

National Parks Advisory Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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Photo Credit:
Wilsons Promontory
Image courtesy of A. Foley.

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Foreword

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

The Council met four times in 2021–22. Once again, Council's meeting schedule and its ability to meet face-to-face was significantly impacted during most of the period due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Council was able to undertake one field trip, during late May 2022, to Wilsons Promontory National Park to learn about planned infrastructure upgrades and the complimentary conservation program to transform the park into Victoria's largest conservation sanctuary.

During 2021-22, Council formally advised the Minister on six matters for which advice was sought under sections 19G, 19K, and/or 40(3) of the *National Parks Act 1975* (the Act). These included:

- A new lease to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority over the Cape Otway Lightstation precinct in Great Otway National Park. The Council supported the granting of the lease, noting the Authority's responsibility over asset repair and maintenance, its future position as direct land managers, its funding, and development of a heritage conservation and precinct master plan.
- With respect to a new 7-year lease to Bridgewater Lakes Aquatic Club Incorporated, Council supported the proposed new lease, noting that the relatively short lease term is to ensure an opportunity to develop a longer-term vision for the site.
- Council recommended that the Minister provide conditional support to an application by Premium Limestone Victoria Pty Ltd to conduct an exploration drilling operation in Tyers Park to search for stone. In its deliberations, Council noted the geographical limitations placed on the proposed search and the applicant's obligation to submit a detailed Environmental Plan prior to commencing searching operations.

- Council supported a 3-year renewal of the lease and associated licence for Gardners Hut in the Alpine National Park. Council noted that the short lease was recommended after engagement with representatives of the Taungurung Land and Waters Council, and in consideration of future joint management arrangements.
- With respect to a 21-year lease to Indigo Shire Council for a mountain bike trail in Beechworth Historic Park, Council supported the granting of a lease in accordance with the key lease terms outlined by Parks Victoria in its briefings to the Council.
- Council supported a new 21-year lease to Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation of the former visitor centre in Point Nepean National Park. Council noted that the planned interpretation centre accords well with the Point Nepean Master Plan (2017).

In supporting each of these proposals, Council made various recommendations, referenced elsewhere in this report, to the Minister. Such advice is an important function of the Council, formed with careful consideration following briefings by public servants. Council appreciates the nature of the presentations it has received from these officers and wishes to note its appreciation for their work.

During the year, Council also received informative briefings on a range of matters to support its work and understanding of park management issues.

These included:

- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, which forms part of the broader planning for nature-based tourism in Victoria;
- developments in relation to the proposed new *Public Land Act*, with Council being particularly interested in implications for and impacts on national parks;
- an update on the Marine and Coastal Strategy and the current actions to support the health of this environment;

- regular updates on the National Park Feral Horse Program, in particular the removal of feral horses from Alpine and Barmah national parks, a conservation activity which Council supports.

Council maintains its interest in the positive impacts of tourism in parks, the need to preserve and protect parks in accordance with the Act, the progress of Joint Management Plans and joint management activities with Traditional Owner groups, and conservation activities including feral herbivore control and bushfire recovery actions.

More recently, Council has particularly noted the increasing popularity of mountain bike use and the development of bike trails across Victoria. Council recognises the economic potential that such activity will bring to regional areas of the State, and that demand for trails could potentially be across some of the Parks Victoria estate, requiring National Park Act leases. Whilst consideration of bike trails in parks under the Act will need to be individually assessed, Council is of the view that lease terms should include strong measures to mitigate environmental risks, as well as clear monitoring processes and rehabilitation strategies to ensure a balance between conservation, cultural values and recreational demand. For these reasons, Council has suggested that consideration be given to developing a State-wide Victorian Mountain Bike Strategy.

Council was well supported in its work by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Parks Victoria and continues to benefit from the participation as observers and contributors at Council meetings of the respective representatives of the department (Ms Frances Northeast, Ms Sarah Crute and Ms Lisa Opray) and Parks Victoria (Mr Matthew Jackson).

My thanks to members of the Council for their contribution to Council's deliberations. Special thanks are recorded here to the Executive Officer, Ms Sylvie Bideau, for her support over the last ten years. On behalf of Council, we wish her well in her retirement.



Anna Foley
Convenor
20 September 2022

The Council

The National Parks Advisory Council (Council) is established under section 10 of the *National Parks Act 1975* (the Act). In 2021–22, the responsible Minister was the Hon. Liliana D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

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

The parks system

As at 30 June 2022, there were 139 parks and other areas, with a total area of approximately 3.47 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, 14 other parks and reserves, 1 landscape conservation area (comprising seven component areas) and 15 non-scheduled areas. In addition, there were 19 wilderness zones and 22 remote and natural

areas located within 13 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 and 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.

