

National Parks Advisory Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



Published by
the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Melbourne, September 2018

© The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning 2018
This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except
in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised by the Victorian Government,
8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne 3002.

Print managed by Finsbury Green
Printed on 100% recycled paper

ISSN: 1834 - 1209 (print)
ISSN: 1834 - 1217 (online)

For more information contact the DELWP Customer Service Centre 136 186

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, such as large print or audio, please telephone 136 186, or through the National Relay Service (NRS) using a modem or textphone/teletypewriter (TTY) by dialling 1800 555 677, or email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au

This document is also available in PDF format on the internet at
www.delwp.vic.gov.au

Front cover: Mt William and rock outcrop, Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park.
Picture supplied by Parks Victoria (Thomas Parkes).

CONTENTS

Foreword	2
The Council	4
Statutory responsibilities	4
The Act	4
The parks system	4
Membership	4
Current members	4
Council activities	7
Program	7
Advice to the Minister	7
Corporate governance	8
Field visit	8
Attendance at forums	10
Presentations to Council	10
Administration	11
Expenditure	11
Protected Disclosure Act 2012	11
Freedom of Information Act 1982	13
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	13

Foreword

It is with pleasure that we provide the Annual Report of the National Parks Advisory Council to the Minister, the Hon. Liliana D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

The Council met three times in 2017-18, and additionally participated in three field trips to:

- The Grampians Gariwerd National Park in July 2017, to be informed on and observe the development of the 13-day walking track (The Grampians Peak Trail), being constructed by Parks Victoria through the Park.
- Point Nepean National Park in December 2017 to be informed of management issues in light of the then impending release of the Master Plan for the Park.
- Alpine National Park and Mount Buffalo National Park in February 2018 for the purpose of being informed about: feral animal management, particularly deer and horses; weed management, particularly Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*); the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing masterplan proposed by Parks Victoria; and, the Mount Buffalo Chalet and Cresta Valley.

During 2017/18 the Council has formally advised the Minister on one matter for which advice was required under the *National Parks Act 1975* in accordance with section 11(1)(a).

With respect to the construction of the Grampians Peak Trail, Council supported the establishment of 7km of new trail and one hiker camp, and the closure of 3.8km of existing track and three informal bushcamps within the Grampians Gariwerd National Park Major Mitchell Plateau Remote Natural Area (RNA).

In its advice to the Minister and concerning especially the proposed new hiker camp, Council noted its support for current legislation and policy (under section 21C (2) of the *National Parks Act 1975*) where new built structures are not permitted in RNAs, and noted also: its concern about structures in RNAs; whether they are “necessary” and “essential”; and, the precedent created by a built structure and their desirability. However, Council noted the number of people likely to use the proposed walk and the closure of the three informal camps, and that the establishment of camping platforms and a toilet are acceptable and desirable to reduce adverse impacts at the new hiker camp. Council also noted the responsibility of Parks Victoria for public health and safety, and that should there be a decision to approve a shelter at the hiker camp the Minister should be mindful that it is minimalist in construction.

The Convenor held several meetings with the Minister informing her of issues being discussed and decisions reached at Council Meetings and to discuss matters relating to the management of parks. Council particularly noted its strong support for the draft Feral Horse Strategic Action Plan along with its supports for the removal of the Bogong High Plains horse population at the earliest opportunity. The Minister subsequently adopted the Protection of Alpine National Park – Feral Horse Strategic Action Plan 2018–21 on 17 May 2018, which was welcomed by the Council. It was released on 2 June 2018.

Following observations of the impacts of horses, deer and weed species in the Alpine National Park, Council also recommended to the Minister that measures to protect endangered and threatened plants and ecosystems are considered as a matter of priority, including the deer population both in the Alps and state-wide. Council also received a wider briefing on the significant impact and threats on parks and the state from a range of feral animals including horses, Sambar deer, cats, pigs, goats, carp, rabbits and foxes.

In visiting Mount Buffalo the Council was briefed on the Park's very high visitation levels, with 10% growth per annum, and the need for a whole of mountain approach to investment at Mount Buffalo. Council has noted a number of proposals for developments at Mount Buffalo National Park and will maintain a watching brief on these.

In the course of the year, Council received informative briefings and had discussions on a range of matters as it developed and implemented its work plan to provide for greatest effectiveness.

