

National Parks Act Annual Report 2016



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Further information

For further information, please contact the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 131 963.

Notes

- During the year the responsible ministers were:
 - 1 July 2015 to 23 May 2016 – the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
 - 23 May 2016 to 30 June 2016 – the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.
- In this report:
 - *the Act* means the *National Parks Act 1975*
 - *DELWP* means the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
 - *the Minister* means the Minister responsible for administering the Act
 - *PV* means Parks Victoria
 - *the Secretary* means the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Cover image

Shipwreck Coast (Twelve Apostles Marine National Park and Port Campbell National Park)

Accessibility

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Foreword

This annual report on the working of the *National Parks Act 1975* for the year ended 30 June 2016 is provided to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, under section 35 of the Act.

The Act establishes the statutory basis for the protection, use and management of an outstanding system of more than 100 national and other parks covering approximately 3.45 million hectares.

The Secretary has statutory responsibility 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 the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

This year marked the fortieth anniversary of the Act coming into operation on 1 December 1975. At that time there were 25 national parks and two other parks covering more than 227 000 hectares. The increase in the area of land protected under the Act by successive governments has been substantial but more importantly has been the increase in the diversity of natural environments, natural and cultural values and scenic landscapes now permanently protected in our parks for the benefit of this and future generations.

Compared to 40 years ago, there is a much greater awareness and appreciation of the contribution that parks make to the community in a whole range of ways – whether it is their special role in protecting areas of the state's natural and cultural heritage, their contribution to providing ecosystem services and opportunities for recreation and enjoyment, or their role in the social and economic well-being of the community.

Some of the highlights of the year included:

- the broad program of activities to protect and enhance natural and cultural values in parks across the state, together with monitoring and research to support improved park management
- the significant efforts made to control the Wye River-Jamieson Track fire in the Great Otway National Park and in the subsequent fire recovery activities
- the increasing involvement of Traditional Owners in park management
- the release of the *Shipwreck Coast Master Plan* and the government's announcement of significant funding to deliver Stage One of the plan
- the commencement of the process to renew the master plan for Point Nepean National Park
- the reduction in camping fees at 53 campgrounds in parks under the Act across the state
- further work on the Grampians Peak Trail
- the granting of a lease for the development of an all-weather, all-abilities access gondola at Arthurs Seat
- the amendments to the Act to remove the ability to grant leases in parks of up to 99 years to protect our national parks from new large-scale private developments.

As in previous years, I acknowledge the extent of collaborative management and community involvement in a wide range of park management activities during the year and thank Parks Victoria and DELWP staff and all those volunteers who contributed to the protection and management of our parks in 2015–16.



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 2016 there were 139 areas with a total area of approximately 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 the Great Otway, Kinglake and Yarra Ranges national parks.

There were no changes during the year to the areas managed under the Act.

Management and other planning

As at 30 June 2016, there were approved management plans for all or parts of 43 national parks, 3 wilderness parks, 25 state parks, 17 other parks and reserves, 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries.

During the year:

- the *Shipwreck Coast Master Plan*, covering the Shipwreck Coast between Princetown and Boat Bay, including Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park, was released. The plan was developed in partnership with the Corangamite and Moyne Shires and Tourism Victoria
- the *Master Plan Preliminary Concept* for the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing walk in the Alpine National Park was completed following public consultation
- work progressed on finalising the plan for the Greater Alpine national parks (which 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). Issues raised in more than 500 public submissions on the draft plan were carefully considered and further consultation was undertaken on key issues where necessary
- public consultation commenced as part of developing the management plan for the River Red Gum parks
- work commenced on renewing the master plan for Point Nepean National Park.

The *Partnering with Traditional Owners* section of the report includes further information on management planning for jointly managed parks.

Managing natural values

Managing natural values

The basis for setting strategic priorities for environmental management in areas under the Act includes Parks Victoria's State of the Parks Effectiveness Evaluation Program and relevant 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 programs which often directly target or provide benefits for threatened flora, fauna and vegetation communities. Examples of projects are included in Table 1.

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 their impacts on natural and cultural values. Programs included those at a landscape-scale as well as projects targeting particular species in various parks.

Significant funding comes from the ongoing Weeds and Pests on Public Land and the Good Neighbour programs. The federal government also contributes funding to some projects.

Landscape-scale programs included those summarised in Table 2 as well as the long-term Eden programs (aimed at controlling high-threat invasive plants) and Ark programs (aimed at controlling foxes) which involve various parks:

- 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 (includes Lake Eildon and Yarra Ranges national parks and Cathedral Range State Park), 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).

Parks Victoria and the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research progressed the development of a strategic management framework for large herbivores (deer, goats and pigs).

Partnerships continued to play an important role in the management of invasive species. Parks Victoria again partnered with the Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) during the year through a coordinated volunteer hunter program. Control projects were delivered in the Alpine, Kinglake, Mitchell River and Wilsons Promontory national parks, and planning commenced for a deer and goat control program in the Grampians National Park.

The *Managing marine values* section of the report contains information on the control of marine pests.

Table 1 – Threatened species and communities projects

PV region / park	Project
Western Victoria	
Grampians NP	Monitoring of Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby.
Little Desert NP	Fox control to protect Malleefowl.
Northern Victoria	
Terrick Terrick NP	Northern Plains Grassland management including fox and weed control as well as strategic sheep grazing to manage biomass to protect Plains Wanderer.
Wychitella NCR	Fox control to protect Malleefowl in partnership with the Dja Dja Wurrung.
Eastern Victoria	
Alpine NP	<p>Fox control in remote sections of the park to help protect the Long-footed Potoroo and Mountain Pygmy-possum.</p> <p>Targeted removal of Sambar Deer and wild horses and treatment of Grey Sallow (willow) and Soft Rush to protect the alpine bog community.</p>
Gippsland Lakes CP	Control of Sea-spurge at Crescent Island, a nesting site for Little and Fairy Terns (in partnership with other agencies).
Snowy River NP	Fox control to protect the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby.
Melbourne	
Threatened Species Protection Initiative	<p>French Island NP – weed control and monitoring of the French Island Spider Orchid and Swamp Everlasting.</p> <p>Mornington Peninsula NP – weed control to conserve the Leafy Greenhood and Coast Helmet Orchid.</p> <p>Yarra Ranges NP – weed control and fencing of Shiny Nematolepis sites to protect them from Sambar Deer.</p> <p>Warrandyte SP – protection of Wine-lipped Spider-orchid and Woodland Bearded Orchid through deer and rabbit proof fencing and weed control.</p>
Mornington Peninsula NP	Introduction of a ban on dogs in the park to protect the Hooded Plover.
Point Nepean NP	Treatment of Polygala and other woody weeds to protect Coastal Moonah Woodland.
Woodlands HP	Continuation of partnerships with Conservation Volunteers Victoria and Zoos Victoria to provide a critical re-introduction area for the protection and breeding of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot.

