

National Parks Act Annual Report 2015



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Further information

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Notes

- The Ministers responsible for administering the *National Parks Act 1975* during the year were:
 - 1 July 2014 to 3 December 2014 – the Hon Ryan Smith MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change
 - 4 December 2014 to 30 June 2015 – the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water.
- In this report:
 - *the Act* means the *National Parks Act 1975*
 - *DELWP* means the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning or, as applicable, the former Department of Environment and Primary Industries
 - *the Minister* means the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water or, as applicable, the former Minister for Environment and Climate Change
 - *PV* means Parks Victoria
 - *the Secretary* means the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning or, as applicable, the former Secretary to the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

Cover image

Alpine National Park (photo: Iris Curran)

Accessibility

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Foreword

This annual report on the working of the *National Parks Act 1975* (the Act) for the year ended 30 June 2015 is provided to the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, the Hon Lisa Neville MP, under section 35 of the Act.

The Act establishes the statutory basis for the protection, use and management of an outstanding system of national and other parks covering approximately 3.45 million hectares.

The Secretary is responsible under the Act for ensuring that the parks and other areas to which the Act applies are controlled and managed in accordance with the Act. Parks Victoria is responsible for managing those areas on the Secretary's behalf and works in partnership with DELWP.

The year saw a change in government, which brought changes to several policies and programs relating to national parks. Of particular note:

- the research trial in the Alpine National Park using cattle was stopped in late December 2014 and legislation to prohibit the introduction of cattle into that park as well as the river red gum national parks was introduced and passed in the first half of 2015
- camping fees for basic campsites in several parks, which had been introduced in July 2014, were removed in April 2015
- the new government did not support the continuation of the long-term lease granted in October 2014 over land at the Quarantine Station in Point Nepean National Park.

Also during the year:

- the management plan for parks in far south-west Victoria was released – a collaborative effort involving the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners, Budj Bim Council, Parks Victoria and DELWP
- a broad program of activities was undertaken to protect and enhance natural and cultural values in various parks across the state
- environmental watering saw parts of the Hattah Lakes area under water for the first time in 20 years
- many monitoring and research projects were undertaken to support park management
- fire recovery programs continued and the fire season saw less area burnt by bushfire than in recent years
- the first stage of the Grampians Peaks Trail was opened, and visitor facilities were improved elsewhere, including in several river red gum parks along the Murray River.

The appointment of the Dhehkunya Dja Land Management Board for four parks in north central Victoria marked a further milestone in the involvement of Traditional Owners in the joint management of parks.

I again want to recognise the extent of collaborative management and community involvement in a wide range of park management activities during the year and to thank Parks Victoria and DELWP staff and all those volunteers who contributed to the protection and management of our parks in 2014–15. I also want to acknowledge that Parks Victoria has delivered the park management program while undergoing a major restructure to improve service delivery.



Adam Fennessy

Secretary to the
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

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A representative parks system

Areas managed under the Act

As at 30 June 2015 there were 139 areas with a total area of more than 3.45 million hectares managed under various provisions of the Act. Appendix 1 lists the areas and Appendix 2 shows their location.

The 139 areas comprised:

- 124 areas listed on various schedules to the Act
 - 45 national parks (Schedule Two)
 - 3 wilderness parks (Schedule Two A)
 - 26 state parks (Schedule Two B)
 - 5 coastal parks, 3 historic parks, 1 nature conservation reserve, 8 regional parks and Haining Farm (Schedule Three)
 - 3 marine and coastal parks, 2 marine parks, 1 marine reserve, 1 national heritage park and 1 nature conservation reserve (Schedule Four)
 - 13 marine national parks (Schedule Seven)
 - 11 marine sanctuaries (Schedule Eight)
- 15 non-scheduled areas to which particular provisions of the Act apply.

The Act also defines the following areas within particular national parks:

- 19 wilderness zones (Schedule Five) in 7 national parks (see Appendix 1)
- 22 remote and natural areas (Schedule Six) in 12 national parks (see Appendix 1)
- 4 designated water supply catchment areas in Great Otway, Kinglake and Yarra Ranges national parks.

Changes to the parks system

On 1 September 2014 a total of 88 hectares was added to the following parks:

- Lake Tyers State Park – 40 hectares, comprising a redundant government road (33 ha) or arising from corrections to the park plan (net addition of 7 ha)
- Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park – 48 hectares of redundant government roads.

There were also other minor amendments to the plans of these two parks and Mitchell River National Park and a recalculation of the parks' areas (see Appendix 1).

Management and other planning

As at 30 June 2015, there were approved management plans for all or parts of 43 national parks¹, 3 wilderness parks, 25 state parks, 17 other parks and reserves, 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries.

During the year:

- the approved *Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara South West Management Plan* was released in May 2015

The plan covers nine parks under the Act (the co-operatively managed Mount Eccles National Park as well as Cobboboonee, Lower Glenelg and Mount Richmond national parks, Cape Nelson, Dergholm and Mount Napier state parks, Discovery Bay Coastal Park and Discovery Bay Marine National Park), several indigenous protected areas and more than 130 parks, reserves and other areas not under the Act.

Ngootyoong Gunditj Ngootyoong Mara means Healthy Country Healthy People in the language of the Gunditjmara. The plan was a collaborative effort involving the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners, Budj Bim Council, Parks Victoria and DELWP.

¹ This figure should have been reported as 42 national parks in last year's annual report.

- a strategic management plan for the Dandenong Ranges gardens was released in July 2014 and includes the Mt Dandenong Arboretum in Dandenong Ranges National Park. This subsidiary strategic plan gives more specific directions for this special area of the park and complements the park management plan
- the final *Grampians Peak Trail Master Plan* was released in May 2015 in conjunction with the opening of the first stage of the walk (see *Enhancing visitor enjoyment and tourism*).

Work also progressed on:

- finalising the plan for the Greater Alpine national parks, including considering more than 500 public submissions on the draft plan. The plan covers the Alpine, Baw Baw, Errinundra, Mount Buffalo and Snowy River national parks, Avon Wilderness Park and Tara Range Park as well as several areas not under the Act
- finalising the master plan for the Shipwreck Coast between Princetown and Boat Bay, which includes Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park. The master plan is being developed in partnership with the Corangamite and Moyne shires and Tourism Victoria
- the second stage of the master plan for the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing walk.

Managing natural and cultural values

Managing natural values

The basis for setting strategic priorities for environmental management activities in areas under the Act is Parks Victoria's Levels of Protection framework, the State of the Parks Effectiveness Evaluation Program and conservation action plans. On-ground works are prioritised to protect the highest environmental values at greatest risk. Examples of projects in the various environmental management program areas are provided below.

Managing threatened species and communities

Various projects contributed to the management of threatened species and communities during the year. These included those delivered as part of managing invasive species, habitat restoration and environmental water (and reported elsewhere in this report) which often directly target or provide benefits for threatened flora, fauna and vegetation communities. Examples of projects are included in Table 1.

Table 1 – Threatened species and communities projects

PV region / park	Project
<i>Western Victoria</i>	
Grampians NP	Monitoring of the Brush-tailed rock-wallaby.
Little Desert NP	Fox control to protect the Malleefowl.
<i>Northern Victoria</i>	
Barmah NP	Monitoring of the White-bellied Sea-eagle.
Wyperfeld NP	Installation of cavities in dead native pines in Pine Plains for the Major Mitchell Cockatoo.
Wythitella NCR	Fox control to protect the Malleefowl.
<i>Eastern Victoria</i>	
Alpine NP	Fox control in remote sections of the park to help protect the Mountain Pygmy-possum and Long-footed Potoroo.
	Targeted removal of wild horses and treatment of Grey Sallow (willow) and Soft Rush to protect the alpine bog community.
Gippsland Lakes CP	Sand renourishment and control of Sea-spurge at Crescent Island, a nesting site for Little and Fairy Terns (in partnership with other agencies).
<i>Greater Melbourne</i>	
Point Nepean NP	Treatment of Polygala to protect Coastal Moonah woodland.
Woodlands HP	Continuation of partnerships with Conservation Volunteers Victoria and Zoos Victoria to provide a critical re-introduction area at Woodlands Historic Park for protection and breeding of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot.

CP Coastal Park
NCR Nature Conservation Reserve
NP National Park

Managing invasive species

Managing invasive species is fundamental to protecting our parks and is a key delivery area for natural values management. Programs to control invasive animals were conducted in many parks across the state to manage the impact of invasive species on natural and cultural values.