Council is taking a particular interest in tourism in and around parks and was provided briefings on this topic by Parks Victoria, the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning, Visit Victoria, the Victorian Tourism Industry Council and the Victorian National Parks Association. Council has noted the importance of tourism for parks, and for the state and regional economies, and also the need to manage Parks consistent with the *National Parks Act 1975*.

Council is being kept informed of various opportunities for increasing the visitor opportunity in Parks, as reflected by our field visits, required advice, and presentations received in the course of the year, and maintains a very strong interest that this is being done appropriately. Indeed, Council has formed the view that it:

- does not support new structures in Remote and Natural Areas of Parks, unless there is a clear case for exception
- is sensitive to new structures and experiences in parks that should enhance and not detract from the natural experience
- supports consideration of appropriate licence conditions on any new commercial activity in parks
- would recommend an appropriate return on investment for Parks Victoria in developing tourism opportunities

Council was well supported in its work by the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DEWLP) and Parks Victoria. The Council especially appreciated briefings on a range of topics by both the Secretary's nominee and the CEO of Parks Victoria and looks forward to on-going cooperation with both organisations.

My thanks goes to members of Council who have contributed constructively and diligently to Council's deliberations and fulfilled their role, and to Executive Officer Sylvie Bideau for her continued support.



Doug Humann AM

Convenor

31 August 2018

The Council

The National Parks Advisory Council (Council) is established under section 10 of the *National Parks Act 1975* (the Act). In 2017 – 2018, the responsible Minister was the Hon. Lilians D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

Statutory responsibilities

Under section 11 of the Act the functions of the Council 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
- advise the Minister on any proposed excision from a park referred to it by the Minister
- submit to the Minister within three months after each year ending on 30 June a report on the performance of its functions during that year

In addition to these functions, the Minister is required to seek advice from the Council in relation to the granting of:

- certain leases within parks, under sections 19G, 19I, 30AAA, 30AAAC, 31AA, 31AABB, 32CA and 32CC of the Act
- consents in relation to various earth resources tenements and operations within parks, under section 40(3) of the Act

The Act

The Act governs the protection, uses and management of Victoria's parks system. It provides a strong framework for ensuring that the use and management of the parks are compatible with the long-term maintenance of their natural and cultural values.

The Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) is responsible under the Act for ensuring the appropriate management of parks in accordance with the Act. Parks Victoria (PV), established under the *Parks Victoria Act 1998*, manages the parks under a management agreement with the Secretary.

The parks system

As at 30 June 2018, there were 139 parks and reserves, with a total area of approximately 3.46 million hectares managed under various provisions of the Act. These areas comprised 45 national parks, 3 wilderness parks, 26 state parks, 13 marine national parks, 11 marine sanctuaries, 11 marine and/or coastal parks or reserves, 15 other parks and reserves, and 15 non-scheduled areas. In addition, there were 19 wilderness zones and 22 remote and natural areas within 12 national parks, and 4 designated water supply catchment areas within 3 national parks.

Membership

Council consists of eight members with specific skills and experience, appointed by the Governor in Council:

- two people with skills or experience relating to the preservation and the protection of parks;
- one who is a professor or teacher of ecology at a university in Victoria;
- one with experience in local government who resides in a municipality in which there is a park; and
- four (at least two of whom reside outside of the metropolitan area) with experience with matters affecting the interests of the community.

Prior to 15 December 2017 when the *Parks and Crown Land Legislation Amendment Act 2017* came into force, members also included two specific appointees:

- Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (or his or her nominee)
- Director of National Parks (who is the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Victoria)

These members have been offered observer status to the current Council and are welcomed as participants in meetings but without any decision-making responsibilities.

Current members

The members of the Council on 30 June 2018 were:

Mr Douglas Humann AM (Convenor)

Mr Humann has almost 40 years of leadership experience in the non-government sector across Australia, working principally with environmental NGOs, as well as Indigenous groups and natural resource management authorities. Mr Humann is the current Chairman of Landcare Australia and Deputy Chair of Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board. He was CEO of Bush Heritage Australia (1997–2011) and led the Victorian National Parks Association (1990–97). Mr Humann runs his own consultancy and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Mr Adam McLean (Member)

Mr McLean has been a practising lawyer for over 25 years – 15 years as a barrister. Mr McLean specialises in native title and land rights, industrial relations, and board governance and has also advised many traditional owner groups in their negotiations for Aboriginal owned and co-managed national parks and reserves in Victoria, NSW and QLD. Before law, Mr McLean gained an honours degree in zoology and during completion of his honours thesis surveyed Point Nepean Army Reserve. Mr McLean was raised in the Mornington Peninsula and has a keen interest in conservation, parks and reserves.

