

- Permit horse riding on designated tracks (map 4J).
- Maintain basic camping facilities at Hicks, Jacksons Crossing and Raymond Creek Falls including camping with horses at Hicks.
- Maintain Balley Hooley as a key camping and picnicking site with two wheel drive access.

Tulloch Ard VEA

This area provides two wheel drive day visitor experiences including interpreted short walks. Horse riding is permitted on designated tracks. The Snowy River Icon Drive, a two to three day four wheel drive graded as difficult, passes through the area and links it to Buchan Caves Reserve. This area includes New Guinea Cave 2 which is jointly managed with the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for ski touring and day visits. Support the use of the Snowy River Icon Drive.

Strategies

- Permit horse riding on designated tracks (map 4J), camping with horses is not permitted.
- Manage New Guinea Cave jointly with Gunaikurnai.
- Maintain the opportunity for day visitor experiences including short walks at Tulloch Ard and Ash Saddle.
- Maintain Tulloch Ard Rd – Gelantipy Rd as a loop drive from Buchan, incorporating attractions outside the park.

Snowy River National Park

TARA RANGE PARK (map 2H)

Tara Range VEA

This VEA provides dispersed camping with four wheel drive access, and opportunities for deer hunting. Horse riding is permitted on open roads.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping and hunting.

Strategies

- Permit horse riding on open roads (map 4J).
- Allow dispersed camping in Tara Range Park.

HISTORIC AREAS

Walhalla VEA (map 2A)

Walhalla township (surrounded by the historic area) has a small number of permanent residents and attracts large numbers of tourists interested in the area's gold mining history and relics. Popular activities include camping, day walks, mine tours and riding the historic railway. The area is also a popular base for four wheel drive exploration of the surrounding area and is the southern end of the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT). The Great Walhalla Alpine Trail is a guided walk connecting the township with Baw Baw Alpine Resort using the AAWT through Baw Baw National Park (section 8.3).

Goal

Provide the opportunities for recreation and exploration of an historic gold mining township, which supports the Walhalla community and regional tourism.

Strategies

- Liaise with Baw Baw Shire and Committee of Management to ensure Parks Victoria’s visitor infrastructure in and around Walhalla township supports local needs.
- Support protection of the historic features of Walhalla Township (refer to relevant heritage sections of the previous plan CFL 1988).
- Support the Great Walhalla Alpine Trail as a key experience.
- Maintain and promote Walhalla as the southern end of the Australian Alps Walking Track.
- Promote Walhalla as a base from which to explore Baw Baw National Park.

Snow Gum forest,
Mount Wills Historic Area

Lower Howqua VEA (map 2D)

Extends along the Heritage River listed Howqua River from Tobacco Flat, Frys Hut and Sheepyard Flat in the Howqua Hills Historic Area to Eight Mile Flat in Alpine NP. Camping is popular; dogs on lead are permitted within the historic area (table 8.3). Hunters, hikers, fishers and horse riders use the area as a base from where they travel into Alpine NP, adjacent State forest or Mt Buller Alpine Resort. The area is growing in popularity for mountain biking. There are a number of significant historic sites associated with mining, such as Frys Hut and The Chimney. The area has significant Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values, including historic huts.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for accessible basic camping, including large group camping and camping with horses, cater for large numbers of visitors during peak periods.

Strategies

- Protect and interpret the area's cultural and historic features.
- Work with the Traditional Owners to protect and interpret cultural heritage values.
- Protect the areas Heritage River values.
- Recognise and support Mansfield as the key gateway to the area.
- Investigate construction of a mountain bike touring track within Howqua Hills Historic Area; liaise with other user groups when considering options.
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.
- Provide information for four wheel drives travelling through The Bluff, King Billy, Mt Howitt and Mt Stirling areas.
- Ensure visitors are informed of where activities are permitted (dog walking, hiking, mountain biking, hunting and horse riding).
- Provide trailhead information for hikers in Mt Buller, The Bluff and Eagles Peaks – Governors areas.
- Manage recreational and commercial horse riding between Sheepyard Flat and Pikes Hut via a horse pass system (section 8.3, table 8.2 and map 4E).

Mount Wills VEA (map 2E)

Mount Wills Historic Area has relics and artefacts associated with gold mining. This area also forms a part of the Australian Alps Walking Track.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for remote walking, horse riding and basic camping and for heritage appreciation experiences and protect the area's historic features.

Strategies

- Provide day visitor and basic camping facilities, including dispersed camping with horses (map 4F and H).
- Protect and interpret the area's historic features.
- Maintain access to Mt Wills.

Mount Murphy VEA (map 2F)

Here visitors can explore the relics of the old Wolfram mine, which was discovered in 1890. Access is four wheel drive only. With basic camping facilities located at Buenba Flat which is both two wheel drive and four wheel drive accessible, and dispersed camping at Buckwong Creek that has four wheel drive only access. This area also forms a part of the Australian Alps Walking Track.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping at Buenba Flat and visitors to experience historic values at Mt Murphy.

Strategies

- Provide interpretation of the area's historic value.
- Identify and protect the remaining mining relics.
- Ensure access track into mining area is maintained for four wheel drive access.
- Maintain designated camping area at Buenba Flat and dispersed camping at Buckwong Creek.

Grant – Talbotville VEA (map 2C)

Grant Historic Area, the site of one of Victoria's 1860s goldfields, provides camping for small and large groups, including horse riders. Access is four wheel drive only. The area is a popular base camp or stop for drivers undertaking the Wonnangatta Icon Drive. Visitors have access to medium length walks and horse rides with relics of the area's gold mining history a feature. McMillans Track and the National Bicentennial Trail pass through the area. Dogs on lead are permitted.

Goal

Provide the opportunity for basic camping with the ability to cater for large groups and for large numbers of visitors during peak periods.

Strategies

- Maintain designated camping areas at Talbotbville and Grant, including camping with horses and dogs and areas suitable for large groups.
- Provide interpretation of the area's historic values.
- Identify and protect the relics of the area's mining history.
- Manage perceived user conflict in camping areas by developing education action plans to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.

Information shelter at Wallaces Hut carpark, Alpine National Park

8.2 Access and visitor facilities

Access

Vehicle roads and tracks, and walking tracks within the parks connect people with the spectacular Australian Alps and eastern highlands. A large investment has been made since 2003 in the repair of roads, road bridges and walking tracks following major bushfires and floods, and as part of the Victorian Government's expanded bushfire management program across public land including the planning area.

The walking track network ranges from short walks leading to natural and heritage attractions to long distance walking tracks and routes such as the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) and the multi-use Bicentennial National Trail. The AAWT in particular is valued as it 'links a landscape not only of natural beauty but of human exploration, hardship, nation building and endeavour through the legacy of aboriginal routes, stockman's huts, fences, old towns, ruins and former sites of mining and hydroelectric endeavours (AALC 2014). Some walking tracks or sections of walking tracks are also available for horse riding, cycling and cross-country skiing. Australian walking track standards are applied to ensure track construction is appropriate to use, tracks have minimal environmental impact and complement park settings.

The vehicle road and track network is maintained for public and management access and emergency response. Maintaining tracks clear of overgrowth is challenging and recreation groups provide valuable assistance. Some roads are iconic touring routes (section 8.5). The Great Alpine Road, which extends from Wangaratta to Bairnsdale via Mount Hotham, is Australia's highest year-round accessible sealed road. The sealing of Bogong High Plains Road between Falls Creek and Omeo opened up another route that will facilitate tourism. There are five regional tourism drives (AANL 2010); Snowy Plains Heritage Drive, the Great Alpine Road, Bogong High Plains Discovery Drive (The Bogong Alpine Way), the Walhalla and Mountain Rivers Trail (The Hinterland Trail) and Snowy River Country Trail and NSW linkage (The Man from Snowy River Adventure Drive). Three of the six Iconic four wheel drive adventures across Victoria are within the planning area: Wonnangatta Iconic four wheel drive Adventure, Davies Plain Iconic four wheel drive Adventure and Snowy River Iconic four wheel drive Adventure.

Many vehicle tracks in the planning area are closed to vehicles, including bicycles, seasonally during winter for public safety and to protect roads and park values. Cycling is permitted on some seasonally closed tracks (appendix 3) subject to protection of park values. Users need to be aware that the suitability of these tracks during the closure period cannot be guaranteed as maintenance is not possible (appendix 3). Access is subject to no impact on park values and may be withdrawn without notice (section 8.3).

Management Vehicle Only (MVO) tracks are used for essential management and emergency response and are closed to public vehicles (map 3A-K). MVO tracks are open to walkers and some are available for horse riding and cycling (map 3A-K, appendix 3).

Visitor facilities

Within the VEAs and elsewhere there are approximately 300 visitor sites supporting opportunities for diverse experiences including isolation, remoteness and adventure in the mountains in winter and summer. The majority of visitor sites are accessed from key towns that are the gateways to the parks' major destinations and journeys including Buchan, Dargo, Licola, Omeo, Bairnsdale, Orbost and Walhalla in the south and Mansfield, Bright, Corryong and Mount Beauty in the north.

Visitor sites include campgrounds, camping areas, picnic areas and sites where visitors can observe the cultural and natural heritage. The majority of visitor sites provide for visitors seeking a self-reliant experience while a number provide for more accessible camping with a wider range of facilities. Some facilities were established in the past under earlier land uses and no longer effectively service visitor activity. Managing the existing number of facilities and sites across a very wide area is no longer sustainable, especially given the large investment in recent times on repairing and replacing facilities following bushfires and floods, particularly access facilities such as roads and bridges. The inventory of visitor facilities and access assets is substantial with over 2000 carparks, bridges, walking tracks, toilets, major signs, picnic areas, visitor shelters, camping areas, lookouts and heritage buildings and over 3000 km of roads and tracks.

Continuous incremental adjustment of the type and location of facilities is needed in order to respond to the impacts of climate change such as more frequent or severe fires and storms, renew ageing facilities and improve those that match visitor patterns and requirements and to modify or remove those that are no longer serving visitor requirements – either for popular activities or more specialised activities.

Goal A sustainable road and track network is maintained to support recreation, park management and emergency response.	
Strategies	**Park**
Work with recognised recreational bodies such as Four Wheel Drive Victoria, horse riding groups, bushwalking groups and others to support management, maintenance of the road and track network and volunteer involvement (map 3A-K).	All
Progressively implement Four Wheel Drive Victoria's track classification system.	All
Identify roads and tracks that are no longer required for management, have limited recreational value or having an adverse impact on natural or cultural values and either mitigate the impacts or close and rehabilitate.	All
Investigate the criteria and feasibility for determining if any MVO tracks can be opened for public vehicle access without affecting other values, including other recreation experiences.	All
Maintain walking tracks to designated standard (appendix 2).	All

Goal A range of appropriate facilities to support visitor experiences, while minimising environmental and cultural impacts of visitation, is maintained.	
Strategies	**Park**
Prioritise maintenance and renewal of facilities to those within priority Visitor Experience Areas.	All
Remove facilities in other areas that are no longer serving visitor needs.	All
Provide information at key visitor sites (map 3A-K) and gateways regarding park values, access, facilities and available experiences.	All – refer to map 3
Minimise visitor induced spread of weeds by focussing facilities and promoting visitation at key park destinations.	All
Control blackberries where they affect visitor access to recreational sites and rivers.	All

Cross-country snowshoeing on the Bogong High Plains, Alpine National Park

8.3 Visitor activities

Much of the planning area's appeal stems from its remote and undeveloped nature which offers opportunities for a diverse range of visitor activities with a reasonable level of solitude and challenge. This is particularly so in the alpine areas, most of which is zoned Conservation reflecting the area's high environmental values. The activities are managed, often with assistance from community groups (section 7.2), to minimise the impacts on the parks and other visitors in accordance with activity codes of conduct and regulations.

