

National Parks Act

Annual Report 2012



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Notes

- The Minister responsible for administering the *National Parks Act 1975* during the year was the Hon Ryan Smith MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change.
- In this report:
 - the legislation referred to is Victorian legislation
 - *the Act* means the *National Parks Act 1975*
 - *DSE* means the Department of Sustainability and Environment
 - *DPI* means the Department of Primary Industries
 - *the Minister* means the Minister for Environment and Climate Change
 - *the Secretary* means the Secretary to the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Cover: Walking track at Hollow Mountain following flood recovery works, Grampians National Park (photo: Parks Victoria)

Foreword



This annual report on the working of the *National Parks Act 1975* (the Act) for the year ended 30 June 2012 is provided to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon Ryan Smith MP, for the purpose of 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 nearly 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.

Legislation to add approximately 10 000 hectares to the parks system was passed in March 2012. Of particular note was the provision to create Lake Tyers State Park in East Gippsland. This will not only implement recommendations of the former Land Conservation Council but provide the basis for the granting of Aboriginal Title over the park and its joint management by the Gunaikurnai People, a commitment under the Gunaikurnai native title settlement agreement.

More broadly, the importance of involving and engaging Traditional Owners in park management continued to be recognised across the state through cooperative management and other engagement mechanisms.

A significant program to improve the condition of our parks was delivered this year. This included threatened species management, environmental watering in Barmah and Murray-Sunset national parks, and research and monitoring programs to inform park management. A comprehensive program for marine protected areas was developed following the release of the Victorian Auditor-General's 2011 report on the environmental management of these areas. The program is now being delivered across the state.

Considerable efforts to control pest plants and animals included several cross-tenure programs and the first year of a new four-year intensive management program in the Alpine National Park. Of note was the successfully coordinated response to the appearance of the invasive North Pacific Seastar in the Tidal River estuary in Wilsons Promontory National Park.

A particular focus of the year was responding to the damage caused by flood and storm events in different parts of the state in late February and early March 2012 and again in early June 2012. This added to the recovery works already being undertaken in response to similar events in the previous financial year.

The fire season was below average but considerable work was carried out as part of implementing an expanded statewide program of planned burning on public land in response to the findings of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, the largest undertaken in Victoria in more than 20 years.

The year also saw further investment in visitor facilities and associated infrastructure, not only in the course of replacing or repairing those damaged by floods and storms but also through improvements elsewhere. These included works at major visitor attractions including the Twelve Apostles, Wallace's Hut in the Alpine National Park, lookouts in Mount Buffalo National Park and the Quarantine Station in Point Nepean National Park. In addition, further work was initiated to develop a sound future for the Mount Buffalo Chalet and the Point Nepean Quarantine Station.

These and other park management activities undertaken across the state, particularly by Parks Victoria, are reflected in the many projects referred to in this report. I again thank all those staff and volunteers who were involved in delivering the parks program over the past year.

Greg Wilson
Secretary to the
Department of Sustainability and Environment

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Representative parks system



Areas managed under the Act

As at 30 June 2012, there were 138 areas with a total area of nearly 3.45 million hectares managed under various provisions of the Act. Appendix 1 lists the areas and Appendix 4 shows their location. There were no changes to the parks system during the year.

The 138 areas comprised:

- 123 areas (3 440 970 ha) listed on schedules to the Act
 - 45 national parks (Schedule Two)
 - 3 wilderness parks (Schedule Two A)
 - 25 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 (4442 ha) to which particular provisions of the Act apply.

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

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

There were no changes during the year to the areas managed under the Act. Legislation was passed to create additional park areas (see *Legislation*).

Management planning

As at 30 June 2012 there were approved management plans covering all or parts of 42 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 management plan for St Arnaud Range National Park was submitted for approval following the passage of legislation to change the name of the park to Kara Kara National Park
- work continued on the draft management 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)
- Parks Victoria, DSE and the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation progressed the development of a management plan for parks and reserves in Victoria's far south-west, including Cobboboonee, Lower Glenelg, Mount Eccles and Mount Richmond national parks, Cape Nelson, Dergholm and Mount Napier state parks, Discovery Bay Coastal Park and Discovery Bay Marine National Park

Open house consultation sessions were held in five regional communities and an assessment of cultural values was undertaken. A research project in partnership with the University of South Australia and the University of Queensland enabled online community mapping to improve knowledge of places and experiences across the planning area that are important for recreation, culture, heritage and other significant values.

Other planning included:

- developing a draft program plan for marine protected areas which sets out actions for managing Victoria's system of marine national parks and marine sanctuaries and other marine protected areas
- progressing the preparation of a master plan for the Lower Ferntree Gully picnic area in the Dandenong Ranges National Park, in conjunction with the Kokoda memorial project at the 1000 Steps
- completing a master plan for Point Nepean National Park for consideration by government, and progressing the detailed design process in relation to landscaping and improving selected buildings and interpretive features within the Quarantine Station
- completing a review of all previous plans for Tidal River in Wilsons Promontory National Park to assist with the response to floods.

Natural values management



Management

The *State of the Parks 2007* report together with Parks Victoria's Levels of Protection framework provide a basis for setting strategic priorities in environmental management in areas managed under the Act. On-ground works are prioritised in order to protect the highest environmental values at greatest risk. Examples of projects in the various environmental management program areas are provided below.

Threatened species management

Collaborative projects between DSE and Parks Victoria, research partners and community organisations were undertaken in parks throughout the state to protect threatened species. These projects and the related parks included:

- monitoring the level of breeding activity of the Malleefowl, in partnership with the Victorian Malleefowl Recovery Group
- Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park and Beechworth Historic Park – planting orchids under the Threatened Orchid Cultivation Program, which involves collecting seeds and fungi from the threatened species in the parks for germination and propagation by the Royal Botanic Gardens over a five-year period
- Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park – re-recording captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters released in 2010. A captive-bred bird was also observed to have successfully bred with a wild bird, which is one of the final objectives of the project and which demonstrates the potential for captive released birds to integrate with wild populations
- Grampians National Park – continuing the monitoring and land management programs underpinning the reintroduction of the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby. Higher than expected mortalities and lower than expected reproduction led the Victorian Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby Recovery Team to re-evaluate strategies
- Great Otway and Mornington Peninsula national parks – further monitoring of ocean beaches for the Hooded Plover, with the involvement of Birds Australia and the Friends of the Hooded Plover, as well as other measures to help protect the species
- Great Otway National Park – confirming the presence of the Tiger Quoll in the park after a period of approximately twelve years of no confirmed sighting or other evidence
- Mount Buffalo National Park – releasing 260 Spotted Tree Frogs into Buffalo Creek in an effort to re-establish a population of this threatened species that became extinct in the area almost 20 years ago, as well as controlling and eradicating weeds that threaten stream environments critical to the frog's survival

- Snowy River National Park – recording an increase in the Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby population from 6 individuals in 2002 to 20 in 2012. The long-running predator control program is considered to be a strong supporting factor in the population increase
- Bunyip State Park – releasing further Helmeted Honeyeaters into the wild.

Native animal management

Programs to manage the impacts of kangaroo and koala populations continued in several parks, where the long-term impact on park values caused by excessive numbers has been clearly demonstrated. Programs are undertaken in accordance with established ecological rationales developed with the support of key stakeholders, including independent technical advisory committees.

Foot surveys of kangaroos were completed in the more densely wooded parks in the Mallee. Population densities remained below target as an ongoing effect of the previous drought conditions. As such, kangaroo management programs were not required in 2011–12.

Programs relating to koalas occurred in the following parks:

- French Island National Park – a contraceptive program is gradually replacing relocation as a means of controlling koalas on French Island (including the park), with 70 koalas implanted with contraceptive implants and released back onto the island. A further 300 adult koalas were relocated to Bunyip State Park from the island
- Mount Eccles National Park – 240 koalas were treated with contraceptive implants and released back into the park. The population was surveyed and showed a slight decline to an estimated 3900 individuals
- Great Otway National Park – contractors and the community monitored koala populations in suitable habitat areas.