Mr Michael Fendley (Member)

Mr Fendley lives on a small farm near Dunkeld in western Victoria. He has a life-long interest in Victoria's parks and environment, studying ecology and environmental planning at university before becoming one of the first environment officers for Local Government in Australia. He was Conservation Manager for Birds Australia (now Birdlife Australia), member of seven threatened-species recovery teams, CEO of the Victorian National Parks Association during the creation of the Marine and Box-Ironbark parks systems, Manager of the Green Steps Program at Monash University and Manager Sustainability Programs for DSE (now DELWP) in Barwon- South West.

Ms Anna Foley (Member)

Ms Foley is a botanist by training, but her experience spans ecology, statutory planning, heritage, and community engagement. She is currently the Regional Operations Manager at Trust for Nature, and a member of the Heritage Council of Victoria's Landscape Advisory Committee. Until recently, Ms Foley was the Conservation Manager at the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), regularly appearing at Planning Panels and VCAT to advocate for natural and cultural heritage protection.

Ms Judy Dixon (Member)

Ms Dixon is a rural resident and Director of JADE Comm, a business which specialises in delivery of tourism and communication services; its client base includes local government and small business. Ms Dixon has extensive experience working in the local government sector across communications, tourism, economic development and organisational development. Her focus is on partnerships and initiatives that strategically contribute toward destination sustainability. Ms Dixon is a former member of the Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council and the Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Alpine Resort Management Board and past President of Mansfield Secondary College. Her interests include horse riding and snow skiing.

Dr Mary-Jane Rogers (Member)

Dr Rogers is a rural resident with experience in matters affecting the interests of the community and an active member of the *Shepparton/Goulburn Valley* community. She is involved in a range of community groups, including in the areas of the environment and community use of parks. Dr Rogers is a part-time research scientist with Agriculture Victoria (DEDJTR) and has a strong scientific background in plant biology and physiology and in science quality and delivery. She brings to the council many years of experience in natural resource management issues and their effects on the rural community. Dr Rogers was previously a member of NPAC from 2010-2013.

Associate Professor Ursula de Jong (Member)

Dr de Jong is Associate Professor and Associate Head of School (Teaching and Learning) in the School of Architecture and Built Environment, at Deakin University. She is an architectural historian and a researcher of place. Dr de Jong was lead investigator on the recently completed Australia Research Council Sea Change Linkage Grant (2011-2016) which considered the impact of change on the coastal communities of Sorrento and Queenscliff in Victoria. Dr de Jong is Deputy Chair of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), a member of the National Liturgical Architecture and Art Board (NLAAB) and President of the Nepean Conservation Group which, among other things, oversees fourteen local Friends' Groups on the tip of the Mornington Peninsula. In 2017 she was appointed Chair of the Reference Areas Committee.

Chris Rose (Member)

Mr Rose is acknowledged as a world leader and expert in the management of national parks and reserved lands. He has worked in the areas of public land management, tourism and regional development and emergency management and recovery for over 35 years. Mr Rose has held positions in Victorian local government (Shire of Healesville), the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, and from 1996 to 2015, in Parks Victoria. His career at Parks Victoria included managing many of the State's outstanding protected areas in various executive roles including 12 months as Acting Chief Executive Officer of Parks Victoria. He left the sector in 2015 to start his own consulting firm specialising in business strategy development and ecotourism.

Council activities

Program

Council structures its work program according to its statutory responsibilities, provides advice required on key government investigations, policies and strategies, and fulfils its corporate governance responsibilities.

Council continued to take a close interest in on-ground park management issues through field visits, discussions with Parks Victoria field staff and regular briefings by Parks Victoria and Departmental staff.

During 2017–18 Council held three meetings, and conducted three inspections at the Grampians National Park in July 2017, at Point Nepean National Park in December 2017 and at the Alpine Alps in February 2018.

Council meetings

Meeting No. 281	7 September 2017
Meeting No. 282	4 December 2017
Meeting No. 283	20 June 2018

Advice to the Minister

Endorsement of the establishment of 7km of new trail and one hiker camp, and the closure of 3.8km of existing track and three informal bushcamps within the Grampians National Park Major Mitchell Plateau Remote Natural Area.