Current members

The members of the Council on 30 June 2022 were:

Ms Anna Foley (Convenor)

Ms Foley is an experienced environmental advisor with a background in ecology, statutory planning, heritage, and community engagement. She is the Regional Operations Manager at Trust for Nature, overseeing a protected area network of more than 100,000 hectares. Prior to this role Ms Foley was the Conservation Manager at the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) advocating for natural and cultural heritage protection. Ms Foley is an alternate member of the Heritage Council of Victoria, a member of the Reference Areas Advisory Committee, and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Mr Adam McLean (Member)

Mr McLean has been a practising lawyer for over 30 years – 22 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 Queensland. 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.

Ms Judy Dixon (Member)

Ms Dixon is a rural resident and Director of JADE Comm, a business specialising in delivery of training, strategic project and communication services. 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 and within that context is currently working to achieve Mansfield Autism Statewide Services' masterplan development of a therapeutic care farm. Ms Dixon is a former member of the Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council, Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Alpine Resort Management Board and past President of Mansfield Secondary College. This is Ms Dixon's third term on NPAC and she is also a member of the Reference Areas Advisory Committee.

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 (DJPR) 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. This is Ms Rogers's third term on NPAC and she is also a member of the Reference Areas Advisory committee.

Associate Professor Ursula de Jong (Member)

Dr de Jong is Honorary Associate Professor in the School of Architecture and Built Environment, at Deakin University, Geelong. She is a Research Associate of HOME, a Deakin University Research Hub, providing evidence-based, community-tailored housing and social inclusion strategies. She is Honorary Research Fellow in Deakin's School of Architecture and Built Environment, Architecture Vacancy Lab - a research centre investigating vacant spaces – industrial, urban, rural; critical vacancy in architecture as a discipline; and architectural pedagogy, linking innovative teaching and practice to research.

Dr de Jong 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 Director of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), a member of the National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council (NLAAC) and President of the Nepean Conservation Group which has cared for the local environment since 1973 and oversees twenty local Friends' Groups on the tip of the Mornington Peninsula, two in the MPNP and one in PNNP. In 2017 she was appointed Chair of the Reference Areas Advisory Committee.

Mr 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 State and local government in Victoria, 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 and ecotourism development.

Ms Tracey Costello (Member)

Ms Costello lives on Phillip Island and is currently Chief Operating Officer of VETASSESS. She is an accomplished strategic leader with a breadth and depth of finance and governance experience across corporate, government and non-government organisations including 10 years with a leading consultancy and more than six years as a senior executive in local and state government, including as Chief Financial Officer of Phillip Island Nature Parks. Ms Costello holds a Master degree in Fraud and Financial Crime from Charles Sturt University; is a Chartered Accountant (CA); and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

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.

Observers – Parks Victoria and DELWP

Recognising the critical role which DELWP and Parks Victoria play in decisions regarding Victoria’s parks, representatives of these two organisations attend and participate in meetings as observers but do not have any decision-making responsibilities. Council has benefitted from participation by Ms Frances Northeast, Ms Lisa Opray and Ms Sarah Crute as the representatives of DELWP and Mr Matthew Jackson who is the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Victoria.

Appointment

Ms Tracey Costello was appointed as Member of the National Parks Advisory Council on 1 August 2021.

Resignation

^ Mr Michael Fendley submitted his resignation as Member of the National Parks Advisory Council during the year. This will officially take effect when it is formally submitted to the Governor in Council in 2022–23.

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 DELWP staff.

Council meetings

Meeting No. 295	8 September 2021
Meeting No. 296	15 December 2021
Meeting No. 297	1 March 2022
Meeting No. 298	6 June 2022

Advice to the Minister

New 15-year lease to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority over the Cape Otway Lightstation precinct in Great Otway National Park.

Council was requested, in accordance with section 19G of the Act, to advise the Minister on the granting of a new 15-year lease to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority over the Cape Otway Lightstation Precinct in the Great Otway National Park from 2022 to 2037.

Council gave consideration to this lease and read a submission from Parks Victoria out of session in early April 2022. After consultation, feedback was sought, and it was determined on 5 April that Council supported the grant of the proposed Lease to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority over the Cape Otway Lightstation Precinct, for the purposes of the provision of tourist accommodation, interpretation and visitor services to park visitors. Council noted and acknowledged the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority’s responsibility over asset repair and maintenance during the term of the Lease, their future position as direct land managers and their funding and development of an updated Heritage Conservation Management Plan and Cape Otway Lightstation Precinct Master Plan.