Pest plant management

The control and management of invasive plants remains one of the top priorities for natural values management. Depending on the nature and extent of the threat, responses are implemented to either eradicate or contain invasive plants in order to protect natural and cultural assets.

Many key projects were delivered collaboratively by Parks Victoria, DSE, DPI, catchment management authorities and community groups. The federal government's Caring for Our Country initiative also provides financial assistance.

Appendix 2 lists the targeted species for those areas managed under the Act where more than five hectares was recorded as being treated for the purpose of controlling or eradicating that species.

Programs and projects involving parks undertaken during the year, many as part of cross-tenure programs, included:

- the Good Neighbour Program, with twenty-one pest plant control projects delivered. This program focuses on managing pest plants (and pest animals) on public land where it meets private land. Cross-tenure projects were delivered cooperatively with landowners, focusing on established weeds such as Blackberry, Boneseed, Bridal Creeper, English Broom, Patterson's Curse, Ragwort and St John's Wort
- Glenelg Eden, which includes Cobboboonee, Lower Glenelg and Mount Richmond national parks and Discovery Bay Coastal Park and which aims to control high risk pest plants in priority areas of public land in south-west Victoria
- Otway Eden, which includes the Great Otway and Port Campbell national parks and which targeted new and emerging weed infestations and protecting priority biodiversity asset areas
- From the Highlands Down, which includes the Alpine and Mitchell River national parks and has a major focus on preventing the spread of Cape Broom down the Wonnangatta River catchment and protecting the high conservation value aquatic ecosystems of the Mitchell River from blackberry, willows and other riparian weeds
- Protecting the Best, which covers several parks east of the Snowy River, with a continuing focus on new and emerging species
- the Urban Fringe Weed Management Initiative, which included the treatment of approximately 1500 hectares of the Dandenong Ranges National Park for a broad range of woody weeds and which has resulted in a large-scale reduction in the density and distribution of weeds, particularly invasive woody species
- projects in the Mallee which focused on new and emerging weeds such as Hudsons Pear, a species of spiny cactus that has recently been declared a weed of national significance. An experimental control burning of Ward's weed, a rangeland herb that has now become widespread in north-western Victoria, was also carried out
- an extensive program across the newly established river red gum parks, including partnerships with catchment management authorities. Post-flood intervention on the floodplains has been important due to increased germination following wetter conditions. Programs continued despite being impacted by recurring flood events
- the completion of a three-year spraying program which involved aerial spraying and checking of all areas of *Spartina* within Corner Inlet and Nooramunga marine and coastal parks
- the first year of a four-year Alps Intensive Management Program in the Alpine National Park to control a range of weeds including blackberry, brooms and willows (see also *Pest animal management*) and a large hawkweed eradication program on the Bogong High Plains.

Pest animal management

Pest animals are a major threat to native animals and their habitat. Cooperative interstate and community partnerships

facilitate or deliver programs to reduce pest animal populations. Resources are directed toward eradication, containment or asset protection, with a focus on early intervention where possible.

Appendix 3 lists the species and the areas managed under the Act that were targeted during the year in pest animal control projects.

Work continued in 2011–12 to support delivery of the various Ark fox control programs:

- Glenelg Ark, which includes Cobboboonee and Lower Glenelg national parks and Discovery Bay Coastal Park
- Grampians Ark, which includes the Grampians National Park and Black Range State Park
- Otway Ark, which includes the Great Otway National Park
- Southern Ark, which includes parks in East Gippsland east of the Snowy River.

Other projects included:

- twenty-four pest animal projects under the Good Neighbour Program
- work to control pigs in Barmah National Park and goats in Murray-Sunset and Warby-Ovens national parks, in partnership with the Sporting Shooters Association Australia (Victoria)
- Alpine National Park – several projects which included the eradication of an isolated goat population at Mackillop Bridge, fox control to protect targeted threatened fauna, and the removal of further feral horses from the Bogong High Plains and the eastern Alps with the involvement of the Alpine Brumby Management Association and the Victorian Brumby Association. Some of the projects were part of the first year of a four-year Alps Intensive Management Program to control feral horses, deer and goats
- French Island National Park – the second year of pest animal (and pest plant) control works in the park as part of a broader three-year program, funded jointly with the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority, to protect and improve environmental values around Western Port
- Point Nepean National Park – ongoing fox control and monitoring to protect the Long-nosed Bandicoot and the White-footed Dunnart.

Grazing management

Ecological grazing at Terrick Terrick National Park is now managed under a strategic operational plan for the northern plains grasslands, which defines specific objectives for floral and faunal values as a basis for determining the grazing intensity required.

Work associated with the phase-out of grazing from the new river red gum parks continued, in particular the negotiation of agreements with various licensees to erect government-funded fences and off-stream water systems and commencing to implement those works.

Ecological fire management

Further progress was made towards determining appropriate long-term ecological fire regimes through the development of landscape-scale fire ecology and risk

assessments. This information is used throughout Victoria as a component of integrated fire management and to inform fire operations plans. A large number of parks across the state are now covered.

Ongoing monitoring programs examining the effects of fire regimes on biodiversity were applied in parks across the state (see also *Fire*).

A fire ecology strategy currently being developed for the Greater Grampians landscape includes the Grampians National Park and Black Range State Park. This will further conservation objectives and provide the ecological basis for future fire management planning.

Catchment and water management

Environmental water delivered to waterways, wetlands and floodplains across Victoria included, in areas managed under the National Parks Act, Barmah Forest (Barmah National Park) and Lake Wallawalla (Murray-Sunset National Park). The watering was undertaken through a broad partnership involving the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, DSE, Parks Victoria, catchment management authorities, water corporations, the Murray Darling Basin Authority and the federal and New South Wales governments. The program is integrated with river, wetland and catchment management activities to achieve the best ecological outcomes.

Structural works at Hattah Lakes (Hattah-Kulkyne National Park) commenced in order to enable the efficient use of environmental water and to maximise ecological benefits. Funded by the Murray Darling Basin Authority's Living Murray Program, planning also progressed for works at Lindsay and Walpolla islands (Murray-Sunset National Park) and in Gunbower National Park.

Marine values management

Parks Victoria works in partnership with other agencies, local government, industry groups and the community to protect the values of the marine protected areas under the Act.

In addition to projects reported under *Management planning, Research and Monitoring*, Parks Victoria:

- completed reports on the marine natural values for each of Victoria's five marine bioregions, including a full description and details of the knowledge gained since Victoria's marine national parks and marine sanctuaries were created nearly ten years ago. Report cards for marine protected area management and condition are being developed
 - continued a partnership with Museum Victoria that resulted in comprehensive marine inventories and image collections at Bunurong and Wilsons Promontory marine national parks
 - participated in responses to several marine pest incursions and a number of related pest incidents
- Volunteer divers helped to reduce the threat posed to Marengo Reefs Marine Sanctuary by the invasive marine algae Japanese Kelp.

Of critical importance was the coordinated response to the appearance of the Northern Pacific Seastar in the Tidal River estuary in Wilsons Promontory National Park.

This included imposing restrictions on various water-based activities in the river, and divers removing more than 100 seastars and monitoring other waters of the park, as well as off-shore waters and Shallow Inlet, for the presence of this invasive pest.

Monitoring

DSE's Forests and Parks Monitoring and Reporting Information System provides a platform to meet reporting obligations, support future policy and management decisions and assess the health and condition of Victoria's forests and parks. During the year, new monitoring plots were established and measured at 187 sites across Victoria's forests, including 68 in 22 parks managed under the Act, bringing to 81 the number of plots now established in 29 parks¹.