Investment is directed toward fulfilling legislative obligations, maximising partnerships and ensuring previous gains are maintained or improved through eradication, containment and asset protection with a focus on early intervention where possible. Significant funding comes from the ongoing Weeds and Pests on Public Land program. The federal government also contributes funding to some projects.

Working at the most effective scale is critical to achieving long-term outcomes in invasive species management. Wherever possible, working at a landscape or park scale is required to control invasive or introduced species such as deer, foxes, goats, horses, pigs and rabbits.

Programs to control invasive species in 2014–15 included landscape-scale programs (including those funded under the Weeds and Pests on Public Land program) as well as projects targeting particular species in various parks.

Landscape programs during the year included the ongoing Eden programs aimed at controlling high threat invasive plants and the Ark programs aimed at controlling foxes and involving extensive fox baiting:

- Central Highlands Eden (Baw Baw and Yarra Ranges national parks and Bunyip and Moondarra state parks), Glenelg Eden (Cobboboonee, Lower Glenelg and Mount Richmond national parks, Cape Nelson State Park and Discovery Bay Coastal Park) and Otway Eden (Great Otway and Port Campbell national parks)
- Central Highlands Ark (Lake Eildon and Yarra Ranges NPs and Cathedral Range SP), Glenelg Ark (Cobboboonee, Lower Glenelg and Mount Richmond national parks and Discovery Bay Coastal Park), Grampians Ark (Grampians National Park and Black Range State Park), Otway Ark (Great Otway and Port Campbell national parks) and Southern Ark (Alfred, Alpine (part), Coopracambra, Croajingolong, Errinundra, Lind and Snowy River national parks, Lake Tyers State Park and Cape Conran Coastal Park).

Other major landscape scale programs in terrestrial parks this year are summarised in Table 2. The *Managing marine values* section of the report contains information on the control of marine pests.

In addition, funding from the state and the Commonwealth's Biodiversity Fund supported an aerial shooting program in Murray-Sunset National Park to control feral goats and encourage the recovery of rangeland vegetation. This was the first aerial control program delivered in the Mallee, and complements an integrated approach including ground shooting, fencing, closure of water points, and kangaroo and rabbit control.

Partnerships continued to be important in the management of invasive species. Parks Victoria partnered with the Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) during the year through Parks Victoria's coordinated volunteer hunter program. Continuing existing deer control projects and establishing new pilot projects in areas not open to recreational hunting was a priority in 2014–15. Control projects were delivered in the Alpine and Dandenong Ranges national parks and planning commenced for a deer control program in Wilsons Promontory National Park.

Community consultation continued in relation to wild horses in Barmah National Park.

Managing native animals

Long-term programs to manage the impact of overabundant kangaroo and koala populations continued in several parks. Excessive numbers threaten habitats and can result in animal welfare issues. The programs are underpinned by established ecological rationales developed with the support of key stakeholders, including technical advisory committees.

Red and Western Grey Kangaroos were controlled in Hattah-Kulkyne, Murray-Sunset and Wyperfeld national parks as part of managing the total grazing pressure on the parks from kangaroos, goats and rabbits in order to protect regenerating woodland habitats.

Table 2 – Landscape invasive species control programs

PV region / program	Activity
<i>Multi-region</i>	
Good Neighbour Program	This program again delivered benefits on the interface between parks and private land, including the control of blackberry, gorse, foxes, pigs and rabbits.
Large Herbivore Control Program	This program operates across the state where satellite populations of large herbivores (deer, goats and pigs) have been identified as threatening key natural assets and are considered to be locally eradicable or able to be contained. There were operations in Barmah, Murray-Sunset and Snowy River NPs, Langi Ghiran SP and Gippsland Lakes CP.
<i>Northern Victoria</i>	
Mallee Bounceback	Significant work was undertaken to manage rabbits and their warrens as part of controlling grazers in Hattah-Kulkyne, Murray-Sunset and Wyperfeld NPs and Lake Albacutya Park.
<i>Eastern Victoria</i>	
Alpine Fox Control	This program again included, in the Alpine NP, fox baiting to protect the Long-footed Potoroo and the Mountain Pigmy-possum.
Alps Intensive Management Program	<p>This program treated blackberry, broom, willow and several other species in the Alpine NP. In partnership with DELWP, hawkweed eradication and surveillance continued on the Bogong High Plains, working towards eradicating the three hawkweed species from the park.</p> <p>There was wild horse control and monitoring to inform a broader wild horse management strategy, and the design and delivery of the first-ever deer control project on the Bogong High Plains. This will provide important information on the techniques and effort required to protect alpine bogs.</p>
Gippsland Lakes	Activities in Gippsland Lakes CP included, as part of an invasive species strategy for the Gippsland Lakes, controlling Bridal Creeper, Dolichos Pea and Sea-spurge at visitor nodes, controlling Agapanthus, Boxthorn and Prickly Pear at the park/private land interface, trapping feral pigs and controlling foxes.
<i>Greater Melbourne</i>	
Urban Fringe Weed Management	This program managed high risk environmental weeds that threatened high value assets in Melbourne's urban fringe including the Dandenong Ranges and Kinglake NPs and Arthurs Seat SP.
Urban Rabbit Control Initiative	This initiative, involving rabbit control in peri-urban environments around Melbourne, included works in Warrandyte SP and Woodlands HP.

CP Coastal Park
 HP Historic Park
 NP National Park
 SP State Park

About 7000 kangaroos were removed as part of the program. This focused on Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, the Berribee, Taperoo and Pink Lakes areas of Murray-Sunset National Park and Pine Plains in Wyperfeld National Park and was supported by the Commonwealth Government's Biodiversity Fund. Kangaroos were also culled in Lysterfield Park.

Koalas were controlled in French Island and Mount Eccles national parks to protect woodlands and help prevent loss of koala habitat. Fertility control implants were administered to 157 koalas on French Island and 116 koalas at Mount Eccles. More than 4500 koalas have been implanted at Mount Eccles since 2004.

Managing habitat restoration

Programs during the year to restore habitat focused on the following communities:

- Alpine peatlands (Alpine National Park)

The work to protect alpine peatlands continued, including both weed control and a project to improve the protection of this important and sensitive vegetation community from the impact of fire. The project identified the peatlands most vulnerable to fire and their condition, including those that are long unburnt and therefore representative of their natural state, to inform fire management activities.

- Mallee semi-arid woodlands (Hattah-Kulkyne, Murray-Sunset and Wyperfeld national parks)

To augment the total grazing management program to restore semi-arid woodlands in the Mallee parks, 550 hectares of woodland was revegetated. This consisted of 378 km of direct seeding as well as the planting of an additional 54 000 plants across six sites. An assessment of rabbit grazing pressure indicates a reduction across all sites, despite favourable rains in some areas over the year. The program is partly funded through the Mallee Biofund project.

- Northern Plains grassy ecosystems (Terrick Terrick National Park)

An ecological grassland burn was completed in autumn 2015, and grazing contracts were refined with additional specifications for grazed and non-grazed areas. With these modifications, grassland habitat structure has improved and regular fauna monitoring is recording threatened species such as the Plains-wanderer again, but in low numbers.

- Coastal grassy woodlands on the Yanakie Isthmus (Wilsons Promontory National Park)

This project, which aims to restore coastal grassy woodlands on the isthmus, established that burning in winter and spring is the optimum time to destroy coastal tea-tree seed production, which smothers other vegetation. It also showed that native and exotic grazers are impacting on the grassy structure and flowering in these woodlands, particularly in recently burnt areas. However, new sightings of the threatened New Holland Mouse within the 2009 burn area and within an herbivore exclusion plot suggest that this species may respond to active restoration management.

Managing environmental water

During 2014–15 many of Victoria's rivers, wetlands and floodplains experienced below average rainfall conditions, particularly in the western and central parts of the state.

A significant program coordinated by the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) delivered environmental water to rivers and wetlands across the state, including areas under the Act. The VEWB works in partnership with waterway managers and Parks Victoria to integrate environmental watering with river, wetland and catchment management activities so as to achieve the best ecological outcomes. Most of the water was provided by the VEWB as well as the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (The Living Murray program) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

The largest amounts of water were delivered to the Snowy River, which benefited the river where it passes through the Alpine and Snowy River national parks, and the lower Goulburn River, which passes through the Lower Goulburn National Park. Other streams included in the program included lower Broken Creek, which passes through Broken-Boosey State Park.