In forming its position, Council noted that this is a proposal for a 15-year lease of Cape Otway Lightstation Precinct, at \$1 per annum (if requested), and that the lease is intended as an interim arrangement until the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority is appointed as the land manager - currently expected in June 2024. Council was advised that the funding contribution by Parks Victoria was provisioned for Cape Otway Lightstation Precinct specifically and is tied to this outcome. Council also noted the March media release and the advanced state of the process regarding the granting of the new lease to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority.

New 7-year lease Bridgewater Lakes Aquatic Club Incorporate.

Council was requested to consider a Parks Victoria proposal to recommend that the Minister grant a seven-year lease to Bridgewater Lakes Aquatic Club Incorporated pursuant to section 19G of the Act for the purposes of the occupation and use of the

premises known as Bridgewater Lakes Clubhouse in the Discovery Bay Coastal Park.

Council met on 8 September 2021 to consider the matter. Council was supportive of the lease being issued in accordance with the key lease terms outlined in the Parks Victoria briefing paper.

Council noted that the Parks Victoria proposal involves a seven-year lease, shorter than the tenant's previous 21-year lease. Parks Victoria indicated that this relatively short lease term was to ensure there was an opportunity to develop a longer-term vision for the site in the context of the 2018 designation under the Ramsar Convention, to seek Traditional Owners and other community input; and to consider powerboating and other uses, in the context of this long-term vision.

Council's recommendation of the seven-year lease should not be taken as Council's endorsement of powerboating as a long-term use of the site. In Council's view, the long-term vision for the site must give active consideration to the potential benefits of phasing out powerboating on the site.

Application by Premium Limestone Victoria Pty Ltd (PLV) for consent to conduct an exploration drilling operation in Tyers Park to search for stone.

Council was requested, in accordance with section 40(3) of the Act, to advise the Minister on the application by Premium Limestone Victoria Pty Ltd for consent to conduct an exploration drilling operation in Tyers Park to search for stone.

The Council received a presentation from Premium Limestone Victoria Pty Ltd representatives on 15 December 2021. From information gathered during the presentation, and briefings by Parks Victoria staff, Council members were able to note that:

- Boral operated a stone quarry prior to the establishment of the Tyers Park in 1994 until approximately 2005. Previous Ministerial consents were granted to Boral Australia P/L (basalt) in 1995, Omya Southern P/L (limestone) in 2004 and LV Blue Metal P/L (basalt) in 2020 to search for stone within Tyers Park.
- Although several approvals to extract stone from existing quarries within a small number of parks have been granted in the past, no

Minister has consented to a new quarry in an area managed under the Act, and

- Parks Victoria advised Premium Limestone Victoria Pty Ltd that Ministerial consent would be required for any future resource extraction.

Council agreed with Parks Victoria's view that Premium Limestone Victoria (PLV) Pty Ltd's current application should be assessed on its merits and not on the basis of future applications for resource extraction that might impact on Tyers Park values. Upon review, assessment and advice Council considered the impact of the proposed drilling program to be negligible on the overall values of Tyers Parks and on visitor experiences, provided the proposed conditions of any consent were met.

Council therefore recommended that the Minister provide conditional consent to the application by PLV, subject to all conditions in the proposed 'Terms and Conditions Applying to the Consent' by Parks Victoria were met.

These included:

- condition 6 specifying that searching was limited to and did not extend beyond the W3 Track;
- condition 14 regarding PLV's obligation to submit an Environment Plan that *"details all measures to manage soil, pathogens, drainage, plant and vehicle hygiene, spillage and contamination; health and safety of Consentee staff and agents and Park visitors, flora and fauna, noise and dust"* to the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Victoria for approval at least six weeks before the proposed commencement of searching operations".

Council noted that Parks Victoria had assessed the exploration proposal. PLV had proposed specific measures and agreed to additional risk mitigation measures that, if followed, would minimise the impact of the exploration on the values of Tyers Park and visitor experiences. Impacts have therefore been assessed by Parks Victoria as 'insignificant'.

Council wished to emphasise the importance of environmental concerns being addressed throughout the process of finalising, implementing and monitoring the Environment Plan and all other aspects of the Terms and Conditions Applying to the Consent.

Three-year lease and associated licence for Gardners Hut in the Alpine National Park.

Council was requested to consider a Parks Victoria proposal to recommend that the Minister grant a three-year lease and associated licence for Gardners Hut in the Alpine National Park pursuant to sections 19G and 19K of the Act.