CP Coastal Park
 HP Historic Park
 NCR Nature Conservation Reserve
 NP National Park
 SP State Park

Table 2 – Landscape invasive species control programs

PV region / program	Activity
Multi-region	
Good Neighbour Program	This program again delivered benefits on the interface between various parks and private land and included the control of blackberry, gorse, foxes, pigs and rabbits.
Northern Victoria	
Total Grazing Management	Semi-arid woodlands in the Mallee national parks (Hattah-Kulkyne, Murray-Sunset and Wyperfeld) continued to be a focus for the management of total grazing pressure to ensure the continuing recovery of this threatened community. Total grazing management is delivered through large-scale rabbit, goat and kangaroo control programs (see below and also Managing native animals).
Mallee Bounceback	Significant work was undertaken to manage rabbits and their warrens in the Mallee national parks and Lake Albacutya Park.
Mallee Goat Control	There were aerial culls of feral goats in the Mallee national parks. A comprehensive feral goat strategic management plan is in the initial development stages.
Eastern Victoria	
Alpine Fox control	This program included fox baiting to protect the Long-footed Potoroo and Mountain Pigmy-possum.
Alps Intensive Management Program	<p>This program treated blackberry, broom, willow and several other species in the Alpine National Park. Hawkweed eradication and surveillance continued on the Bogong High Plains, working towards eradicating the three hawkweed species from the park.</p> <p>Wild horses were controlled and monitoring was undertaken to inform a broader wild horse management strategy, and there was a Sambar Deer control trial on the Bogong High Plains. This work will provide important information on the techniques and effort required to protect alpine bogs.</p>
Gippsland Lakes	As part of an invasive species strategy for the Gippsland Lakes, Bridal Creeper, Dolichos Pea and Sea-spurge at visitor nodes, Agapanthus, Boxthorn and Prickly Pear at the park/private land interface, and foxes were controlled in Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park.
Melbourne	
Urban Fringe Weed Management Initiative	This program managed high risk environmental weeds that threatened high value assets in Melbourne's urban fringe including Dandenong Ranges and Kinglake national parks and Arthurs Seat State 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 (see Table 2).

There were 8902 kangaroos removed as part of the program, which again focused on Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, the Berribee, Taperoo and Lindsay Island areas of Murray-Sunset National Park and Pine Plains in Wyperfeld National Park. The program was supported by the Commonwealth Government's Biodiversity Fund.

Koalas were controlled in Mount Eccles National Park to protect the vulnerable Stony Rises Woodlands endangered vegetation class and to help prevent the loss of koala habitat. Fertility control implants were administered to 84 koalas at Mount Eccles; a total of 4613 koalas have been implanted at Mount Eccles since 2004. Several other parks, including French Island National Park, were surveyed for overabundant koalas and canopy loss.

Sites within the Great Otway National Park were selected to receive koalas from depleted private bushland at Cape Otway. A successful relocation program was undertaken to reduce the browsing pressure from koalas and to maintain animal welfare.

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 controlling Sambar Deer and weeds and a project to improve the protection of this important and sensitive vegetation community from the impact of fire.

- 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, 1085 hectares of woodland was revegetated. This consisted of 140 kilometres of direct seeding as well as the planting of an additional 191 000 plants across five sites. An assessment of rabbit grazing indicates a continuation of low grazing pressure across all sites. The program is partly funded through the Mallee Biofund project.

Parks Victoria also supported the Commonwealth Government's 20 Million Tree initiative, with 500 000 trees planted across 550 hectares of degraded semi-arid woodland in Murray-Sunset National Park.

- Northern Plains grassy ecosystems (Terrick Terrick National Park)

Strategic grazing by sheep to modify grassland habitat structure, combined with the management of foxes and environmental weeds, has been a focus in improving habitat for the Plains Wanderer. A recent survey detected seven birds within the park, the largest number seen in a single survey in several years.

- Coastal grassy woodlands on the Yanakie Isthmus (Wilson's Promontory National Park)

This adaptive management project, which aims to restore coastal grassy woodlands on the isthmus, continued with monitoring of the impact of grazers and determining total grazing pressure.

Managing environmental water

During 2015–16, many of Victoria's rivers, wetlands and floodplains experienced significantly lower inflows due to drier El Nino conditions, particularly in the western and central parts of the state.

Across much of the northern, western and eastern areas of Victoria, a program coordinated by the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH), continued to ensure that environmental water was delivered to priority rivers and wetlands, 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 in order to achieve the best ecological outcomes. Water was provided by the VEWB as well as the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (The Living Murray Program) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

A number of environmental water flushes down the Goulburn River through the Lower Goulburn National Park during spring 2015 resulted in significant re-establishment of lower bank native vegetation. Other streams included in the program included the lower Broken Creek, which passes through Broken-Boosey State Park, and waterways in Nyah-Vinifera Park.

Wetlands receiving environmental water included those in Barmah, Gunbower, Hattah-Kulkyne and Murray-Sunset national parks:

- at Barmah, targeted environmental water delivery in spring/early summer 2015 helped to support nesting of about 20 per cent of the endangered Australasian Bittern population in the national park. The delivery triggered an explosion in the food chain attracting the birds, allowing them to feed and breed
- at Gunbower, allocations topped up key wetlands, promoted fish spawning and have made observable improvements in red gum canopy condition
- at Hattah Lakes, water was delivered to test whether native fish would move from the lakes back into the Murray River
- at Lindsay-Walpolla islands in Murray-Sunset National Park, water was pumped to key wetland sites to support vegetation growth and provide habitat for frog breeding.

Managing marine values

Marine invasive species continue to be a priority threat to marine values in areas under the Act. Parks Victoria staff and partners, including volunteers, have been key to surveying areas at risk and undertaking control activities where this was possible.