Some activities are permitted in certain zones and areas and not in others due to the statutory purposes of the zone or to protect environmental and cultural values. No public access is permitted in Reference Areas. Vehicles, including bicycles, and introduced animals, including horses and dogs, are not permitted in Wilderness Areas and Zones. The details of which activities can occur where are shown in table 8.3; details about horse riding are provided on map 4A-J and for deer hunting on map 5. More restrictions apply in the wilderness and national parks while the historic areas offer recreational experiences not available in national parks, such as fossicking and dog walking. Different restrictions may apply in various areas to minimise the impacts on the parks and other visitors. In some areas with high use, such as horse riding on The Bluff, a system to manage the number of horse riders is proposed. Such as system has been in place for commercial riders for some time and the system will be extended to recreational riders.

All of the activities undertaken in the parks and historic areas involve appreciation of the surrounds in which they occur. Activities like bird watching, nature study, photography and appreciation of cultural relics enhance visitors' experiences and for some visitors are part of the primary purpose of their visit. Providing interpretative materials supports these experiences (section 8.4), which can also be enhanced by licensed tour operators (section 8.5).

A number of concerns have been raised regarding the impact of various activities on other park visitors. Horse riding, bushwalking, hunting and mountain bike riding, for example, were all noted as having the potential to create conflict amongst different users. Where possible, management has sought to improve opportunities for recreational experiences while minimising the impacts of activities on the parks or other

visitors' experiences. In some instances, separate facilities are provided to cater for different activities, such as some camping areas being walk-in only, some being vehicle-based and some catering for people camping with horses. Similarly, there are single use trails and tracks and some shared use tracks. Education and engagement with the community and particularly cooperation with peak recreation bodies are recognised as important aspects of improving these outcomes.

A number of visitor experience areas are defined routes that are part of a recognised multi-day or long day experience (visitor experience journeys). These include long distance walks such as the Australian Alps Walking Track, icon four wheel drive routes such as the Wonnangatta Drive, long distance horse trails such as the Bicentennial National Trail, and canoe journeys, such as that along the Snowy River. Goals and strategies for these specific visitor experiences are detailed below.

Goals Provide the opportunity for a range of visitor activities from easy to challenging. Minimise the impacts on the environment and other users.	
Strategies	Park
Work in partnership with representative organisations to understand and improve recreation opportunities, including the needs of people with limited mobility.	All, with a focus on priority VEAs
Continue to improve recreational opportunities in consultation with users, tour operators and recognised organisations, including ensuring a range of activities catering to different skill levels are available.	All
Improve equity of use in responding to new and emerging activity trends. Improve visitors understanding of where recreation activities are appropriate and the rules and codes applying in different land tenures.	All
Work with alpine resorts and neighbouring land managers to ensure recreation activities are undertaken in the land tenure most suitable for maintaining those activities.	All
Consult users to develop and promote a code for shared use and if considering any changes to shared use tracks.	All
Improve visitor awareness of the range of activities available in and near the planning area and encourage and promote four season use and activities not permitted in national parks on adjacent public land where consistent with the management goals for those lands.	All
Manage visitor activities in accordance with table 8.3 and conditions and additional strategies noted for specific activities below.	All

Bushwalking

Victoria's high country has long been a popular venue for bushwalkers, providing a variety of experiences from remote hiking to easy day walks. The extensive track network available for bushwalking is generally enhanced by basic facilities. The most popular tracks are those that lead to and traverse the higher alpine ridges and peaks. The Australian Alps Walking Track between Walhalla and Canberra is a long distance track winding through the planning area. Parks Victoria has an agreement with

Bushwalking Victoria, being the peak body representing recreational walking and the many walking clubs within Victoria.

The **Australian Alps Walking Track** is a 650 km long walking track from Walhalla Historic Area through Victoria's Baw Baw and Alpine national parks into Kosciusko National Park in NSW, from where it continues to Namadgi National Park in the ACT. It is known as one of Australia's iconic walks with various sections attracting walkers from across Australia. Much of the track is in remote areas providing an experience for self-reliant visitors, including access to wilderness areas, such as the Razor–Viking Wilderness Zone. Included in the Journey are various 'feeder' tracks that provide access to the main trail. The Great Walhalla Alpine Trail and Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing VEA both include sections of the Australian Alps Walking Track.

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee, which includes representatives from Victoria, NSW and the ACT, have prepared a Strategic and Operational Plan (AALC 2014) to guide management of the track.

The **Great Walhalla Alpine Trail** links Walhalla with Baw Baw Alpine Resort and includes a section of Australian Alps Walking Track. It is popular with hikers and skiers journeying across the Baw Baw Plateau and is used for commercially guided hikes linking the alpine resort and Walhalla township. The journey passes through the Baw Baw Plateau VEA and Walhalla VEA.

A series of walking routes across Victoria have been identified and will be developed and marketed under the banner 'Walk Victoria's Icons'. One being developed in 2016 – **the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing** – is within the planning area. An initial alignment of this walk has been developed with two campsites – Cope Hut and Dibbins Hut – which require bookings and payment of a fee. The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan (Parks Victoria in prep) is being developed, which is reviewing the alignment to consider including Mount Feathertop and The Razorback via Diamantina Spur as iconic elements of the walk, and linkages between Falls Creek Alpine Resort and Alpine NP. The Master Plan is also considering options for bookable camping or accommodation for a fee at locations yet to be determined in the Mount Feathertop and West Kiewa Valley areas.

Conditions
Bushwalking is permitted throughout the planning area with the exception of Reference Areas.

Goals Provide for a range of walking experiences throughout the planning area, from self-reliant walking in remote areas to opportunities for easier and guided walks. Ensure local communities benefit from walker related visitation.	
Strategies	**Park**
Maintain a range of short, day and longer walker-only tracks, including routes with minimal or no facilities catering to hikers seeking a challenge as per Appendix 2 (refer also to section 8.1).	All
Maintain iconic walks and journeys such as the Australian Alps Walking Track, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing and Great Walhalla Alpine Trail. Upgrade tracks if required.	All
Continue to provide tracks for shared use and where appropriate designate single use walker only. Consult if considering any changes from walker only to shared use tracks (Appendix 2).	All
Promote centres such as Harrietville, Licola, Mansfield, Bright and the alpine resorts as key gateways for hikers.	All
Investigate opportunities for and feasibility of new tracks such as loop walking tracks in association with sections of the Australian Alps Walking Track and walking tracks along the Mitta Mitta River between Anglers Rest and Big River camping areas in consultation with relevant stakeholders.	Alpine NP
Australian Alps Walking Track (Visitor Experience Area – Journey) Provide information about, and maintain the Australian Alps Walking Track as a premier long distance walking track. Identify and maintain major trail heads. Progressively realign sections where feasible where they coincide with vehicle tracks in order to separate walkers and vehicles. Determine track classes for all sections with community engagement (including feeder tracks) and maintain accordingly. Support AALC in guiding management of the track. Liaise with DELWP and alpine resorts regarding management of the track.	Baw Baw and Alpine NPs
Great Walhalla Alpine Trail (Visitor Experience Area – Journey) Recognise the Great Walhalla Alpine Trail as a key section of the Australian Alps Walking Track and manage as a priority section of the AAWT. Protect remote and natural area values. Support promotion of the Great Walhalla Alpine Trail as a key experience.	Walhalla HA and Baw Baw NP
Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (Visitor Experience Area – Journey) Complete planning, feasibility assessment and consultation for the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, including investigating options for establishing bookable, fee-for-use, new types of accommodation. Prohibit camping within 100 m of fee-for-use camping platforms. Maintain tracks identified as part of the 'Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing' as a priority. Recognise the services available in key support centres of Falls Creek, Mount Hotham, Dinner plain, Harrietville, Bright and Mount Beauty.	Alpine NP

Camping

Within the planning area, river flats and alpine plateaus provide an attractive setting with designated areas for remote bush camping, ski camping and vehicle based camping with basic to high facilities, some of which are designated as horse camping areas (refer to map 3). Outside of designated areas, dispersed camping, that is, camping outside designated camping areas, including dispersed camping with horses, is permitted as described below.

Camping provides visitors with a base for undertaking a range of other activities. Parks Victoria a range of stakeholders to better understand the needs of visitors and ensure camping opportunities are sustainable.

Conditions

Dispersed camping (that is, camping outside designated camping areas, including dispersed camping with horses) is permitted across much of the planning area except within the following areas.

All Reference Areas

Alpine NP: within 200 m of Bogong High Plains Rd, Pretty Valley Rd or Howitt High Plains Rd or within 100 m of camping areas associated with the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing.

Baw Baw NP: within 200 m of any vehicle track or carpark.

Errinundra NP: within 200 m of any vehicle track or carpark.

Mt Buffalo NP Opportunities for winter (snow-based) camping are to be investigated and may include dispersed camping.

Walhalla Historic Area: within Walhalla Township which is surrounded by the historic area.

Map 3 identifies a range of designated camping areas where facilities such as toilets are provided. Camping with horses is only permitted in some camping areas. Refer to section on horse riding and map 4A-J for conditions.

Canoeing, kayaking, rafting and boating

Canoeing, kayaking, rafting and boating are popular in the rivers and lakes of the planning area with some rivers, such as the Snowy and Mitta Mitta, being used extensively for commercial rafting. The major rivers and lakes used are the Snowy, Big, Thomson, Howqua and Mitta Mitta rivers, Lake Catani and Rocky Valley Storage. Canoeing, kayaking and rafting generally require minimal facilities, with lack of facilities and more remote settings being part of the attraction. Some rivers, such as the Snowy and Mitta Mitta, are in or adjacent to Wilderness Zones and Remote and Natural Areas. Parks Victoria engages with Canoeing Victoria and other stakeholders who have an interest in the sustainability of these activities.

Canoeing on Lake Catani, Mount Buffalo National Park

Conditions

Canoeing, kayaking rafting and boating are permitted throughout the planning area except for within Reference Areas. The Snowy River, Thomson River and Mitta Mitta River canoe, kayak and rafting experiences are recognised as Visitor Experience Journeys.

Goals Provide a range of on-water experiences.	
Strategies	**Park**
Protect Heritage River, Wilderness Zone and Remote and Natural Area values and settings.	All
Provide information on on-water activities (river grades, distances, water levels, hazards etc.) for Snowy River, Thomson River and Mitta Mitta River.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP, Snowy River NP
Snowy River (Visitor Experience Area – Journey) Provide for river put in and take out points at Mackillops Bridge, Willis and Balley Hooley. Permit dispersed camping along the river.	Snowy River NP
Thomson River (Visitor Experience Area – Journey) Maintain Beardmores, Low Saddle Crossing, The Narrows and Thomson River Bridge as canoe and raft access areas, in line with seasonal track closures. Maintain as a day experience – promote camping at Coopers Creek and Bruntons Bridge in adjacent State forest for people taking a multi-day journey.	Baw Baw NP
Mitta Mitta River (Visitor Experience Area – Journey) Maintain key access points at Big River, Bundara Picnic Area and Jokers Flat.	Alpine NP

Caving

Caving is undertaken in some parts of the planning area, notably in Mount Buffalo's Underground River and Snowy River National Park's limestone caves. Many caves and karsts have highly sensitive values; access restrictions apply to some caves to protect these values. New Guinea Cave within Snowy River National Park is jointly managed with the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owners (section 5.2). Parks Victoria works with the Victorian Speleological Association (VSA), Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association (ACKMA), Parks Victoria's Cave and Karst Advisory Group (CAKAG) and the Australian

Speleological Association (ASF) to protect caves and karsts and to ensure the activity is sustainable.

Conditions

Permitted throughout the planning area except for within Reference Areas and as noted below. A maximum group size of six applies.

Alpine NP: No access is permitted to LC-16, LC-17, MM-2 and MM-5 caves.

Snowy River NP: No access is permitted to New Guinea Cave 2. Access to New Guinea Cave 1 is prohibited from 1 July to 30 November. Access to New Guinea Caves is subject to change.