Parks Victoria's Signs of Healthy Parks monitoring program aims to provide an understanding of the health of parks, evaluate the effectiveness of Parks Victoria's conservation programs and provide early warning of emerging threats. A significant program of monitoring undertaken in parks across the state included projects relating to:

- monitoring the condition of native vegetation (including an assessment of the level of pest plant infestation) in the Alpine, Croajingolong, Errinundra, Great Otway, Heathcote-Graytown, Little Desert, Mornington Peninsula, Point Nepean and St Arnaud Range national parks
- monitoring selected native fauna in parks including the Alpine, Barmah, Cobobboonee, Coopracambra, Croajingolong, Grampians, Great Otway, Lower Glenelg, Mornington Peninsula, Point Nepean, Terrick Terrick and Wilsons Promontory national parks
- monitoring pest plants in the Alpine, Chiltern-Mt Pilot, Errinundra, Grampians, Great Otway, Greater Bendigo and Port Campbell national parks
- trialing sophisticated remote sensing software to monitor English Broom and willows in the Alpine National Park
- monitoring pest animals (including cats, deer, foxes, goats, horses and rabbits) in 14 parks across the state
- monitoring subtidal reefs in Point Addis and Wilsons Promontory marine national parks and intertidal reefs in three marine national parks and seven marine sanctuaries.

There was also a range of community based monitoring undertaken, including the Reef Life Survey, Sea Search and Reefwatch programs and by groups including Friends groups and Birdlife Australia.

Research

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*, *Reference Areas Act 1978* or *Wildlife Act 1975*.

A total of 167 research permits were issued during the year, 88 of which were new permits and 79 were renewed permits. These enabled research to be carried out in 105 parks (a permit may cover more than one park) or in all

¹ The 2011 annual report should have reported that 39 monitoring plots were established across Victoria's forests, including 13 in 10 parks managed under the Act.

parks if required (28 permits). Those parks for which 10 or more permits were issued (in addition to the 'all parks' permits) were: Alpine (20), Grampians (18), Great Otway (22), Hattah-Kulkyne (12), Murray-Sunset (18), Wyperfeld (11) and Yarra Ranges (11) national parks.

Examples of the research authorised include:

- the taking of protected flora, the construction of grazing exclusion fences and the monitoring of effects of fire on biodiversity in the Mallee, including in Hattah-Kulkyne and Murray-Sunset national parks
- the collection of samples of sediment, water and seagrass from French Island and Yaringa marine national parks (and elsewhere) for the purpose of quantifying the water quality requirements of seagrass in Western Port
- the establishment of monitoring plots and the taking of protected flora in Baw Baw and Yarra Ranges national parks, as part of the Mountain Invasion Research Network global survey and monitoring project
- invertebrate surveys and the collection of invertebrate specimens, including listed Lepidoptera species, within all regions in order to complete taxonomic research and a book
- listening surveys of amphibians within Mitchell River National Park (and other public land in Gippsland) for the purpose of undertaking surveys of the Giant Burrowing Frog.

Research programs

DSE progressed a three-year research program with the University of Melbourne's Department of Forest and Ecosystem Science to investigate the impacts of fire (natural and managed), climate variability/change and forest management regimes on water quantity and quality, biodiversity values, carbon assets, other social and economic values, and the vulnerability and resilience of Victoria's public forests, including those in parks.

No grazing occurred in the Alpine National Park during the year under the research program to assess the effectiveness of fuel and bushfire risk management in Victoria's high country using strategic cattle grazing. The Federal environment minister's decision to refuse to consent to the research under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* was challenged in the Federal Court.

New and ongoing research occurred under Parks Victoria's Research Partners Program, which aims to inform and improve park management through applied research collaborations with universities and other research institutions.

Twenty-one new projects relating to areas managed under the Act were established. These included:

- a project examining trends in the status of bird communities in areas under the Act, including Chiltern-Mt Pilot, Grampians, Greater Bendigo, Great Otway, Hattah-Kulkyne and Murray-Sunset national parks
- a project developing and refining monitoring techniques to inform and improve management of over-abundant koalas at French Island, Great Otway and Mount Eccles national parks

- a project improving strategies for the efficient and effective control of invasive willows in alpine peatlands in the Alpine and Mount Buffalo national parks
- the Prom Bioscan project, undertaken in partnership with the Museum of Victoria, to provide a snapshot census of fauna in a range of habitats in Wilsons Promontory National Park following the flood of March 2011
- several projects aimed at developing more effective approaches to monitoring and understanding the status of natural values and management effectiveness in marine national parks and marine sanctuaries.

As well as establishing new research, the program also supported 51 ongoing projects relating to areas managed under the Act. These projects included:

- the development of an ecological management strategy that will identify priority natural values and management strategies to protect box-ironbark forest and woodland areas in parks
- research into the effects of different fire regimes on biodiversity in the Great Otway and Heathcote-Graytown national parks
- an examination of the effects of climate change and fire on alpine vegetation in the Alpine National Park
- the development of decontamination techniques to reduce the spread of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* in Brisbane Ranges National Park
- the identification and mapping of important habitat refuges for fauna in the Grampians National Park
- the development of conceptual models for ecosystems in marine national parks and marine sanctuaries.

Adaptive management research

Adaptive management incorporates monitoring and evaluation into the management cycle so that park managers can learn from the results of their actions, leading to improved management over time. Research undertaken during the year included:

- continuing the monitoring of the effects of ecological thinning in box-ironbark ecosystems
- establishing a project to develop an adaptive management strategy for improved management of arid and semi-arid ecosystems, including Hattah-Kulkyne, Little Desert, Murray-Sunset and Wyperfeld national parks
- continuing the research in the Alpine National Park to improve our understanding of effectiveness of techniques in controlling the highly invasive English Broom and the effects of these techniques on native vegetation
- examining ecological thinning as a technique for maintaining and improving the health of river red gums in Barmah National Park, including identifying sites, obtaining agreement on the experimental design and commencing pre-thinning monitoring (see also *Interstate cooperation*)
- developing and testing an efficient structured decision-making process to guide resource allocation within an adaptive management framework for areas including the Great Otway National Park.

Fire and flood management and recovery



Fire

The bushfire season was below average. Following Victoria's wettest summer on record in 2010–11, conditions across the state varied during the year, with lower than average rainfall between March and October 2011 in all areas except Gippsland. There was higher than average rainfall in the eastern part of the state during the 2011–12 summer and lower than average rainfall in the west. The commencement of the autumn 2012 planned burning program was affected by the early March rainfalls in the eastern half of the state and the lengthy periods required for forest areas to dry off.

Bushfires

DSE recorded 72 fires starting in areas managed under the Act. These fires affected approximately 895 hectares. All but two of the fires were less than 100 hectares, with 57 recorded as burning 1 hectare or less or not being found. The largest fires – in Murray-Sunset National Park (320 ha) and the Grampians National Park (230 ha) – were started by lightning. In total, 30 of the fires were started by lightning, with 18 being escapes from a campfire or BBQ and 10 being deliberately lit.

Planned burning

As part of the 2010–11 statewide planned burning program, there were 143 burns in areas managed under the Act. These treated nearly 63 000 hectares of land in total. The largest areas treated were in the Murray-Sunset (14 670 ha), Grampians (6956 ha), Snowy River (5202 ha) and Wyperfeld (3400 ha) national parks. The *Management* section of the report contains further information on ecological fire management.

Monitoring

Monitoring programs continued in parks across the state. Monitoring provides important information for bushfire management on public land. The current programs (Flora Monitoring, the Landscape Fire and Environmental Monitoring Program and HawkEye) involve a range of monitoring activities aimed at assessing fire impacts (e.g. burn extent and severity), fire effects and improving management models and decision making.

Melbourne Bushfire Protection Program

The Melbourne Bushfire Protection Program, established in 2009 to improve bushfire preparedness on Melbourne's urban-bushland interface, 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.