In 2015–16, priority pest species included the Northern Pacific Seastar, which was found for the first time in the Gippsland Lakes, much further east than any previous records, and poses a potential threat to the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. There was also work to prevent the spread of and to manage existing pests such as Japanese Kelp affecting marine protected areas in Port Philip and at Apollo Bay and Pacific Oysters in Western Port and Tidal River.

Overabundant native grazers are also a concern in marine protected areas, where native sea urchin species have been observed having significant impacts on kelp and seagrass communities through overgrazing:

- Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary – the large Black Spined Sea Urchin has become widespread and significantly impacted on kelp communities by grazing this down to bare rock. Experiments to investigate the effectiveness of controlling urchin numbers on kelp communities commenced, including using volunteers
- Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park – a different native species of urchin (*Heliocidaris erythrogramma*) was observed during the year as being responsible for the loss of large areas of seagrass including the Broad Leaf Seagrass that is restricted in distribution in Victoria to Corner Inlet. Assessment of options for management commenced.

Monitoring natural values

During the year, monitoring threats and their impacts on terrestrial ecosystems, which includes work undertaken as part of Parks Victoria's Signs of Healthy Parks program, focused on:

- weeds in the Alpine, Baw Baw, Chiltern-Mt Pilot, Grampians, Great Otway, Kinglake, Lower Glenelg, Mornington Peninsula, Mount Buffalo, Point Nepean and Yarra Ranges national parks, as well as Bunyip State Park
- the abundance and impact of:
 - deer in the Alpine, Kinglake and Wilsons Promontory national parks
 - foxes in various parks as part of the cross-tenure Ark programs
 - goats in the Grampians and Kinglake national parks
 - kangaroos in the Mallee national parks (Hattah-Kulkyne, Murray-Sunset and Wyperfeld) and Woodlands Historic Park
 - koalas in French Island National Park and parks in the south-west, including Mount Eccles and Mount Richmond national parks and Mount Napier State Park
 - rabbits in the Mallee national parks as part of the Mallee Bounceback program, and in Wilsons Promontory National Park and Warby Range State Park.

Monitoring of habitat condition and threatened and other native flora and fauna populations included:

- the condition of vegetation in the Great Otway, Mornington Peninsula and Point Nepean national parks
- native grasslands and the Plains Wanderer in Terrick Terrick National Park
- threatened bird species in Chiltern-Mt Pilot, Little Desert and the three Mallee national parks
- shore-nesting birds, including the Hooded Plover, in Mornington Peninsula National Park and Discovery Bay Coastal Park
- migratory waders in Corner Inlet and Nooramunga marine and coastal parks

- small mammals in Cobboboonee, Grampians, Great Otway, Lower Glenelg, Mornington Peninsula and Wilsons Promontory national parks, and arboreal mammals in Kinglake and Yarra Ranges national parks.

The citizen science wildlife survey program with the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria continued and was expanded to the Great Otway National Park.

Monitoring activities in marine protected areas included:

- the most extensive surveys to date of subtidal reef habitats, fish communities and rock lobster populations in Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park, including the first Victorian surveys as part of the Integrated Marine Observing System Autonomous Underwater Vehicles program
- the continuation of the intertidal reef monitoring program and implementation of new methods using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park and Barwon Bluff, Mushroom Reef and Ricketts Point marine sanctuaries
- citizen science surveys in a number of parks including Reef Life Survey monitoring of shallow subtidal reefs in Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park and Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary, and Sea Search surveys of seagrass in Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park, Jawbone Marine Sanctuary and Corner Inlet and Nooramunga marine and coastal parks (including urchin barren surveys), and intertidal reefs in Eagle Rock, Jawbone, Mushroom Reef, Point Cooke and Merri marine sanctuaries.

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. As at 30 June 2016, it included 642 permanent monitoring plots located across State forest and forested parks and conservation reserves, together with detailed aerial photography and satellite imagery. During the year, another nine plots were established and measured in areas under the Act.

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 267 research permits were issued during the year, 183 of which were new permits and 84 were renewed permits. These enabled research to be carried out in 115 parks (a permit may cover more than one park) or in all parks if required (25 permits).

The parks for which 10 or more permits were issued (in addition to the 'all parks' permits) were: Alpine (24), Baw Baw (13), Brisbane Ranges (20), Chiltern-Mt Pilot (11), Croajingolong (13), Dandenong Ranges (17), French Island (12), Grampians (28), Great Otway (41), Hattah-Kulkyne (13), Kinglake (13), Lower Glenelg (13), Mornington Peninsula (15), Mount Buffalo (11), Murray-Sunset (21), Snowy River (14), Wilsons Promontory (22), Wyperfeld (16) and Yarra Ranges (22) national parks, Warrandyte State Park (11) and Cape Liptrap (12) and Gippsland Lakes (11) coastal parks.

Research authorised under the permits included:

- Grampians National Park and Black Range State Park – gravity measurements along existing roads as part of the Stavely Gravity Survey 2015–16
- Great Otway, Tarra-Bulga and Yarra Ranges national parks – collection of individuals for the purpose of identification, taxonomic revision and research of the Australian Marsh Beetle Scirtidae
- Wilsons Promontory National Park – research related to investigating the distribution of the New Holland Mouse
- Mt Arapiles-Tooon State Park – an investigation of cliff face plant communities on Mt Arapiles

- Bunurong, Point Addis, Port Phillips Head and Wilsons Promontory marine national parks and Jawbone, Merri, Mushroom Reef, Point Danger and Ricketts Point marine sanctuaries – research into the Southern Rock Lobster and surveys for the purpose of baseline habitat mapping and monitoring reef habitats.

Research programs

Parks Victoria's Research Partners Program continued to deliver collaborative research with universities and other research institutions to address critical knowledge gaps and ensure management decisions are supported by high-quality science.

Research to support and improve management of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems included:

- the continued development of a rapid park health check tool as an early warning for detecting symptoms of degradation in all terrestrial parks
- several projects to build greater understanding of how to manage invasive Sallow Wattle in the Grampians National Park and to decide priorities for tackling weed invasion in parks including Chiltern-Mt Pilot, Churchill and Dandenong Ranges national parks
- reviewing the outcomes of an ecological thinning trial to guide on-going management of Box-Ironbark parks including Paddys Ranges State Park and Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park
- continuing the long-term research to understand the status and ecology of fauna and habitat in the Central Highlands including Yarra Ranges National Park
- investigating the effects of road salting on water quality and invertebrate fauna in streams in alpine areas including the Alpine National Park
- developing improved techniques for estimating the local abundance of feral horses in the Alpine National Park.

