



2. Profile of the parks network

2.1 Profile of the Victorian parks network

Indicators

- Number and area of parks
- History of park establishment
- Areas managed under joint management and co-Management
- Additional conservation obligations and responsibilities
- Park size profile
- Park shape profile (area-boundary ratio)
- Surrounding land use
- Number of neighbouring properties

Context

Victoria has one of the most diverse park networks in the world, ranging from wilderness areas and national parks, to urban and regional parks and waterways, historic parks and reserves and nature conservation reserves. This variety of parks and reserves are managed for a range of goals from protecting our natural and cultural heritage to enabling recreational use, providing clean fresh water and contributing to Victoria's economy. In recent years increasing recognition of Traditional Owners in land management has resulted in both joint management and co-management arrangements of parks.

Number and area of parks

Victoria's parks and waterway network covers 4.1 million hectares and includes both land-based and marine protected areas¹ and other parks, reserves and waterways. There are 139 areas managed under the National Parks Act covering 3.45 million hectares (84% of the total area of the parks network). This includes 124 scheduled areas as well as 15 non-scheduled areas. The network of parks includes a representative system of 24 marine national parks and sanctuaries covering 5% of Victoria's coastal waters (around 54,000 hectares). Conservation Reserves account for 93% of the total number of parks but only 13% of the area of the parks network.

¹ As defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) www.iucn.org

In addition to the protected area estate, Parks Victoria also manages a comprehensive network of 81 metropolitan, reservoir and regional parks.

Appendix 2.1 shows the Victorian parks network.

Parks Victoria also has responsibilities as the local port manager for Port Phillip Bay, Western Port and Port Campbell and is the designated waterway manager for the Lower Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers and recreational manager of the Bays.

Figure 2.2.1 Number and area of parks by park type

Park Group	Number of Parks	% Number of Parks	Total Area (ha)	% Total Area (ha)
Conservation Reserve	2783	93.1	544007.8	13.2
National Parks Act - Marine	29	1.0	119951.2	2.9
National Parks Act - Terrestrial	95	3.2	3348047.7	81.3
Urban and Other	81	2.7	103874.3	2.5
Grand Total	2988	100.0	4115881.0	100.0

Number and area of parks by IUCN category

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines a protected area as: “An area of land and/or sea dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal and other effective means” (IUCN, 1994). Most national and state parks were classified as IUCN category II, which protects large natural or near natural areas with large-scale ecological processes, indigenous species and ecosystems.

Figure 2.2.2 Number and area of parks by IUCN category

IUCN Category	Park Count	% Total Parks	Total Area Ha	% Total Estate Area Ha
Ia	466	15.6	262660.1	6.4
Ib	3	0.1	200699.3	4.9
II	84	2.8	3127666.0	76.2
III	334	11.2	57433.5	1.4
IV	1485	49.7	44888.9	1.1
VI	253	8.5	169714.4	4.1
Not a Protected Area	361	12.1	242540.1	5.9
Protected Area - not assigned	2	0.1	278.6	0.0
Grand Total	2988	100.0	4105881.0	100.0