Council's support was sought for the establishment of 7km of new trail and one hiker camp, and the closure of 3.8km of existing track and three informal bushcamps within the Grampians National Park Major Mitchell Plateau Remote Natural Area.

Under section 11(1)(a) of the *National Parks Act 1975*, it is a function of Council 'to advise the Minister generally in relation to the administration of this Act and on particular matters in relation to that administration on which its advice is sought by the Minister'. The Act requires that any advice received must be tabled in both Houses of Parliament.

At its meeting on 7 September 2017, Council was briefed on these matters with a thorough explanation of the planned developments and how each complies with the requirements of the Act, including with reference to sections 21C and 21D pertaining to protection and management respectively of remote and natural areas. It also utilised knowledge gained on an earlier field trip to the area to view developments.

Council paid special reference to remote natural areas provisions of the *National Parks Act 1975*, whereby any works within a Remote Natural Area (RNA) may be undertaken (under section 21D(5) of the Act 1975) by the Secretary, with the approval of the Minister, if the Secretary considers it is:

- essential for the responsible management of a RNA; or
- necessary to be done in the public interest, in relation to a RNA, and
- does not substantially degrade the natural condition or appearance of the area.

In considering the development of new tracks, the closure of existing tracks and the closure and establishment of a new hiker camp, Council recommended the following:

- Grampians Peaks Trail Project (Stage Two). Closure of 3.8km of pre-existing track through the Major Mitchell Remote and Natural Area Management Zone within the Grampians National Park and the construction of 7km of new walking track – net increase of 3.2km, equivalent to approx. 2,270m².
- Grampians Peaks Trail Project (Stage Two). Close down of informal camping on Stockyard Saddle and construction of a new formal hikers camp, inclusive of twelve hikers camp pads, communal shelter for 24 people and toilet facility within a 0.5 hectare envelope in the Major Mitchell Remote and Natural Area Management Zone within the Grampians National Park.

In terms of the new hiker camp and its built form, Council recommended that:

- (a) particular account be taken of whether structures are “necessary” and “essential” in a RNA. Council members expressed concern about structures in remote natural areas, the precedent this creates, and their desirability;
- (b) in light of the closure of the three informal bush camps and given the number of people anticipated to use the proposed walk, Council recommended that the construction of new camping platforms and a toilet are acceptable to reduce adverse impacts at the new camp ground;
- (c) the council supports current legislation and policy (under section 21C(2) of the *National Parks Act 1975*) where new built structures are not permitted in RNAs, but noting the responsibility of Parks Victoria for public health and safety, and should there be a decision to approve a shelter, the Minister should be mindful that it is minimalist in construction and consistent with those viewed at the Meeting (No. 281, 7 September 2017).

Corporate governance

The Council has adopted and adapted the following DELWP policies and procedures:

- Code of Conduct;
- Conflict of Interest;
- Meetings and decision-making;
- Dispute Resolution;
- Gifts, benefits and hospitality; and
- Performance Assessment.

Field visits

NPAC undertook three field visits during the year.

During July 2017, Council members were joined by Parks Victoria operational staff and management on a field trip to Grampians Gariwerd National Park and Brambuk Cultural Centre. The purpose was for Council to be informed about and observe, the development of stage 2 of the 13-day walking track being constructed by Parks Victoria, through the Park. The track is receiving financial support from the Australian and Victorian Governments.

The full walk is proposed for opening in October 2019 and has a stage 1 already in use.

Council visited several sites in the Park’s Remote Natural Area (RNA), in addition to the Jimmy Creek Campground, immediately adjacent to the RNA.

The visit was a precursor to the subsequent September Council Meeting. At that Meeting Council was asked to consider elements of the proposed walk within the RNA taking account of relevant sections of the *National Parks Act 1975* (particularly 21D (4) & (5) and 21C).

Council also visited the existing walking track at Duwal Balug (Mt William), Stockyard Saddle and Jimmy Creek where it was proposed to realign, close and/or create new tracks. In addition Council viewed the proposed hiker camp area at Mafeking and several adjacent bush camps proposed for closure.

The visit was instructive for members, and with the subsequent Council deliberation, demonstrated the value of observing conditions on the ground.



Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park. Picture supplied by Parks Victoria

Council members were joined by Parks Victoria operational staff and management on a field trip to Point Nepean National Park on 4 December 2017. The purpose was for Council members to gain an insight into recent developments and future planning of this important and iconic part of the national estate.