Council met on 15 December 2021 to consider the matter. Council was supportive of the lease being issued in accordance with the key lease terms outlined in Parks Victoria's briefing paper

Council noted Parks Victoria proposal involved a three-year lease, shorter than the tenant's previous seven-year lease, and that this timeframe had been recommended after engagement with representatives of the Traditional Owners, the Taungurung Land and Waters Council, and consideration of future joint management arrangements.

Also noted and supported by Council, was that the proposed lease included a broadening of the permitted use from *"occasional accommodation"* to *"preserve and protect features in the park of scenic, archaeological, ecological, geologic, historic or other scientific interest, namely the buildings referred to as 'Gardners Hut' and surrounding area including the lease plan and short-term accommodation"*.

21-year lease to Indigo Shire Council for a mountain bike trail in Beechworth Historic Park.

Council was requested to consider a Parks Victoria proposal to recommend that the Minister grant a new 21-year lease to Indigo Shire Council over part of the Beechworth Historic Park from 2022 to 2043 for a mountain bike trail (known as the Epic MTB), pursuant to section 19G of the Act.

Council met on 15 December 2021 to consider the specific matter of the proposed lease. Council was supportive of the lease being issued in accordance with the key lease terms outlined in the Parks Victoria briefing paper.

At previous meetings Council had received briefings on Epic MTB in the context of the potential for using leases under the Act to manage the increasing mountain bike use and trail development across the Parks Victoria Estate. Council subsequently wrote to the Minister on 8 February 2021 to express support

for the development of a State-wide Victorian Mountain Bike Strategy. Council noted and appreciated the recent publication of the Victorian Mountain Bike Strategy published by AusCycling.

In assessing the proposed lease for the Epic MTB trail, Council considered the particular issues pertaining to this location. Council noted specifically that consideration of any further mountain bike trails in parks under the Act will need to be individually assessed.

Council also considered the suitability of lease terms to deal with any concerns that may arise regarding environmental concerns such as unauthorised side-tracks causing damage to the park. Council wished to emphasise the importance of strong measures to mitigate environmental risks being included in lease terms, as well as clear monitoring processes and rehabilitation strategies.

New 21-year lease to Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation of the former visitor centre building in Point Nepean National Park.

Council was requested, in accordance with section 19G of the Act, to advise the Minister on the granting of a new 21-year lease to Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation of the former Visitor Centre Building in Point Nepean National Park from 2022 to 2043.

At its meeting on 1 March 2022, Council gave consideration to this lease and heard a submission from Parks Victoria on the recent history of the site, the proposed use of the site as a Bunurong Interpretation Centre, and the proposed key lease terms approved by the Parks Victoria Board.

Council noted that the planned interpretation centre accorded well with the Point Nepean Master Plan (2017), Council also noted that funding to undertake necessary renovations was yet to be secured and that the lease will contain a condition that it may be terminated if funding is not secured within a two-year period.

Under these circumstances, Council supported the grant of the proposed lease to Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation over the former visitor centre building at Point Nepean National Park for the purposes of its renovation and use as a Bunurong Interpretation Centre.

Field visit

Council undertook one field trip in May 2022, a two-day visit to Wilsons Promontory National Park.

The purpose was for Council to be informed of the significant investment that has been committed to the park which, once completed, will become Victoria's largest conservation sanctuary and have improved visitor experiences through a \$23 million Wilsons Promontory Revitalisation project. Council visited several sites to learn about the proposed predator-proof exclusion fence across the Yanakie Isthmus, upgrade to the Tidal River visitor precinct, improved car parking and traffic management options, new accommodation outside the northern border and at Tidal River, and a new trail to connect Tidal River and Mount Oberon.

Council was particularly interested to learn about the proposed conservation activities which will include invasive species control, large-scale habitat restoration and active threatened species recovery programs, all of which will support the long-term health of the park's environment.

Council highly appreciated experiencing a Pennicott Wilderness Journeys and congratulate the government on securing this eco-conscious operation to Victoria; one which adds a great deal to the adventure experiences of Wilsons Promontory.

Council found the visit instructive to understand the transformation that is expected from the investment in upgraded park infrastructure and the strategies to protect the natural bio-diversity of the area.