Works undertaken during the year relating to those areas included:

- the creation of 20 km of new fuel breaks and upgrading 56 km of existing fuel breaks. A further 11 km of roads and tracks were upgraded to improve access for fire management
- the mapping of the location and condition of more than 1000 km of fire access tracks and fuel breaks, as well as hundreds of gates, culverts, water points and signs
- the use of new modeling to help identify and treat bushfire risk. The system has been used to assign all parks with a relative bushfire risk rating to assist with resource prioritisation.

Preparing for emergencies

Emergency management plans were reviewed and tested to ensure that they remain current and effective. Emergency scenarios are used to test the effectiveness of the plans, either through a desk top scenario or in the field. At Wilsons Promontory National Park, an annual exercise is conducted using a test emergency scenario involving Victoria Police.

In June 2012, Parks Victoria took part in Exercise Seadragon, a national marine pollution exercise, as part of a Victoria-led multi-government and multi-agency incident management team. The scenario was based on a 100 000-tonne oil tanker breaching its cargo and releasing significant amounts of crude oil into Western Port (where there are three marine national parks).

Fire recovery – 2009 bushfires

The vast majority of fire recovery works following the February 2009 fires were completed by 30 June 2011. Works included the following:

- Kinglake National Park – the completion of landscape and preliminary engineering works at Jehosophat Gully, with toilet and shelter works underway. Works began at Masons Falls, with completion scheduled for late 2012
- Yarra Ranges National Park – the completion of works at Cambarville, with the construction of a new picnic rotunda in the picnic ground which complements the redeveloped walking trails and lookouts in the precinct
- Cathedral Range State Park – the completion of a new walking track between Sugarloaf Saddle and Cooks Mill.

Floods and storms

Two significant storm and flood events during the year affected parks managed under the Act.

In late February and early March 2012 storms caused considerable damage to various parks, largely restricted to the Alps and northern Victoria. The most severely affected parks were the Alpine, Burrowa-Pine Mountain and Warby-Ovens national parks. Damage to park infrastructure, roads and tracks was significant in some places, and various parks were closed.

In early June 2012 a strong low pressure system caused a series of severe storms across southern Victoria. The strong winds and heavy rain caused damage in a number of parks, mainly in Gippsland but also in the Great Otway National Park. Parts of the Alpine, Croajingolong and Mitchell River national parks and Moondarra State Park were closed.

Flood and storm recovery

When a series of eight storms swept Victoria between September 2010 and March 2011, the damage to Victoria's parks was unprecedented in scale and severity. Roads and walking tracks were particularly hard hit by heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding.

The Victorian Government provided significant funding to assist recovery. This was allocated to protect natural and cultural values, reduce safety risks and repair roads, tracks and visitor facilities. Work commenced during the year on many of the recovery projects, with a reasonable number completed. The recovery program will continue in 2012–13.

The focus in 2011–12 was reopening high visitation areas and carrying out works in damaged areas that posed an unacceptable risk to public safety.

Table 1 illustrates the work undertaken in the most severely affected parks.

Table 1 – Flood recovery works

Park	Example of works
Alpine NP	Completion of road and track repairs
	Completion of works to repair and upgrade walking tracks (including the Wallace Heritage Trail on the Bogong High Plains)
Grampians NP	Repairs to numerous walking tracks throughout the park
	Repairs to Borough Huts and Buandik visitor sites
	Repairs to roads across the park, which have restored access for visitors, contractors and essential services to some 80 per cent of the network ahead of large-scale repairs
	Improved drainage works at the Brambuk Information Centre and Parks Victoria office
Little Desert NP	Completion of repairs to roads and visitor facilities at two campgrounds, including the replacement of a septic system and the replacement and updating of visitor information boards
Warby-Ovens NP	Repairs to flood-damaged footbridges and walking tracks
Wilsons Promontory NP	Repairs to and the reopening of several walking tracks
	Excellent progress with works at Mt Oberon, where the reconstruction of the Mt Oberon Road and Telegraph Saddle Track are nearing completion
	Completion of the Wilsons Promontory drinking water project, mitigating risk to the water supply in future flood events
	Reopening of the Tidal River general store
Beechworth HP	Repairs to the flood-damaged footbridges and walking tracks
Lysterfield Park	Repair and rebuilding of 27 km of dedicated mountain bike trails, including the Commonwealth Games Mountain Bike Trail, in conjunction with Lysterfield District Trail Riders and Trailmix
HP	Historic Park
NP	National Park

Traditional Owner partnerships and cultural heritage management



Traditional Owner partnerships and Aboriginal cultural heritage

DSE and Parks Victoria continued to progress the development of joint and co-management arrangements in Victoria.

In north-western Victoria, Parks Victoria continued to work with the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (the representative body of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Yupagalk Peoples), engaging the Wimmera Peoples in works such as pest plant management, rabbit control and cultural site management along the Wimmera River in Little Desert National Park and Lake Albacutya Park.

In south-western Victoria, significant progress was made on the management planning project for several parks, in partnership with the Gunditjmara People (see *Management planning*). As state government representatives on the Budj Bim Council, DSE and Parks Victoria continued to provide support to the council as a strategic advisory body with respect to Mount Eccles National Park.

In northern Victoria, a series of innovative projects commenced in relation to the river red gum parks. These included compiling detailed histories of key parks, tourism planning with Traditional Owners, archaeological modelling and oral history research. Work progressed with the Yorta Yorta on the establishment of a Traditional Owner land management board for Barmah National Park. Parks Victoria continued to support the development of the Yorta Yorta Caring for Country Ranger Team.

In southern Victoria, the Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Boonwurrung Peoples were engaged in cultural heritage assessments at various locations as part of the Melbourne Bushfire Protection Program.

At Wilsons Promontory National Park, a memorandum of understanding was developed between Parks Victoria and the Traditional Owners of Yiruk and Wamoon: the Boon Wurrung, Bunurong and Gunaikurnai Peoples. Archaeological assessment and related permits were supported by the Traditional Owners, and members of each Traditional Owner organisation met regularly for onsite inspections and cultural heritage assessments. A number of new cultural places were recorded.

In eastern Victoria, DSE and Parks Victoria continued to work with the Gunaikurnai in the implementation of joint management arrangements for several areas in Gippsland, including Mitchell River, Tarra-Bulga, The Lakes and part of Snowy River national parks, Lake Tyers State Park (to be proclaimed) and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. Parks Victoria also worked with the Gunaikurnai on establishing an employment program for the Gunaikurnai People to work on country.

The Victorian Alps Traditional Owner Reference Group and East Gippsland Traditional Owner Reference Group merged during the year. Parks Victoria facilitates meetings to seek guidance from Traditional Owners on park management issues and to discuss potential employment and business opportunities on Parks Victoria managed land.

Following completion of a cultural heritage management plan for the King River Hut site in the Alpine National Park, significant site protection works were undertaken to ensure the ongoing protection of one of the richest known Aboriginal archaeological sites in Victoria.

Post settlement cultural heritage

Work during the year in relation to post settlement cultural heritage included:

- Alpine National Park – restoration works at Wallace's Hut in conjunction with the Victorian High Country Huts Association, and the opening of the rebuilt Weston and King River huts, both of which had been destroyed by fire and had been rebuilt with the assistance of volunteers
- Point Nepean National Park – stabilisation of historic features in the range area of the former Officer Cadet School, construction of a screen to protect the remnants of an historic 1840s lime kiln on the Point Nepean beach, and locating and documenting buried rails of the historic tramway system at the Quarantine Station
- Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park – the commencement of a project, in partnership with Gippsland Ports, to restore the historic jib crane that is part of the heritage listed New Works Historic Complex on the western side of the entrance to the Gippsland Lakes.

Community involvement



Volunteers

Volunteers continued to make a major contribution to the management of many areas under the Act. Friends groups, individuals, schools, corporate volunteers and special interest groups provide invaluable support to Parks Victoria and park management.