Cycling and mountain biking

Cycling and mountain biking are fast growing activities. Most road-based cycling is on roads managed by other agencies that traverse the park network. Mountain biking has a number of disciplines with cross-country riding available within the parks on roads open to the public, some management vehicle only tracks and along aqueducts on the Bogong High Plains. Cycling on shared use tracks such as in the Wellington River–Riggal Spur area and on the Hotham–Dinner Plain Track are suitable for the range of users from easy rides to more adventurous. Alpine resorts are working to improve cycling facilities to generate all season visitation, including downhill cycling, which will provide ample cycling experiences adjacent to the parks. Downhill tracks will not be provided for within the planning area.

Recognising the health benefits of cycling is consistent with Parks Victoria's Healthy Parks Healthy People philosophy and a number of opportunities to enhance cross-country cycling and have been identified in the plan, including shared used trails, a mountain bike trail at Howqua Hills, and access to some seasonally closed tracks in specific parks as listed in appendix 3.

Park Victoria works with Bicycle Victoria, who are the peak body representing cycling, and MTBA. These groups have agreements with Parks Victoria recognising the need to work together to manage this activity.

Conditions

Permitted on all open roads, most MVOs (not permitted on MVOs in Wilderness Zones and Reference Areas) and some walking tracks (refer to appendix 2). Seasonal road closures apply to cycling except for roads and tracks listed in appendix 3. Where access to MVOs and walking tracks is permitted this may be subject to seasonal closures applying in the general area (appendix 3).

Goal Provide a range of cycling opportunities.	
Strategies	**Park**
Continue to provide walking tracks for shared use (appendix 2) and where appropriate designate single use walker only or mountain bike only tracks. Investigate future shared use options and consult users if considering any changes to single or shared use tracks Cycling on walking tracks is subject to seasonal closures applying in the general area.	All
Permit cycling on MVO tracks except those in Wilderness Areas and Reference Areas. Seasonal closures may apply to MVOs (appendix 3).	All
Permit cycling on selected seasonally closed tracks (appendix 3) subject to protection of park values. Ensure users are aware that the suitability of tracks during the closure period cannot be guaranteed as maintenance is not possible. Withdraw access where impact on park values is noted.	All
Investigate constructing a dedicated mountain bike touring loop in Howqua Hills Historic Area.	Howqua Hills HA

Fishing

The parks waters are highly valued for recreational fishing. Parks Victoria engages with the peak bodies representing recreational anglers in Victoria and a diverse range of fishing clubs and associations and other stakeholders to better understand issues around fishing and ensure the activity is sustainable. Protecting water quality is a key part of protecting fishing opportunities.

Conditions

Fishing is permitted throughout the planning area except within Reference Areas. Collection of live bait is not permitted in national, state and wilderness parks.

Goal Provide the opportunity for sustainable fishing.	
Strategies	**Park**
Work with angling groups to support fishing experiences and promote initiatives such as 'Adopt a Stream', fish recovery programs and fishing platforms or boardwalks in high-use areas.	All
Ensure protection of water quality is a key consideration in design and location of visitor facilities, such as camping areas and track–river crossings, and in fire management.	All

Fossicking and prospecting

Fossicking or prospecting for minerals is regulated under the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* (Vic.) and is permitted in the historic areas under a miner's right or tourist fossicking authority. Fossickers and prospectors are required to use non-mechanical hand tools; and they must not disturb vegetation and archaeological sites or Aboriginal places or objects. Fossickers and prospectors are encouraged to follow the Prospecting Guide (DPI 2004) including the Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria and Victorian Gem Clubs Association Code of Conduct.

Conditions
Fossicking and prospecting are not permitted in national, wilderness and other parks or within Reference Areas.

Eductor dredging and fossil collection are not permitted throughout the entire planning area.

Four wheel driving

Four wheel driving provides access to remote areas. Parks Victoria and DELWP have an agreement with Four Wheel Drive Victoria (FWDV) as the peak body representing Victorian four wheel drive clubs. Some MVO tracks are opened to FWDV affiliated clubs to enable volunteer work to be undertaken. four wheel drive clubs offer training and accreditation in safe and responsible use of vehicles and recovery equipment as well as a code of conduct, minimum impact camping and group safety. Volunteers assist in track clearing to prepare the seasonally closed tracks for public access after the four-month winter closure and after severe weather.

In 2010 a series of popular Victorian four wheel drive routes were identified and marketed as 'Victoria's Iconic four wheel drive Adventures'. Of the seven drives, three – **Wonnangatta, Snowy River** and **Davies Plain Icon Drives –** are within the planning area and these are noted as Visitor Experience Area–Journeys. The Snowy River Drive is rated difficult while the Wonnangatta and Davies Plain drives are rated very difficult. These are mapped as VEA Journeys (map 3).

Conditions
Four wheel driving is permitted on open roads (roads other than MVOs) throughout the planning area. Tracks may be subject to seasonal closures.

Goal Provide and promote popular four wheel driving experiences and ensure local communities benefit from their use.	
Strategies	**Park**
Maintain the tracks identified as part of the iconic routes and key visitor sites and access tracks as a priority for four wheel driving.	Alpine and Snowy River NPs
Maintain the Deddick Trail as a more challenging Four Wheel Drive alternative to the Snowy River Icon Drive.	Snowy River NP
Maintain the Icon Drives as catering to drivers seeking a difficult (Snowy River) to very difficult (Wonnangatta and Davies Plain) experience.	Alpine and Snowy River NPs
Promote the services available and provide information in key support towns of Mansfield, Dargo, Heyfield, Licola, Orbost, Buchan and Corryong.	Alpine and Snowy River NPs
Liaise with Four Wheel Drive Victoria in promoting the Icon Drives and providing information.	Alpine and Snowy River NPs

Rock climbing, The Cathedral
Mount Buffalo National Park

Hang gliding and paragliding

Hang gliding and paragliding are regulated by Civil Aviation Orders. The Hang Gliding Federation of Australia (HGFA) provides training and accreditation for pilots and helps maintain high safety standards. There are hang gliding and paragliding launching sites in Mount Buffalo National Park (map 3B). Parks Victoria works with HGFA and the Victorian Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association in managing the sites.

Conditions

Hang glider launching is not permitted except from the ramp at the Gorge, Mt Buffalo NP. Paraglider launching is not permitted except from Reeds Lookout, Mt Buffalo NP. Landing hang gliders or paragliders in parks is not permitted.

Horse riding and camping with horses

Horse riding dates back to early settlers with miners and explorers using horses to access the remote high country. Horse riding and camping remain popular activities. Improving the sustainability of horse riding while maintaining the remote high country riding experience and access enjoyed by riders is a key issue for the parks. The former broad-area-based permit system is no longer seen as a suitable tool for managing recreational riding. A limited horse pass system was considered to be a suitable option for limiting the number of horses that visit some specific areas such as The Bluff.

The management of horse camps has been a particular concern. There is a need to relocate some horse camps as they are having unacceptable environmental impacts and do not meet the needs of riders. Park managers together with the horse riding community have identified a number of opportunities to relocate some sites to more suitable locations. In addition, sealing the Bogong High Plains Road has altered the camping experience at a number of locations and riders are now seeking new camping areas away from the road. Ensuring constructed yards and other facilities are provided at designated horse camps is critical in minimising impacts. A horse camp booking system that would provide equity of use for riding groups and allow use to be monitored and managed was identified as another tool to minimise impact.

Parks Victoria engages with a range of stakeholders to ensure the activity continues to be sustainable.

Conceived and promoted by the Australia Trail Horse Riders Association (ATHRA), the Bicentennial National Trail is a 5330 km long trail between Cooktown, Queensland and Healesville, Victoria. Although primarily used by horse riders, the trail also has some popularity with hikers and, to an extent, cyclists. The trail traverses the planning area from the Macalister River in the west through the Wonnangatta Valley to Grant Historic Area. From Grant Historic Area, the trail traverses State forest before re-entering Alpine National Park in the Cobberas area, where it heads north to Tom Groggin and into Kosciusko National Park in New South Wales. The trail largely follows roads, including seasonally closed tracks, but includes sections that were constructed for riding but are also used by walkers.

Conditions

Horse riding is permitted in the areas and on the tracks shown on map 4A-J and listed in appendix 2 subject to the conditions noted below and on the maps.

- Horses are not permitted to remain at designated camps and day visitor areas, with the exception of designated horse camps as shown on map 4A-J.
- Horses are not permitted in peatland, bogs, wetlands, wet heathland and snow patch areas. Other areas may be closed from time to time for environmental protection.
- Seasonal restrictions apply to some areas (Map 4 A-J)
- Group size restrictions apply – refer to map 4A-J for details.
- Pass systems apply to commercial and recreational riding in some areas to manage use and impacts (table 8.2 and map 4D). The number of passes will be allocated annually in an equitable manner.
- Horses must be watered downstream of huts and camps. Buckets should be used for watering where possible.
- Horses must not be washed in or near rivers, streams, waterbodies or aqueducts; buckets must be used for washing.
- Nose bags must be used for feeding; feed is restricted to processed pellets, rolled or cracked clean grain, or certified clean (weed-free) chaff.

Horse camping is permitted subject to the conditions noted on the maps. These conditions include:

- Camping with horses is permitted in Designated Horse Camps. Horses must be kept in yards where provided at Designated Horse Camps. Bookings apply for the use of these yards.
- Dispersed camping with horses is permitted in areas as shown on map 4A-J.
- Where yards are not provided and when dispersed camping with horses, horses must remain properly restrained at least 30 m from waterbodies, huts and visitor facilities. Tethering to trees overnight is not permitted.
- A maximum of four consecutive nights' horse camping in one location applies.

Other park-specific restrictions are noted on map 4A-J.

Table 8.2 Horse pass areas and total annual passes to be issued

Horse Pass Area	Commercial Passes	Recreational Passes
Howqua River – Sheepyard Flat through to Pikes Flat	1920	500
Mt Howitt – King Billy	520	20
The Bluff	200	30
Mt Bogong	200	0

HORSE PASS CONDITIONS:

- Access is permitted only from December 1 to April 30 (riding season).
- Horses must remain within the horse pass areas.
- Groups are limited to 20 horses (riders and pack horses), each of which requires a horse pass.
- Horse pass applications must detail number of passes required, proposed itinerary and timing of tours and any other information to allow the application to be assessed for potential impact on park values and visitor amenity.
- Unused passes are not transferrable without Parks Victoria's consent and will be forfeited.
- Parks Victoria retains the right to adjust pass numbers, in consultation with users, depending on track conditions, visitor amenity and level of use.

Goal Provide a range of horse riding experiences.	
Strategies	**Park**
Permit riding in areas and on tracks as shown on map 4A-J and noted in appendix 2.	All
Maintain and support the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) as a long distance riding trail. Liaise with BNT Committee, DELWP and ATHRA regarding maintenance, management of the trail and volunteer involvement.	Alpine NP
Manage recreational and commercial horse rider numbers to The Bluff plateau, Mt Howitt–King Billy area, Howqua River (refer to map 4D) and Mt Bogong (section 8.5) via a horse pass system subject to the conditions outlined in table 8.2.	Alpine NP
Establish an environmental and visitor impact monitoring system for The Bluff plateau, Mt Howitt–King Billy, Howqua River and Mt Bogong horse riding pass areas.	Alpine NP
Permit horse camping as identified on map 4A-J.	Baw Baw NP, Alpine NP, Snowy NP
Formalise horse camping at The Playground and Charlie Creek to ensure that significant flora in those locations is protected. If protection is not viable, relocate horse camping.	Alpine NP
Establish a booking system for horse camps.	All
Increase maximum number of consecutive nights for camping with horses from two to four.	Baw Baw NP, Alpine NP, Snowy NP
Investigate reopening historic horse trails subject to assessment of impacts and demand.	Alpine NP

Hunting

Deer are classified as protected wildlife and listed as game species under the *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic.). Within the planning area hunting of Sambar has been permitted during hunting seasons in some parts of Alpine and Baw Baw National Parks and in Avon Wilderness Park. Hunting of other deer species has not been previously permitted. Hunting of all species is permitted in Tara Range Park and within the Historic Areas generally all year round. There are significant populations of Fallow Deer and Sambar and some other deer species in the planning area. The planning area provides for recreational deer hunting of all deer species consistent with adjacent areas of public land, while ensuring that the activity has minimal impact on the parks and other visitors. A Code of Practice aims to ensure the welfare of animals in hunting.