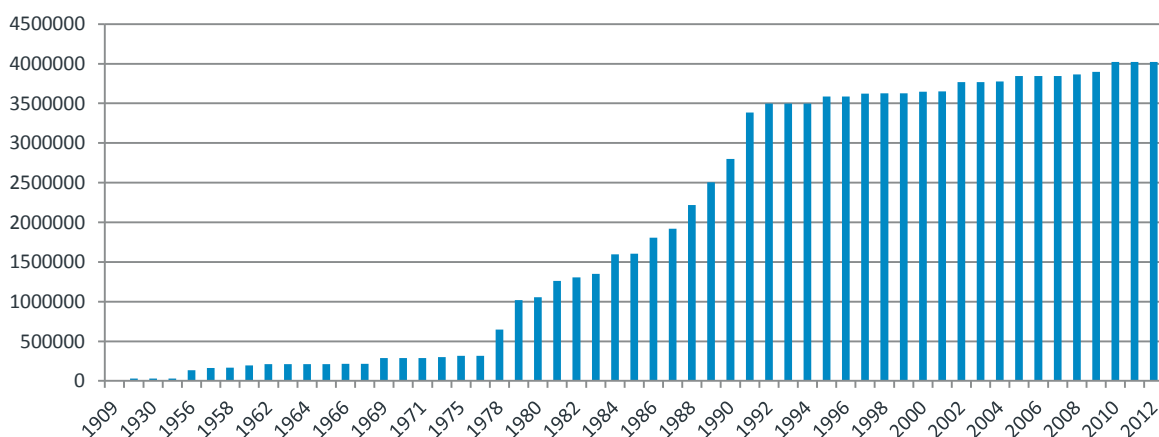
History of park establishment

The Victorian parks network has a long and important history, dating back to the late nineteenth century, with the earliest national parks established to protect scenic or natural features from development. The area of the Victorian parks network rapidly expanded during the 1980's and early 1990's based on recommendations by the Land Conservation Council (and its successors) to reserve representative examples of Victoria's ecosystems. A comprehensive review of the history of parks established under the National Parks Act establishment in Victoria can be found on the Parks Victoria website or by clicking [here](#).

Many of the metropolitan parks managed by Parks Victoria were borne from the foresight of Melbourne's urban planners in the 1930s who recognised the value of reserving open space for community use and enjoyment.

Between 2010 and 2013 50,000 hectares was added to the national parks estate with around a further 14,000 hectares added to other parks estate through assignment and appointment.

Figure 2.2.3 History of park establishment



Areas managed under joint management and co-management

Joint management

Joint management describes a formal partnership between Traditional Owners and the State where both parties share knowledge to manage parks and other protected areas. In Victoria, joint management is established under the terms of the *Traditional Owners Settlement Act 2010* (Vic). The Act allows for parks and reserves to be returned to Aboriginal ownership under Aboriginal Title. Land under this title continues to be managed under existing legislation, such as the *National Parks Act 1975*.

At the end of 2013, joint management arrangements in parks were established in:

- East Gippsland , where in 2010 the Gunai/Kurnai People were granted title to ten parks and reserves within their broader native title settlement area including Tarra Bulga National Park and the Knob Reserve near Stratford.
- Northern Victoria, where in 2010 the Yorta Yorta People entered into a joint management agreement for Barmah National Park. While formal title to this park has not been transferred to the Yorta Yorta, the park will be overseen by a Traditional Owner Land Management Board.

Figure 2.2.4 Joint managed parks

Park	Joint manager	Area
Greater Bendigo National Park	Dja Dja Wurrung	17321
Hepburn R.P	Dja Dja Wurrung	2916
Kara Kara National Park	Dja Dja Wurrung	12643
Kooyoorra State Park	Dja Dja Wurrung	11455
Paddy's Ranges State Park	Dja Dja Wurrung	2015
Wehla N.C.R.	Dja Dja Wurrung	411
Buchan Caves Reserve	Gunaikurnai	296
Gippsland Lake C.P. (Addition)	Gunaikurnai	199
Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park	Gunaikurnai	17557
Lake Corringale W.R.	Gunaikurnai	921
Lake Tyers	Gunaikurnai	8500
Mitchell River National Park	Gunaikurnai	14346
New Guinea Caves (Snowy River NP)	Gunaikurnai	1097
Raymond Island G.L.R.	Gunaikurnai	249
Tarra-Bulga National Park	Gunaikurnai	2018
The Lakes National Park	Gunaikurnai	2416
Top End Reference Area	Yorta Yorta	124
Top Island Reference Area	Yorta Yorta	177
Barmah National Park	Yorta Yorta	28502
Total		123163

Co-management

Co-management is an alternate form of partnership with Traditional Owners operating in Victoria in recognition of native title. Under co-management, title to parks is not transferred to Traditional Owners, but Traditional Owners are involved in shaping the ongoing management of specific parks by forming councils with representatives from Government.

Figure 2.2.5 Parks with co-management arrangements established by the end of 2013

Park name	Co-manager
Lake Albacutya Park	Barengi Gadjin
Lake Hindmarsh L.R.	Barengi Gadjin
Little Desert National Park	Barengi Gadjin
Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park	Barengi Gadjin
Wimmera River, Marma SS.R.	Barengi Gadjin
Wyperfeld National Park	Barengi Gadjin
Mount Eccles National Park	Gunditj Mirring
Wimmera River, Eversley SS.R.	Martang
Goulburn River Reserve	Yorta Yorta
Loch Gary W.R.	Yorta Yorta
Lower Goulburn National Park	Yorta Yorta
Proposed Murray River Park (part)	Yorta Yorta
River Murray Reserve	Yorta Yorta
Gemmill Swamp W.R	Yorta Yorta