Research to support and improve management of marine ecosystems managed under the Act included:

- investigating the effects of climate change, water quality, marine pests and illegal fishing on rocky reefs
- trialing new methods for monitoring shallow subtidal reefs in Wilsons Promontory National Park and intertidal reef platforms in Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park and Barwon Bluff, Mushroom Reef and Ricketts Point marine sanctuaries
- evaluating the effectiveness and impacts of different management approaches for control of the invasive saltmarsh grass *Spartina anglica*
- assessing how inputs from catchments affect seagrass beds and how these can be restored by better management in French Island and Yaringa marine national parks
- using sonar and video to map habitat in Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park and a second trial of survey methods for rock lobster populations in the park
- assessing the effectiveness of removing invasive native sea urchins to restore kelp forests in Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary.

A report on the findings of the first phase of the Valuing Victoria's Parks project, jointly produced by DELWP and Parks Victoria, was released during the year. This provided information on the contribution of parks to Victoria's economy, liveability and environmental sustainability based on an ecosystem accounting and evaluation framework.

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

Managing cultural values

Managing Aboriginal heritage

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

- the development of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Tool Smartphone App, with assessments piloted in several national parks
- Grampians National Park and Black Range State Park – the conservation of Aboriginal rock art, involving a partnership of the Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Martang Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria and Aboriginal Victoria
- Dandenong Ranges National Park – a survey across 13 kilometres of the existing mountain bike trail, involving Aboriginal staff from Parks Victoria, and representatives of the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurrundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc.
- Hattah-Kulkyne National Park – the commencement of an investigation into possible impacts to Aboriginal heritage from previous rabbit management activity in the park
- Murray-Sunset National Park – the North West Burials Conservation Project – this involves a partnership of the Ngintait, Latji Latji and Nyeri Nyeri Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria and Aboriginal Victoria
- Point Nepean National Park – the construction of a rock retaining wall on the foreshore at the Quarantine Station to protect a newly discovered hearth site from further storm and tidal impact, involving representatives of the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Bunurong Land and Seas Association Inc.

Managing historic heritage

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

- the development of a Historic Heritage Assessment and Management App with assessments completed for 35 significant heritage buildings
- Alpine National Park – a heritage conservation project at McNamara's Hut (Dinner Plain) with volunteers from the Victorian High Country Huts Association
- Grampian National Park – the completion of repairs to the stone shelters at Zumsteins and MacKenzies Falls as part of recovery from the 2014 fires
- Grampians National Park – repairs to stonework at the Heatherlie Quarry Hut
- Mount Buffalo National Park – heritage maintenance works at the Mt Buffalo Chalet to repair facades and re-stump the building (scheduled to be completed in 2017)

During the year a decision was made not to demolish sections of the Chalet.

- Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park – a project to implement actions from the Heritage Action Plan with support from the Green Army, facilitated by Conservation Volunteers Australia. This project improves public access to heritage sites, cemeteries and mining sites. The work included vegetation and weed clearing, cleaning, moving fences, securing sites and repairing infrastructure.

Managing fire

Managing fire

Bushfires

There were 460 fires recorded in areas under the Act during the year which burnt 6010 hectares. The most significant bushfire was what became known as the Wye River-Jamieson Track fire. It started as two fires caused by lightning in the Great Otway National Park on 19 December 2015. The fire was contained on 21 January 2016 and burnt approximately 2500 hectares of the national park and private property. Recovery actions on relevant areas under the Act continue.

There were two other significant fires in areas under the Act, both in Wyperfeld National Park and both started by lightning on 8 December 2015:

- Wyperfeld - Eucy Track – 1566 hectares burnt
- Wyperfeld - Broombush Reference Area – 869 hectares burnt.

The main causes and area burnt by bushfire on areas under the Act were lightning (74 fires), campfires (142 fires) and deliberate (malicious) lighting (44 fires).

Planned burning

There were 65 burns undertaken in areas under the Act, treating a total area of more than 49 000 hectares. This area included approximately 24 000 hectares in the Alpine National Park, 9500 hectares in Wyperfeld National Park and just over 2000 hectares in the Yarra Ranges National Park.

Melbourne Bushfire Protection Program

The Melbourne Fire and Emergency Program, established in 2009 as the Melbourne Bushfire Protection Program, aims to improve bushfire preparedness in Melbourne's urban areas. 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 included works on fuel breaks, upgrading roads and tracks to improve access for fire vehicles, preparing planned burn edges, modifying mechanical fuel and delivering pest plant control works post-burn and as part of a 10-year program to improve vegetation condition to offset native vegetation losses that result from previous fuel break works. There were also community engagement programs delivered aimed at promoting fire safety behaviour and community education and involving DELWP, Parks Victoria and other fire and emergency agencies.

Planning, monitoring and research

In November 2015, the Victorian Government released *Safer Together: a new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria* in response to the Inspector-General for Emergency Management's review of performance targets for the future bushfire fuel management program on public land.

Safer Together will use a risk reduction target across public and private land (including areas under the Act) to focus bushfire management activities, like planned burning, in areas that will have the greatest impact. It takes a landscape approach to strategic bushfire management, with agencies partnering with local communities. The risk reduction approach will support a fuel management program that reduces risk to communities while maintaining healthy natural environments.

Implementation of *Safer Together* will be supported by strategic bushfire management plans and monitoring evaluation and reporting implementation plans for the state's seven bushfire risk landscapes. These strategic plans, as well as risk modelling and community engagement, will guide bushfire and fuel management activities.

During the year, strategic bushfire management plans were finalised for the Alpine and Greater Gippsland, Alpine and North East, Mallee and Murray Goulburn, and South Western bushfire risk landscapes. These plans guide bushfire management on public land and ensure we build ecological resilience as well as reducing the risk of bushfires. Parks Victoria is working with DELWP to prepare and finalise monitoring evaluation and reporting implementation plans for all seven risk landscapes.

DELWP and Parks Victoria 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.

Research progressed in the Dandenong Ranges, Great Otway and Yarra Ranges national parks to better understand fuel dynamics in wet forests, while the box-ironbark landscape mosaic burning project continued. Other long-term fire and biodiversity research progressed in parks in the Alps, Grampians and Mallee for incorporation into bushfire management planning.

An Alpine Peatlands and Fire project was undertaken, with the objective of improving the management of alpine peatlands in eastern Victoria through the development of guidelines, procedures, work instructions and tools to mitigate risk to these vulnerable peatlands during bushfire response and to better inform fuel management planning.

