



5.1 Park visits and visitor services

Indicators

- Number of visits to parks and piers
- Proportion of Victorians that have visited a park
- Demographic profile of park visitors
- Motivation and types of park visitors
- Number and type of sites visitor sites provided by Levels of Service (LOS) category
- Reason for park visit and activities undertaken
- Interpretation and education services provided
- Licensed Tour Operator services provided

Context

The diversity of visitor experiences sought reflects the great diversity of Victoria's parks. Understanding the level of visitation, the motivations of visitors and the social profile of park visitors enables park managers to more effectively plan and develop appropriate visitor services and facilities across the parks network.

In order to facilitate access and quality experiences a complex array of park facilities, infrastructure and park services are provided. The types of services and infrastructure provided depend on the different objectives for visitor experiences.

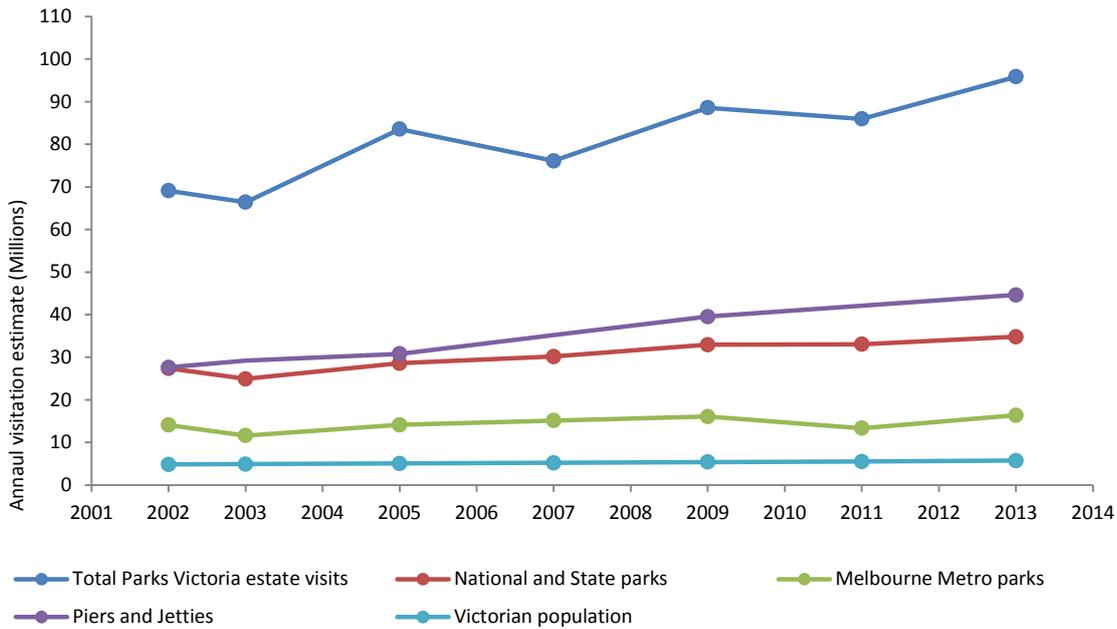
Number of visits to parks and piers

The total number of visits to parks and piers in 2013 was 95.8 million. This consisted of:

- 34.8 million visits to national and state parks
- 16.3 million visits to metropolitan parks
- 44.6 million visits to piers and jetties of the bays

Between 2003 and 2013 there had been a steady increase in visitation to National / State and Major Metropolitan Parks rising from 36.5 million visits in 2003 to 51.2 million visits in 2013. Overall this was in line with the population increase of Victoria, however some park types such as the piers and jetties on the bays had a higher increase in visitation than the population increase.

Figure 5.1.1 Total number of visits to the park network



Source: Parks Victoria Visitor Number Monitor

In addition to the land based parks and piers, there were an estimated

- 3.8 million visits to **Marine national parks and sanctuaries**, an increase from 2.7 million in 2003
- 32 million visits on **Port Phillip and Western Port bays**

Indicative estimates for 2014/215 suggest that the total number of visits to parks and piers to be around 100 million.