Wetlands receiving environmental water included ones in Gunbower and Murray-Sunset national parks and Kings Billabong and Nyah-Vinifera parks. Of particular note was the water pumped into Hattah Lakes in Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. This inundated around 6100 hectares of lakes and floodplain, improving the health of the vegetation. River red gum and black box vegetation communities received water, some for the first time in 20 years, while several species of native fish and waterbirds bred during the event.

Managing marine values

Marine invasive species persist as a significant challenge to marine values in parks. There have been ongoing efforts to reduce the spread and impact of both exotic as well as overabundant native species within the marine parks. Activities included those in the following parks:

- French Island Marine National Park – programs involving community members have helped to control the feral Pacific Oyster established on a rocky outcrop within the park
- Wilsons Promontory – an ongoing program to manage the previously reported Northern Pacific Seastar, Pacific Oysters and New Zealand Screw shells in Tidal River has continued, while community members also supported local staff in monitoring a number of other locations around the Prom at risk of invasion to ensure that other marine pests were not becoming established
- Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary – a trial program investigating options to control the large Black Spined Sea Urchin that has impacted significantly on the kelp forests of the sanctuary was established in partnership with the Friends of Beware reef and other divers from across the state.

New brochures developed for Port Philip and Western Port provided community groups and staff with additional information to help detect and identify marine pest species before they become established.

In addition to the programs reported in *Research programs*:

- Discovery Bay Marine National Park – a marine Bioscan in May 2015 investigated the health of this park and the impacts of the previously widespread abalone virus that impacted the area
- Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park – outputs from the previous year’s mapping of the park were released and are now being incorporated into new signage and displays to help visitors better appreciate the unique and diverse nature of the marine environments and species within this park
- Merri Marine Sanctuary – the published results of field research on the Southern Rock Lobster in this sanctuary, undertaken with Deakin University, clearly demonstrate the benefits of marine protected areas to maintaining local lobster populations, with significantly more lobsters of larger sizes being found within the park.

Other activities relating to managing marine values are referred to in the *Monitoring natural values*, *Research programs* and *Informing, interpreting and educating* sections of the report.

Monitoring natural values

DELWP’s Victorian Forests Monitoring Program provides a platform to meet its reporting obligations, support future policy and management decisions and assess the health and condition of Victoria’s forests and parks. It includes a network of 629 permanent monitoring plots located across State forest and forested parks and conservation reserves, together with detailed aerial photography and satellite imagery. During the year, a further 66 plots were established and measured in areas under the Act, bringing to 306 the number of plots in areas under the Act.

Monitoring key threats and their impacts to terrestrial park ecosystems, which includes work undertaken as part of Parks Victoria’s Signs of Healthy Parks program, focused on:

- weeds in the Alpine, Baw Baw, Grampians, Great Otway, Lower Glenelg and Yarra Ranges national parks and Bunyip State Park
- the abundance and impact of foxes in various parks as part of the cross-tenure Ark programs
- deer in the Alpine National Park
- goat populations in the Mallee national parks (Hattah-Kulkyne, Murray-Sunset and Wyperfeld)
- overabundant kangaroo populations in the Mallee national parks and koala populations in parks in the south west
- grazing by rabbits, as part of the Mallee Bounceback program in the Mallee national parks.

Programs to monitor the habitat condition and threatened species populations included:

- the condition of alpine peat lands in the Alpine National Park
- small mammals in the Great Otway and Wilsons Promontory national parks
- the response of small mammal populations to fire and predator control in the Grampians National Park
- native grasslands and the Plains Wanderer in Terrick Terrick National Park.

The *Managing fire* section of the report contains information on fire monitoring carried out during the year.

A targeted citizen science wildlife survey program with the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria continued and was expanded to include Warby-Ovens and Wilsons Promontory national parks.

Monitoring activities in marine protected areas included:

- the continuation of the sub-tidal reef biodiversity monitoring program, which was undertaken in seven marine national parks and marine sanctuaries (Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park and Eagle Rock, Jawbone, Marengo Reefs, Merri, Point Cooke and Ricketts Point marine sanctuaries)
- surveys of seagrass in three parks and intertidal reefs in four parks, as part of the Sea Search citizen science program
- surveys targeting marine pests in Refuge Cove and Tidal River at Wilsons Promontory and at Popes Eye in Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park.

Researching natural values

Research authorisations

Research, study and investigation in areas on the schedules to the Act are authorised under section 20 or 21A of the Act, sometimes in conjunction with a permit under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the *Reference Areas Act 1978* or the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

A total of 211 research permits were issued during the year, 118 of which were new permits and 93 were renewed permits. These enabled research to be carried out in 108 parks (a permit may cover more than one park) or in all parks if required (22 permits). The parks for which 10 or more permits were issued (in addition to the 'all parks' permits) were: Alpine (23), Chiltern-Mt Pilot (10), Croajingolong (10), Dandenong Ranges (19), Grampians (15), Great Otway (23), Kinglake (10), Little Desert (10), Murray-Sunset (17), Snowy River (13), Wilsons Promontory (20), Wyperfeld (10) and Yarra Ranges (19) national parks.

Research authorised under the permits included:

- research in Hattah-Kulkyne and Murray-Sunset national parks and Lake Albacutya Park as part of investigating the taxonomy, dispersal and reproductive evolution and invasive characteristics of the Australian Box-thorn
- work in Croajingolong and Wilsons Promontory national parks and Holey Plains State Park to investigate Australian carnivorous water beetle diversity
- work in the Alpine, Dandenong Ranges, Great Otway, Wilsons Promontory and Yarra Ranges national parks and Bunyip State Park to investigate the distribution of the Broad-toothed Rat in Victoria
- work in the Alpine National Park as part of undertaking a quantitative assessment of the abundance of feral horses in the Australian Alps
- work in Bunurong Marine National Park and Bunurong Marine Park to investigate wave and sediment dynamics on shore platforms.

Research programs

During the year a number of research programs continued, commenced or were discontinued.

In late December 2014 the research trial in the Wonnangatta Valley in the Alpine National Park using strategic grazing of domestic livestock was stopped (see also *Legislation*). The ecological thinning trial in Barmah National Park (referred to in last year's report) also did not proceed.

DELWP and Parks Victoria finalised a report on the findings of the first phase of the Valuing Victoria's Parks project. This project provides information on the contribution of parks to Victoria's economy, liveability and environmental sustainability based on an ecosystem accounting and evaluation framework.

Parks Victoria's Research Partners Program continued to support and facilitate applied research collaborations with universities and other institutions, gathering critical information to underpin an evidence-based approach to decision-making and further improve park management.

In terrestrial landscapes the research program included research into:

- turtle ecology (Barmah National Park)
- koala ecology and impacts (French Island National Park)
- the emerging impacts of the Sallow Wattle (Grampians National Park)
- continuation of the Yanakie Isthmus adaptive experimental restoration project, and the status of the endangered New Holland Mouse (Wilsons Promontory National Park) (see also *Managing habitat restoration*).

The *Managing fire* section of the report contains information on fire research carried out during the year.

Research projects relating to marine ecosystems included:

- understanding the links between seafloor physical characteristics and biological communities
- hydroacoustic mapping of Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park and Merri Marine Sanctuary
- researching 'Blue carbon' sequestration in vegetated coastal habitats
- the removal of the introduced kelp *Undaria pinnatifida* and its interaction with the native algal canopy
- the bio control of the invasive Northern Pacific Seastar in marine protected areas using predation by the native Eleven-armed Sea Star.

Managing cultural values

Managing Aboriginal heritage

Projects during the year relating to managing Aboriginal heritage in parks included:

- Aboriginal rock art conservation and survey in the Grampians National Park and Black Range State Park – this involved a partnership of the Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Martang Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV)
- the North West Burials Conservation Project in Murray Sunset National Park – this involved a partnership of the Ngintait, Latji Latji and Nyeri Nyeri Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria and OAAV.

Managing historic heritage

Projects during the year on the many historic heritage sites in parks under the Act included:

- Baw Baw National Park – completion of works at the Poverty Point Bridge to remove rock fall debris, manage vegetation at the base of the structure and maintain access via the Long Tunnel Mine Tramway
- Croajingolong National Park – erection of a timber post and rail exclusion fence around two brick chimneys remaining at the historic Lakeview site
- Mount Buffalo National Park – removal and storage of the Mount Buffalo Chalet's moveable heritage collection
- Point Nepean National Park – an event on 5 August 2014 to commemorate the centenary of the first shot fired at the start of World War I
- Steiglitz Historic Park – completion of repairs to the verandah and roof gutters at the former Steiglitz Courthouse and to the former Church of England church
- Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park – further work to identify, locate and map historic sites and cultural landscapes in the park.