In partnership with Deakin University, the University of Melbourne and other researchers, fire and biodiversity research was undertaken in relation to the broader Grampians landscape. These projects included:

- research to better determine species relative abundance
- research to understand the impacts of small area mosaic burning on key small mammal species
- the development of a range of conceptual models (based on 10 years of field data) highlighting the links between the fire, small mammals and rainfall patterns; and to inform the development of a range of burn prescriptions to better guide burn delivery.

Managing bushfire recovery

The recovery program associated with the large fire in the northern areas of the Grampians National Park during 2014 continued.

Fires during December 2015 resulted in recovery programs being planned and implemented in the following parks:

- Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park – a recovery program commenced following the Barnawartha-Indigo Creek Road fire, which impacted upon the north and eastern areas of the park
- Great Otway National Park – a recovery program following the Wye River-Jamieson Track fire was initiated during 2016 and is ongoing, with additional state government financial support being provided.

Encouraging visitors and tourism

Enhancing visitor enjoyment and tourism

Works were carried out across the state to improve visitor and tourist access and enjoyment while maintaining park values and reducing risks. Major projects commenced

or completed during the year included those summarised in Table 3. Other projects include those referred to in the *Managing historic heritage* section of the report.

Table 3 – Visitor facility projects

PV region	Project
Western Victoria	Grampians NP – completion of a large-scale program to upgrade roads.
	Port Campbell NP and Glenample Homestead – upgrading of the Twelve Apostles Visitor Precinct including refurbishment of the homestead and maintenance of the visitor infrastructure at the Twelve Apostles, including toilets.
	Port Campbell NP – commencement of planning to construct a sewer pipeline to connect the Twelve Apostles visitor centre to the Wannon Water wastewater treatment facility at Port Campbell.
	Bay of Islands CP – repair of beach access steps at the Bay of Martyrs.
Northern Victoria	Lake Eildon NP – planning for an upgrade of visitor infrastructure at the Fraser Camping Area.
Eastern Victoria	Mount Buffalo NP – renewal of the Lake Catani campground, including upgrades to the toilet block, camping facilities and landscaping.
	Wilsons Promontory NP – commencement of construction works to replace the decommissioned Lorikeet Flats at Tidal River with contemporary visitor accommodation.
	Wilsons Promontory NP – renewal of the Tidal River water supply weir to maintain water supply and quality.
Melbourne	Arthurs Seat SP – commencement of works to renew the Bottom Car Park and Summit Precinct and other visitor facilities as part of works to upgrade facilities to complement the new all-weather gondola, construction of which also commenced.

CP Coastal Park
NP National Park
SP State Park

Parks Victoria also continued to lead the development and promotion of Walk Victoria's Icons long-distance walks. Works during the year included the following:

- Grampians Peaks Trail (Grampians National Park) – work continued on the trail with the near completion of works to a 1.4 kilometre section of track at the southern end of the trail known as the Piccaninny
- Great Ocean Walk (Great Otway and Port Campbell national parks) – improvements delivered this year included track re-alignments, improvements to accommodation, new toilets, new trail heads and interpretive signage along the walk.

On 28 May 2016, the Minister announced a \$9.8 million investment in the Shipwreck Coast (including Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park) to deliver Stage One of the *Shipwreck Coast Master Plan* (see also *Management planning*). This will encourage longer, overnight stays and increased spending in local communities along the Great Ocean Road by providing a greater range of tourism experiences and visitor facilities, including a new world class lookout at the Twelve Apostles.

Visits to parks

Parks Victoria's latest Visitor Number Monitor, conducted in 2014–15, estimated that 37.8 million visits were made to national and state parks during that year. The monitor is a biennial survey covering a sample of Victorians and interstate (NSW and South Australia) and international visitors.

Licensed tour operators

Tour operators are licensed to run organised tours and recreational activities for profit on Victorian public land. As at 30 June 2016, 390 operators were licensed to operate in areas under the Act. Work continued on improving the administration and enforcement of the tour operator licensing system.

Informing, interpreting and educating

Interpretation and education services relating to areas under the Act were provided to encourage visits, increase knowledge and understanding of park values, manage risks and encourage visitors to develop a stronger connection with, and appreciation of, nature.

Information was again provided to the public through Parks Victoria's information service (131 963), the Parks Victoria website, social media and the Park Note visitor guides.

Face-to-face interpretation activities were delivered to 16 664 adults and children in 31 parks under the Act. This included delivery to 6499 students at Parks Victoria's education centres at Dandenong Ranges and Wilsons Promontory national parks, and the delivery of Parks Victoria's Junior Ranger Program to 3804 participants (including 2423 children) in 19 parks under the Act.

Parks Victoria created a new Australian record for 'the most number of children participating in a nature treasure hunt in parks' during Nature Play Week (6–14 April 2016). The Junior Ranger nature treasure hunt aimed to reconnect children with outdoor activity and the natural environment and attracted 341 children and their families, including 133 children and their families to the following areas under the Act: Grampians, Point Nepean, The Lakes and Wilsons Promontory national parks and Jawbone Marine Sanctuary.

Community engagement continued to be a focus for marine management, supported by Parks Victoria's regional staff and seasonal rangers as well as community volunteers. A series of Junior Ranger discovery programs focused on marine protected areas were delivered during the school holidays while the annual Summer by the Sea program was delivered in partnership with DELWP's Coastcare Victoria.

Partnering with Traditional Owners

In December 2015 aboriginal title was granted under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* to the Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation over most of Kara Kara National Park and all of Kooyoora and Paddys Ranges state parks. The areas under the Act over which aboriginal title has now been granted also include several grants to the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Corporation in 2010: Mitchell River and The Lakes national parks, New Guinea Cave No. 2 in Snowy River National Park and Lake Tyers State Park.

DELWP and Parks Victoria continued to work with Traditional Owners across the state to implement joint and co-operative management arrangements and to 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 commenced development of a joint management plan for areas including Greater Bendigo and (most of) Kara Kara national parks and Kooyoora and Paddys Ranges state parks. Support was provided to the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation to review and update the Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan, which covers these jointly managed areas. Dja Dja Wurrung rangers and Parks Victoria field staff continued to work together in those parks to look after Country.

In East Gippsland, the Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board (with the involvement of the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, 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.