There has been an increase in the number of deer hunters and an expansion of deer populations over recent decades. Opportunities to enhance hunting include opening specific areas in the Alpine National Park where deer hunting has not been permitted. Hunting species other than deer is permitted in historic areas.

The potential for conflict between hunters and other visitors who are sensitive to the sight of firearms and carcasses will be managed by focussing on improving hunting etiquette.

Parks Victoria works with peak groups and other stakeholders to provide appropriate hunting experiences in the parks and has established agreements with the Australian Deer Association and Sporting Shooters Association of Australia to facilitate cooperation.

Conditions

Hunting will be permitted in specified areas (map 5) following a gazettal and as follows:

Alpine NP and Baw Baw NP, Avon WP, and Tara Range Park

- Hunting of Sambar, Red, Fallow, Chital, Rusa and Hog Deer permitted by stalking only (hunting with dogs not permitted) during the prescribed hunting season (February 15 to December 15 each year).
- Loaded firearms and hunting not permitted within 100 m of any designated picnic area or designated camping area or camp (whether populated or not).
- Hunting not permitted within any Education Area or Education Zone.
- Firearms and bows must not be used for purposes other than hunting deer.
- Only firearm types and calibres or bows legal for the hunting of deer permitted.

Historic areas

- Hunting of all game and pest species permitted all year.
- Hunting with dogs permitted in accordance with hunting regulations.
- Loaded firearms and hunting not permitted within 100 m of any designated picnic area or designated camping area or camp (whether populated or not).
- Hunting not permitted within any Education Area or Education Zone.

Goal Provide the opportunity for deer hunting in designated areas.	
Strategies	Park
Permit deer hunting in the areas shown on map 5; permit hunting of all species of deer (Sambar, red, fallow, chital, rusa and hog).	Designated areas of Alpine NP and Baw Baw NP; Avon WP, Tara Range Park and historic areas.
Work with the Game Management Authority and hunting organisations to promote safe and responsible hunting, ensure all visitors are aware that hunting is a legitimate activity in areas where it is permitted and to manage perceived user conflict by developing education programs to promote hunting etiquette, including respect for non-hunting park users.	Alpine NP, Baw Baw NP, Avon WP, Historic Areas and Tara Range Park
Change deer hunting season in Baw Baw NP to extend from 15 February to 15 December.	Baw Baw NP

Orienteering and rogaining

Competitive orienteering and rogaining events require a permit. Parks Victoria engages with Orienteering Victoria as the peak recreational body for the activity.

Rock climbing and abseiling

Rock climbing and abseiling are popular activities, particularly on Mount Buffalo National Park's granite cliffs. Parks Victoria engages with the Victoria Climbing Club in relation to these activities.

Conditions
Not permitted within Reference Areas.

Avon Wilderness Parks and Wilderness Zones: Clean climbing only.

Snowy River NP: Rock climbing and abseiling not permitted within Little River Gorge.

Alpine NP: Rock climbing and abseiling at Paradise Falls only permitted in the period 1 December to 31 July.

Skiing and snow play

Cross country skiing remains a strong winter recreation activity. Mount Buffalo National Park and Mount St Gwinear in Baw Baw National Park offer easy access to cross country skiing trails and facilities for tobogganing and snow play. The Alpine Resorts of Falls Creek, Mount Hotham, Mount Baw Baw and Dinner Plain provide access to marked and groomed cross-country skiing trails. The Kangaroo Hoppet, Australia's premier long distance cross-country ski race, is held on the Bogong High Plains each year.

Cross country skiing and snowshoeing offers visitors the only form of access to remote snow covered back country across the Bogong High Plains, Howitt Plains, Baw Baw Plateau, Dargo High Plains and other remote winter plateaus.

Downhill skiing is not provided for in the planning area although it has previously taken place at Mount Buffalo National Park under a commercial licence. Following bushfires in 2006, Cresta Lodge and associated infrastructure was destroyed. Alpine resorts adjacent to the planning area provide significant downhill skiing opportunities.

Conditions
Skiing and snowboarding permitted except on designated toboggan slopes.

Snowshoeing permitted except on designated toboggan runs and groomed ski trails.

Oversnow vehicles (skidoos) are not permitted.

Baw Baw National Park: Tobogganing using moulded plastic toboggans permitted on designated toboggan runs only. Tobogganing using moulded plastic toboggans permitted throughout all other parks.

Trail bike riding

Trail bike riding is a popular activity on roads and tracks open to the public throughout the parks. Trail bike riding often produces high levels of noise, which can disturb park users, neighbours and fauna. Bikes may also affect the condition of roads and tracks. Parks Victoria supports the development of relationships with the peak and local amateur trail bike riding bodies in Victoria.

Conditions
Trail bike riding is permitted on open roads only (roads other than MVOs) throughout the planning area subject to bikes being registered and riders licenced. Tracks may be subject to seasonal closures.

Off-road riding and riding on walking tracks is not permitted.

New and emerging sports and activities

A range of other sports and activities, such as geocaching and ice-climbing, take place in parks and others may emerge in the future. Provided they can be undertaken without impacting park values or creating a risk or disturbance to other visitors, they are generally acceptable. Where an activity starts to affect values through increased popularity or poor practices, Parks Victoria will manage the activity and seek to liaise with the bodies representing participants.

Compliance
While the majority of visitors to the parks act in a safe and responsible manner, abiding by park and other regulations, anti-social behaviour within the parks occurs at times by an irresponsible few. This behaviour can significantly impact on park values, other visitor's experiences and public safety. Enforcement of laws and regulations is undertaken by Victoria Police and authorised officers including wildlife officers, fisheries officers and park rangers.

Due to the remote nature of many of the areas, targeted compliance and enforcement operations through cooperative efforts of Victoria Police, DELWP and Parks Victoria can be required to augment routine patrolling in apprehending and prosecuting incidents of illegal activity.

The community is encouraged to report any observations of illegal activity. This reporting can help plan targeted enforcement operations and patrolling in the parks.

Table 8.3: Summary of recreation activities and conditions

Activity	Zones in National Parks						*Zones in Historic areas*		
	Conservation Zone	Conservation and Recreation Zone	Education Zone	Recreation Development Zone	Wilderness Zone	Reference Area Zone	*Conservation Zone*	*Conservation and Recreation Zone*	*Education Zone*
Bushwalking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Camping – designated areas	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Camping – dispersed	As noted below	As noted below	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
	Not permitted in Mount Buffalo NP. *Permitted in all other parks except within 100 m of designated Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing camping areas, 200 m of other designated camping or picnic area; within 20 m of any waterway or waterbody; or within 200 m of Bogong High Plains Rd, Pretty Valley Rd or Howitt High Plains Rd. Permitted for walkers and cyclists in Errinundra NP.*								
Camping – with horses in designated horse camps	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Camping – dispersed vehicle-based	As noted below	As noted below	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
	Not permitted in Baw Baw, Mount Buffalo and Errinundra NPs. *Permitted in all other parks except within 200 m of any designated camping or picnic area; within 20 m of any waterway or waterbody; or within 200 m of Bogong High Plains Rd, Pretty Valley Rd or Howitt High Plains Rd.*								
Car rallies	No	No	No	No	No	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
Caving	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below	*No*	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below
	A maximum group size of 6 applies. Access prohibited to New Guinea 1 cave between 1st July and 1st December and at all times to New Guinea 2 cave in Snowy River NP, and LC-16, LC-17, MM-2 and MM-5 caves in Alpine NP at all times.								
Competitive events	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Permit required.								
Cross-country skiing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	n/a	n/a	n/a

Activity	Zones in National Parks						*Zones in Historic areas*		
	Conservation Zone	Conservation and Recreation Zone	Education Zone	Recreation Development Zone	Wilderness Zone	Reference Area Zone	*Conservation Zone*	*Conservation and Recreation Zone*	*Education Zone*
Cycling	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below	No	No	*As noted below*	*As noted below*	*As noted below*
	Permitted on: all open roads; and MVOs within Alpine NP (incl. Rocky Valley, Cope East, Cope West, Langford East and Langford West aqueducts), Mount Buffalo NP, Errinundra NP and historic areas. *Not permitted on walking tracks except as noted in appendix 2. Seasonal restrictions apply to cycling.*								
Dog walking on lead	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fires – liquid or gas fuel stove	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fires – solid fuel campfires	As noted below	As noted below	Yes	As noted below	As noted below	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Not permitted on Mt Bogong massif, Mt Feathertop and approaches, Lake Tali Karng VEA or within 1 km of Vallejo Gantner Hut. Only permitted in Baw Baw or Mount Buffalo NPs in designated fireplaces, where firewood may be bought in but not collected. Solid fuel fires permitted elsewhere but must be within a designated fireplace where one is provided, firewood for use in the parks may be collected or bought in.								
Fires – solid fuel portable commercial barbecue appliances	As noted below	As noted below	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Not permitted on Mt Bogong massif, Mt Feathertop and approaches, Lake Tali Karng VEA or within 1 km of Vallejo Gantner Hut.								
Fishing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Collection of live bait not permitted in NPs.								
Fossicking and prospecting including eductor dredging	No	No*	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fossil collection	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Four wheel driving	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guided activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Activity	Zones in National Parks						*Zones in Historic areas*		
	Conservation Zone	Conservation and Recreation Zone	Education Zone	Recreation Development Zone	Wilderness Zone	Reference Area Zone	*Conservation Zone*	*Conservation and Recreation Zone*	*Education Zone*
Hang gliding, paragliding	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Permitted only at the launching ramp at the Gorge, Mount Buffalo NP. Landing in parks not permitted.								
Horse riding	As noted below	As noted below	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Refer to map 4A-J for details of permitted areas and conditions. Not permitted within peatland or wet heathland areas, the banks of the Snowy River (except to cross or drink), or within 1 km of Lake Tali Karng.								
Horse riding – camping	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Refer to map 4A-J for details of permitted areas and conditions. Within Alpine NP within designated horse camping areas subject to a permit and conditions.								
Hunting – conditions applying to all hunting	*Refer to map 5 for details of permitted areas and conditions. Firearms must be stored securely in any vehicle transiting these areas. Loaded firearms and bows are not permitted within 100 m of any camping or picnic area. Firearms and bows must remain unloaded and concealed while being carried in vehicles and while not in actual use for hunting.*								
Hunting – deer stalking	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hunting – deer, with the aid of gundogs	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hunting – species other than deer	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hunting – with the aid of scent trailing hounds	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Motorised vessels	As noted below	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Motorised boats are not permitted except at Rocky Valley Storage, Alpine NP, where they are permitted between sunrise and sunset subject to a speed limit of 10 km/hour, a maximum 10 horse power engine capacity, launch and removal at constructed launching ramps. Not permitted between the dam wall and the red floating beacons, or within 30 m of the shore, except at launching ramps; water skiing, paraflying, kite flying, jet skis, and boats containing toilets or sleeping accommodation are not permitted.								

Activity	Zones in National Parks						*Zones in Historic areas*		
	Conservation Zone	Conservation and Recreation Zone	Education Zone	Recreation Development Zone	Wilderness Zone	Reference Area Zone	*Conservation Zone*	*Conservation and Recreation Zone*	*Education Zone*
Orienteering, rogaining and other organised events	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below	No	No	As noted below	As noted below	As noted below
	Subject to a permit in NPs. Orienteering and rogaining only permitted within Baw Baw NP during snow season.								
Rafting, canoeing and kayaking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trail bike riding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rockclimbing and abseiling	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Access to the cliff face at Paradise Falls, Alpine NP is prohibited from August to December. Prohibited in Little River Gorge within Snowy River NP.								
Snow sports – tobogganing, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing	As noted below	As noted below	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Moulded plastic toboggans are permitted in Alpine NP and on designated toboggan runs in Baw Baw and Mount Buffalo NPs. Skiing, snowshoeing and snowboarding are prohibited on designated toboggan runs. Snowshoeing restricted on groomed ski trails. All conditions may vary with snow conditions.								
Snow vehicles	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	Recreational use of over snow vehicles (skidoos) is not permitted. Use for essential and emergency management purposes (not routine patrol), is permitted subject to minimising use and impacts. Use for training and for supervising competitive events may be permitted.								
Vehicle access (two and four wheel driving and trail bikes)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Permitted on open roads only. Seasonal closures apply.								