Council were informed of the current status of the Point Nepean National Park Master Plan (subsequently released on 21 January 2018). Council discussed the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, and options for appropriate commercial and other tourism development opportunities.

Other matters discussed included the environmental restoration of the coastal grassy woodland, initiatives for Traditional Owner partnership programs, an outline of the significant heritage assets and the range of visitor experience opportunities.

Council also received a number of presentations from Parks Victoria's staff and a community perspective presentation by Associate Professor Ursula de Jong (NPAC member).



Cheviot Beach (Anna Foley 4/12/17)

During February 2018, Council members were joined by Parks Victoria operational staff and management on a field trip to the Alpine National Park and Mount Buffalo National Park. The purpose was for Council to be informed about several topics: feral animal management, particularly deer and horses; weed management, particularly Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*); the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan proposed by Parks Victoria; the Mount Buffalo Chalet; and Cresta Valley.

Council visited several sites in the Alpine National Park, including Tawonga Huts, Mount Jim, and New Species Gully. Council was joined for this inspection by Alpine Ecologist Dr Richard Williams who provided advice on the impact of feral ungulates on sensitive alpine peatland sites.

The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing proposal was at the draft Master Plan stage at the time of this inspection. The Master Plan was released 18 April 2018 and provides new hiker camps, huts and trail construction over a 57 km route. The Tawonga Huts site visited by the Council is one of the proposed "overnight nodes". Council had not considered the Master Plan or been required to provide advice on any component of the Plan in 2017–18.

Council was also briefed on Parks Victoria's Orange Hawkweed eradication program and observed some sites currently being monitored.

The Council also visited several sites at Mount Buffalo National Park, including Cresta Valley, Dingo Dell, Lake Catani campground and picnic area, the Chalet and the Gorge carpark and lookout.

Mount Buffalo currently receives 200,000 visitors per annum, with 10% growth per annum. A community-led vision for Mount Buffalo was proposed in 2017, involving six elements. A committee has been appointed to complete a feasibility study to explore the proposed vision. The feasibility report is due in November 2018.

Parks Victoria staff outlined the current \$3.1M being spent on the front section of the Chalet (exterior and structural works). Council also viewed the recently completed day visitor shelter upgrade at Lake Catani.

Council had not been required to provide advice on any matters regarding Mount Buffalo at this point. However, Council noted these developments at Mount Buffalo and will maintain a watching brief on them.

Parks Victoria management also spoke about trials underway for new food and beverage, and accommodation "pods", to be introduced in parks. Council will further examine these.

The Alpine/Mount Buffalo national parks visit was instructive for members and will be helpful in informing subsequent Council deliberations.



Pole 333 in the Alpine National Park (Adam McLean 19/2/18)

Attendance at forums

Attendance at forums – Members throughout the reporting period :

	Number of meeting attended
Mr Doug Humann	3 out 3
Mr Adam McLean	3 out 3
Ms Anna Foley	2 out 3
Mr Michael Fendley	2 out 3
Ms Judy Dixon	3 out 3
Mr Chris Rose	3 out 3
Dr Mary-Jane Rogers	3 out 3
Associate Professor Ursula de Jong	3 out 3
Secretary's Nominee (Ms Sarah Crute)	2 out 2
Mr Matthew Jackson (Director – National Parks)	2 out 2

Presentations to Council

Title	Presenter	Date
Presentations at meetings		
Presentation to Council on the Falls to Hotham Master Plan	Mr Stuart Hughes (PV – Director Park Planning and Policy)	20 June 2018
Presentation to Council	Mr Peter Bingeman, (CEO, Visit Victoria)	20 June 2018
Presentation to Council	Ms Felicia Mariani, (CEO, Victorian Tourism Industry Council)	20 June 2018
Presentation to Council on EcoPods Trial by PV	Mr Simon Talbot (PV – Chief Operating Officer)	20 June 2018
Presentation to Council	Mr Matt Ruchel Executive Director, Victorian National Parks Association) and Mr Phil Ingamells (Parks Protection Victorian National Parks Association)	20 June 2018
Presentation to Council on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants Picnic Ground 	Mr Chris Hardman (PV – Executive Director Melbourne Division)	20 June 2018
Presentation to Council on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harold Holt Memorial 2018 budget outcomes for PV 	Mr Matthew Jackson (Chief Executive Officer – PV)	20 June 2018
Presentation to Council on PV Evaluation Framework.	Mr Stuart Hughes (PV – Director Park Planning and Policy)	4 December 2017
Presentation to Council on Point Nepean National Park – a community perspective.	Associate Professor Ursula de Jong (NPAC member)	4 December 2017
Presentation to Council on legislative amendments.	Mr Doug Hooley (DELWP – Principal Legislation and Policy Officer – Land Management Policy Division)	7 September 2017
Presentation to Council on Statewide Assessment of Public Land.	Ms Joan Phillips (DELWP – Executive Officer – VEAC)	7 September 2017
Presentations to Council on the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point Nepean and Falls to Hotham Masterplan Update Planning and Assessment Matrix 	Mr Stuart Hughes (PV – Director Park Planning and Policy)	7 September 2017