Examples of the generous contributions of the many Friends groups and other volunteers include:

- the Friends of Chiltern-Mount Pilot National Park, who supported the planting of threatened orchids in Chiltern-Mount Pilot National Park and Beechworth Historic Park
- the Friends of Eastern Otways, who undertook a range of works including weeding, monitoring, cleaning, maintenance and environmental projects in the Great Otway National Park
- the Friends of Point Nepean National Park, who continued their long association with the park, undertaking heritage conservation works to the fortifications and firing range structures
- the Victorian High Country Huts Association, which was involved in rebuilding, restoring and maintaining high country huts in the Alpine National Park.

The Campground Host program was delivered for the eleventh year, with 35 volunteer campground hosts participating at eight parks, including Croajingolong, Lake Eildon and Mount Buffalo national parks. More than 160 hosts volunteered as part of the Four Wheel Drive Camp Host program at ten parks including the Alpine, Great Otway and Grampians national parks (and at three state forests).

Parks Victoria's partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) continued. This included CVA employing a volunteers' coordinator to operate within Parks Victoria's Halls Gap office to service all Parks Victoria's volunteer management for the Grampians region.

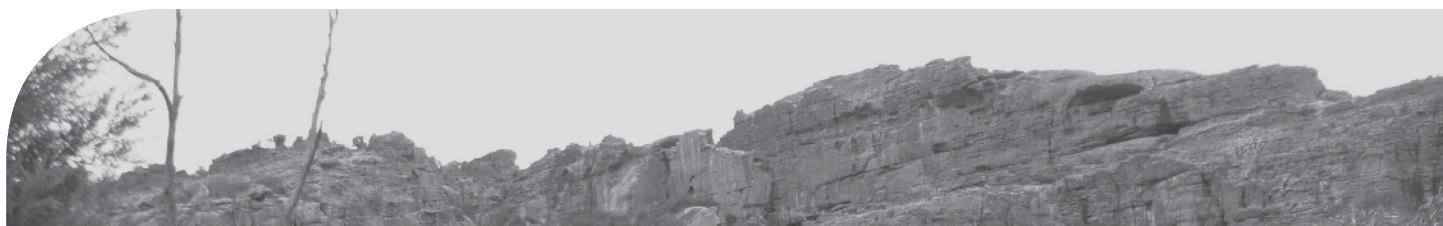
Community group grants

Parks Victoria's Healthy Parks Healthy People Grants are available to community groups who wish to undertake projects related to areas managed by Parks Victoria. Groups work in close conjunction with local Parks Victoria staff to develop and implement projects.

Eighty-five projects were funded in 2011–12 in relation to areas under the Act. The groups and projects included:

- the Friends of the Hooded Plover – protection of Hooded Plover nest sites and chicks in Mornington Peninsula National Park through a variety of activities
- the Harry Ferguson Club – rabbit management, track grading and installation of a BBQ shelter at the Snow Drift visitor area in Wyperfeld National Park
- the Sherbrooke Lyrebird Survey Group – monitoring of the lyrebird population in the Dandenong Ranges National Park
- the Victorian Malleefowl Recovery Group – ongoing monitoring of Malleefowl activity in national and wilderness parks in the Mallee.

Visitor and tourism services



Information, interpretation and education

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

Information was again provided to the public through Parks Victoria's 24-hour information service (13 1963), the Parks Victoria website <www.parkweb.vic.gov.au> and Park Notes.

Parks Victoria delivered face-to-face interpretation and education programs to more than 19 000 visitors in areas under the Act.

Interpretive Junior Ranger Program activities were provided for children of primary school age during school holidays. These were held in eleven national parks, with approximately 3300 people participating, a significant increase in participant numbers over the previous year.

Curriculum-based school education programs were delivered to more than 2500 students and their teachers at education centres in the Dandenong Ranges and Wilsons Promontory national parks. More than 340 students participated in a range of free activities for government schools at Point Nepean and Dandenong Ranges national parks as part of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Education Week program.

Enhancing visitor enjoyment and tourism

Visitor facilities

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 2 as well as those referred to in *Flood recovery* and *Post settlement cultural heritage*.

Table 2 – Visitor facilities

Park	Project
Alpine NP	Completion of new facilities, including a lookout platform, observation deck and a series of interpretive panels, on the Wallace Heritage Trail (see also <i>Table 1 - Flood recovery works</i>)
	Replacement of Riley Creek Bridge on the Wonnangatta Track
	Erection of new fly-out toilet facilities at Dibbins Hut, part of a statewide pit toilet replacement program
Dandenong Ranges NP	Work on the construction of the Kokoda Terrace, as the first part of a major project involving the construction of a Kokoda Memorial Wall and work on Lyrebird Track and the 1000 Steps
	Completion of a new bird feeding area at Grants Picnic Ground, funded by a Commonwealth and Victorian Government initiative to encourage tourists back to those regions economically affected by the February 2009 bushfires
	Construction of a new toilet facility at Ferntree Gully picnic area
Great Otway NP	Completion of approximately 15 km of new dedicated walking track on the Great Ocean Walk, and upgrading of additional sections of the Walk, with works at Bowkers Bay completed
Mount Buffalo NP	Upgrading of facilities at the Marriott, Monolith, Mt Dunn, The Horn, View Point and Wilkinsons lookouts
Point Nepean NP	Commencement of a significant infrastructure services works project
	Installation of a solar power system at the existing toilet block at Fort Nepean to power the sound and light interpretive installation within the fort's underground tunnels

Park	Project
Port Campbell NP	Completion of repairs and refurbishment works at the Twelve Apostles Visitor Centre
	Completion of a new viewing platform at the Twelve Apostles
Yarra Ranges NP	Completion of the O'Shannassy Aqueduct Stage 2 link track
	Revamping of the viewing tower at Mt Donna Buang

NP National Park

In addition to the above activities:

- several bridges and fords, including in the Alpine, Great Otway and Murray-Sunset national parks, were replaced as part of a 4-year program to upgrade and replace bridges on public land
- specialist wheelchairs and equipment were introduced in the Grampians, Point Nepean and Wilsons Promontory national parks and Cape Conran Coastal Park to assist visitors with disabilities
- further progress was made on the planning for works for stage 1 of the Grampians Peaks Trail and the development of a master plan for the implementation of the walk
- there was a detailed review of the Mount Buffalo Community Enterprise proposal for the redevelopment of the Mount Buffalo Chalet. Following a decision not to pursue this proposal, which required substantial government funding, the state government allocated \$500 000 towards the preparation of a development plan that will outline the future use of the chalet. An interagency working group led by DSE was established to prepare the plan
- the preferred tenderer for the replacement of the Arthurs Seat chairlift in Arthurs Seat State Park was involved in developing the proposal for a contemporary state-of-the-art all-weather gondola.

Tour operators

Tour operators are licensed to run organised tours and recreational activities for profit on Victorian public land. As at 30 June 2012, 286 operators were licensed to operate in areas under the Act.

The reform of the licensing system for tour operators reported last year took effect from 1 July 2011 (see also *Legislation*). In the first year of implementation, seven ten-year licences were approved in relation to parks under the Act. Approximately three quarters of the remaining operators hold a one-year licence, while the rest hold a three-year licence.

Parks Victoria conducted a familiarisation program at Wilsons Promontory National Park for tour operators, industry and staff in response to the 2011 floods. The event was timed to coincide with the reopening of the park.