Key

Yes Permitted subject to legislation and conditions noted
No Not permitted
n/a Not applicable

Use of generators and chainsaws is not permitted in the parks.

Participants at the Alpine Ecology Course, Bogong High Plains, Alpine National Park

'Community and park visitor education is critical to successful park management. Visitors are more likely to behave well if they understand the values the parks protect, and the impacts inappropriate behaviour can have. Also, a well-informed community is more likely to support any necessary initiatives by park managers aimed at giving better protection to vulnerable ecosystems and/or species.'

— Victorian National Parks Association

8.4 Information, interpretation and education

Information and interpretation play an important role in raising visitor awareness, providing opportunities for visitors to deepen their understanding of the parks' values and management. The Australian Alps National Parks Co-operative Management Program has developed key information and interpretive messages appropriate for the parks under the theme Caring for the Alps – leave no trace, which are available at the AANP website.

Partnerships with peak bodies, recreation groups, tour operators, schools, outdoor education providers, friends groups and volunteers can also develop and deliver information, interpretation and education. There are also opportunities for Parks Victoria to work with Traditional Owners, community groups and conservation and recreation groups, to interpret and share knowledge of the parks.

Visitor centres, park offices, Alpine Resorts and local townships provide visitors with up to date information about the parks through Park Notes and brochures such as touring and activity guides. Visitor information and maps are also included on information boards at popular visitor sites, while signs on access roads help to orientate visitors. Parks Victoria also maintains information on-line and via a phone information service.

The presence of rangers in parks, and informal interaction between rangers and visitors, is an important educational process. To help the community develop a greater understanding of the values of the parks, a range of other interpretive tools is used. These include face-to-face activities such as guided walks, ranger talks and Junior Ranger programs, self-guided tours such as Discovery Tour podcasts and nature trails, and on-site interpretive information displays at specific locations.

Key topics for information and interpretation include:

- The context of the parks and reserves system, why they exist and how they are managed.
- Significant values – flora and fauna, ecology, wilderness, landscape, geology – and the threats they face.
- Aboriginal and post-settlement heritage.
- Opportunities for visitors and minimising impacts from visitation.

The parks offer diverse settings and experiences for education and inspiration. Schools visit the parks for field trips, outdoor education, camping, and adventure activities. Parks Victoria offers extensive web-based material on planning excursions and minimal impact guidelines for schools. A number of schools own property within close proximity and use the parks to enhance their programs and activities.

Outdoor education — educating for healthy relationships through suitable outdoor experiences — is a significant part of why schools visit the parks. Outdoor education offers opportunities for students to develop positive relationships with the environment, others and themselves. These relationships are essential for the wellbeing and future of individuals, society and the environment. Outdoor education experiences contribute to students' lifelong health through a fundamental connection with nature. This connection builds life skills, confidence, self-reliance, teamwork, respect for the environment and appreciation of the value of wilderness.

Goals **Accurate information to assist visitors with planning their visit, on arrival and during their visit is provided.** **Visitors are welcomed and informed of the range of opportunities for enjoyable experiences.**	
Strategies	Park
Work with Shires, Alpine Resorts and regional tourism visitor centres regarding requirements for and distribution of park visit information, including assisting visitors gain access to information on-line.	All
Upgrade information provided at gateway towns to the parks (section 8.2).	All
Investigate and trial the use of technology such as web and mobile phone applications for providing information and interpretation when in the parks and away from the parks.	All
Liaise with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Cooperative to enhance Buchan Caves Visitor Centre's role as an information centre for Snowy River, Errinundra, the eastern section of Alpine National Park and Tara Range Park.	Snowy River NP, Errinundra NP, east Alpine NP, Tara Range Park

Goals Visitors are assisted to understand park values and management, and connect with the parks during their visit. A deeper and stronger understanding of the alps and the high country, environment, culture, and history is inspired in visitors and students.	
Strategies	**Park**
Progressively upgrade and improve interpretation of relevant key themes at priority sites within Visitor Experience Areas, gateway towns and along key touring routes and icon drives (sections 8.1 and 8.2).	All
Investigate use of web and mobile phone applications to deliver interpretive activities to support self-guided experiences in priority Visitor Experience Areas.	All
Adopt consistent design and messages for all interpretive signs and provide suitable interpretive experience for non-English speaking visitors in priority Visitor Experience Areas.	All
Provide opportunities for ranger-led interpretative activities.	All
Support volunteers, tour operators, recreation bodies, the media, and community groups to deliver interpretation programs.	All

Goal The wider community is informed about the rich and diverse Aboriginal culture and connections Traditional Owners have to Country within the parks.	
Strategies	**Park**
Improve information, interpretation and understanding of Aboriginal cultural values, working with Traditional Owners.	All
Incorporate the use of Aboriginal language and place names and support official renaming of sites and features to Aboriginal names (chapter 6).	All

Goal Visitors and students are enriched through learning experiences that inspire a lifelong appreciation of nature, generate a greater appreciation and support for management and develop strong links between healthy parks, community health and personal wellbeing.	
Strategies	**Park**
Investigate the feasibility of providing discovery rangers and guides to expand face-to-face education.	Alpine NP
Support schools in delivering outdoor education and curriculum	All
Promote school–park partnerships and student and school involvement with other volunteer programs.	All

Audax Alpine Classic participants at Dingo Dell, Mount Buffalo National Park

8.5 Visitor economies

The parks play an important role in supporting nature-based tourism in north-east Victoria and Gippsland providing significant economic returns to local communities. IUCN guidelines assist protected area managers in the planning and management of tourism in protected areas so that tourism can develop in a sustainable fashion, while respecting local conditions and local communities. A key principle is that 'The natural and cultural environment within the protected area should form the basis for all other uses and values affecting the park and its management. These fundamental assets must not be put at risk' (Eagles et al. 2002). Parks Victoria provides for visitors, tour operators and other commercial operations within the constraints of the primary objective of the parks and historic areas, that is, to preserve and protect the natural environment and heritage values. Managing the impacts from climate change on key values and flow on tourism disruptions from increasing fire, flood and storm will be an ongoing challenge for park managers and the tourism industry.

The planning area is part of the Australian Alps National Landscape and the Visit Victoria's High Country and Gippsland tourism regions.

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources is the Government's tourism agency, providing research and policy guidance and working with the industry to develop tourism within Victoria, including identifying tourism opportunities across the State.

The Alpine Resorts

Three Alpine Resorts – Falls Creek, Mount Hotham and Mount Baw Baw – and Dinner Plain Village provide a gateway to the parks and infrastructure for accommodation, food and other services. Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Alpine Resorts also border the park and increasingly visited by park visitors as part of their hiking or four wheel drive journeys. Visitor locations close to Falls Creek – such as Rocky Valley Dam and Wallace's Hut area – are anticipated to become increasingly popular. Some of the Visitor Experience Area overlays (maps 2A-H) provide a focus for a seamless journey from park to resort and account for anticipated increased visitation in non-winter months. Popular short walks in the area will be maintained as a high visitor experience area.

The historic Star Hotel at Walhalla

The proposed Falls Creek to Hotham Alpine Crossing is a three-day walk linking the Falls Creek and Mount Hotham Resorts within the Visitor Experience Area overlays (maps 2A–H). The walk will be a signature remote multi-day experience for organised tour groups and independent walkers. Taking in popular locations like Wallaces Hut, Red Robin Mine and Mount Feathertop, the walk will include upgraded tracks and campsites with bookable tent platforms and information.

The Great Walhalla Alpine Trail is a joint venture between Baw Baw Alpine Resort and the Star Hotel, Walhalla. The trail is a fully guided and catered walk over 40 km of the Australian Alps Walking Track linking Mount Baw Baw Resort with Walhalla township through Baw Baw National Park and Walhalla Historic Area. Accommodation is provided at the resort, Walhalla township and camping en route.

The Falls Creek Village Master Plan (FCAR 2014) proposes a new entrance — the Gully Gateway — at the entrance of the resort village. The proposed Gateway includes a centre providing orientation, information, interpretation and museum facilities and presents an opportunity for Parks Victoria to showcase the park. As a consequence, the proposal in the draft plan for a Victorian Alps Centre is no longer required.

Licensed tour operators

The parks are used by a number of licensed tour operators and recreation or education providers. The parks are also popular places for organised recreational, sporting, cultural and social events.

Goal Sustainable nature-based tourism experiences around nature, life in the mountains, Aboriginal culture and cultural heritage are supported to generate opportunities for economic and social benefits to communities, including Traditional Owners.	
Strategies	**Park**
Facilitate licensed tour operations. Ensure commercial and encourage other groups adhere to appropriate standards for their activity, such as Adventure Activity Standards, including group sizes.	All All
Continue to permit limited commercial horse riding over Long and Eskdale Spurs, Mt Bogong (horses must remain on Long Spur and Eskdale Spur tracks and are not permitted west of Eskdale Point) subject to monitoring social and environmental impacts and the conditions outlined in table 8.2.	Mt Bogong Area, Alpine NP
Assist tour operators to work with Traditional Owners. Support Traditional Owners and Aboriginal businesses delivering nature-based tourism services.	Snowy River NP and All
Complete planning and feasibility assessment for the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing, including new types of accommodation and a new or realigned walking track in the Diamantina Spur area.	Alpine NP
Implement improvements to visitor facilities and infrastructure at The Gorge. Investigate the feasibility of new types of accommodation in Mount Buffalo National Park.	Mount Buffalo NP
Work with Visit Victoria, as the lead agency for promotion, and Shires, regional tourism bodies, tour operators, Alpine Resorts and other land managers to promote nature-based tourism destinations and experiences.	All
Work in partnership with Shires and the tourism industry in managing and communicating tourism disruptions from increasing flood, storm and fire impacts from climate change.	All
Provide orientation, information, interpretation for museum and other facilities in a Gully Gateway Day Centre in Falls Creek resort as proposed in the Falls Creek Master Plan.	Alpine NP
Maintain touring routes and icon drives such as Walhalla and Mountain Rivers Trail, Snowy Plains Heritage Drive, Great Alpine Drive and Wonnangatta, Davies Plain and Snowy River Icon four wheel drive Adventures.	Walhalla HA, Snowy River NP, Alpine NP
Support the Great Walhalla Alpine Trail (Walhalla to Mt Baw Baw Alpine Resort) through track maintenance, signage and information.	Baw Baw NP, Walhalla HA
Recognise adjacent communities such as Harrietville, Licola and Mansfield as key elements of the park visitor experience and economies.	All, noted in VEAs (refer to section 8.1)
Investigate options for supporting and improving visitor experiences at Howqua Hills Historic Area.	Howqua Hills HA

White water rafting, Mitta Mitta River, Alpine National Park

8.6 Risks and safety

Parks Victoria undertakes risk mitigation works throughout the parks estate, ensuring buildings and facilities are maintained at the required standards. Elements of risk, however, are always present in the outdoors and associated with all recreation activities. Visitors need to be aware of these risks and be responsible for their own actions. Providing information and educating park users are the most effective ways to increase awareness of risks and promote safety. This is done through pre-visit information such as Park Notes and on-site information. High risk recreation activities in the planning area include hang gliding, rock climbing, abseiling and cycling/mountain biking (Newspoll 2006; Parks Victoria 2007).