In northern Victoria, the Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board commenced development of a joint management plan for Barmah National Park. Parks Victoria provided advice to the board regarding park planning processes, and a workshop involving representatives of the Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria and DELWP was held to establish the scope of the plan.

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 the management of Little Desert and Wyperfeld national parks and Lake Albacutya Park.

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*).

Parks Victoria commenced high level engagement to establish a partnership approach with the Gariwerd Native Title Claim Group (which includes Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation) over an area which includes the Grampians National Park and Black Range State Park.

A workshop to review the draft master plan for Point Nepean National Park was undertaken with representatives of the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land and Sea Association Inc and Boon Wurrung Foundation.

Partnering with the community

Volunteers

Volunteers from a wide range of organisations, including many 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, the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, Four Wheel Drive Victoria and many Friends groups were involved in undertaking activities such as revegetation, habitat restoration, environmental monitoring track and trail maintenance and heritage site maintenance.

The Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) again provided valuable support for several invasive species control projects (see *Managing invasive species*).

For the fifteenth year in a row, volunteers participated in the Campground Host Program during peak camping periods over the summer and Easter holidays, providing assistance to campers and field staff. 2015–16 also saw the largest number of campground hosts – 78 engaging with over 5000 campers. The program was run in the Alpine, Croajingolong, Grampians, Great Otway, Lake Eildon, Kinglake (for the first time since Black Saturday 2009), Mount Buffalo and Wilsons Promontory national parks and Cathedral Range State Park.

Four Wheel Drive Victoria again delivered 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 continued its work to make parks more accessible and inclusive for visitors of all abilities so many more Victorians can participate and enjoy parks with their families and friends. This included:

- the introduction of a Lasher Beach Wheelchair for visitor use at Wilsons Promontory National Park. This specially designed wheelchair allows visitors with paraplegia and other disabilities to access and explore Norman Beach independently
- the introduction of a motorised all terrain wheelchair (TrailRider) at Grants Picnic area in Dandenong Ranges National Park. The provision of this chair enables visitors with significant mobility limitations to be able to explore walking trails in Sherbrooke Forest with the assistance of chair operators (sherpas)
- supporting Blind Sports Victoria in the provision of organised group walks for vision impaired visitors to Point Nepean National Park and two discovery visits to Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park.

Supporting park management

Management arrangements

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 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 2015–16 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

National Parks Amendment (No 99 Year Leases) Act 2015

This Act, which was introduced into Parliament on 15 September 2015, amended the National Parks Act on 28 October 2015 to remove the power to grant leases of up to 99 years in specified areas under the Act. In particular, it reduced the maximum lease terms under the general leasing power to 21 years and the maximum lease term under the leasing powers relating to specific sites in Mount Buffalo and Point Nepean national parks and Arthurs Seat State Park to 50 years. The amending Act also removed the powers to grant in principle approval and agreements to lease.

Crown Land Legislation Amendment (Canadian Regional Park and Other Matters) Act 2016

This Act, which was introduced into Parliament on 20 October 2015, received the Royal Assent on 5 April 2016.¹ It includes amendments to the National Parks Act to:

- add 201 hectares to Dandenong Ranges and Murray-Sunset national parks, Warrandyte State Park, Cape Liptrap Coastal Park and Steiglitz Historic Park
- excise 0.6 hectares from Lake Tyers State Park and Steiglitz Historic Park
- make several minor amendments and adjustments to the plans of Dandenong Ranges and Great Otway national parks, Lake Tyers State Park and Gadsen Bend Park
- make consequential amendments arising from the insertion of new bee site licensing provisions into the *Land Act 1958* which will now apply to land under the National Parks Act – the new provisions will enable the granting of licences of up to 10 years over specified land under the National Parks Act and a streamlined process for renewing licences.

National Parks and Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Acts Amendment Bill 2016

This bill was introduced into Parliament on 24 May 2016.² The amendments to the National Parks Act relate mainly to Greater Bendigo National Park, including providing for the addition of approximately 245 hectares to the park, correcting some of the linework which depicts parts of the park boundary and simplifying the description of those parts of the park that extend only to 100 metres below the land surface. It also includes some minor technical amendments and the repeal of several spent provisions.

¹ The amendments, other than those relating to bee site licensing, commenced on 5 August 2016.

² The bill was passed in August 2016. The amendments to the National Parks Act commenced on 7 September 2016.

Camping fees

Following the removal of camping fees from all basic campsites in parks in April 2015, there was a review of all other camping fees to ensure that the balance was right between affordable holidays and funding for new facilities. On 18 December 2015 camping fees in the peak season were reduced at 53 mid-level campgrounds or camping areas in parks under the Act, including in the Brisbane Ranges (4), Grampians (6), Great Otway (6) and Lower Glenelg (9) national parks.

Authorities under the Act

Leases

Three leases were granted during the year under various provisions of the Act:

- Alpine National Park – a 10-year lease was granted under section 32AB to the Scout Association of Australia Victorian Division for occupation of the Rover Chalet on the Bogong High Plains for accommodation and a ski tow for use by community groups

- Croajingolong National Park – a 3-year lease was also granted under section 19G to KRR Services Pty Ltd for the operation of the Thurra River and Mueller Inlet campgrounds in the park
- Arthurs Seat State Park – in August 2015, the Minister granted a 50-year lease under section 32CC to Arthurs Seat Skylift Pty Ltd over part of the park for the development of an all-weather, all-abilities access gondola with new top and bottom station buildings and visitor facilities (see also *Enhancing visitor enjoyment and tourism*).

Other authorities

Table 4 lists various permits that were granted during the year under section 21(1)(c)(ii) of the Act to carry out particular businesses. Other authorities included apiary permits granted under section 21(1)(b), tour operator licences under section 27D (see *Enhancing visitor enjoyment and tourism*) and authorisations under sections 45A and 45B in relation to access to Cape Howe and Point Hicks marine national parks.

Table 4 – Authorities under the Act

Park	Permittee	Purpose
Lake Eildon NP	Bourke's Ice Works	Mobile retail sales of ice, food and camper supplies at the Fraser Camp Area.
Yarra Ranges NP	Hot to Trot	Mobile food outlet and toboggan hire at Mt Donna Buang.
Arthurs Seat SP	Arthurs Seat Skylift Pty Ltd	Temporary occupation associated with the development of the skylift project.
Cape Conran CP	Individual	Operation of a mobile refreshment van at selected car parks.