Administration

Expenditure

DELWP provides Council with an executive officer to support its work. Council complied with departmental policies in performing its functions throughout the reporting period. Financial and other information relating to the *Financial Management Act 1994* is included in the department's annual report for 2017–2018.

Table 2: Expenditure incurred by Council in undertaking its responsibilities

	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018
Meeting fees	4,500.00	5,500.00
Other operating expenses	7,492.31	15,575.58
Total	\$11,992.31	\$21,075.58

Consultancies below \$10,000

None

Consultancies above \$10,000

None

Major contracts

During 2017/18 the Council did not enter into any contracts valued over \$10 million.

Significant changes in financial position

There were no significant changes in financial position during the reporting period.

Major changes affecting performance

There were no major changes or factor affecting performance.

Subsequent events

There were no events subsequent to the balance date that significantly affect the operating performance of the Council in the future.

Workforce Data

As at 30 June 2018 the Council secretariat consisted of one staff member:

- Sylvie Bideau – Executive Officer

There has been no change in the number of ongoing staff positions in the secretariat from the previous financial year. Council staff is also included in the employment statistics for the DELWP in 2017–18.

The Council is committed to apply merit and equity principles when appointing staff. The selection processes ensure that applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably on the basis of the key selection criteria and other accountabilities without discrimination.

Government Advertising Expenditure

Government Policy requires disclosure of all Government Advertising Expenditure with a total media buy of \$150,000 or greater (exclusive of GST). No Government Advertising Expenditure was incurred by the council during the reporting period.

Protected Disclosure Act 2012

Compliance with the *Protected Disclosures Act 2012*

The Protected Disclosure Act was part of a package of integrity reforms introduced by the Victorian Government, which also established the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).

The Protected Disclosure Act enables people to make disclosures about improper conduct within the public sector without fear of reprisal. It aims to ensure openness and accountability by encouraging people to make disclosures and protecting them when they do.

What is a 'protected disclosure'?

A protected disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body. The NPAC is a "public body" for the purposes of the Act.

What is 'improper or corrupt conduct'?

Improper or corrupt conduct involves substantial:

- mismanagement of public resources; or
- risk to public health or safety or the environment; or
- corruption.

The conduct must be criminal in nature or a matter for which an officer could be dismissed.

How do I make a 'Protected Disclosure'?

You can make a protected disclosure about the NPAC or its members, officers or employees by contacting DELWP or IBAC on the contact details provided below.

Please note that the NPAC is not able to receive protected disclosures.

How can I access the NPAC's procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action?

DELWP has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a protected disclosure about the NPAC or its employees. You can access DELWP's procedures on its website at:

www.delwp.vic.gov.au

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3001.

Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3000

Internet: www.ibac.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: see the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

Compliance with DataVic Access Policy

Consistent with the Victorian Government's DataVic Access Policy (2012), the Council intends that data tables that it may produce in the future will be available at <http://data.vic.gov.au/> in machine readable format.

Summary of environmental performance

The Government's aim of improved environmental management is supported by a requirement that Departments disclose their ongoing performance in managing and reducing the environmental impacts of their office-based activities. The Council makes use of DELWP offices and facilities to perform its functions and the reporting requirement of the office is met by DELWP. The Council secretariat participates fully in a range of environmental programs undertaken by DELWP, including:

- separation of reusable, recyclable, compostable and landfill waste;
- use of Green Power;
- use of flow restricted taps and waterless urinals;
- use of recycled paper and use of duplex printing;
- environmentally sustainable fitouts; and
- regular use by staff of public transport, cycling or walking to and from work.

Statement of Availability of Other Information

Additional information included in annual report

Details in respect of the following items have been included in this report:

- Assessments and measures undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees.
- A statement on industrial relations.
- A statement of completion of declarations of pecuniary interests.