In relation to the Mount Buffalo Chalet, the first half of the year saw the development of a tender process for the repair and partial refurbishment of the chalet. Tenders closed on 21 December 2014; all were significantly over the allocated budget. The government has since been reconsidering the project's future.

Managing fire and flood

Managing fire

Bushfires

The 2014–15 bushfire season was below average in its severity. While the number of bushfires statewide during the year was significantly above average, the area burnt by those fires was significantly below average. The season was characterised initially by hot dry conditions; then, in mid-January, significant rain significantly reduced bushfire risk particularly in the east of the state.

There were 313 bushfires recorded as starting in areas under the Act. These burnt a total area of 23 778 hectares. The most significant causes of these fires were lightning (116 bushfires – 37%) and unattended campfires (113 bushfires – 36%). The largest were in the Little Desert National Park: Nhill Harrow Road fire (13 100 ha), Broughtons Track fire (3200 ha) and Wallaby Track fire (1121 ha).

Planned burning

Conditions for planned burning were generally good during the year, with most of the 2014–15 planned burning program completed. Completed burns included 65 in areas under the Act, treating a total area of more than 100 000 hectares. This area included more than 50 000 hectares in the Alpine National Park, nearly 10 000 hectares in Coopracambra National Park and more than 10 000 hectares in Little Desert National Park.

Melbourne Bushfire Protection Program

This initiative, established in 2009 as the Melbourne Bushfire Protection Program, aims to improve bushfire preparedness in Melbourne's urban areas and is now an ongoing program. It includes Churchill, Dandenong Ranges, Mornington Peninsula, Organ Pipes and Point Nepean national parks, Arthurs Seat and Warrandyte state parks, Lysterfield Park, Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve and Woodlands Historic Park.

Activities under the program during the year in areas under the Act included:

- constructing 2 km of new fuel breaks and upgrading 65 km of existing fuel breaks
- upgrading 20 km of roads and tracks to improve access for fire vehicles
- delivering pest plant control on 605 hectares across 10 parks post burn
- delivery of a further 234 hectares of pest plant control works in Dandenong Ranges, Mornington Peninsula and Point Nepean national parks and Warrandyte State Park as part of a 10-year program to improve vegetation condition to offset native vegetation losses resulting from previous fuel break works
- delivery of community engagement programs aimed at promoting fire safety behaviour and community education and involving DELWP, Parks Victoria and other fire and emergency agencies.

Planning, monitoring and research

Management of Victoria's bushfire risk on public land continues to improve and adapt, with further development of policies, guidelines and tools during the year to increase the effectiveness of bushfire management across public land statewide, including areas managed under the Act.

During the year the government asked the Inspector-General for Emergency Management to conduct a review of performance targets for the future bushfire fuel management program on public land. The government will respond to the Inspector-General's recommendations later in 2015.

Victoria takes a landscape approach to strategic bushfire management. Strategic bushfire management planning informs fire operations undertaken by DELWP and Parks Victoria. Plans are developed to manage bushfire risk on public land by using world leading technology to simulate bushfires and to understand the level of risk for each community. Staff work closely with communities and stakeholders to prioritise assets and values for protection.

Three strategic bushfire management plans (Barwon-Otway, East Central and West Central) were published in November 2014 and are now being implemented. Planning was undertaken during the year for the remaining four bushfire risk landscapes (Alpine and Greater Gippsland, Alpine and North East, Mallee and Murray Goulburn, and South Western).

New ways to maintain ecosystem resilience was incorporated into strategic bushfire management planning during the year, including placement of burns to reduce the amount burnt below minimum tolerable fire intervals for different ecosystems. Further tools to improve and enhance ecosystem resilience are also being developed and trialled.

Planned burning guides for the 2003 Alpine fires, 2006–07 Great Divide fires and 2009 Kilmore East-Murrindindi fires continued to inform bushfire management planning.

All fire-related monitoring is being consolidated under a single monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework – the Victorian Bushfire Monitoring Program (VBMP). This is being designed to implement the new Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework for Bushfire Management on Public Land (which was published in February 2015). Fire monitoring programs, including Project HawkEye, were reviewed to identify which elements will continue under the new VBMP.

In addition to the monitoring programs, DELWP continued to invest in research to investigate the impact and management of bushfire and planned burning on factors such as water quantity and quality, biodiversity, carbon assets, social and economic values and the vulnerability and resilience of Victoria's public forests, including those in parks.

The Mallee fire and biodiversity and the box-ironbark landscape mosaic burning projects continued. Other fire and biodiversity research progressed in parks in the Alps, Grampians, Mallee and Otways for incorporation into bushfire management planning.

Managing fire and flood recovery

Bushfires

Fires in early 2015 resulted in recovery programs in the following parks:

- Grampians National Park – the recovery program in the northern Grampians continued during the year
- Wyperfeld National Park – the program was completed during April 2015
- Snowy River and Errinundra national parks – all projects to repair or reinstate assets were completed during May 2015, with other components of the program due for completion in 2015–16. These include projects to mitigate against the impacts associated with natural and Aboriginal cultural values.

Impact assessments were undertaken for a number of other bushfires, including in the Little Desert National Park, but did not reach the prerequisites required for initiating any long-term recovery programs.

Floods

A storm event in June 2014 impacted on a number of assets in the Dandenong Ranges National Park. A recovery program for the affected sites was established and works to repair or reinstate affected assets was ongoing during the year.

A storm event in February 2015 also resulted in significant damage along a short section of the Deddick Trail in the Snowy River National Park. Parks Victoria commenced planning and implementing recovery programs to reinstate or repair these assets and rehabilitate any associated environmental impacts.

Encouraging visitors and tourism

Enhancing visitor enjoyment and tourism

Increasing numbers of visitors are coming to our parks and works were again carried out across the state to improve the visitor experience while maintaining park values and reducing risks. Table 3 contains examples of projects worked on during the year (see also *Managing historic heritage*).

Table 3 – Visitor facility projects

PV region	Project
Western Victoria	Grampians NP – renewal of safety railings at Lakeview, Mt Rosea and Sundial Peak lookouts and safety improvements at the Grand Canyon.
	Wyperfeld NP – completion of fire recovery works.
Northern Victoria	Barmah NP – upgrading of facilities at the Gulf day visitor and camping area, including a concrete boat ramp.
	Gunbower NP – installation of toilet facility at Masters Landing.
	Hattah-Kulkyne NP – upgrades at the Hattah Lakes and Lake Mournpall campgrounds including replacing toilets.
Eastern Victoria	Wilsons Promontory NP – renewal of two visitor toilet blocks at Tidal River to comply with safety requirements.
	Cape Conran CP – construction of an accessible beach ramp for those with disabilities and mobility limitations.
Greater Melbourne	Point Nepean NP – landscaping of the park entrance and at the Quarantine Station.

CP Coastal Park
NP National Park

Parks Victoria also continued to lead the development and promotion of *Walk Victoria's Icons* long-distance walks:

- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (Alpine National Park) – this walk is into its second year of operation, during which it received 251 bookings (see also *Management and other planning*)
- Grampians Peaks Trail (Grampians National Park) – the approved master plan was launched at the end of May in conjunction with the first stage of the walk, a 2-night, 3-day loop walking track from Halls Gap to Rosea Campsite and Borough Huts. Parks Victoria is working with partner agencies to progress the remaining stages of the Trail
- Great Ocean Walk (Great Otway and Port Campbell national parks) – significant enhancements funded during the final year's delivery of the \$4.16 million Great Ocean Walk Experience project. These included upgrading and realigning sections of track, installation of signage and new online visitor information and interpretation. The trend of steady growth continued for the tenth year, including a five per cent increase in campsite bookings compared to the previous year.

Visits to parks

Parks Victoria's latest Visitor Number Monitor, estimated that 38 million visits were made to national and state parks during 2014–15. This represents a 9 per cent increase from the 34.8 million visits estimated in 2012–13. The monitor is a biennial survey covering a sample of Victorians and interstate (NSW and South Australia) and international visitors.