Origin of park visitors

For national and state parks:

- 66% of visits were undertaken by Melbournians
- 29% of visits were undertaken by other Victorians
- 2% of visits were undertaken by international visitors[#]
- 4% of visits were from interstate (NSW and SA)

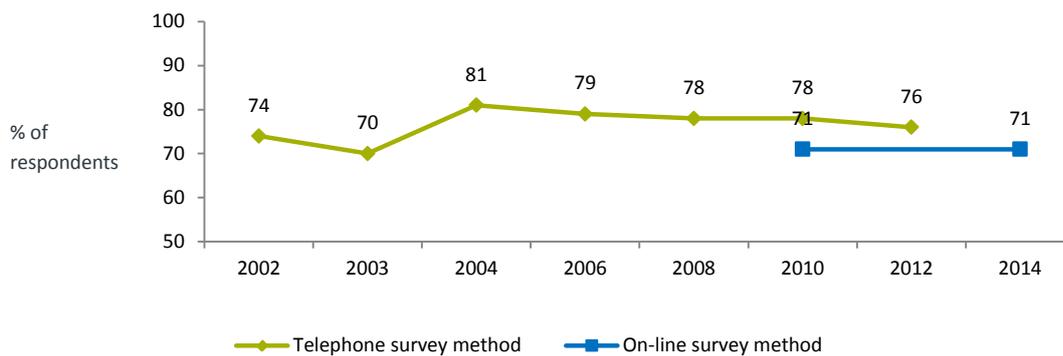
[#] due to methodological constraints this is expected to be an under-representation of international visitors

For metropolitan parks, 95% of visits were undertaken by Melbournians.

Proportion of Victorians that have visited a park

In 2014 71% of the Victorian population had visited a park in the previous twelve months. This percentage has remained relatively constant over the past decade.

Figure 5.1.2 Percentage of Victorian population that visited a park in the previous 12 months



Source: Parks Victoria Community Perception Monitor

Demographic profile of park visitors

Visitors to parks are more likely to be older, employed, married, have white collar jobs, be university educated, have higher incomes, and be from an English speaking background. A major effort has been made to increase engagement and access to parks for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and people with disabilities.

Figure 5.1.3 Demographic profile of park visitors

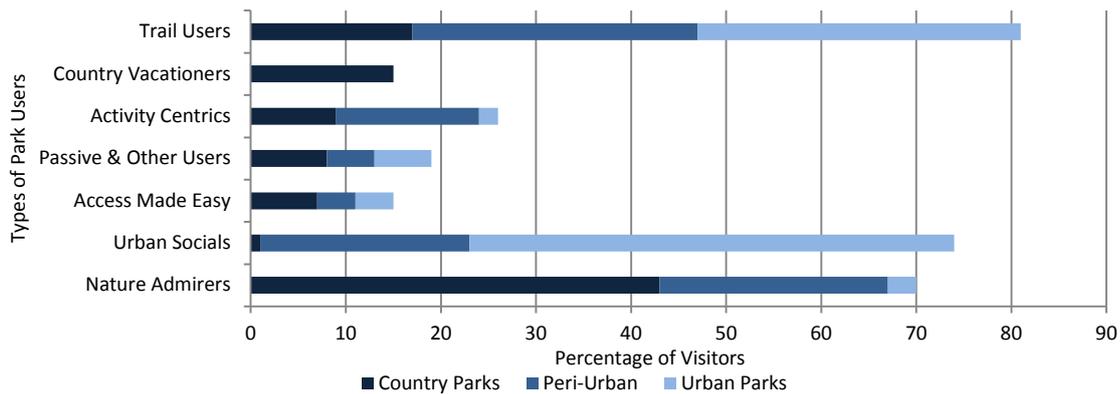
	National and state parks	Metropolitan parks	Marine parks
Gender	Males (52%) more than females (48%)	Females (54%) more than males (46 %)	Males (60%) more than females (40%)
Age	Aged 50 and over (37%) more than aged 35-49 (31%) more than aged 25-34 (18 %)	People aged 35-49 (31% more than those aged 50 and over (30 percent)	People aged 50 and over (67%)
Marital status	Married people (49 %) more than those who have never been married (23%)	Married people (50 percent)	Married people (62 %)
Employment	Full time workers (39%) more than non-workers (33%) and part time workers (27%)	Full time workers (43 percent) more than part time workers (32 percent), followed by non-workers (22 percent)	Non workers (39%)
Employment type	White collar households (57%) more than those in blue collar households (43 %)	White collar households (62 percent), more than blue collar households (38 percent)	White collar households (62 %) more than blue collar households (38%)
Household income	Households with a combined annual income of \$110,000 (25 %) more than lower income households	Households with a combined annual income of \$110,000 and over (39 percent) more than lower income households	n/a
Education	University educated (41%) more than college/apprenticeship (31%) and primary/secondary school (26%)	University educated (55%) more than college / apprenticeship (30 %) and primary / secondary (13 %)	University educated (60%) more than other education
Children	Households without children (60%) more than households with children. Note households with 3 or more children (9%) make significantly fewer visits than any other households.	Households without children (53 %) compared to households with children. Households with 3 or more children (4 %) make significantly fewer visits than any other household structure	Households without children (72%) compared to households with children