*Wilsons Promontory.
Credit – A. Foley*



*Wilsons Promontory.
Credit – A. Foley*

Attendance at meetings

Attendance at meetings by members in the reporting period was as follows:

Member	Number of meetings attended
Mr Adam McLean	2 out 4
Ms Anna Foley	3 out 4
Mr Michael Fendley	1 out 4
Ms Judy Dixon	3 out 4
Mr Chris Rose	4 out 4
Dr Mary-Jane Rogers	3 out 4
Associate Professor Ursula de Jong	4 out 4
Ms Tracey Costello	3 out 4
DELWP – Permanent Invitee, non-member – Ms Frances Northeast/Ms Sarah Crute/Ms Lisa Opray	4 out 4
Parks Victoria – Permanent Invitee, non-member - Mr Matthew Jackson	4 out 4

Presentations

Title	Presenter	Date
<i>Presentations at meetings</i>		
Presentation to Council on proposed seven year lease to Bridgewater Lakes Aquatic Club	Mr John Clark (Manager Major Projects - Parks Victoria)	8 September 2021
Presentation to Council on Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan	Mr Stuart Hughes (Director Park Planning and Policy - Parks Victoria)	8 September 2021
Presentation to Council on Land Management Strategy	Mr Stuart Hughes (Director Park Planning and Policy - Parks Victoria)	8 September 2021
Presentation to Council on the proposed <i>Public Land Act</i>	Ms Fiona Harris (Project Manager, Crown Land Management Reform - DELWP)	8 September 2021
Presentation to Council on Government response to VEAC Central West Investigation)	Ms Fiona Harris (Project Manager, Crown Land Management Reform - DELWP)	8 September 2021
Presentation to Council by Premium Limestone Victoria (PLV) P/L application to search for stone within Tyers Park.	Mr Myles Tehan (Advisor - PLV) and Mr Tim Summons (Managing Director - PLV) Mr Stuart Hughes (Director Park Planning and Policy – Parks Victoria) Mr Mark Riley (Manager, Park and Waterway Policy – Parks Victoria)	15 December 2021
Presentation to Council on proposed 3-year lease and Associated Licence for Gardners Hut in the Alpine National Park.	Ms Psyche Payne (Director Commercial – Parks Victoria) Mr Stuart Hughes (Director Park Planning and Policy – Parks Victoria)	15 December 2021
Presentation to Council on the DELWP Marine and Coastal Strategy	Ms Nicola Waldron (Co-Manager Policy and Strategy, DELWP)	15 December 2021
Presentation to Council on proposed lease to the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation – Former visitor centre building, Point Nepean National Park.	Ms Psyche Payne (Director Commercial – Parks Victoria)	1 March 2022
Presentation to Council on the Land Management Strategy.	Mr Stuart Hughes (Director Park Planning and Policy – Parks Victoria)	1 March 2022
Presentation to Council on the Alpine National Park Feral Horse Program	Dr Mark Norman (Chief Conservation Scientist and Executive Director of Environment and Science – Parks Victoria).	1 March 2022
Presentation out of session to Council on proposed lease to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority over the Cape Otway Lightstation precinct in Great Otway National Park.	Mr Stuart Hughes (Director Park Planning and Policy – Parks Victoria)	8 April 2022

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 2021 - 22.

Table 2: Expenditure incurred by Council in undertaking its responsibilities:

	2020-21	2021-22
Meeting fees	6,900.00	7,310.00
Other operating expenses	3,788.56	3,822.52
Total	10,688.56	11,132.52

Consultancies below \$10,000

None

Consultancies above \$10,000

None

Administration

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.

Workforce Data

As at 30 June 2022 the Council secretariat consisted of one staff member:

- Sylvie Bideau – Executive Officer

There was 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 2021–22.

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.

Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* (PID Act) enables people to make a disclosure about corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body.

NPAC is a public body for the purposes of the PID Act.

What is a public interest disclosure?

A public interest disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct or detrimental action by a public officer or a public body.

'improper or corrupt conduct' involves substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health or safety or the environment, or corruption.

"Detrimental action" is action taken against a person in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure.

How do I make a public interest disclosure?

You can make a public interest disclosure about the NPAC or its board members, officers or employees by contacting IBAC (details below).

NPAC is **not** able to receive protected disclosures.

DELWP has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure about NPAC, its board members, officers or employees. You can access NPAC'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 3000.

Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001

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 council makes use of DELWP offices and facilities to perform its functions and the reporting requirement of the office is met by DELWP and participates fully in a range of environmental programs undertaken by DELWP.

Statement of Availability of Other Information

Any information retained by the Council relating to its activities is available on request, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Occupational health and safety policy

The 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*.

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Freedom of Information Act 1982

The 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.

- Manager FOI, DELWP, on (03) 7022 6530

No Freedom of Information requests were made during the 2020 - 21 reporting period.

An application fee applies. The fee from 1 July 2022 is \$29.60.

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 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.

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 2 – 8 Nicholson Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000.
www.delwp.vic.gov.au

National Parks Advisory Council

c/ Environment and Climate Change Group

Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

Level 2 – 8 Nicholson Street

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