Additional conservation obligations and responsibilities

Parks Victoria has a number of conservation responsibilities as part of, or in addition to its core legislation. These include obligations under international treaties and conventions (e.g. Ramsar Wetlands Agreement), management of Reference Areas proclaimed under the Reference Areas Act 1978 (Vic.), Wilderness Zones and Remote and Natural Areas established under the *National Parks Act 197*, Heritage Rivers and Natural Catchment Areas. See Appendix 2.2 (map of legislative obligation areas)

Figure 2.2.6 Number and area of conservation obligations

Area Type	Number	Number of parks	Total area (ha)	% of total parks estate
Education Area	15	13	6098	0.1
Heritage River	18	72	131089	3.2
Natural Catchment Area	18	8	33222	0.8
Ramsar Wetland	9	94	218394	5.3
Reference Area	115	49	93842	2.3
Remote and Natural Area - not scheduled under National Parks Act	2	2	16907	0.4
Remote and Natural Area - Schedule 6, National Parks Act	22	19	280141	6.8
Wilderness Zone - Schedule 5, National Parks Act	19	11	640441	15.6
Wildlife Management Co-operative Area	4	4	521	0.0

The Victorian parks network provides important habitat for many species that are listed under international conventions and agreements between the Australian Government and other countries, including bilateral migratory bird agreements with Japan (JAMBA), China (CAMBA) and the Republic of Korea (ROKAMBA), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), and through the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership.

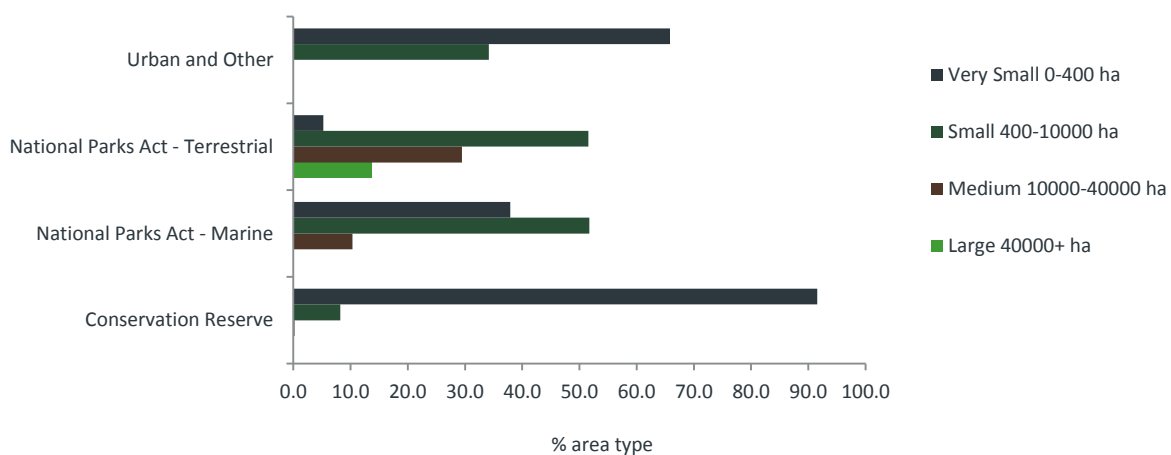
The parks network provides habitat for 61 migratory species recorded across 524 parks. Those parks among the most significant for migratory species include Croajingolong National Park, French Island National Park, Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park, Nooramunga Marine & Coastal Park, Lake Connewarre W.R, Point Cook Coastal Park, The Spit W.R.

See Appendix 2.3 (map of migratory species recorded in parks).

Park size profile

The different types of parks within the Victorian parks network have very different size profiles. For the National Parks estate, 43% of terrestrial national parks are greater than 10,000 hectares, while 92% of conservation reserves are less than 400 hectares. Two-thirds of metropolitan parks are less than 400 hectares. The largest parks are the Murray-Sunset National Park, Alpine and Wyperfeld national parks accounting for approximately 1.7 million hectares (around 40% of the area of the State’s parks network).