Information that is not applicable to the Council

The following information is not relevant to the Council:

- Details of publications produced and how these can be obtained.
- Details of major research and development activities undertaken
- Details of major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken to develop community awareness of the entity and its services.
- Details of overseas visits undertaken
- List items relevant to this section
- Details of changes in prices, fees, charges, and levies charged.
- A list of the Council's committees.
- A declaration of shares held by Council members and senior officers.
- Details of any major external reviews carried out on the Council.

National Competition Policy

Council adheres to the principles of the National Competition Policy (NCP) to ensure that any business competition with private entities takes place in an environment where the Council has no unfair competitive advantages.

Local Jobs First - Victorian Industry Participation Policy 2013

During the year Council, did not enter into any contracts to which the *Victorian Industry Participation Policy Act 2003* applied.

Building Act 1993

In accordance with the reporting directions, the annual report must include a statement about compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the Building Act 1993. The Council makes use of building and facilities controlled by DELWP to perform its functions and does not own or control any buildings.

Occupational health and safety policy

Council utilises DELWP Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures.

Public administration employment and conduct principles

Victorian Public Service merit and equity principles are applied in the appointment and management of staff. The NPAC follows the merit and equity principles used by DELWP, in accordance with Government directives and the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

Freedom of Information Act 1982

Council is an agency under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and it complies with the procedures prescribed under which members of the public may gain access to information held by agencies. A decision to release information is made by an authorised officer.

The authorised officer is the DELWP Freedom of Information Manager, Kim Reeves (03) 9637 9730.

No Freedom of Information requests were made during the 2017–18 reporting period.

An application fee applies. The fee from 1 July 2017 is \$28.40.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

The Council falls under the umbrella of DELWP in relation to ICT and the provision of business ICT services. Please refer to DELWP Annual Report 2017–18.

Risk Management

While the NPAC examines the risks of delivery of its particular work functions and objectives on an ongoing basis, it relies on the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) risk management framework and internal audit of financial and other administrative systems which are used by the NPAC's Secretariat. Please refer to the DELWP annual report for further information.

Disclosure Index

Legislation	Requirement	Page no.
ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER'S DECLARATION		
SD 5.2.3	Sign off requirements	3
CHARTER AND PURPOSE		
FRD 22H	Objectives, functions, powers and duties	4
FRD 22H	Manner of establishment and responsible Minister	4
FRD 22H	Nature and range of services provided	7
FINANCIAL INFORMATION		
FRD 22H	Operational and budgetary objectives	11
FRD 22H	Summary of the financial results	11
FRD 22H	Major changes or factors affecting performance	11
FRD 22H	Subsequent events	11
FRD 22H	Significant changes in financial position during the year	11
GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE		
FRD 22H	Organisational structure	5
FRD 22H	Occupational health and safety policy	13
FRD 22H	Public Administration employment and conduct principles	13
OTHER INFORMATION		
FRD 25C	Local Jobs First - Victorian Industry Participation Policy disclosures	12
FRD 22H	Details of consultancies in excess of \$10 000	11
FRD 22H	Details of consultancies under \$10 000	11
FRD 22H	Disclosure of government advertising expenditure	11
FRD 12B	Disclosure of major contracts	N/A
FRD 22H	Application and operation of <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	13
FRD 22H	Compliance with <i>Building Act 1993</i>	13
FRD 22H	Statement on National Competition Policy	12
FRD 22H	Application and operation of <i>Protected Disclosures Act 2012</i>	11
FRD 22H	Summary of environmental performance	N/A
FRD 22H	Statement of availability of other information	12
SD 3.7.1	Risk management	13
LEGISLATION		
	<i>National Parks Act 1975</i>	2
	<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>	13
	<i>Protected Disclosures Act 2012</i>	11
PRINT AND DESIGN		
FRD 30C	Standard requirements for the design and print of annual reports	Entire document

FRD – Financial Reporting Direction

SD – Standing Direction

PC – Premier's Circular

Further copies of this report and information on Council can be obtained from:

Executive Officer
National Parks Advisory Council
c/o Environment and Climate Change Group
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Level 39, 2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000.
www.delwp.vic.gov.au



Further copies of this report and information on Council can be obtained from:

Executive Officer
National Parks Advisory Council
c/o Environment and Climate Change Group
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
Level 39, 2 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000.
www.delwp.vic.gov.au