A new applied research project commenced that is investigating the personal and community level benefits gained from visiting national and state parks.

New or increased fees were introduced on 1 July 2014 by the former government for camping and accommodation facilities in 31 parks under the Act, with discounts for school groups and concession card holders. In April 2015, the Minister announced the removal of camping fees from all basic campsites in parks as from 2 April 2015 and the removal of the requirement to book basic camping sites as from 1 July 2015. Refunds were issued to all affected customers.

Peak season ballots were phased out during the year for four popular campgrounds in Croajingolong National Park (Shipwreck Creek and Wingan Inlet), Great Otway National Park (Blanket Bay) and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park (Bunga Arm), with bookings successfully transitioning to real-time on-line bookings. Ballots and advanced bookings for peak periods remain in place for camping and accommodation at Wilsons Promontory National Park and Cape Conran Coastal Park and continued to be in high demand.

Licensed tour operators

Tour operators are licensed to run organised tours and recreational activities for profit on Victorian public land. As at 30 June 2015, 353 operators were licensed to operate in areas under the Act. Work continued during the year on improving the administration and enforcement of the tour operator licensing system.

Informing, interpreting and educating

Information, interpretation and education services relating to areas under the National Parks Act were provided to encourage visits, manage risks, increase knowledge and understanding of parks and biodiversity and encourage visitors to develop a stronger connection with the environment.

Information was again provided to the public through Parks Victoria's information service (13 1963), the Parks Victoria website, social media and Park Notes.

Face-to-face interpretation activities were delivered to nearly 14 000 adults and children in 30 sites in areas under the Act. This included delivery to 4860 students at Parks Victoria's education centres at Wilsons Promontory and Dandenong Ranges national parks, and the delivery of Parks Victoria's Junior Ranger Program to 2664 participants (including 1680 children) at 12 sites in parks under the Act.

Community engagement continued to be a key focus for marine management, supported by parks Victoria's regional staff and seasonal rangers as well as community volunteers. A series of Junior Ranger programs focused on marine protected areas were delivered during the schools holidays while the annual Summer by the Sea program in January 2015 – delivered in partnership with DELWP's Coastcare Victoria – saw an increase in participation over previous years.

Throughout the year a series of short films profiling marine ranger staff and the parks they manage was released. This has further raised awareness in the community of the values of these areas and the role of marine staff managing them. Each of the films includes extensive use of underwater footage captured by staff through research and monitoring programs across Victoria.

Partnering with Traditional Owners

DELWP and Parks Victoria continued to work with Traditional Owners across the state to implement joint and co-operative management arrangements and support the involvement of Traditional Owners in park management.

Joint management

Further progress was made during the year in working with Traditional Owner corporations and the respective Traditional Owner land management boards to implement Traditional Owner settlement agreements and joint management partnerships.

In north-central Victoria the Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board was appointed on 16 September 2014 for four parks under the Act: Greater Bendigo and (most of) Kara Kara national parks and Kooyoora and Paddys Ranges state parks. This arose from the Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement between the Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation and the State signed in 2013.

In East Gippsland, the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board (with the involvement of the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLAWAC), Parks Victoria and DELWP) continued to develop a joint management plan for areas including Mitchell River, Tarra-Bulga, The Lakes and Snowy River (New Guinea Caves) national parks, Lake Tyers State Park and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. Gunaikurnai rangers and Parks Victoria field staff continued to work together in those parks to look after Country.

GLAWAC and Parks Victoria worked together on the Sperm Whale Head Project to upgrade infrastructure at Point Wilson in The Lakes National Park.

In northern Victoria, the Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board was re-appointed during year for Barmah National Park. A key task for the board is the preparation of a joint management plan for the park. A workshop involving representatives of the Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria and DELWP included sharing cultural insights into the park for general members of the board and government agency representatives.

Co-operative management

Parks Victoria continued to work cooperatively with the Budj Bim Council and the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in the management of Mount Eccles National Park, and with the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation in management of the Little Desert and Wyperfeld national parks and Lake Albacutya Park.

A highlight of the year was the completion of the *Ngootyoong Gunditj, Ngootyoong Mara South West Management Plan* for parks in far south-west Victoria (see *Management and other planning*). The plan was developed in a partnership involving the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners, Budj Bim Council, Parks Victoria and DELWP.

Other Traditional Owner partnerships

Parks Victoria continued to work with other Traditional Owner groups during the year, including on various aboriginal heritage projects (see *Managing aboriginal heritage*).

Partnering with the community

Volunteers

Volunteers from a wide range of organisations, including Friends groups, community and recreation users, special interest groups, educational institutions, partner organisations and corporate groups, as well as individuals continued to make a major contribution to the management of areas under the Act.

Organisations including Conservation Volunteers Australia, Four Wheel Drive Victoria and many Friends groups were involved, as were the Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria), which gave valuable support to invasive species control projects (see *Managing invasive species*).

Volunteers again participated in the Campground Host Program during peak camping periods over the summer and Easter holidays, providing assistance to campers and field staff. The program was run in the Alpine, Croajingolong, Grampians, Great Otway, Lake Eildon and Mount Buffalo national parks and Cathedral Range State Park.

Parks Victoria continued its partnership with Four Wheel Drive Victoria to deliver the highly successful Four Wheel Drive Camp Host program in parks including the Alpine, Barmah and Great Otway national parks.

Supporting visitors with disabilities

Parks Victoria undertook a number of initiatives to assist people with disabilities. These included:

- developing a motorised version of the TrailRider all-terrain wheelchair with the technical assistance of the firm Mobility Plus
- providing, in partnership with Colac Otway Shire, an all-terrain wheelchair at Apollo Bay for visitors wishing to explore sections of the Great Ocean Walk and other walking trails in the Great Otway National Park. There are now such chairs at this site as well as at the Grampians, Point Nepean and Wilsons Promontory national parks and Cape Conran Coastal Park
- constructing an accessible canoe launcher at Kings Billabong Park which enables canoeists with disabilities to transfer safely and easily in and out of their canoes and launch them independently
- constructing, with funding assistance from the People and Parks Foundation, an accessible beach ramp at the Sailors Grave day visitor area in Cape Conran Coastal Park
- the Walk in the Park program – this program was delivered in partnership with Blind Sports Victoria and provided escorted group walks and group camps in parks for people who are blind and vision impaired. Walks were held in parks in and around Melbourne including Organ Pipes and Yarra Ranges national parks, and camps at Wilsons Promontory National Park and Cape Conran Coastal Park.

Supporting park management

Management

The Secretary is responsible under the Act for ensuring that the parks and other areas to which the Act applies are controlled and managed in accordance with the Act.

Parks Victoria, established under the *Parks Victoria Act 1998*, is responsible through a management services agreement for managing the parks and other areas under the Act on behalf of the Secretary. Various powers under the Act have been delegated to employees of Parks Victoria.

DELWP, on behalf of the Secretary, works with Parks Victoria and provides strategic policy advice to the Minister and the Secretary. Under the Act, the Director of National Parks (who is the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Victoria) provides advice to the Minister and the Secretary on the operational elements of park management.

Parks Victoria's 2014–15 business plan set out the management services and strategic priorities to be delivered for the year. Its annual report contains information on the organisation and its operations for the year. DELWP and other organisations also contributed to the parks program during the year.

Legislation

Amendments to the Act

Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Act 2013

The remaining provisions of this Act, relating to Mitchell River National Park, Lake Tyers State Park and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park, commenced on 1 September 2014 (see *Changes to the parks system*).

National Parks Amendment (Prohibiting Cattle Grazing) Act 2015

This Act amended the National Parks Act on 13 May 2015 to prohibit the introduction and use of cattle in the Alpine National Park and River Red Gum national parks (Barmah, Gunbower, Hattah-Kulkyne, Lower Goulburn, Murray-Sunset and Warby-Ovens) except if authorised to move directly through particular parks.

Other amending Acts

The *Filming Approval Act 2014*, which commenced on 1 March 2015, aims to support and facilitate commercial filming on public land. It amended the National Parks Act to clarify that it applies to land under that Act and to provide that any regulations made under the Act with respect to film permits must not be inconsistent with the film friendly principles established under the Filming Approval Act.

The *Water Amendment (Flood Mitigation) Act 2014* primarily amended the *Water Act 1989* to regulate the maintenance of certain levees on certain Crown land, including those in various areas under the National Parks Act. On 1 March 2015 it amended the National Parks Act to insert an offence for the unauthorised construction, removal, alteration or maintenance of levees in specified areas.