Figure 2.2.7 Size profile of the Victorian parks network

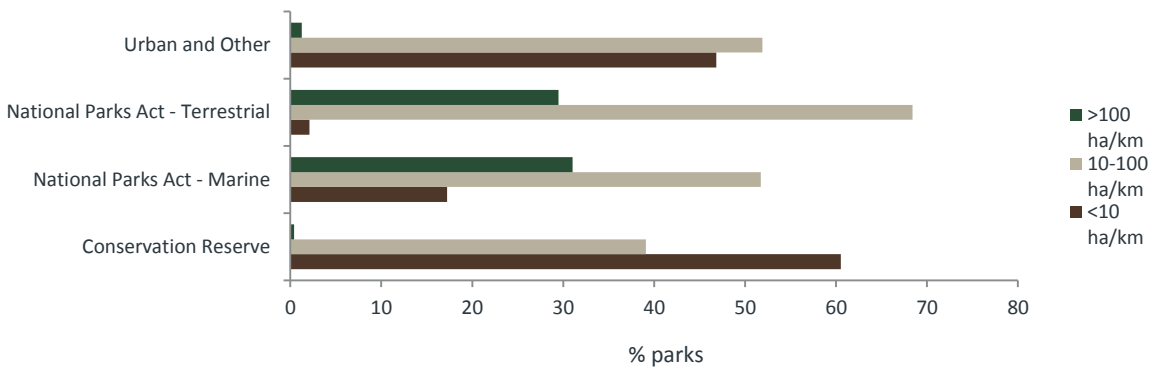


Park shape profile

The size and shape of parks, together with adjoining land use, are indicators of management complexity and can have a significant impact on the both level of threats and condition. Larger parks with a higher area to boundary ratio are less prone to external effects than smaller parks with lower area to boundary ratio.

The profiles of area-boundary ratio varies between park types. Terrestrial national parks have a greater proportion of parks with a high area to boundary ratio. Urban parks and conservation reserves have a greater proportion of parks with a low area to boundary ratio. Those parks with the highest area to boundary ratio include the Big Desert and Avon Wilderness parks and the Wyperfeld, Murray-Sunset, Hattah-Kulkyne, Little Desert and Snowy River national parks. National parks with the lowest area boundary ratio include the Port Campbell, Mornington Peninsula and Dandenong Ranges national parks.

Figure 2.2.8 Area-boundary ratio of the Victorian parks network



Surrounding land use

Parks that have conservation land use as the predominant surrounding land use will generally have few external threats

