

Traditional Owner Agreements Unit

What is the difference between Cooperative and Joint Management?



Cooperative Management and Joint Management are different types of collaborative land management in Victoria. This information sheet provides an overview of the main differences between the two models

Public land management in Victoria

Victoria's public land covers almost 40 per cent of the state and includes Crown land and land owned by public authorities. This includes parks and reserves, state forests, alpine resorts, marine areas and catchments, but does not include land owned by the Commonwealth government or local councils.

It is a great responsibility to manage this land well, as it is highly valued by many in the community, bringing much enjoyment and numerous benefits. In addition to the variety of plant and animal life, public land has significant cultural heritage values, and provides for recreation and tourism, education and resource use, as well as housing utilities and government services.

Public land is managed through various partnerships between the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Parks Victoria, committees of management and land management boards, including Traditional Owner land management boards.

Parks Victoria is the on-ground land manager of around 50 per cent of Victoria's parks, some of which are jointly managed or cooperatively managed with Traditional Owners. The remainder are managed by voluntary and municipal committees of management, which have an important role in improving, maintaining and controlling certain areas of public land, including advising the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on land management planning. Land management boards play a more strategic role in setting the direction of land management for the parks and reserves to which they are appointed to oversee.



Above: Joint Management rangers on Country. Traditional Owner Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation and a Parks Victoria ranger. Credit: Jessica Shapiro Photography.

Traditional owners have an active role in managing many parts of the state. For some parks and reserves, this role is formalised through a cooperative management or joint management agreement.

What is Cooperative Management?

Cooperative management is a formal partnership between a Traditional Owner Group and the Victorian Government to manage an agreed area. The objective is to recognise the cultural connection of the Traditional Owners to Country, and to provide for their active

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involvement in management and decisions of that area. This includes the integration of traditional knowledge, internal decision-making processes and perspectives into management planning and works programs. This is enabled through an advisory council or similar, established under a Cooperative Management Agreement.

Cooperative management facilitates the identification and promotion of employment, training and economic development opportunities for the Traditional Owners of that Country

Joint Management

Joint management recognises the unique cultural connection of Traditional Owners to Country and seeks to integrate their knowledge, culture and values into the management of public land.

Joint management is a formal and ongoing partnership between a Traditional Owner group and the Victorian Government in the management of designated parks and reserves.

Joint management is achieved via a Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement, which establishes a statutory board made up of a majority of Traditional Owners. The board is responsible, with DELWP and Parks Victoria, in preparing a joint management plan which provides for the strategic management of the lands under joint management.

Joint Management under a Recognition and Settlement Agreement

Joint management of public land is a key outcome under a Recognition and Settlement Agreement. Where a Recognition and Settlement Agreement is in place, resources are provided to employ Traditional Owner rangers on Country and establish and operate the board and prepare a Joint Management Plan.

Where public land is to be granted in Aboriginal Title to a Traditional Owner Corporation under a Recognition and Settlement Agreement the land must be jointly managed by the Traditional Owner Group and DELWP and Parks Victoria.

Under a Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement a grant of Aboriginal title is conditional on the Traditional Owners agreeing that the State can continue to occupy and manage the land as public land. Transfers of parks or reserves to Aboriginal title does not affect existing use and access rights.

Further information

Visit www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au for further information on:

- Agreements with Traditional Owners
- Public land agencies
- Managing Crown land

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