Parks Victoria is a support agency for bushfire, search and rescue and road incidents and a control agency for waterway pollution. Parks Victoria is responsible for response to emergency flood, and rehabilitation, clearing and restoration of roads and other assets in parks. Parks Victoria prepares Emergency Management Plans for all parks across the State. These plans are integrated with municipal emergency management plans and provide procedures for responding to a range of emergency situations, such as search and rescue, fire, flood and visitor behaviour problems. Chapter 5 sets out further actions to manage bushfire risk and safety.

Goal Safety incidents and impacts on visitors and staff are minimised.	
Strategies	**Park**
Maintain facilities in a condition that allows for safe use.	All
Increase visitor awareness of potential risks associated with key sites and activities.	All
Work with visitor and user groups and Licensed Tour Operators to encourage and promote safe practices, training and awareness of relevant codes of practice.	All

Goal Emergency incidents are responded in a timely, appropriate and coordinated manner.	
Strategies	**Park**
Maintain Emergency Management Plans for the parks.	All
Ensure staff are prepared and trained to respond appropriately to emergency situations.	All

Maisie's Pretty Valley research plots, established in 1947 on the Bogong High Plains, Alpine National Park

9 Research and monitoring

Management is based on the best available science and insights gained from monitoring programs and communities are used to adapt and improve management. Innovation in exploring ways to enhance management effectiveness is encouraged.

9.1 Research and monitoring

Research and monitoring are essential components of park management, providing objective evidence to support decision-making and informing how and when intervention is required. Scientific study relating to the conservation of the environment in parks is listed as one of the 'Objects' of the National Parks Act. Research can be applied (targeted to specific objectives), fundamental (to improve basic knowledge) or opportunistic. Research for park management includes ecology, cultural heritage, recreation and social sciences.

An outstanding feature of research and monitoring in the alpine parks is the long-term focus, with some studies extending back 70 years (Williams et al. 2014). Long-term studies on vegetation change, plant and animal population dynamics (including pest plants and animals), fire regimes and their impacts on the environment, the effects of livestock grazing (and its cessation) on alpine vegetation, hydrology, aquatic ecology, and the potential effects of climate change on ecosystems have all influenced park management. Research and monitoring will continue to be a fundamental component of managing the parks in the face of substantial environmental change in the coming decades.

While DELWP maintains statewide inventory databases for flora, fauna and vegetation, there is a need for systematic, long term monitoring of biodiversity in Victoria (Bennett et al. 2009). Parks Victoria has a collaborative research program with leading universities and research institutions through its Research Partners Program. Partner agencies including DELPW, AALC and catchment management authorities also undertake research and monitoring on issues such as water quality, threatened species and fire effects.

Adaptive management is a technique in which the outcomes of programs are designed to allow them to be readily monitored and evaluated to gauge success. Based on the evaluation, management is adjusted to improve outcomes.

Integral to park management is gathering data on the health or condition of particular focus areas or assets. This enables improved decisions to be implemented based on science supported by local and social knowledge and citizen science. Monitoring for change will be essential to inform management responses to climate change (section 4.1). Parks Victoria's Signs of Healthy Parks monitoring program forms the basis for monitoring of the key threats to environmental assets and their active adaptive management.

Goal Management decisions and techniques are improved through enhanced ecological, cultural and visitor use knowledge and the effectiveness of management programs is monitored and evaluated.	
Strategies	**Park**
Promote ecological research that addresses key information gaps and increases understanding of priority ecological assets and threats (see indicative table 9.1) and continue to exclude general access to research and revegetation plots.	All
Develop Signs of Healthy Parks monitoring plans incorporating priority ecological assets and threats.	All
Use the World Commission on Protected Areas framework to undertake park adaptive management including effectiveness evaluation to inform future management.	All
Work with Research Partners in coordinating, applying and promoting management focused research and establishing regional science and knowledge partnerships.	All
Work with the AALC to co-ordinate multiple agency research partnerships.	Baw Baw NP, Alpine NP, Snowy River NP, Mt Buffalo NP Avon WP
Support research partners and organisations to undertake activities that assist park management.	All
Work with Traditional Owners to research and document Aboriginal cultural values including places, stories, names, travel routes and heritage sites, and apply traditional ecological knowledge and land management practices to contemporary park management.	All
Work with DELWP and agencies to support fire research and monitoring in particular of baseline information of priority species and threats and the effects on biodiversity of planned burning and bushfires.	Al
Work with DELWP and agencies to support invasive species research and monitoring and evaluation in particular the effectiveness of programs and techniques.	All
Improve knowledge and understanding of community connections.	All
Monitor cultural values and assets, in particular for any impacts from visitors or management. Increase knowledge and understanding of the location and significance of historic sites and structures, maintenance and protection methods.	All
Continue to undertake research to increase knowledge and understanding of visitor use trends, patterns, needs, experiences, satisfaction and methods for managing impacts and conflicts.	All

Monitoring Bogong Apple Moss, a threatened species, on the Bogong High Plains

Table 9.1: Key ecological research questions

PRIORITY THEME Key ecological research questions	Natural Ecosystem			
	Alps	Wet Forest & Rainforest	Dry Forest & Wood-lands	Inland Waters & Wetlands
FIRE				
What are the long-term outcomes for ecosystem resilience by adopting the current bushfire management strategy?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What were the Traditional Owner methods and the effects of managing fire?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What are the impacts of fire on open forests from changing the open vegetation structure to forests dominated by a dense scrub layer?			✔	
INVASIVE SPECIES				
What is the existing and predicted extent, abundance and impact of large introduced herbivores on soils and biota?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What is the existing and predicted extent, abundance and ecological impacts of herbaceous and woody weeds?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What invasive species control techniques are likely to be most effective and feasible? What are the effects of herbicides on native vegetation?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What is the existing and predicted extent, abundance and ecological impacts of introduced predators?		✔	✔	
What effect will establishing dingo conservation areas in the parks (away from private property) have on control of overgrazers and regulation on the meso predators (foxes and cats).	✔	✔	✔	✔
What are the effects on introduced fish species on different riparian/aquatic ecosystems and their biota? What management techniques can minimise effects of introduced fish on native species?				✔

Table 9.1: (continued)

PRIORITY THEME Key ecological research questions	Natural Ecosystem			
	Alps	Wet Forest & Rainforest	Dry Forest & Wood-lands	Inland Waters & Wetlands
CLIMATE CHANGE				
What is the role of these parks in providing climate refugia and habitat connectivity?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What biota are most at risk from predicted temperature increases and rainfall changes and where?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What are management implications of predicted future climate impacts?	✔	✔	✔	✔
TRADITIONAL OWNER KNOWLEDGE				
What are the key cultural signs such as individual resource values, and stories of healthy alpine and High Country?	✔	✔	✔	✔
FLORA AND FAUNA AND ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES				
What is the extent of recovery of species and ecological processes from past land use disturbances?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What are the relationships between the key predators and their prey species, particularly after major events such as fire?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What management techniques are likely to be the most cost effective for ecosystem restoration?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What are the habitat requirements and condition, distribution and abundance of key faunal groups, such as ground dwelling mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians?	✔	✔	✔	✔
What are the key control and management intervention techniques for chytridiomycosis mitigation to encourage self-sustaining wild populations.	✔	✔	✔	✔
WATER				
What are the effects of changed fire regimes on water yield (including recovery of water yield) and water quality?	✔			✔
What are the effects of changed water regimes on streams and aquatic ecosystems?	✔	✔		✔
What is the role of surface water versus ground water in alpine catchments?	✔			✔
HUMAN IMPACTS				
What are the effects of visitor and other human uses of the parks on biota of the parks?	✔			✔
SOILS AND GEOLOGY				
What are the effects of disturbance on alpine soils (including effects on water quality)?	✔			

Mt Ellery track,
Errinundra National Park

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Appendix 1

Submissions on the draft management plan

A total of 508 written submissions were received on the draft management plan, which was released for comment from June to August 2014. Submissions were received from the individuals and organisations as listed below. Fourteen submissions marked as confidential are not listed.

Individuals — Submission number and name

18	Sally Adams	30	Linda Bottom	201	Shelly Cohan	263	Margaret Edwards
127	Mae Adams	226	Jennifer Breedon	115	Anita Coia	348	Clive Edwards
41	Robert Adams	39	Barbara Brennan	406	Jean Colguhoun	450	Leah Eisen
55	Brett Adolphson	446	Gerard Brereton	277	Robert Coller	104	Trevor Evans
418	Rebecca Ainsworth	281	Gary Brooker	84	Bridget Collier	121	Graham Evans
178	James Anderson	130	Rod Brooks	133	Lindus Conlan	48	Nancy Fahey
179	James Anderson	153	Jennifer Brown	227	David Coppolino	270	Dave Falzon
24	Mandy Andrews	262	Gillian Brown	259	Philippa Coull	203	Rosmary Faris
297	Helen Appleby	34	Greg Bryan	247	Eli Court	354	Michael Feller
407	Rob Armstrong	95	Meredith Budge	65	Michael & Helen Craig	143	Maqrgaret Finch
4	Jeffe Aronson	465	Mark Burrows	81	Mick Cranko	21	Carol Fletcher
306	Christine Ashburner	177	Barabara Butler	108	Wendy Crebbin	142	Mick Floyd
311	Simon Attard	188	Jennifer Caddaye	74	Marilyne Crestias	113	Jacqueline Flynn
331	Melanie Attard	275	Shaun Caddaye	385	Richard Crispin	125	Sue Forrester
333	Daniel Attard	194	Daniel Caffrey	349	Robin Crocker	32	Elizabeth Fowler
207	Bronwyn Baade	23	Angela Callard	225	Lynne Crookes	274	Murray Frazer
388	Robin Bailey	131	Warren Cameron	56	Danny Crossman	480	Helen Gardiner
106	Tamsin Baker	12	Tim Campbell	444	Kevin Cullen	158	Robin Gardner
222	Wendy Baker	49	Catriona Campbell	371	Gennaro D'Alessandro	470	Mrs Gardner
314	Sandrine Balbo	219	Bruce Campbell	328	Jonathan Davies	429	Steve Garlick
111	Ross Balharrie	137	Patricia Carden	147	Nick Day	287	Judith Gibson
246	Pam Bannister	57	Maree Carroll	269	Dave Deakin	251	Chris Gittins
346	Andrea Barnes	309	Anthony Carroll	204	Haydn Deane	443	Darrel Glessing
452	Darryl Bastin	193	Tommy Castles	278	Elizabeth Dearn	136	Julie Goodall
334	Laurie Batiste	351	John Cayley	325	Trevor Dennis	231	Jason Goodall
40	Gary Battershill	124	Prue Cerin	340	Maddaleine-Bently Dennis	114	Geoffrey Goode
72	Naomi Beacham	295	Gavin Cerini	67	Elise Dewar	64	Douglas Goodwin
112	Nick Bell	296	Gavin Cerini	357	Bill Di Donna	255	Deborah Goosdon
69	Holly Bennett	77	Carol Challis	35	Kathy Diener	26	Marcia Gosper
166	Rudy Bettanin	293	Marguerite Chamberlain	473	Scott Dizais	120	Keith Graham
196	Celia Bevan	221	Jean Christie	87	Robyn Dobson	141	Moira Graham
317	Ann Birrell	110	Rhonda Chung	157	Glenda Dodd	58	Carole Gray
442	David Blair	384	Collen Clancy	318	Markus Doll	256	Sheila Greenwell
448	Sera Blair	464	Gary & Suzanne Clark	330	Gregory Downes	172	Samantha Greiner
42	Natasha Blaker	335	Lani Climpson	27	Rosemary Downing	304	Melva Griffiths
192	Leif Bloomer	369	Stuart Coggin	393	David Duckett	321	Noel Griffiths
300	Jenny Bolger	201	Shelly Cohan	291	Brian Dungey	310	Ken Grimes
63	Anne Bolitho	115	Anita Coia	494	David Dunlatt	90	John & Shirley Gunson
168	Regina Bos	406	Jean Colguhoun	232	Samantha Dunn	62	Suzanne Gwilym
128	Stephen Haley	91	Joan Kinnon	342	Jeremiah Mierke	174	Bru Phillips