Figure 2.2.9 Surrounding land use- terrestrial National Parks Act parks

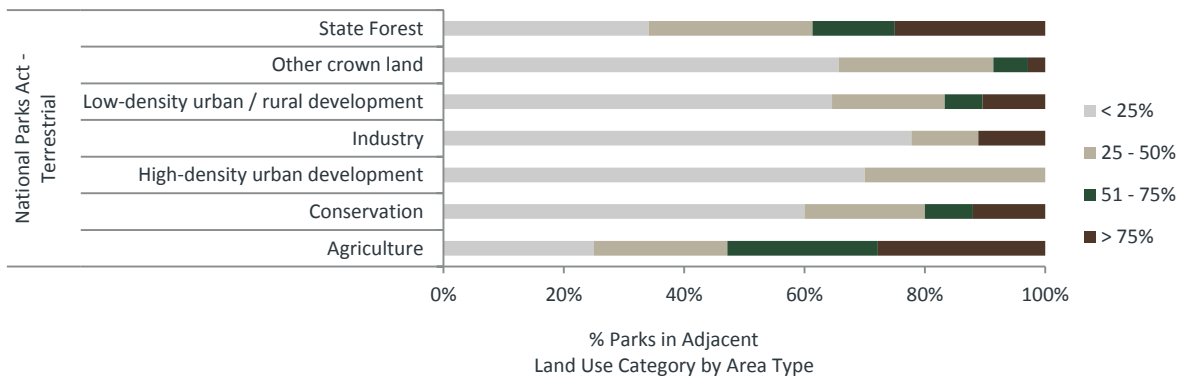


Figure 2.2.10 Surrounding land use- Conservation Reserves

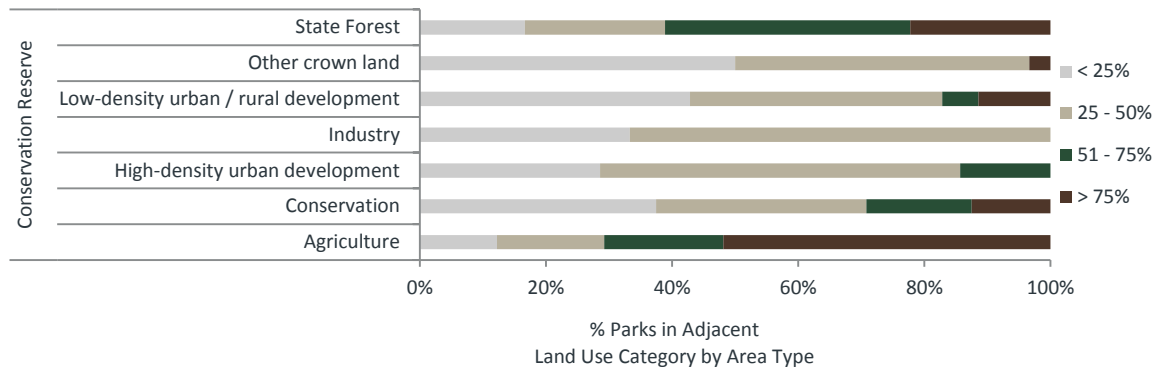


Figure 2.2.11 Surrounding land use - marine National Parks Act parks

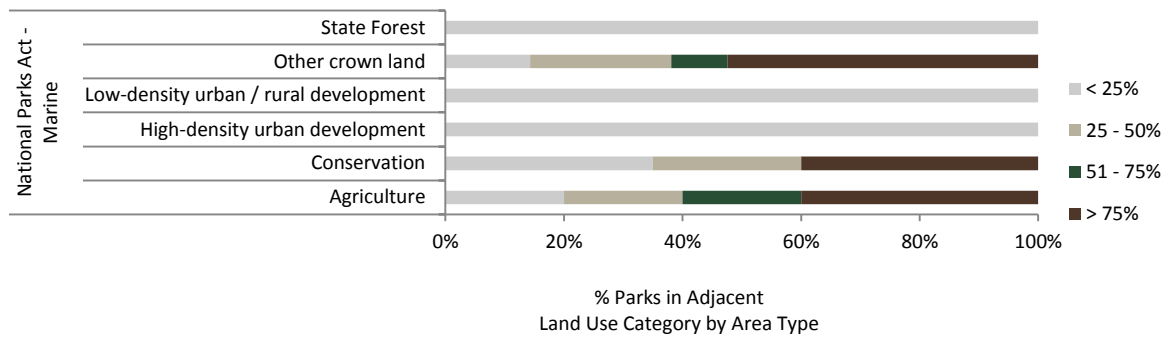
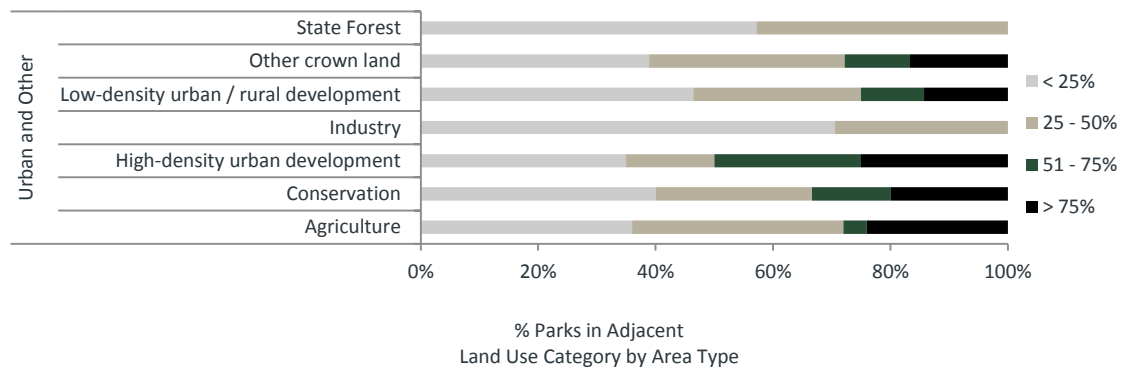


Figure 2.2.12 Surrounding land use - urban and other parks



Number of neighbouring properties

The number of neighbouring properties is an indicator of intensity of surrounding land use and potential management complexity. There are more than 91,000 neighbouring properties to parks and reserves across the Victorian parks network. The Great Otway National Park has the highest number of neighbouring properties in the State.

See Appendix 2.4 (map of neighbouring properties count 2013)

Figure 2.2.13 Number of immediate park neighbouring properties by park type

Park type	Number of neighbours
Conservation Reserve	47672
National Parks Act - Marine	1139
National Parks Act - Terrestrial	31389
Urban and Other	11075

Figure 2.2.14 Parks with more than 1000 immediate neighbouring properties

Park name	Number of neighbouring properties
Great Otway National Park	3313
Alpine National Park	2868
Murray River Park (proposed)	2633
Croajingolong National Park	2235
Port Phillip	1718
Bendigo R.P.	1551
Dandenong Ranges National Park	1386
Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park	1346
Murray - Sunset National Park	1307