CP Coastal Park
NP National Park
SP State 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	Purpose
Chiltern-Mt Pilot NP	APA VTS Australia (Operations) Pty Ltd	Install and operate a high pressure gas pipeline in the Chiltern section of the park, mostly along Pipeline Track.
Grampians NP	NBN Co Limited	Install and operate infrastructure associated with the National Broadband Network at Mt William.
Greater Bendigo NP	City of Greater Bendigo	Install and maintain a cycling and walking track from McIvor Forest Drive to Junortoun Road.
Great Otway NP	Barwon Region Water Corporation	Install and operate the Airey's Inlet water pipeline.
Wilsons Promontory NP	Telstra Corporation Ltd	Install and maintain a telecommunications facility at Mt Oberon.
Warrandyte SP	Yarra Valley Water	Install and operate pipelines associated with the Backlog Sewerage Project.
Lysterfield Park	Telstra Corporation Ltd	Install and operate fibre optic cables.

NP National Park
SP State Park

Enforcement

There were 13 individuals successfully prosecuted during the year for committing offences under the Act (14) or the National Parks Regulations 2013 (5).¹ Most of the offences related to possessing or using a gun or other weapon (11), fishing in a marine sanctuary (3) and bringing a dog into a park (3).

There were 158 infringement notices issued during the year in relation to prescribed offences against the Act or the regulations. These included offences relating to recreational fishing in a marine national park or marine sanctuary (64), dogs (46), fires (12), camping outside a designated area (9), illegal firewood collection (6) or interfering with vegetation (6).

In addition, 72 official warnings and 16 warnings were issued during the year in relation to offences under the Act or the regulations. The most common offences for which official warnings were issued related to recreational fishing in marine national parks and marine sanctuaries, and the most common offence for which warnings were issued related to guns.

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

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 in the MOU are Parks Victoria, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and the Commonwealth Department of Environment.

Projects finalised and delivered during the year included:

- measuring water quality degradation at visitor / invasive animal impact sites
- investigating the persistence of seed in soil seed banks of alpine bogs and fens (with CSIRO)

- genotyping the Guthega Skink to inform recovery of the species, which only occurs in the vicinity of Mount Kosciuszko (NSW) and on the Bogong High Plains in Victoria
- assessing feral deer impacts on ecological and social values of the Alps
- further training of non-park stakeholders in the application of the rehabilitation field guide notebook for the Australian Alps
- contributing to developing new secondary school text book on the Australian Alps (with CSIRO).

Projects which will continue into 2016–17 include:

- studying *Phytophthora* dieback at high elevation ecozones
- assessing the effects on alpine streams of salting to de-ice roads
- documenting Aboriginal cultural and spiritual values of the Australian Alps
- projects relating to feral horses.

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. As at 30 June 2016 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 Bradley Fauteux
(Director of National Parks)

The council's annual report for 2015–16 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 2016, the membership of the committee was as follows:

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

There were also several non-statutory advisory groups involved in the management of various parks. These include an advisory group formed during the year to provide strategic advice about the future of Mount Buffalo National Park, including the chalet, to Parks Victoria's Chief Executive and ensure the best possible visitor experience on the mountain for years to come.

Appendix 1 – Areas managed under the National Parks Act

There were no changes during the year to areas managed under the Act.

A National parks (Schedule Two)

	National park	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
1	Alfred	3 050
2	Alpine	661 777
3	Barmah	28 505
4	Baw Baw	13 530
5	Brisbane Ranges	8 885
6	Burrowa-Pine Mountain	18 400
7	Chiltern-Mt Pilot	21 650
8	Churchill	271
9	Cobboboonee	18 510
10	Coopracambra	38 800
11	Croajingolong	*88 500
12	Dandenong Ranges	3 540
13	Errinundra	39 870
14	French Island	*11 160
15	Grampians	168 235
16	Greater Bendigo**	17 324
17	Great Otway	*103 875
18	Gunbower	9 330
19	Hattah-Kulkyne	49 975
20	Heathcote-Graytown	12 700
21	Kara Kara	13 990
22	Kinglake	23 210
23	Lake Eildon	27 750
24	Lind	1 370
25	Little Desert	132 647
26	Lower Glenelg	26 430
27	Lower Goulburn	9 320
28	Mitchell River	14 395
29	Mornington Peninsula	*2 680
30	Morwell	565
31	Mount Buffalo	31 020
32	Mount Eccles	8 565
33	Mount Richmond	1 733
34	Murray-Sunset	664 810
35	Organ Pipes	153

36	Point Nepean	*578
37	Port Campbell	*1 830
38	Snowy River	114 600
39	Tarra-Bulga	2 015
40	Terrick Terrick	6 390
41	The Lakes	2 390
42	Warby-Ovens	14 750
43	Wilsons Promontory	*49 049
44	Wyperfeld	359 445
45	Yarra Ranges	77 185
Total – National parks		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.

B Wilderness parks (Schedule Two A)

	Wilderness park	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
1	Avon	39 650
2	Big Desert	142 300
3	Wabba	20 100
Total – Wilderness parks		202 050

C State parks (Schedule Two B)

	State park	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
1	Arthurs Seat	565
2	Black Range	11 700
3	Broken-Boosey	1 010
4	Bunyip	16 655
5	Cape Nelson	210
6	Cathedral Range	3 616
7	Dergholm	10 400
8	Enfield	4 400
9	Holey Plains	10 740
10	Kooyoora	11 350
11	Lake Tyers	8 680
12	Langi Ghiran	3 040
13	Leaghur	2 050
14	Lerderderg	20 185
15	Moondarra	6 330

16	Mount Arapiles-Tooan	7 470
17	Mount Buangor	2 400
18	Mount Granya	6 140
19	Mount Lawson	13 150
20	Mount Napier	2 800
21	Mount Samaria	7 600
22	Mount Worth	1 040
23	Paddys Ranges	2 010
24	Reef Hills	2 020
25	Warrandyte	686
26	Werribee Gorge	575
Total – State parks		156 822

D Other parks (Schedule Three)

	Other park	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
1	Bay of Islands CP	950
2	Beechworth HP	1 090
3	Cape Conran CP	11 700
4	Cape Liptrap CP	4 315
5	Discovery Bay CP	*10 460
6	Gadsen Bend Park	1 620
7	Gippsland Lakes CP	17 688
8	Haining Farm	66
9	Kings Billabong Park	2 195
10	Lake Albacutya Park	8 300
11	Langwarrin FFR	214
12	Lysterfield Park	1 397
13	Murray-Kulkyne Park	4 555
14	Nyah-Vinifera Park	1 370
15	Steiglitz HP	425
16	Tara Range Park	7 620
17	Tyers Park	1 810
18	Woodlands HP	820
Total – Other parks		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.

