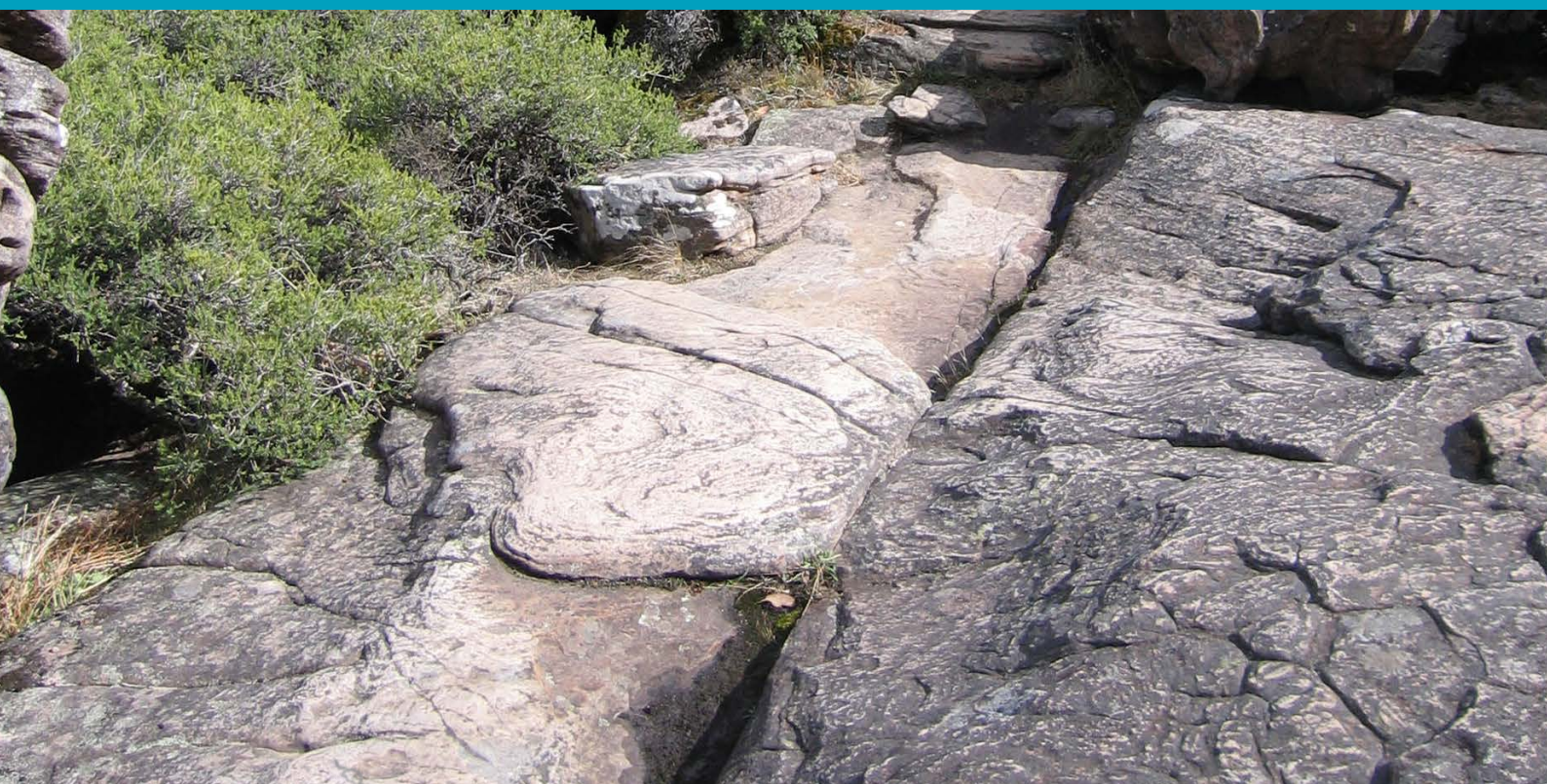




EXPLORING VICTORIA'S NATIONAL PARKS



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED ABOUT
VICTORIA'S NATIONAL PARKS



VICTORIAN
NATIONAL PARKS
ASSOCIATION
Be part of nature

Victorian National Parks Association

An independent, non-profit, membership-based group, VNPA exists to protect Victoria's unique natural environment and biodiversity through the establishment and effective management of national parks, including marine national parks, conservation reserves and other measures. VNPA works by facilitating strategic campaigns and education programs, developing policies, conducting hands-on conservation work, and by running bushwalking and outdoor activity programs that promote the care and enjoyment of Victoria's natural heritage.