There were also minor technical amendments to the National Parks Act on 1 July 2014 relating to the definition of, and references to, police officers.

Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2014

This bill was introduced into Parliament on 2 September 2014 but was not passed before the proroguing of Parliament before the 2014 State election. The amendments relating to the National Parks Act were to:

- provide for the addition of 190 hectares to Dandenong Ranges and Murray-Sunset national parks and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park
- make consequential amendments arising from the insertion of new bee site licensing provisions into the *Land Act 1958*
- make several minor amendments and repeal several spent provisions.

Amendments to regulations

The National Parks Amendment Regulations 2015 amended the National Parks Regulations 2013 on 18 March 2015. The amendments support the amendments to the Act relating to the maintenance of levees in parks. They exempt the holder of a levee maintenance permit from particular offences while acting under and in accordance with the permit. The amendments also amended the references to the plans defining areas in Cape Howe and Point Hicks marine national parks which are prescribed for various purposes.

Authorities under the Act

Leases

In October 2014 the former Minister granted a 50-year lease, with an option for a further 49 years, to Point Leisure Group under section 30AAAC of the Act over 64 hectares of the Quarantine Station, Point Nepean National Park. The lease allowed the area to be developed as a recreation and leisure precinct. The incoming government considered the proposal inappropriate for the site, and the lease lapsed on 30 June 2015.

Considerable work was undertaken during the year in the development of the lease for the proposed new gondola and associated visitor facilities at Arthurs Seat State Park. This included seeking the advice of the National Parks Advisory Council.

Other authorities

Table 4 lists various authorities (licences and permits) that were granted under the Act during the year. Other authorities included apiary permits granted under section 21(1)(b) and tour operator licences under section 27D (see *Enhancing visitor enjoyment and tourism*).

Table 4 – Authorities under the Act

Park	Section of Act	Permittee / licensee	Purpose
Alpine NP	21(3)	Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW Parks and Wildlife Service	Install, operate and maintain radio equipment and solar array at Mt Tingaringy.
	30B	Trinity Grammar School	Access private property
Grampians NP	21(3)	Wireless Institute of Australia (Victorian Division)	Operate and maintain radio communications equipment on Mt William
Mount Buffalo NP	21(3)	North East Broadcasters Pty Ltd	Operate a community radio station at the rear of Mt Buffalo Chalet
Cape Conran CP	21(1)(c)(ii)	Bush Ed	Operation and management of the Cape Conran camping precinct
Lysterfield Park	21(1)(c)(ii)	Lysterfield Sailing Club	Operation of a sailing club

CP Coastal Park
NP National Park

Consents to public authorities

Table 5 lists the consents granted under section 27 of the Act to public authorities (as defined in the Act) to carry out works, subject to conditions, in various parks.

Table 5 – Consents to public authorities

Park	Public authority	Location / Purpose
Alpine NP	Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure	Operate and maintain water storage tank and associated pipes at Howmans Gap.
	Telstra Corporation Ltd	Vary existing consent relating to Snowy Range.
Brisbane Ranges NP	Barwon Region Water Corporation	Drain Lower Stony Creek Reservoir.
Greater Bendigo NP	NBN Co Ltd	Install, operate and maintain the National Broadband Network at One Tree Hill.
		Install and operate fibre optic cables as part of the National Broadband Network at Big Hill.
Kinglake NP	Nillumbik Shire Council	Operate and maintain existing water tank for firefighting.
Yarra Ranges NP	Telstra Corporation Ltd	Install, operate and maintain telecommunications facility at Lake Mountain.
Mt Buangor SP	Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Corporation	Operate water infrastructure.
Woodlands HP	Optus Mobile Ltd	Install and operate fibre optic cables at Gellibrand Hill.
Castlemaine Diggings NHP	Roads Corporation	Construct road culvert and associated infrastructure.

HP Historic Park
 NHP National Heritage Park
 NP National Park
 SP State Park

Enforcement

There were 15 individuals successfully prosecuted during the year for committing 27 offences under the Act (20) or the National Parks Regulations 2013 (7).¹ Most of the offences related to possessing or using a gun or other weapon (13), hunting an animal contrary to the regulations (6) and fishing or possessing a priority species in a marine national park or a marine sanctuary (5).

There were 389 infringement notices issued during the year in relation to prescribed offences against the Act (120) or the regulations (269). These included offences relating to dogs (118), using recreational fishing equipment in a marine national park or a marine sanctuary (90), camping outside a designated area (53), vehicles (33), fires (29), taking fallen or felled trees (27) or interfering with vegetation (17).

In addition, 69 warnings were issued during the year for offences under the Act or the regulations. The most common offences for which warnings were issued related to dogs (31).

Interstate cooperation

Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program

The *Memorandum of understanding in relation to the cooperative management of the Australian Alps national parks* (the MOU) covers, in Victoria, the Alpine, Baw Baw, Mount Buffalo and Snowy River national parks and Avon Wilderness Park.

The purpose of the MOU is to promote cross-border cooperation in the protection and management of this highly significant conservation area. The four agencies involved are Parks Victoria, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and the Commonwealth Department of Environment.

¹ The numbers refer to the number of successful prosecutions during the year regardless of when the offences took place.

During the year the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program funded projects relating to across natural values management (including climate change; water and catchments), visitor services (including stakeholder engagement and communications) and cultural heritage. Activities under the program included:

- a project to align assessment and monitoring protocols for alpine bogs
- the roll out of Phase 2 of the Rehabilitation Field Guide Notebook for the Australian Alps to non-park stakeholders such as power companies, state road authorities, ski resorts, forest managers, contractors and developers
- continuing the reporting into the cultural significance of the Alps
- installing a huts code notice into huts in the Alpine National Park to guide users on their protection and fire safety
- the final year of the four-year partnership with the National Environmental Research Program's Landscape and Policy Hub, which had the Australian Alps as one of its two research landscapes to explore the likely implications of changing climate, land use and other human and natural influences on ecosystem processes and on the distribution of endemic and introduced plants and animals.

Advisory bodies

National Parks Advisory Council

The National Parks Advisory Council is appointed under section 10 of the Act. Its main functions are to advise the Minister generally in relation to the administration of the Act and on particular matters in relation to which its advice is required under the Act or is sought by the Minister.

The council comprises the Secretary (or his or her nominee), the Director of National Parks (who is the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Victoria) and eight non-government members. There were several changes to the membership during the year. As at 30 June 2015 the council comprised the following members:

Acting Convenor: Mr Peter Roper

Members:

- Dr Sue Beeton
- Mr Peter Beaumont (nominee of the Secretary)
- Cr Jim Child
- Mr Christopher Collins
- Ms Judith Dixon
- Mr Chris Rose (Director of National Parks)

The council's annual report for 2014–15 provides information on the council and its activities over the year.

Alpine Advisory Committee

The Alpine Advisory Committee is constituted under section 32AF of the Act to assist with the development of a management plan for the Alpine National Park. During the year the committee continued to assist with the development of a management plan for the Greater Alpine national parks (see *Management planning*).

As at 30 June 2015, the membership of the committee was as follows:

Convenor: Mr Ewan Waller AFSM

Members:	Ms Trudy Anderson	Mr Ronald Moon
	Dr Peter Attiwill AM	Mr Russell Mullett
	Mr Geoff Burrowes	Mr David Packham OAM
	Mr Chris Commins	Ms Louise Perrin
	Mr Philip Davis	Mr Peter Roper
	Mr Stephen Dingwall	Ms Christa Treasure
	Mr Andrew Dwyer	Mr Neville Wright.
	Mr Mervyn McGuire	

There were also several non-statutory advisory groups involved in the management of various parks.