E Other parks and reserves (Schedule Four)

	Other park or reserve	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
1	Bunurong MP	*1 660
2	Castlemaine Diggings NHP**	7 585
3	Corner Inlet MCP	*18 000
4	Deep Lead NCR (No. 1)**	1 120
5	Nooramunga MCP	15 000
6	Shallow Inlet MCP	2 000
7	Wilsons Promontory MP)	*10 000
8	Wilsons Promontory MR)	
	Total – Other parks and reserves	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 2016
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

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 2016
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

H Marine national parks (Schedule Seven)

	Marine national park*	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
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.

I Marine sanctuaries (Schedule Eight)

	Marine sanctuary	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
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

J Other areas (non-scheduled)*

	Area	Section of Act	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
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
 NCR Nature Conservation Reserve
 PPR Public Purposes Reserve
 SLR Scenic Lookout Reserve

* Only specific sections of the Act apply to these areas.
 # Area approximately 0.1 ha

K Summary – areas managed under the Act

	Category	No. of areas 30 June 2016	Area (ha) 30 June 2016
A	National parks (Schedule Two)	45	2 904 757
B	Wilderness parks (Schedule Two A)	3	202 050
C	State parks (Schedule Two B)	26	156 822
D	Other parks (Schedule Three)	18	76 595
E	Other parks and reserves (Schedule Four)	8	55 365
H	Marine national parks (Schedule Seven)	13	52 900
I	Marine sanctuaries (Schedule Eight)	11	876
J	Other areas (non-scheduled)	15	4 442
Total		139	3 453 807

L Unproclaimed additions

As at 30 June 2016 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
- 2 Hattah-Kulkyne NP
- 3 Murray-Kulkyne Park
- 4 Big Desert WP
- 5 Wyperfeld NP
- 6 Lake Albacutya Park
- 7 Little Desert NP
- 8 Mount Arapiles-Tooon SP
- 9 Dergholm SP
- 10 Black Range SP
- 11 Grampians NP
- 12 Deep Lead NCR (No. 1)
- 13 Lower Glenelg NP and
Cobboboonee NP
- 14 Discovery Bay CP
- 15 Lower Glenelg PPR and SLR
- 16 Mount Richmond NP
- 17 Cape Nelson SP
- 18 Mount Eccles NP
- 19 Mount Napier SP
- 20 Langi Ghiran SP
- 21 Mount Buangor SP
- 22 Paddys Ranges SP
- 23 Kara Kara NP
- 24 Kooyoora SP
- 25 Wychitella NCR
- 26 Leaghur SP
- 27 Terrick Terrick NP
- 28 Greater Bendigo NP
- 29 Heathcote-Graytown NP
- 30 Castlemaine Diggings NHP
- 31 Lerderderg SP and
associated leased areas
- 32 Long Forest NCR
- 33 Werribee Gorge SP
- 34 Enfield SP
- 35 Moreep BR
- 36 Brisbane Ranges NP
- 37 Steiglitz HP
- 38 Bay of Islands CP
- 39 Port Campbell NP
- 40 Glenample Homestead
- 41 Tara Range Park
- 42 Great Otway NP
- 43 Point Nepean NP

44 Collins Settlement HS
45 Mornington Peninsula NP
46 Arthurs Seat SP
47 Main Ridge NCR
48 Bald Hills BR
49 Flinders NCR
50 Flinders NIR
51 French Island NP
52 Langwarrin FFR
53 Churchill NP
54 Lysterfield Park
55 Bunyip SP
56 Dandenong Ranges NP
57 Warrandyte SP
58 Organ Pipes NP
59 Woodlands HP and adjacent
Commonwealth land
60 Kinglake NP
61 Haining Farm
62 Yarra Ranges NP
63 Cathedral Range SP
64 Lake Eildon NP
65 Mount Samaria SP
66 Reef Hills SP
67 Broken-Boosey SP
68 Barmah NP
69 Warby-Ovens NP
70 Chiltern-Mt Pilot NP
71 Beechworth HP
72 Mount Granya SP
73 Mount Lawson SP
74 Burrowa-Pine Mountain NP
75 Wabba WP
76 Mount Buffalo NP
77 Alpine NP
78 Avon WP
79 Baw Baw NP and Mt St
Gwinear access road
80 Moondarra SP
81 Tyers Park
82 Mount Worth SP
83 Bunurong MP
84 Cape Liptrap CP
85 Shallow Inlet MCP
86 Wilsons Promontory NP
87 Wilsons Promontory MP
88 Wilsons Promontory MR
89 Corner Inlet MCP

90 Nooramunga MCP
91 Tarra-Bulga NP
92 Morwell NP
93 Holey Plains SP
94 Gippsland Lakes CP
95 The Lakes NP
96 Mitchell River NP
97 Nyerimilang Park
98 Snowy River NP
99 Errinundra NP
100 Cooperambra NP
101 Lind NP
102 Alfred NP
103 Cape Conran CP
104 Croajingolong NP
105 Kings Billabong Park
106 Gadsen Bend Park
107 Nyah-Vinifera Park
108 Gunbower NP
109 Lower Goulburn NP
110 Lake Tvers SP

Marine national parks and marine sanctuaries

A	Discovery Bay MNP
B	Merri MS
C	The Arches MS
D	Twelve Apostles MNP
E	Marengo Reefs MS
F	Eagle Rock MS
G	Point Addis MNP
H	Point Danger MS
I	Barwon Bluff MS
J	Port Phillip Heads MNP
K	Point Cooke MS
L	Jawbone MS
M	Ricketts Point MS
N	Mushroom Reef MS
O	Yaringa MNP
P	French Island MNP
Q	Churchill Island MNP
R	Bunurong MNP
S	Wilsons Promontory MNP
T	Corner Inlet MNP
U	Ninety Mile Beach MNP
V	Beware Reef MS
W	Point Hicks MNP
X	Cape Howe MNP

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

1 - 110		National or other park greater than 1000 ha
★		National or other park/area less than 1000 ha
A - X		Marine national park greater than 1000 ha
▲		Marine national park or marine sanctuary less than 1000 ha





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