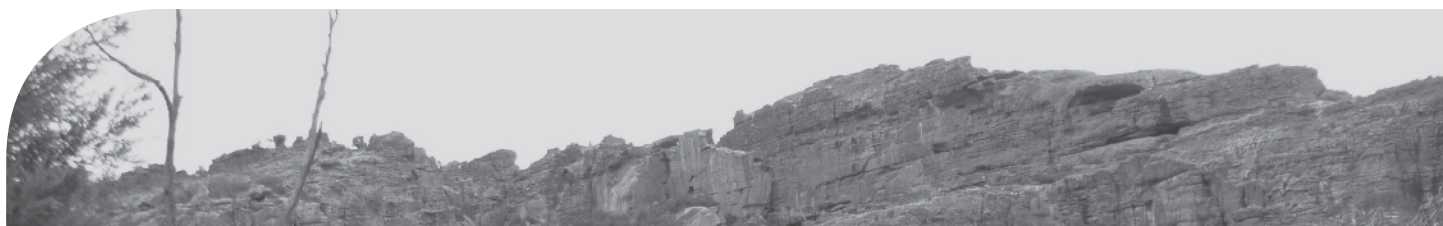
Licensed tour operator compliance activities were conducted in partnership with regional staff and external agencies, primarily at Grants Picnic Ground (Dandenong Ranges National Park) and the Twelve Apostles (Port Campbell National Park). These activities resulted in twelve new operators being licensed.

Visits to parks

The Visitor Number Monitor is a biennial survey covering a sample of Victorian, New South Wales, South Australian and overseas visitors. The statewide monitor was introduced in 2001 to record the number of visits to national and state parks and to report on change and trends in park visitation. The survey was not conducted in 2011–12 but will be conducted again in 2012–13.

Visitor numbers were monitored at Mornington Peninsula, Point Nepean and Wilsons Promontory national parks to examine the change to park visitation following the removal of park entry fees at various parks on 1 July 2010.

Supporting park management



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 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.

DSE, 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 2011–12 business plan described the park management services and strategic priorities to be delivered for the year. Its annual report for 2011–12 provides information on its operations for the year.

Finance

The estimated expenditure in relation to areas managed under the Act in 2011–12 was \$119 million. This includes flood recovery costs and capital works carried out on areas managed under the Act. Information about DSE's and Parks Victoria's overall financial activities is contained in their respective annual reports.

Staff

Parks Victoria manages a diverse range of areas, including all of the parks and other areas managed under the Act as well as other conservation reserves, regional and metropolitan parks and aspects of the bays and waterways in or near Melbourne.

As at 30 June 2012, Parks Victoria employed 1036 full time equivalent employees. There were 329 rangers (including 25 chief rangers) and 182 field service officers engaged in managing areas under the Act, 55 of whom were Indigenous staff. To meet summer peak seasonal visitor attendance at high visitation locations, 36 seasonal rangers were employed to run visitor services programs across the state, including in areas under the Act. Additionally, project fire fighters were employed for planned burning and wildfire management.

Staff from DSE and DPI also contributed to the parks program.

Legislation

There were several amendments to the Act during the year. In addition, the *Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Act 2012* was passed, and two sets of regulations under the Act commenced.

Amendments to the Act

On 1 July 2011 the *Crown Land Acts Amendment (Lease and Licence Terms) Act 2009* amended the Act to include several new or amended provisions relating to organised tours and recreational activities carried out for profit in parks. This was part of establishing a uniform licensing regime for these activities across Crown land. The Act now provides for licence terms of up to ten years and makes it an offence for a tour operator to operate on areas under the Act without a licence.

On 1 January 2012 the *Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2010* amended sections 40A and 40B of the Act in relation to marine national parks and marine sanctuaries in the Victorian offshore area to refer to the 2010 Act in place of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1982* and to prohibit greenhouse gas storage exploration except under specified conditions identical to those applying to petroleum exploration.

On 26 February 2012 section 50D of the Act was automatically repealed. This transitional provision allowed licensed eucalypt oil harvesting in parts of Greater Bendigo National Park until that date.

On 28 June 2012 the *Statute Law Revision Act 2012* made several minor technical amendments to the Act.

Amending legislation

Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Act 2012

This amending Act received the Royal Assent on 6 March 2012. As at 30 June 2012, it had not come into operation.² The amendments to the National Parks Act:

- expand the parks system by creating Lake Tyers State Park (8645 hectares) and adding 1125 hectares to ten parks (Alpine, Chiltern-Mt Pilot, French Island, Grampians, Kinglake, Lower Goulburn, Mitchell River, Mornington Peninsula and Warby-Ovens national parks and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park)
- change the name of St Arnaud Range National Park to Kara Kara National Park
- provide for an extended lease term of up to 50 years for a chairlift in Arthurs Seat State Park and include in the park the airspace above the Arthurs Seat Road through which a chairlift would pass

² This Act came into operation on 1 September 2012.

- extend until 30 June 2015 the period during which firewood can be removed from sawlog harvesting residue in designated areas of Barmah and Gunbower national parks
- update the references in section 40 of the Act to the plans which define Greater Bendigo National Park
- repeal several spent provisions.

Regulations

National Parks (Tour Operator Licence Fee) Regulations 2011

These regulations came into operation on 1 July 2011 to coincide with the amendments to the Act regarding tour operators. The regulations prescribe the fees payable in respect of tour operator licences granted under the Act and provide for the reduction, waiver or refund of such fees.

National Parks (Park) Amendment Regulations 2011

These regulations amended the National Parks (Park) Regulations 2003 on 10 December 2011 and replaced the National Parks (Fees and Charges) Regulations 2001 and the National Parks (Point Hicks Marine National Park) Regulations 2002.

The amendments:

- provide for the payment of fees and charges for park occupation permits and the use of park services, utilities, facilities and goods under section 21 of the Act
- prescribe the conditions of any approval given by the Minister to allow persons in possession or charge of boats carrying priority species (abalone or rock lobster) to be in Point Hicks Marine National Park.

Authorities granted under the Act

Lease

A lease was granted under section 19(2)(b) of the Act to Holdsworth Haulage Pty Ltd, as trustee for The Simoluke Trust, to enable it to operate and manage the Princess Margaret Rose Cave and Campground Complex in Lower Glenelg National Park.

Licences and permits

Table 3 lists permits granted under various sections of the Act. In addition, apiary permits were granted under section 21(1)(b) and commercial tour permits under section 21(1)(c) (ii) (see *Tour operators*).

Table 3 – Licences and permits

Park	Section of Act	Licensee/permittee	Purpose
Grampians NP	21(3)	St John Ambulance (Vic) Inc.	Operation and maintenance of a radio communication tower on Mt William
Mount Buffalo NP	21(1)(c)(ii)	Individual	Operation of a café within Keown Lodge, Dingo Dell
	21(3)	Country Fire Authority	Installation of a temporary telecommunications trailer
	30I	Individual	Access to a private property
Mount Arapiles-Tooan SP	21(3)	St John Ambulance (Vic) Inc.	Operation and maintenance of a radio communication tower

NP National Park
SP State Park

Consents to public authorities

Table 4 shows 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 4 – Consents to public authorities

Park	Public authority	Purpose
Alpine NP	Bureau of Meteorology	Installation of infrastructure as part of the Gippsland flood warning systems
Brisbane Ranges NP	Barwon Region Water Corporation	Draining of the Lower Stony Creek Reservoir
Great Otway NP	Barwon Region Water Corporation	Replacement of a section of the Colac water supply pipeline
	Surf Coast Shire	Installation of an underground sewer
Hattah-Kulkyne NP	Goulburn-Murray Rural Water Corporation	Installation of water infrastructure as part of the Living Murray Project
Point Nepean NP	Port of Melbourne Corporation	Installation of commercial navigation aids known as Quarantine Station Light, Monash Light and Eagle Nest Radar
Beechworth HP	North East Region Water Corporation	installation of essential infrastructure
Cape Liptrap CP	South Gippsland Region Water Corporation	Formalisation of an existing underground outfall pipeline and de-aeration chamber
Gippsland Lakes CP	Department of Primary Industries	Installation and removal of gas absorbers as part of the CarbonNet project
	Gippsland Ports	installation of infrastructure as part of the Lakes Entrance Sand Management Project
Tyers Park	Central Gippsland Region Water Corporation	Operation and maintenance of existing essential infrastructure

CP Coastal Park
HP Historic Park
NP National Park

Consent to earth resource activities

The Minister's consent given under section 40 of the Act to enable Origin Energy to explore for natural gas in the Bay of Islands Coastal Park was tabled in both houses of Parliament on 11 October 2011 and was subsequently not disallowed.