Appendix 1 – Areas managed under the National Parks Act

A National parks (Schedule Two)

		Area (ha)	Area (ha)
National park		30 June 2014	30 June 2015
1	Alfred	3 050	3 050
2	Alpine	661 777	661 777
3	Barmah	28 505	28 505
4	Baw Baw	13 530	13 530
5	Brisbane Ranges	8 885	8 885
6	Burrowa-Pine Mountain	18 400	18 400
7	Chiltern-Mt Pilot	21 650	21 650
8	Churchill	271	271
9	Cobboboonee	18 510	18 510
10	Coopracambra	38 800	38 800
11	Croajingolong	*88 500	*88 500
12	Dandenong Ranges	3 540	3 540
13	Errinundra	39 870	39 870
14	French Island	*11 160	*11 160
15	Grampians	168 235	168 235
16	Greater Bendigo**	17 324	17 324
17	Great Otway	*103 875	*103 875
18	Gunbower	9 330	9 330
19	Hattah-Kulkyne	49 975	49 975
20	Heathcote-Graytown	12 700	12 700
21	Kara Kara	13 990	13 990
22	Kinglake	23 210	23 210
23	Lake Eildon	27 750	27 750
24	Lind	1 370	1 370
25	Little Desert	132 647	132 647
26	Lower Glenelg	26 430	26 430
27	Lower Goulburn	9 320	9 320
28	Mitchell River	14 365	^14 395
29	Mornington Peninsula	*2 680	*2 680
30	Morwell	565	565
31	Mount Buffalo	31 020	31 020
32	Mount Eccles	8 565	8 565
33	Mount Richmond	1 733	1 733
34	Murray-Sunset	664 810	664 810
35	Organ Pipes	153	153
36	Point Nepean	*578	*578
37	Port Campbell	*1 830	*1 830
38	Snowy River	114 600	114 600
39	Tarra-Bulga	2 015	2 015
40	Terrick Terrick	6 390	6 390
41	The Lakes	2 390	2 390
42	Warby-Ovens	14 750	14 750
43	Wilsons Promontory	*49 049	*49 049
44	Wyperfeld	359 445	359 445
45	Yarra Ranges	77 185	77 185
Total – National parks		2 904 727	2 904 757

* Area includes the area of the national park located beneath a marine national park.

** Parts of Greater Bendigo NP extend only to 100 metres below the land surface.

^ New area reflects a redefinition of the park boundary along the Dargo Road, a new map base, a plan correction and a recalculation of the park area.

B Wilderness parks (Schedule Two A)

		Area (ha) 30 June 2014	Area (ha) 30 June 2015
	Wilderness park		
1	Avon	39 650	39 650
2	Big Desert	142 300	142 300
3	Wabba	20 100	20 100
	Total – Wilderness parks	202 050	202 050

C State parks (Schedule Two B)

		Area (ha) 30 June 2014	Addition (ha)	Area (ha) 30 June 2015
	State park			
1	Arthurs Seat	565		565
2	Black Range	11 700		11 700
3	Broken-Boosey	1 010		1 010
4	Bunyip	16 655		16 655
5	Cape Nelson	210		210
6	Cathedral Range	3 616		3 616
7	Dergholm	10 400		10 400
8	Enfield	4 400		4 400
9	Holey Plains	10 740		10 740
10	Kooyoora	11 350		11 350
11	Lake Tyers	8 645	40	*8 680
12	Langi Ghiran	3 040		3 040
13	Leaghur	2 050		2 050
14	Lerderderg	20 185		20 185
15	Moondarra	6 330		6 330
16	Mount Arapiles-Toosan	7 470		7 470
17	Mount Buangor	2 400		2 400
18	Mount Granya	6 140		6 140
19	Mount Lawson	13 150		13 150
20	Mount Napier	2 800		2 800
21	Mount Samaria	7 600		7 600
22	Mount Worth	1 040		1 040
23	Paddys Ranges	2 010		2 010
24	Reef Hills	2 020		2 020
25	Warrandyte	686		686
26	Werribee Gorge	575		575
	Total – State parks	156 787	40	156 822

* New area reflects additions, an updated map base and a recalculation of the park area.

D Other parks (Schedule Three)

		Area (ha) 30 June 2014	Addition (ha)	Area (ha) 30 June 2015
	Other park			
1	Bay of Islands CP	950		950
2	Beechworth HP	1 090		1 090
3	Cape Conran CP	11 700		11 700
4	Cape Liptrap CP	4 315		4 315
5	Discovery Bay CP	*10 460		*10 460
6	Gadsen Bend Park	1 620		1 620
7	Gippsland Lakes CP	17 805	48	**17 688
8	Haining Farm	66		66
9	Kings Billabong Park	2 195		2 195
10	Lake Albacutya Park	8 300		8 300
11	Langwarrin FFR	214		214
12	Lysterfield Park	1 397		1 397
13	Murray-Kulkyne Park	4 555		4 555
14	Nyah-Vinifera Park	1 370		1 370
15	Steiglitz HP	425		425
16	Tara Range Park	7 620		7 620
17	Tyers Park	1 810		1 810
18	Woodlands HP	820		820
Total – Other parks		76 712	48	76 595

CP Coastal Park

FFR Flora and Fauna Reserve

HP Historic Park

* Area includes the area of the park located beneath a marine national park.

** New area reflects additions, realignment of part of the boundary, a new map base for parts of the park and a recalculation of the park area.

E Other parks and reserves (Schedule Four)

		Area (ha) 30 June 2014	Area (ha) 30 June 2015
	Other park or reserve		
1	Bunurong MP	*1 660	*1 660
2	Castlemaine Diggings NHP**	7 585	7 585
3	Corner Inlet MCP	*18 000	*18 000
4	Deep Lead NCR (No. 1)**	1 120	1 120
5	Nooramunga MCP	15 000	15 000
6	Shallow Inlet MCP	2 000	2 000
7	Wilsons Promontory MP)		
8	Wilsons Promontory MR)	*10 000	*10 000
Total – Other parks and reserves		55 365	55 365

MCP Marine and Coastal Park

MP Marine Park

MR Marine Reserve

NCR Nature Conservation Reserve

NHP National Heritage Park

* Area includes the area of the park or reserve located beneath a marine national park.

** Castlemaine Diggings NHP and Deep Lead NCR (No. 1) extend only to 100 metres below the land surface.

F Wilderness zones (Schedule Five)

Wilderness zones are located within several national parks, as set out below. The areas of the wilderness zones are included in the areas of the relevant parks in Part A of this appendix.

	National park	Wilderness zone	*Area (ha) 30 June 2015
1	Alpine	Mount Darling-Snowy Bluff	40 400
2	Alpine	Razor-Viking	15 700
3	Alpine	Indi	13 800
4	Alpine	Cobberas	10 000
5	Alpine	Buchan Headwaters	30 000
6	Alpine	Tingaringy	7 900
7	Coopracambra	Genoa	19 400
8	Croajingolong	Sandpatch	15 600
9	Croajingolong	Cape Howe	7 100
10	Murray-Sunset	Sunset	126 900
11	Murray-Sunset	Minook	38 700
12	Murray-Sunset	Galpunga	35 700
13	Murray-Sunset	Mount Cowra	23 500
14	Snowy River	Snowy River	27 000
15	Snowy River	Bowen	17 500
16	Wilsons Promontory	Wilsons Promontory	21 800
17	Wyperfeld	North Wyperfeld	97 900
18	Wyperfeld	South Wyperfeld	61 300
19	Wyperfeld	Chinaman Flat	29 800
Total – Wilderness zones			640 000

* No changes during the year.

G Remote and natural areas (Schedule Six)

Remote and natural areas are located within several national parks, as set out below. The areas of the remote and natural areas are included in the areas of the relevant parks in Part A of this appendix.

	National park	Remote and natural area	*Area (ha) 30 June 2015
1	Alpine	The Governors	8 100
2	Alpine	Macalister	33 300
3	Alpine	Dandongadale	3 700
4	Alpine	Bundara-Cobungra	13 700
5	Alpine	Bogong	16 300
6	Alpine	Davies Plain	10 500
7	Alpine	Suggan Buggan	17 800
8	Alpine	Upper Snowy	11 800
9	Baw Baw	Baw Baw Plateau	6 500
10	Burrowa-Pine Mountain	Mount Burrowa	6 200
11	Coopracambra	Mount Kaye	8 100
12	Croajingolong	Rame Head	9 800
13	Errinundra	Brodribb	7 700
14	Grampians	Victoria Range	14 000
15	Grampians	Serra Range	11 200
16	Grampians	Major Mitchell Plateau	6 900
17	Little Desert	Little Desert	16 400
18	Mount Buffalo	North Buffalo	6 500
19	Murray-Sunset	South Sunset	24 000
20	Wilsons Promontory	Wilsons Promontory Islands (12)	469
21	Wilsons Promontory	Southern Wilsons Promontory	14 400
22	Wyperfeld	Hopping Mouse Hill	32 100
Total – Remote and natural areas			279 469

* No changes during the year.