Source: Parks Victoria Visitor Number Monitor

Motivation and types of park visitors

The diversity of different visitor groups and their characteristics are defined through analysis of results from visitor surveys. The largest group of visitors found at urban and peri-urban parks are “Urban Socials”, while “Nature Admirers” are the largest segment found at country parks.

Figure 5.1.4 Types of visitors to parks (market segments)

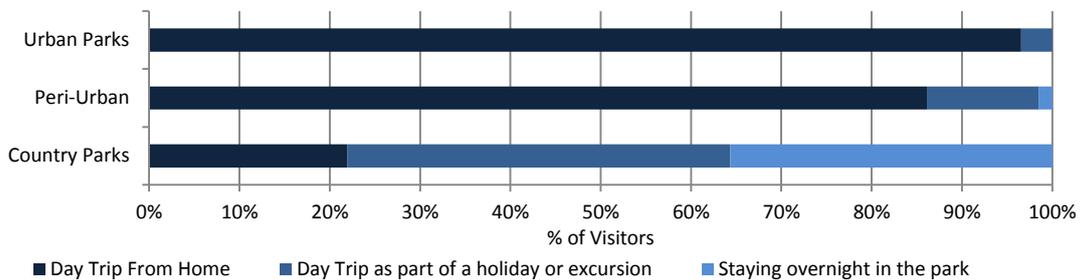


Source: Parks Victoria Visitor datasets

Length of stay

On average visitors stay between two and four hours, dependent on the type of park. There has been an overall increase in the length of stay to peri-urban and country parks since 2004 while the length of stay in urban parks has not changed.

Figure 5.1.5 Length of visitors stay in parks



Source: Parks Victoria Visitor Satisfaction Monitor

Number and type of visitor sites provided by Levels of Service (LOS) category

The parks network provides a diverse range settings for visitor enjoyment. Across the network visitor sites have been classified into ‘Level of Service’ categories.

Figure 5.1.6 LOS Category visitor sites by type and number

LOS category	Number Parks	% Number Parks	Total Park Area Ha	% Total Park Area Ha
A1	25	0.8	1372202.0	33.3
A2	26	0.9	66206.8	1.6
B	45	1.5	376708.9	9.2
C	196	6.6	1657422.2	40.3
Not Rated	2696	90.2	643341.1	15.6
Total	2988	100.0	4115881.0	100.0

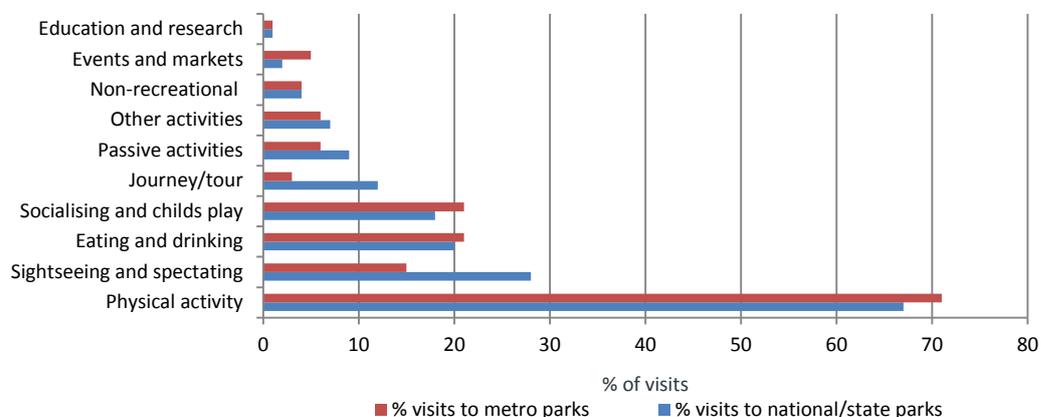
Reason for visit and activities undertaken