Enforcement

There were 18 individuals successfully prosecuted in the courts during the year for committing 33 offences under the Act (14) or associated regulations (19).³ Most of the offences related to dogs (8), fishing in a marine national park or a marine sanctuary (6), interfering with vegetation (5), vehicles (5) and obstructing, abusing or threatening an authorised officer (4).

There were 412 infringement notices issued during the year in relation to prescribed offences against the Act (101) or the National Parks (Park) Regulations 2003 (311). These included offences relating to dogs (193), using recreational fishing equipment in a marine national park or a marine sanctuary (95) and lighting or maintaining a fire (30).

In addition, there were 116 warnings issued, one resulting from a prosecution. These included offences relating to dogs (60), using recreational fishing equipment in a marine national park or a marine sanctuary (23) and entering or remaining in a prohibited or restricted area (12).

DPI fisheries officers continued to play a major role in enforcement associated with marine national parks and marine sanctuaries.

Interstate cooperation

Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program

The *Memorandum of understanding in relation to the cooperative management of the Australian Alps national parks* (MOU) covers eleven parks and reserves in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria. In Victoria, these are 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 25th anniversary of the signing of the MOU occurred on 4 July 2011. Celebrations in late November focused on community involvement, with concurrent community events in held in the ACT, NSW and Victoria.

The Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program operates under the auspices of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee. The committee seeks to provide land managers with appropriate technical tools and sound scientific advice in management reports and strategies to assist in achieving the objectives of the MOU in delivering best practice land management across the region. Parks Victoria represents Victoria on the committee.

Highlights of the program during the year included:

- a conference involving scientists and managers aimed at providing managers with the tools to better assess and measure the effectiveness of their programs

³ The numbers refer to the numbers of successful prosecutions during the year regardless of when the offences took place.

- the preparation of a report into the distribution of European Carp and other exotic fish (with the exception of salmonoid species)
- a workshop, run with the assistance of the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Royal Botanic Gardens, which took managers from across the Alps through a process of prioritising weed management based on the cost of control or other management objectives for specific weeds versus the risk of the weed to the environment or human values
- the ongoing involvement of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners Reference Group, which met twice during the year. Increased recognition of Aboriginal people across the Alps and their connections to the mountains remains a priority for the group
- the development of an Australian Alps Flickr site, which contains many high quality images from across the Alps
- the redesign and distribution of Australian Alps tourism brochures through visitor centres across the Alps.

River Red Gum Adaptive Management Science Advisory Committee

This committee was formed under New South Wales legislation following the establishment of new river red gum parks in Victoria and New South Wales to encourage a sharing of knowledge and expertise and provide quality assured scientific advice to government on the management of the river red gum forests. The objectives of the committee include providing a scientific program to underpin the active forest management of the river red gum parks and reserves in both states.

As at 30 June 2012, the membership of the committee, which comprises ten members (chair, deputy chair, a policy representative from each state and six independent scientists), was as follows:

Chair: Dr Graham Mitchell
 Deputy Chair: Dr Kate Wilson
 Members: Associate Professor Leon Bren
 Professor Rod Keenan
 Professor Richard Kingsford
 Associate Professor Ian Lunt
 Mr Ross McDonnell (NSW)
 Dr Andrew Haywood (Victoria)
 Dr Libby Rumpff
 Dr Skye Wassens.

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 that administration on which its advice is sought by the Minister. The council also provides advice on any proposed excisions from parks which the Minister refers to it and on the granting of certain leases and consents for earth resource activities. The council's 2011–12 annual report provides information on the council and its activities during the year.

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 2012, the membership of the council was as follows:

Convenor: Dr Charles Lane
 Members: Mrs Heather Gee
 Mr John Gray
 Mr Gary Howell (Secretary's nominee)
 Dr Bill Jackson (Director of National Parks)
 Mr Lance Jennison
 Dr Brian Martin
 Dr Philip Moors
 Dr Mary-Jane Rogers
 Dr John Sherwood.

Parks Victoria has also established several non-statutory advisory groups to assist in its management and planning of particular parks.

Appendixes



Appendix 1 – Areas managed under the National Parks Act

A National parks (Schedule Two)

National park		*Area (ha) 30 June 2012
1	Alfred	3 050
2	Alpine	661 375
3	Barmah	28 505
4	Baw Baw	13 530
5	Brisbane Ranges	8 865
6	Burrowa-Pine Mountain	18 400
7	Chiltern-Mt Pilot	21 560
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	**11 050
15	Grampians	168 145
16	Greater Bendigo***	17 324
17	Great Otway	**103 195
18	Gunbower	9 330
19	Hattah-Kulkyne	49 975
20	Heathcote-Graytown	12 700
21	Kinglake	23 175
22	Lake Eildon	27 750
23	Lind	1 370
24	Little Desert	132 647
25	Lower Glenelg	26 430
26	Lower Goulburn	9 310
27	Mitchell River	14 250
28	Mornington Peninsula	**2 680
29	Morwell	565
30	Mount Buffalo	31 020
31	Mount Eccles	8 375
32	Mount Richmond	1 733
33	Murray-Sunset	664 810
34	Organ Pipes	153
35	Point Nepean	**575
36	Port Campbell	**1 830
37	Snowy River	114 600
38	St Arnaud Range	13 990
39	Tarra-Bulga	2 015
40	Terrick Terrick	6 390
41	The Lakes	2 390
42	Warby-Ovens	14 655

National park		*Area (ha) 30 June 2012
43	Wilson's Promontory	**49 049
44	Wyperfeld	361 770
45	Yarra Ranges	77 190
Total – National parks		2 905 217

* No changes during the year.

** 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 2012
1	Avon	39 650
2	Big Desert	142 300
3	Wabba	20 100
Total – Wilderness parks		202 050

* No changes during the year.

C State parks (Schedule Two B)

State park	*Area (ha) 30 June 2012
1 Arthurs Seat	558
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 Kooyoorra	11 350
11 Langi Ghiran	3 040
12 Leaghur	2 050
13 Lerderderg	20 185
14 Moondarra	6 330
15 Mount Arapiles-Tooan	7 470
16 Mount Buangor	2 400
17 Mount Granya	6 140
18 Mount Lawson	13 150
19 Mount Napier	2 800
20 Mount Samaria	7 600
21 Mount Worth	1 040
22 Paddys Ranges	2 010
23 Reef Hills	2 020
24 Warrandyte	686
25 Werribee Gorge	575
Total – State parks	148 135

* No changes during the year.

D Other parks (Schedule Three)

Other park	*Area (ha) 30 June 2012
1 Bay of Islands CP	950
2 Beechworth HP	1 090
3 Cape Conran CP	11 700
4 Cape Liptrap CP	4 225
5 Discovery Bay CP	**10 460
6 Gadsen Bend Park	1 620
7 Gippsland Lakes CP	17 610
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	76 427

CP Coastal Park

FFR Flora and Fauna Reserve

HP Historic Park

* No changes during the year.

** 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 2012
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)	
8 Wilsons Promontory MR)	**10 000
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

* No changes during the year.

** 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 2012
1	Murray-Sunset	Sunset	126 900
2	Murray-Sunset	Minook	38 700
3	Murray-Sunset	Galpunga	35 700
4	Murray-Sunset	Mount Cowra	23 500
5	Wyperfeld	North Wyperfeld	97 900
6	Wyperfeld	South Wyperfeld	61 300
7	Wyperfeld	Chinaman Flat	29 800
8	Alpine	Mount Darling-Snowy Bluff	40 400
9	Alpine	Razor-Viking	15 700
10	Alpine	Indi	13 800
11	Alpine	Cobberas	10 000
12	Alpine	Buchan Headwaters	30 000
13	Alpine	Tingaringy	7 900
14	Snowy River	Snowy River	27 000
15	Snowy River	Bowen	17 500
16	Coopracambra	Genoa	19 400
17	Croajingolong	Sandpatch	15 600
18	Croajingolong	Cape Howe	7 100
19	Wilson's Promontory	Wilson's Promontory	21 800
Total – Wilderness zones			640 000

* No changes during the year.