H Marine national parks (Schedule Seven)

	Marine national park*	**Area (ha) 30 June 2015
1	Bunurong	2 100
2	Cape Howe	4 050
3	Churchill Island	670
4	Corner Inlet	1 550
5	Discovery Bay	2 770
6	French Island	2 800
7	Ninety Mile Beach	2 750
8	Point Addis	4 600
9	Point Hicks	4 000
10	Port Phillip Heads	3 580
11	Twelve Apostles	7 500
12	Wilsons Promontory	15 550
13	Yaringa	980
Total – Marine national parks		52 900

* Marine national parks extend only to 200 metres below the land surface. Some partly overlay parts of other parks under the Act.

** No changes during the year.

I Marine sanctuaries (Schedule Eight)

	Marine sanctuary	*Area (ha) 30 June 2015
1	Barwon Bluff	17
2	Beware Reef	220
3	Eagle Rock	17
4	Jawbone	30
5	Marengo Reefs	12
6	Merri	25
7	Mushroom Reef	80
8	Point Cooke	290
9	Point Danger	25
10	Ricketts Point	115
11	The Arches	45
Total – Marine sanctuaries		876

* No changes during the year.

J Other areas (non-scheduled)*

Area	Section of Act	**Area (ha) 30 June 2015
1 Bald Hills BR	19B	1
2 Collins Settlement Historic Site	19B	1
3 Flinders NCR	19B	1
4 Flinders Natural Interest Reserve	19B	4
5 Long Forest NCR	19B	283
6 Lower Glenelg PPR and SLR	19B	24
7 Main Ridge NCR	19B	64
8 Moreep BR	19B	10
9 Nyerimilang Park	19B	200
10 Wychitella NCR	19B	3 780
11 Mt St Gwinear access road	19C	35
12 Commonwealth land adjacent to Woodlands Historic Park	19D	31
13 Picnic area at McKenzie's Flat (Lerderderg State Park)	19E	#
14 Blackwood Ranges Track (Lerderderg State Park)	19E	#
15 Glenample Homestead	32AA	8
Total – Other areas		4 442

BR	Bushland Reserve	*	Only specific sections of the Act apply to these areas.
NCR	Nature Conservation Reserve	**	No changes during the year.
PPR	Public Purposes Reserve	#	Area approximately 0.1 ha.
SLR	Scenic Lookout Reserve		

K Summary – areas managed under the Act

Category	No. of areas 30 June 2015	Area (ha) 30 June 2014	Area (ha) 30 June 2015
A National parks (Schedule Two)	45	2 904 727	2 904 757
B Wilderness parks (Schedule Two A)	3	202 050	202 050
C State parks (Schedule Two B)	26	156 787	156 822
D Other parks (Schedule Three)	18	76 712	*76 595
E Other parks and reserves (Schedule Four)	8	55 365	55 365
H Marine national parks (Schedule Seven)	13	52 900	52 900
I Marine sanctuaries (Schedule Eight)	11	876	876
J Other areas (non-scheduled)	15	4 442	4 442
Total	139	3 453 859	*3 453 807

* The apparent decrease in area compared to 2013–14 results from a recalculation of the area of Gippsland Lake Coastal Park (see Table D). In actual fact, there was a net increase in 2014–15 of 88 ha in the area under the Act.

L Unproclaimed additions

As at 30 June 2015 the following legislation provides for future additions to the parks system.

Act	Provision of Act	Park	Area (ha)
1 <i>National Parks Act 1975</i>	50K	Greater Bendigo National Park	*16
2 <i>National Parks Act 1975</i>	Schedule One AA clause 20	Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park	*2
3 <i>National Parks (Amendment) Act 1989</i>	29(3)	Moondarra State Park	178
Total – unproclaimed areas			196

* Area will become part of the park on surrender of the title to the Crown.

Appendix 2 – Location of parks and other areas

National and other parks and areas

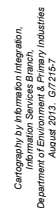
1	Murray-Sunset NP	45	Mornington Peninsula NP	91	Tarra-Bulga NP
2	Hattah-Kulkyne NP	46	Arthurs Seat SP	92	Morwell NP
3	Murray-Kulkyne Park	47	Main Ridge NCR	93	Holey Plains SP
4	Big Desert WP	48	Bald Hills BR	94	Gippsland Lakes CP
5	Wyperfeld NP	49	Flinders NCR	95	The Lakes NP
6	Lake Albacutya Park	50	Flinders NIR	96	Mitchell River NP
7	Little Desert NP	51	French Island NP	97	Nyerimilang Park
8	Mount Arapiles-Tooan SP	52	Langwarrin FFR	98	Snowy River NP
9	Dergholm SP	53	Churchill NP	99	Errinundra NP
10	Black Range SP	54	Lysterfield Park	100	Coopracambra NP
11	Grampians NP	55	Bunyip SP	101	Lind NP
12	Deep Lead NCR (No. 1)	56	Dandenong Ranges NP	102	Alfred NP
13	Lower Glenelg NP and Cobboboonee NP	57	Warrandyte SP	103	Cape Conran CP
14	Discovery Bay CP	58	Organ Pipes NP	104	Croajingolong NP
15	Lower Glenelg PPR and SLR	59	Woodlands HP and adjacent Commonwealth land	105	Kings Billabong Park
16	Mount Richmond NP	60	Kinglake NP	106	Gadsen Bend Park
17	Cape Nelson SP	61	Haining Farm	107	Nyah-Vinifera Park
18	Mount Eccles NP	62	Yarra Ranges NP	108	Gunbower NP
19	Mount Napier SP	63	Cathedral Range SP	109	Lower Goulburn NP
20	Langi Ghiran SP	64	Lake Eildon NP	110	Lake Tyers SP
21	Mount Buangor SP	65	Mount Samaria SP	Marine national parks and marine sanctuaries	
22	Paddys Ranges SP	66	Reef Hills SP	A	Discovery Bay MNP
23	Kara Kara NP	67	Broken-Boosey SP	B	Merri MS
24	Kooyoorra SP	68	Barmah NP	C	The Arches MS
25	Wychitella NCR	69	Warby-Ovens NP	D	Twelve Apostles MNP
26	Leaghur SP	70	Chiltern-Mt Pilot NP	E	Marengo Reefs MS
27	Terrick Terrick NP	71	Beechworth HP	F	Eagle Rock MS
28	Greater Bendigo NP	72	Mount Granya SP	G	Point Addis MNP
29	Heathcote-Graytown NP	73	Mount Lawson SP	H	Point Danger MS
30	Castlemaine Diggings NHP	74	Burrowa-Pine Mountain NP	I	Barwon Bluff MS
31	Lerderderg SP and associated leased areas	75	Wabba WP	J	Port Phillip Heads MNP
32	Long Forest NCR	76	Mount Buffalo NP	K	Point Cooke MS
33	Werribee Gorge SP	77	Alpine NP	L	Jawbone MS
34	Enfield SP	78	Avon WP	M	Ricketts Point MS
35	Moreep BR	79	Baw Baw NP and Mt St Gwinear access road	N	Mushroom Reef MS
36	Brisbane Ranges NP	80	Moondarra SP	O	Yaringa MNP
37	Steiglitz HP	81	Tyers Park	P	French Island MNP
38	Bay of Islands CP	82	Mount Worth SP	Q	Churchill Island MNP
39	Port Campbell NP	83	Bunurong MP	R	Bunurong MNP
40	Glenample Homestead	84	Cape Liptrap CP	S	Wilsons Promontory MNP
41	Tara Range Park	85	Shallow Inlet MCP	T	Corner Inlet MNP
42	Great Otway NP	86	Wilsons Promontory NP	U	Ninety Mile Beach MNP
43	Point Nepean NP	87	Wilsons Promontory MP	V	Beware Reef MS
44	Collins Settlement HS	88	Wilsons Promontory MR	W	Point Hicks MNP
		89	Corner Inlet MCP	X	Cape Howe MNP
		90	Nooramunga MCP		

BR Bushland Reserve
 CP Coastal Park
 FFR Flora and Fauna Reserve
 HP Historic Park
 HS Historic Site
 MCP Marine and Coastal Park

MNP Marine National Park
 MP Marine Park
 MR Marine Reserve
 MS Marine Sanctuary
 NCR Nature Conservation Reserve
 NHP National Heritage Park

NIR Natural Interest Reserve
 NP National Park
 PPR Public Purposes Reserve
 SLR Scenic Lookout Reserve
 SP State Park
 WP Wilderness Park

Mildura



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