Reasons for visit

Two thirds of all Victoria’s National / State park visits and 71% of visits to metropolitan parks are made for physical activities. Since the 2006/07 measure there has been a significant increase in the number of people visiting. Victoria’s National / State and Major Metropolitan parks for:

- Physical activity (rising from 57 percent to 67 percent)
- Sightseeing & Spectating (increasing from 23% to 26%)
- Socialising & Child’s Play (increasing from 14% to 19 percent)
- Passive activities (increasing from 5% to 9%)
- Overnight Stays (increasing 6% to 8%)

Figure 5.1.7 Reason for visits to metropolitan and national/state parks

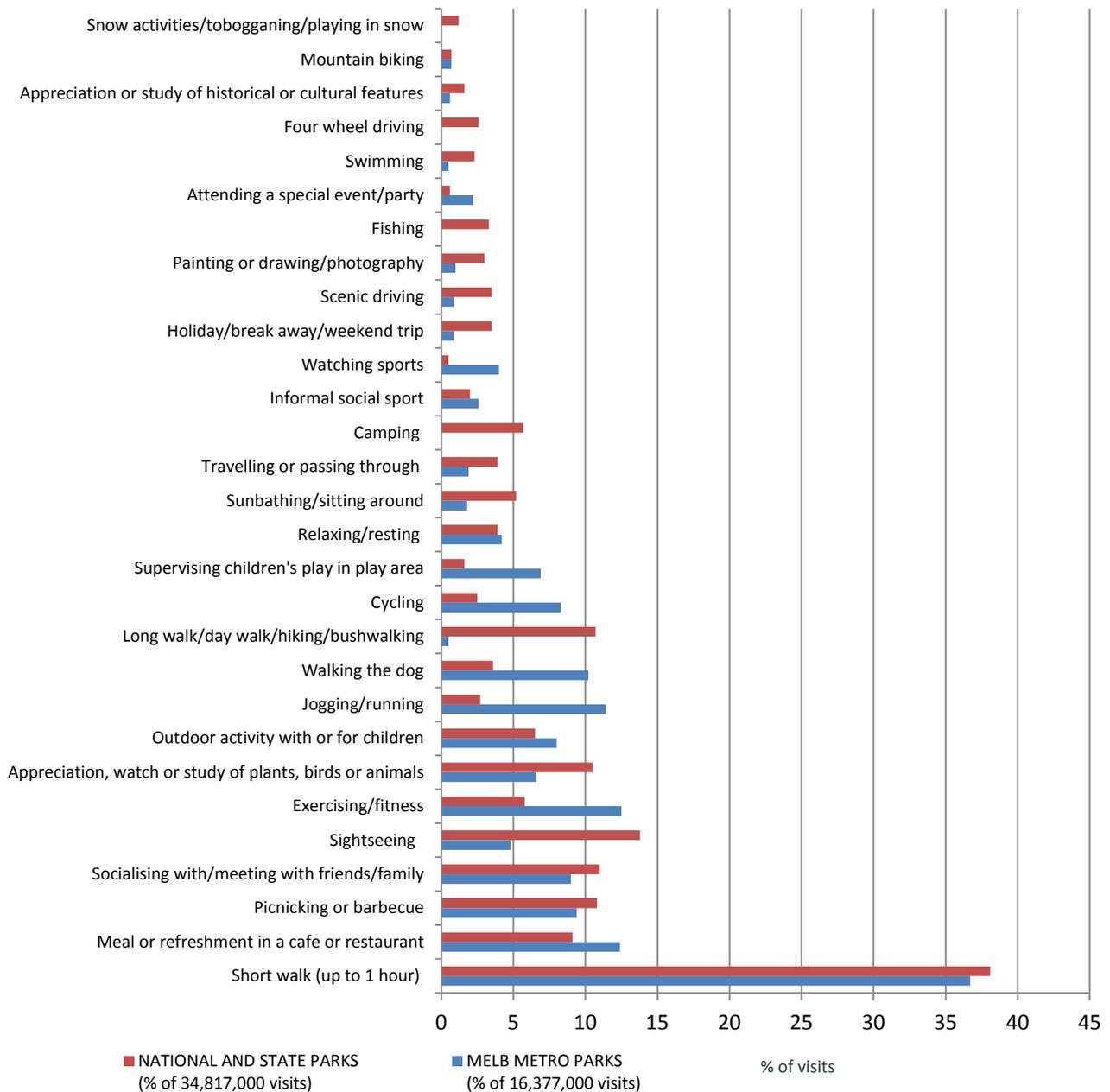


Source: Parks Victoria Visitor Number Monitor

Specific activities undertaken¹

Short walks are by far the most popular activity under in both national/state parks and metropolitan parks, undertaken in around 40% of visits.

Figure 5.1.8 Percentage of specific activities undertaken across the park network



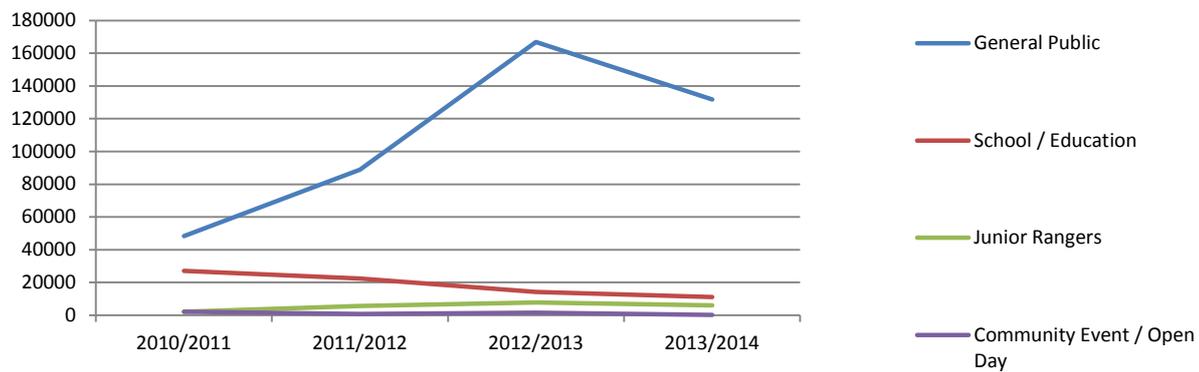
Source Parks Victoria Visitor Number Monitor

¹ Activities undertaken in parks with at least 1% of total visits. Note other to national and state parks included hunting (0.7%), Canoeing (0.7%), sailing (0.5%) cross-country skiing (0.5%), horse riding (0.3%), fossicking (0.2%) and rock climbing (0.2%).

Interpretation and education services

Interpretation and education services enable improved awareness and connection with nature. Parks Victoria’s education and interpretation program includes formal curriculum based schools education, through to public interpretation events, junior ranger activities and community events. More than 150,000 participants were involved in interpretation and education activities and events in 2013/14, including almost 132,000 participants to general interpretation activities, 11,000 participants in education programs and over 6000 participants in junior ranger programs.

Figure 5.1.9 Number of participants in interpretation and education programs



Licensed Tour Operator services

Licensed Tour Operators provide bushwalking, fishing, gold panning and fossicking, native wildlife viewing, vehicle touring, whale watching, guided nature tours and Aboriginal cultural heritage interpretation. Many of these are small businesses operating in regional areas. Licensed tour operators generated nearly 200,000 visits in parks.

Figure 5.1.10 Number of licensed tour operator services in 2013

Licensed Tour operator services	2013
Licensed Tour Operators managed	372
Number of LTO generated visits	225 642