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101	Richard Halford	374	Nick Kirshner	481	Frances Miller	199	Louise Phillips
47	Sam Hand	424	Natalie Kirshner	107	Matt Missen	389	Jill Pickering
186	James Hands	401	Shauna Knee & Richard Rankin	126	Jan Mitchell	495	David Plozza
414	Charles Hardy	483	Dawn Kneen	258	Marilyn Moore	292	Kate Powell
245	Jim Harker	484	Max Knight	271	Rosie Moore	213	Ian Price
243	Megan Hartridge	76	Toby Koberle	156	Peter Morison	118	Michael Quinn
273	Douglas Harvey	66	Anne Kotzman	299	Thomas Moritz	181	Patricia Rabl
200	Lyn Harwood	92	Jan Lacey	14	Geof Moseley	214	Peter Radford
305	Prue Hasler	260	Geoff Lacey	61	Katie Moss	412	Janet Radford
212	Michael Haynes	356	Malcolm Laurence	29	Michelle & Paul Moulden	413	Janet Radford
17	Nikki Hearne	378	Patrick Leary	499	Diana & Gordon Mundy	463	Janusz Radwanski
462	Donald Heater	59	Alan Leenaerts	123	Laura Munns	404	Robyn Rattray-Wood
198	Cathie Hellstedt	154	Anthony Legg	99	Janet Munro	202	Doug Read
433	Carl Henczel	19	Sue Leitner	169	Dave Munro	301	Verena Reich
94	Glenn Henke	282	Kate Leslie	381	Maree & Marty Myhill	458	John Renowden
285	Alfred Heuperman	122	Edward Lloyd	332	Ruth Naismith	475	Paula Rhodes
134	Alan Hewett	490	Anne Lorraine	411	Isabelle Napier	46	Heath Rickard
240	Vanessa Hewson	284	Nicole Lowe	437	Anne Napier	352	Christine Riddall
60	Jill Heydon	373	Andrew Luke	165	Grace Neff	82	Robert Rio
506	Taylah Hill	161	Giorsal Lyall	1	Norm Nelson	250	Angela Robinson
70	Timothy Hill	379	Danielle Mackay	2	Norm Nelson	320	Isabel Robinson
235	Cristina Hill	427	Dawn Mackay	3	Norm Nelson	229	Helen Rommelaar
80	Jack Hoadley	326	Rob Mackenzie	344	Jaclyn Neville	105	Premjyoti Ross
102	Bevan Hood	25	Julie Madin	345	Bradly Neville	16	Chris Rudd
103	Jen Hooper	86	Sylvia Mair	216	Grant Nichol	339	Salv Salanitri
257	Gil Hopkins	54	Anthony Mann	171	Sheina Nicholls	31	Alan Salter
117	Peter Howe	183	Sue Mann	144	Chris Nicholson	45	John Sampson
438	Ian Howley	365	Annie Marlow	36	Renata Nitschke	280	Sandra Sampson
190	Leonie Hudson	383	Allan Marsland	162	Rowan None	478	Rod & Jill Sanders
425	Chelle Hungerford	211	Anwyn Martin	210	Anne Norman	316	Madhumati Saraswati
324	Andrea Hunt	493	Adam Martin	175	Rodney Novak	176	Jenifer Saulwick
307	Catherine Irwin	398	Anne Martinelli	417	Anthony Novak	472	Don Saunders
129	Nick Ivanoff	195	Teresa Martin-Lim	469	Tom Nuzzaco	173	John Saw
486	Peter Jack	139	Paul May	224	Anna O'Brien	98	Tony Schnaedelbach
426	Keith James	361	Winston May	249	Ann O'Connor	149	Michael Schwarz
50	Alice Jane	336	Kathryn McCullagh	432	Amy O'Dell	28	Allison Seeley
73	Doug Jenkin	10	Stewart McEwen	109	Rodney Orr	428	Russell Sharman
456	Diana Jensen	138	Kylie McGenniskin	376	Stephen O'Ryan	338	Peter Shave
453	Harry Jensen	93	Peta McGregor	380	Patrick & Beverly O'Ryan	96	Peter Shaw
164	Lucy Jones	410	Ken McInnes	244	Andrew Parsons	209	AN & DA Silva
254	Karen Jones	146	Colin McLaren	252	Janine Passlow	396	Deirdre Slattery
403	Sandy Jones	22	Rebecca McLennan	75	Wendy Paterson	11	Ken Slee
394	Michelle Judd	375	Desleigh Mcmahon	52	Ric Pawsey	217	Maris Sleger
421	Ian Julian	167	Nicole McManus	497	Angie Pearce	152	Colin Smith
279	Wally Jurowicz	78	Sapphire McMullan-Fisher	408	Karen Pedersen	312	Amanda Smith
79	Charlotte Kandelaars	237	Lucy McMurray	266	Stanislaw Pelczynski	366	Anna Smith
276	Stace Karikis	302	Kylie McQualter	163	Aldo Penbrook	208	Brian Snape AM
197	Barry Kemp	236	Alison McShane	367	Stephen Pennells	329	Ilana Sowter
419	Iain Kemp	477	Sally & Hugh Mellor	116	John Petheram	184	Stuart Spark

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303	Regina Splinetti	368	Lurline Thorp	479	Robert Wallace	135	Glenn Wilson
364	Warwick Sprawson	355	Jaclyn Tindale	148	Russell Wanklyn	187	Leanne Wilson
370	Robert Springer	20	Arn Tolsma	215	Margaret Wanklyn	239	Shauna-Marie Wilson
451	Karen Stott	159	David Tomkins	85	David Wanless	248	Lesley Wilson
261	Lisa Stuart	8	Michael Trigg	323	Bruce Warren	315	Andrew Winbanks
71	Sue Sturup	503	Dan Tropp	372	Gerard & Jan Webb	191	Sandra Winzar
230	Bob Tate	6	Fred Tropp-Asher	468	Brent Wejendorp	387	Hans Witteveen
88	Julie Tavener	502	Frederick Tropp-Asher	53	Mark Wellard	160	Heidi Wollum
33	Ted Taylor	140	Alan Truscott	182	Ken Whitney	68	Stephen Wood
151	Cindy Taylor	313	Lewis Tulk	283	Isabel Widdison	205	Jennifer Woods
170	Jonathon Temby	189	James Turner	238	Michael Wild	272	Hayley Woodward
363	Liz Terrey	382	Andi Tyndall	83	Monty Williams	51	Jeremy Woolhouse
220	Matt Tetteroo	420	Andrew Tytherleigh	145	Melissa Williams	353	Bill Woolmore
395	Mary Thackeray	155	Maxine van Zuylen	206	Terri Williams	89	Adele Wotzke
132	Jill Thio	267	Peter Venour	150	Ann Williamson	487	Cate Young
360	Bernard Thole	399	Selin Veral	223	Lil Williamson	488	Catherine Young
119	Tony Thomas	466	Graham Vickery	180	Gary Wills	489	Margaret Young
461	Dianne Thompson	415	Jim Walker	97	Matt Wilson	100	Deborah Zinn
435	Richard Thomson					459	Reto Zollinger

Organisations — Submission number and name

5	Adventure Guides Australia	44	Land, Fire & Environment DELWP
185	Alexandra and District Horsemen's Association	507	Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club Inc
457	Alpine Helicopter Charter	350	Licola Community Representative Group
498	Alpine Resorts Coordination Council	43	Man from Snowy River Bush Festival Inc
492	Alpine Shire Council	440	National Dingo Preservation and Recovery Program Inc.
423	ATHRA The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association	504	North East Catchment Management Authority
294	Australian Brumby Alliance	7	North East Deer Stalkers Association
289	Australian Brumby House Register	253	North Eastern Deer Stalkers Association
377	Australian Deer Association (Victoria)	422	Omeo Action Group
234	Barefoot Australia	501	Post Polio Victoria
242	Baringhup Trail Riders & Maryborough Adult Riding Club	476	PETA
482	Bogong Horseback Adventures	15	Post Polio Victoria Inc.
474	Brumby Working Group	37	Riddells Creek Trail Horse Riding Club
286	Bunroy Station	288	Save the Brumbies Inc.
290	Bushwalking Victoria	337	Snowy Mountains Bush Users Group Inc.
41	Cochran Horse Treks	390	Snowy Mountains Horse Riders Association (NSW & Vic)
445	East Gippsland Rainforest Conservation Management Network	397	Southern Fly Fishers Australia Inc
508	East Gippsland Shire Council	485	Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (VIC)
38	Environment East Gippsland	327	SSAA Deerstalkers Club
491	Environmental Justice Australia	439	The Australasian Native Orchid Society
343	Evolve	467	The Friends of Eastern Otways
434	Falls Creek Resort Management	400	The Gippsland Environment Group
455	Field and Game Australia	13	Tom Groggin Station
9	Forest Fire Victoria	319	Tom Groggin Station
416	Four Wheel Drive Victoria	322	Tourism & Research Forum
218	Friends of Bogong Inc	500	Tourism and Transport Forum
405	Friends of Errinundra	496	Victorian Brumby Association
264	Game Management Authority	362	Victorian Hound Hunters
265	Game Management Authority	505	Victorian National Parks Association
471	Geelong Environment Council Inc.	341	Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body
391	Gypsie Lodge Equestrian Centre	308	Wellington Shire Council
436	Harrietville Community Forum (HCF)	233	West Gippsland CMA
441	Heritage Council of Victoria		
359	King Valley Tourism Association		

Appendix 2

Walking track grades and access for horse riding and cycling

GRADE 1	Well signposted, flat, broad, hard surfaced track, suitable for independent wheelchair use. Width of 1200 mm or more. Gradient not exceeding 1:14 (7.14% slope or 4.1 degrees with rest landings as per AS 2156). Well maintained with minimal intrusions. Users need no previous experience and are expected to exercise normal care regarding their personal safety.
GRADE 2	Clearly signposted. Generally a modified or hardened surface, gentle hills with a slope not exceeding 1:10 or 10% may be suitable for assisted wheelchair use. Width is 900 mm or more. Well maintained with minimal intrusions; may have some steps. Users need no previous experience and are expected to exercise normal care regarding their personal safety. Not exceeding 10 km in length.
GRADE 3	Formed earthen track, signposted with few obstacles. Generally a modified surface, sections may be hardened. May include short, steep climbs, flights of well-formed staircases with up to 20 steps and minor creek crossings. May encounter short sections of rock hopping with wide foot placements and narrow gaps to step over. Width is variable to 1200 mm. Mostly clear of intrusions and obstacles. Users need no experience and a minimum level of specialised skills. Users are responsible for their own safety. Less than 20 km in length.
GRADE 4	Generally distinct without major modification to the ground (though may be modified for visitor safety or assistance). Limited signage. Encounters with fallen debris and other obstacles are likely. May have longer, rough, steep arduous sections, many steep uneven steps or many flights of steps. May have extensive rock hopping which may include narrow foot placement surfaces and varying gap distances to step over. May encounter natural obstacles such as tides or creek crossings subject to flash flooding. Users need to be self-reliant with a level of experience with skills in navigation and use of maps. May be over 20 km in length.
GRADE 5	No modification of the natural environment; track is essentially unconstructed and may be indistinct. May include; arduous steep climbs exceeding 1:10, extensive rock hopping over long distances with narrow foot placements with varying gaps to step over, and/or rock scrambling (sections where hands are used to assist progress). Users need to be self-reliant for emergency first aid and weather hazards. Users require previous experience in the outdoors and a high level of specialised skills such as navigation in areas where signage is limited or absent. May be over 20 km in length.
Vehicle Tracks	Vehicle tracks are available for walking. Cycling is permitted on management vehicle only tracks except those in Wilderness Areas and Reference Areas. This access may be subject to seasonal closures applying to cycling on tracks in the vicinity of the MVOs. Cycling is not permitted on seasonally closed tracks except as specified below.