G Remote and natural areas (Schedule Six)

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 2012
1	Murray-Sunset	South Sunset	24 000
2	Wyperfeld	Hopping Mouse Hill	32 100
3	Little Desert	Little Desert	16 400
4	Grampians	Victoria Range	14 000
5	Grampians	Serra Range	11 200
6	Grampians	Major Mitchell Plateau	6 900
7	Baw Baw	Baw Baw Plateau	6 500
8	Alpine	The Governors	8 100
9	Alpine	Macalister	33 300
10	Alpine	Dandongadale	3 700
11	Alpine	Bundara-Cobungra	13 700
12	Alpine	Bogong	16 300
13	Alpine	Davies Plain	10 500
14	Alpine	Suggan Buggan	17 800
15	Alpine	Upper Snowy	11 800
16	Mount Buffalo	North Buffalo	6 500
17	Burrowa-Pine Mountain	Mount Burrowa	6 200
18	Errinundra	Brodribb	7 700
19	Coopracambra	Mount Kaye	8 100
20	Croajingolong	Rame Head	9 800
21	Wilsons Promontory	Wilsons Promontory Islands (12)	469
22	Wilsons Promontory	Southern Wilsons Promontory	14 400
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 2012
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 2012
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 2012
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

** No changes during the year.

Area approximately 0.1 ha.

K Summary – areas managed under the Act

Category	*No. as at 30 June 2012	*Area (ha) 30 June 2012
A National parks (Schedule Two)	45	2 905 217
B Wilderness parks (Schedule Two A)	3	202 050
C State parks (Schedule Two B)	25	148 135
D Other parks (Schedule Three)	18	76 427
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	138	3 445 412

* No changes during the year.

L Unproclaimed additions

As at 30 June 2012, legislation provides for the following additions to the parks system.

Act	Section of Act	Park	Area (ha)
1 <i>National Parks Act 1975</i>	50K	Greater Bendigo National Park	*16
2 <i>National Parks (Amendment) Act 1989</i>	29(3)	Moondarra State Park	178
Total – Unproclaimed areas			194

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

Appendix 2 – Pest plant control projects

Appendix 2 lists the targeted species for those parks where an area of more than five hectares was recorded as being treated for the purposes of controlling or eradicating that species. Areas of less than five hectares were also treated in various parks. It should be noted that, due to protected industrial action by some Parks Victoria staff, the information in the table may not be complete.

Park name	Target species
Alpine NP	Blackberry, Cape Broom, English Broom, Greater Birds-foot Trefoil, Grey Sallow, King Devil Hawkweed, Ox-eye Daisy, Soft Rush, Spear Thistle
Barmah NP	African Boxthorn, Blackberry, Bridal Creeper, Horehound, Paterson's Curse, Sweet Briar
Baw Baw NP	Cape Broom, Grey Sallow
Brisbane Ranges NP	Cinnamon Fungus, Gorse, Milk Thistle, Serrated Tussock
Bunyip SP	Blackberry, Japanese Honeysuckle
Cape Conran CP	Mirror Bush
Cape Liptrap CP	Blackberry
Churchill NP	Spanish Heath, Sweet Pittosporum
Coopracambra NP	Blackberry
Corner Inlet MCP	Spartina
Croajingolong NP	Blackberry, Dolichos Pea, Mirror Bush
Dandenong Ranges NP	Cape Ivy, English Ivy, English Holly, Karamu, Sweet Pittosporum, Sycamore Maple, Wandering Tradescantia
Dergholm SP	Cape Tulip (one-leaf)
Discovery Bay CP	Paterson's Curse
Errinundra NP	Blackberry
Gippsland Lakes CP	Sweet Pittosporum, Sea Spurge
Great Otway NP	African Boxthorn, Blackberry, Bluebell Creeper, Boneseed, Coast Tea-tree, Ragwort, Sweet Pittosporum, Wandering Tradescantia
Gunbower NP	African Boxthorn, Blackberry, Bridal Creeper, Horehound, Paterson's Curse, Sweet Briar
Kinglake NP	Cape Broom, English Holly
Lake Albacutya Park	African Love-grass, Bridal Creeper
Langwarrin FFR	Sallow Wattle
Lerderderg SP	Blackberry, Gorse, Serrated Tussock
Little Desert NP	Horehound
Lower Glenelg NP	Paterson's Curse, Radiata Pine
Lysterfield Park	Spanish Heath, Sweet Pittosporum
Mitchell River NP	Blackberry, Ragwort, Willow
Mornington Peninsula NP	African Boxthorn, Annual Canary-grass, Blackberry, Boneseed, Cape Broom, Dolichos Pea, Polygala, Ragwort, Sea Spurge, Sweet Pittosporum
Mount Arapiles-Toosan SP	Horehound
Mount Worth SP	Blackberry, Willow
Murray-Sunset NP	African Boxthorn, Prickly Pear, Willow
Nooramunga MCP	Spartina
Nyah-Vinifera Park	Paterson's Curse
Port Phillip Heads MNP	African Boxthorn, Tree Mallow
Snowy River NP	Blackberry
Steiglitz HP	Gorse
Tarra-Bulga NP	Willow
Warby-Ovens NP	Blackberry, Patterson's Curse, St John's Wort, Sweet Briar
Werribee Gorge SP	Blackberry, Paterson's Curse, Serrated Tussock
Wyperfeld NP	African Love-grass, Bridal Creeper

CP Coastal Park
FFR Flora and Fauna Reserve
HP Historic Park
MCP Marine and Coastal Park

MNP Marine National Park
NP National Park
SP State Park

Appendix 3 – Pest animal control projects

Appendix 3 lists the targeted species for those parks where an area of more than five hectares was recorded as being treated for the purposes of controlling or eradicating that species. Areas of less than five hectares were also treated in various parks. It should be noted that, due to protected industrial action by some Parks Victoria staff, the information in the table may not be complete.

Park name	Target species
Alpine NP	Dog, Goat, Horse (feral), Pig (feral), Red Fox
Black Range SP	Red Fox
Brisbane Ranges NP	European Rabbit, Red Fox
Cape Conran CP	Red Fox
Cape Liptrap CP	Red Fox
Cobboboonee NP	Red Fox
Croajingolong NP	Red Fox
Discovery Bay CP	Red Fox
Errinundra NP	Red Fox
French Island NP	Cat
Grampians NP	Red Fox
Great Otway NP	Red Fox
Kinglake NP	Goat (feral), Red Fox
Kooyoorra SP	Red Fox
Lake Albacutya Park	European Rabbit
Lake Eildon NP	Red Fox
Lerderderg SP	European Rabbit
Lind NP	Red Fox
Little Desert NP	European Rabbit, Red Fox
Lower Glenelg NP	Red Fox
Mornington Peninsula NP	Red Fox
Morwell NP	Red Fox
Mount Richmond NP	Red Fox
Murray-Sunset NP	European Rabbit, Goat
Nooramunga MCP	Red Fox
Paddys Ranges SP	Red Fox
Snowy River NP	Pig (feral), Red Fox
Steiglitz HP	Red Fox
Tara Range Park	Red Fox
Tarra-Bulga NP	Red Fox
Werribee Gorge SP	European Rabbit
Wilsons Promontory NP	North Pacific Sea Star, Red Fox
Wyperfeld NP	European Rabbit

CP Coastal Park
 HP Historic Park
 MCP Marine and Coastal Park
 NP National Park
 SP State Park

Appendix 4 – Location of parks and other areas

National and other parks/areas

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

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

Areas managed under the National Parks Act

30 June 2012

1 - 109



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