HORSE RIDING

Riding not permitted except as indicated:

Y riding on track permitted; dispersed riding not permitted.

D dispersed riding permitted in area, including on track.

CYCLING

Off-track cycling not permitted.
Cycling permitted on walking tracks as follows:

Y cycling permitted

P proposed, subject to consultation

Baw Baw National Park (map 3A)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT – Mt Baw Baw link	4		
AAWT – Mt Baw Baw link to Stronachs	5		
AAWT – Walhalla HA to Mt Baw Baw Link	4		
Beech Gully Track	3		
Mt St Gwinear tracks	4		
Old Steel Bridge Track – Zig Zag Track	3	Y	P
Thomson Valley Tramway	4		P
Upper Yarra Track	4		
Winter Walking track	4		

Mount Buffalo National Park (maps 3B, 3C)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Andersons Peak	5		
Back Wall	3		
Big Walk	3		
Cathedral and The Hump	3		
Chalwell Galleries	3		
Dickson Falls	3		
Eurobin Falls	3		
Gorge Heritage Trail	2		
Lake View	4		
Lakeside Walk (Lake Catani Circuit)	3		P
Le Souef Plateau	3		
Long Plain - Giants Causeway links	4		P
Long Plain and Mt Dunn	3		P
Macs Point	4		P
Mollison Galleries	4		
Monolith area and access	3		
Mt McLeod (Mt McLeod campground to summit)	4		
North Buffalo Bridle Trail	4		P
Og, Gog and Magog	3		P
Old Galleries	5		
Reed Lookout	4		
Rollasons Falls	3		
South Buffalo	3		
The Horn	3		
Underground River	3		
View Point	3		
Wilkinson Lookout	3		

Alpine National Park – Crinoline and Wellington River area (map 3D)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Crinoline–MG school camp	5		
Long Hill (Tamboritha – Crinoline)	5		
McMillans Tk – Wellington River–Bennison Plains	4	D	

Alpine National Park – Howitt–Snowy Plains area (map 3D)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Bryce Gorge Circuit Walk	4		
Bryce Plain/Guys Hut – Wonnangatta	5	Y (1)	
Dry River (Howitt Hut to Wonnangatta)	4	D	

Alpine National Park – Moroka–Pinnacle area (map 3D)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Moroka Gorge (Horseyard Flat to Shanty Hollow)	5		
Moroka Hut	3	D	
Snowy Bluff – Dawson Ridge	5		
Moroka Gap	5	D	

Alpine National Park – Mt Arbuckle area (map 3D)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Mt Arbuckle – Lost Plain	5		
Mt Reynard/Arbuckle Tk	5	D	

Alpine National Park – Tali Karng area (map 3D)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Clive Lanigan Memorial Track	4	Y (2)	
Echo Point (Tali Karng)	4	Y (3)	Y (3)
Gable End – The Sentinels	5	D	
Gillios Track	3		
Millers	4	D	Y
Mt Margaret – Chromite Mine	5	D	
Riggal Spur	3	D	Y
Spion Kopje (Tali Karng area)	5	D	
Wellington Plain	3	D	
Wellington River	4		Y

NOTES

1 Horses not permitted on Bryce Plain; direct access to Guys Hut is permitted.

2 Horse access restricted to lower section of track.

3 Horse and bicycle access permitted to hitching rail only.

Alpine National Park – Wonnangatta–Moroka area (map 3D)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
D4 Tk, Moroka Rd – Moroka River	5		
Moroka River Track	5		

Alpine National Park – Eagles Peaks area (map 3E)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Eagles Peaks – Eight Mile Gap	4		
Eagles Peaks – Mt Darling link	5		
Eagles Peaks – Sheepyard Flat	4		
Lickhole Creek – Mt Darling	5	D	
Upper Jamieson Hut – Mt McDonald	5		

Alpine National Park – Howqua River–Mount Howitt area (map 3E)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT – Howqua Feeder – Howitt Spur	4	D	
AAWT – King Billies – Mt Howitt	4	D	
AAWT – Mt Clear – King Billies	4	D	
AAWT – Mt Howitt – Mt Speculation	4		
AAWT – Mt Macdonald – The Nobs	4		
AAWT – The Nobs – Mt Clear	4		
Buller West Ridge	4		
Four Mile Spur	4		
Fourteen Mile Spur	5		
Helicopter Spur	5		
King Spur	5		
Mitchell Bridle Trail	4	D	
Mt Howitt	4	D	
Queen Spur	5		
Square Head	5		
Stanleys Name Spur	4		
Wonnangatta Spur (Zeka Spur)	5	D	

Alpine National Park – The Bluff area (map 3E)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Bluff Plateau	4	D	
Eight Mile Spur	4		

Alpine National Park – Mt Cobbler–Mt Speculation area (map 3F)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Cobbler Plateau	4		
Dandongadale Falls	4		
Mount View	5		
King Spur – Mt Koonika – Mt Speculation	5		
Muesli Spur	5		

Alpine National Park – King and Howqua Rivers (map 3F)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Catherine Saddle – Terrible Hollow	5		

Alpine National Park – Razor–Viking area (map 3F)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT – Barry Saddle – Mt St Bernard	4	D	
AAWT – Mt Speculation – The Viking	4		
AAWT – The Viking – Barry Saddle	4		
Viking – Wonnangatta and Blue Hills	5		

Alpine National Park – Wabonga Plateau (map 3F)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Bridle Trail	5	D	
Paradise Falls Track	4		

Alpine National Park – Mt Bogong (map 3G)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT – Long Spur	4	Y	
AAWT – T Spur	4		
Cairn Creek	5		
Eskdale Spur	4		
Howman Falls	4		
Peppermint Walk	3		
The Staircase (Bogong)	3		
Granite Flat Spur	4		
Quartz Ridge	4		

Alpine National Park – Bogong High Plains North (map 3G)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
107 Track	4	D	
AAWT – Bogong High Plains Rd – Heathy Spur	4	D	P
AAWT – Heathy Spur – Ropers Hut	4	D	P
AAWT – Ropers Hut – Duane Spur	4		

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Batty Hut	5	D	
Edmondson Hut	4	D	P
Grey Hills	5	D	
Heathy Spur Tk	4	D	
Johnson Hut	4	D	P
Kelly Track	4	D	P
Ropers Lookout	3		
Timms Spur	5	D	

Alpine National Park – Bogong High Plains South (map 3H)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT – Swindlers Spur–Basalt Temple–Youngs Top	4		
AAWT – Youngs Top to High Plains Rd	4	D	
Brabralung Trail (Dinner Plain – Mt Hotham)	4		Y
Carmichael Falls	3		
Dead Timber Hill	3	D	
Langford Aqueduct	2	D	
Mt Cope	3		
Paling Spur	5	D	
Red Robin – Dibbins Hut – Swindlers Gap	4	D	
Room With a View	3		
Tabletop	4	D	
Wallace Hut Nature walk	2		
Weston Spur	4	D	
Young Hut	5	D	
Youngs Top	5	D	

Alpine National Park – Mount Feathertop (map 3H)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Bon Accord Spur	3	Y	P
Bungalow Spur	3		
Diamantina Spur	4		
Harrietville Nature Trail	3	Y	
North Razorback	4		
Northwest Spur	4		
Razorback	3		

Alpine National Park – Jaithmathang–Fainters area (map 3H)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Fainter Track	4	D	Y
Mt Jaithmathang	4	D	
Mt Jim – Tawaonga Huts	5	D	

Alpine National Park – Dartmouth–Davies Plain area (map 3I)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT - Gill Creek to Taylors Crossing	4	D	
AAWT - Taylors Crossing to Mt Murphy	4	D	
Harringtons Track	4	Y	

Alpine National Park – Cobberas–Tingaringy area (map 3J)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT - Mt Murphy to NSW	5	D	
Tingaringy Falls	4		

Errinundra National Park (map 3K)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Aspens Battery	4	Y	P
Big Tree - Ellery Camp	5		
Errinundra Saddle Rainforest	3		
Far Creek	4	Y	P
First Creek Falls	5		
Goonmirk Rocks Track	4		
Mt Ellery	4		P
Mt Morris (Wollybutt Hill)	4	Y	
Old Growth Forest Walk	4		
Rooty Break Trail	4		
Tea Tree Flat	3	Y	P

Snowy River National Park (map 3K)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Ash Saddle	2		
Basin Creek	4		
Little River Falls	3		
Little River Gorge	3		P
Raymond Creek Falls	3		
Raymond Falls - Snowy River	5		
Silver Mine	5		
Snowy River Nature Trail	3		
Tulloch Ard Lookout	3		

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Waratah Flat	3		P

Howqua Hills Historic Area (map 3E)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
Frys Hut – Sheepyard Flat Heritage Trail	3		

Walhalla Historic Area (map 3A)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT – Walhalla HA	4		P

Mount Wills Historic Area (map 3I)

Track	Grade	Horses	Cycling
AAWT – Big River Rd to Gill Creek	4	D	

Appendix 3

Cycling access on closed roads

- Cycling is permitted on open roads.
- Cycling is permitted on management vehicle only (MVO) tracks except those in Wilderness Areas and Reference Areas. This access may be subject to seasonal closures applying to cycling on tracks in the vicinity of the MVOs.
- Cycling is not permitted on seasonally closed tracks except as specified below. Users need to be aware that the suitability of these tracks during the closure period cannot be guaranteed as maintenance is not possible.
- Access is subject to no impact on park values and may be withdrawn without notice.

Area	Road	Type of closure	Permitted cycle access
Alpine NP - Mt Bogong	Mountain Creek Rd	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine NP - Southern Alps	Howitt Road from Gorge carpark to Howitt carpark	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine NP - Southern Alps	Wonnangatta Track (Dargo approach)	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine NP - Southern Alps	Wonnangatta Track (Myrtleford approach)	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine NP - Tingaringy	Tingaringy Track, Brown Break Track, Allan Track, Cameron Track, Rosendale Track, Laurie Track, Ingram Track, Boundary Track, Armstrong Track, Blackguard Gully Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buffalo Valley	West Buffalo Road	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buffalo Valley	Razor Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buffalo Valley	Harry Shepherds Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buffalo Valley	Penny Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buffalo Valley	Humffary River Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buffalo Valley	Whites Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buffalo Valley	Wonnangatta Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buffalo Valley	Rileys Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buckland Valley	Dingo Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buckland Valley	Twins Jeep Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buckland Valley	Mount Selwyn summit track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buckland Valley	Mount Murray North Track	seasonal closure	all year

Area	Road	Type of closure	Permitted cycle access
Alpine – Buckland Valley	Rileys Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Buckland Valley	Water Spur Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Ovens Valley	Twins Jeep Track (Mt St Bernard)	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Ovens Valley	Dinner Plain Track	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Ovens Valley	Mount Sugarloaf Track (Buckland Gap)	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Ovens Valley	Mount Sugarloaf Track (Gunns Track)	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Ovens Valley	Coach Road	seasonal closure	all year
Alpine – Ovens Valley	Stoney Tops Track	seasonal closure	all year
Errinundra NP	Greens Road	seasonal closure	all year
Errinundra NP	Errinundra Road	seasonal closure	all year
Errinundra NP	BA Road	seasonal closure	all year
Errinundra NP	Hensleigh Creek Road	seasonal closure	all year
Errinundra NP	Goonmirk Rocks Road	seasonal closure	all year
Mt Buffalo NP	Reservoir Road	seasonal closure	all year
Mt Buffalo NP	Lake Catani Campground Road	seasonal closure	all year
Snowy River NP	Reeds Track	seasonal closure	all year
Snowy River NP	Warbisco Track	seasonal closure	all year
Snowy River NP	Deddick Track	seasonal closure	all year
Snowy River NP	Rich Knob Track	seasonal closure	all year
Snowy River NP	Waratah Flat Road	seasonal closure	all year
Snowy River NP	B W Link	seasonal closure	all year
Snowy River NP	Bowen Track	seasonal closure	all year


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