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EXPLORING VICTORIA'S NATIONAL PARKS

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EXPLORING OUR PARKS: QUICK ANSWERS FOR THOSE IN A HURRY

Q. WHY DO WE HAVE PARKS?

The only way to give long-term protection to our native plants and animals is to protect the places in which they live – their different habitat types.

[Read more, page 7 >>](#)

Q. HOW ARE NATIONAL PARKS PROTECTED?

Under State Government legislation national parks are, first and foremost, about preservation and protection of the natural environment.

[Read more, page 9 >>](#)

Q. IS IT EASY TO EXPLORE OUR PARKS?

Yes, our parks are open to everyone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

[Read more, page 10 >>](#)

Q. DO NATIONAL PARKS GET SPECIAL MANAGEMENT?

Yes. Each national park has a plan of management that outlines how threats to the park will be managed, and also specifies zones for visitor access in ways that give people great experiences, while minimising any impacts.

[Read more, page 11 >>](#)

Q. ARE PARKS COSTLY TO MAINTAIN?

No, parks more than pay their way. They contribute strongly to the Victorian economy.

[Read more, page 12 >>](#)

Q. ARE PARKS WELL-SUPPORTED BY THE VICTORIAN COMMUNITY?

Yes indeed! National parks are supported almost unanimously by the Victorian community.

[Read more, page 13 >>](#)

Q. WHAT ABOUT ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT?

There are many ways Aboriginal people and communities are involved with national parks.

[Read more, page 14 >>](#)

Q. WHY ARE THERE SO MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARK?

The park system is complex because nature is complex, and so are the many impacts people have on natural areas.

[Read more, page 15 >>](#)

Q. WHAT SORT OF AREAS ARE PROTECTED IN VICTORIA?

There are different types of parks to match the different levels of protection needed for the conservation or natural attributes and uses of an area.

[Read more, page 16 >>](#)

Q. HOW ARE NEW NATIONAL PARKS CREATED?

By government legislation, after extensive work. Since the 1970s Victoria has had one of the best systems in the world for deciding which areas should be national parks. It is a system based on extensive community consultation and independent expert inputs.

[Read more, page 17 >>](#)

Q. HOW ARE NATIONAL PARKS MANAGED?

National parks and other conservation areas are managed by Parks Victoria, which is a dedicated Victorian government agency.

[Read more, page 18 >>](#)



The Crosscut Saw in Victoria's Alpine National Park.

Photo: John Sampson

Q. IS HORSE RIDING ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Yes, in many parks, but they are usually on designated routes to best protect the environment and avoid clashes with other users and to maximise experiences. Regulations about horse riding, including where you can ride a horse, vary from park to park.

[Read more, page 19 >>](#)

Q. IS FISHING ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Yes, it is allowed in waterways within land-based parks, but not in marine national parks and sanctuaries.

[Read more, page 20 >>](#)

Q. IS HUNTING ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Generally, hunting is not allowed in national parks, but there are exceptions, particularly for Sambar Deer in particular places, at particular times.

[Read more, page 21 >>](#)

Q. ARE MOTOR OR TRAIL BIKES ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Yes. The rules around 4WD vehicles also apply to motorcycles.

[Read more, page 22 >>](#)

Q. ARE 4WD VEHICLES ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Absolutely. The rules around 4WD vehicles in national parks are essentially the same as in state forest, or anywhere else in Victoria: it is legal to drive a registered vehicle on declared roads and tracks.

[Read more, page 23 >>](#)

Q. WHAT ABOUT CAMPING IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Camping is allowed in most national parks, at all times of the year.

[Read more, page 24 >>](#)

Q. CAN I BRING MY DOG?

No, dogs (and other pets) are generally not allowed in national parks and many other conservation reserves although they are sometimes allowed in regional or metropolitan parks close to townships.

[Read more, page 25 >>](#)



Hikers in the Grampians National Park.

Q. WHY DO WE HAVE PARKS?

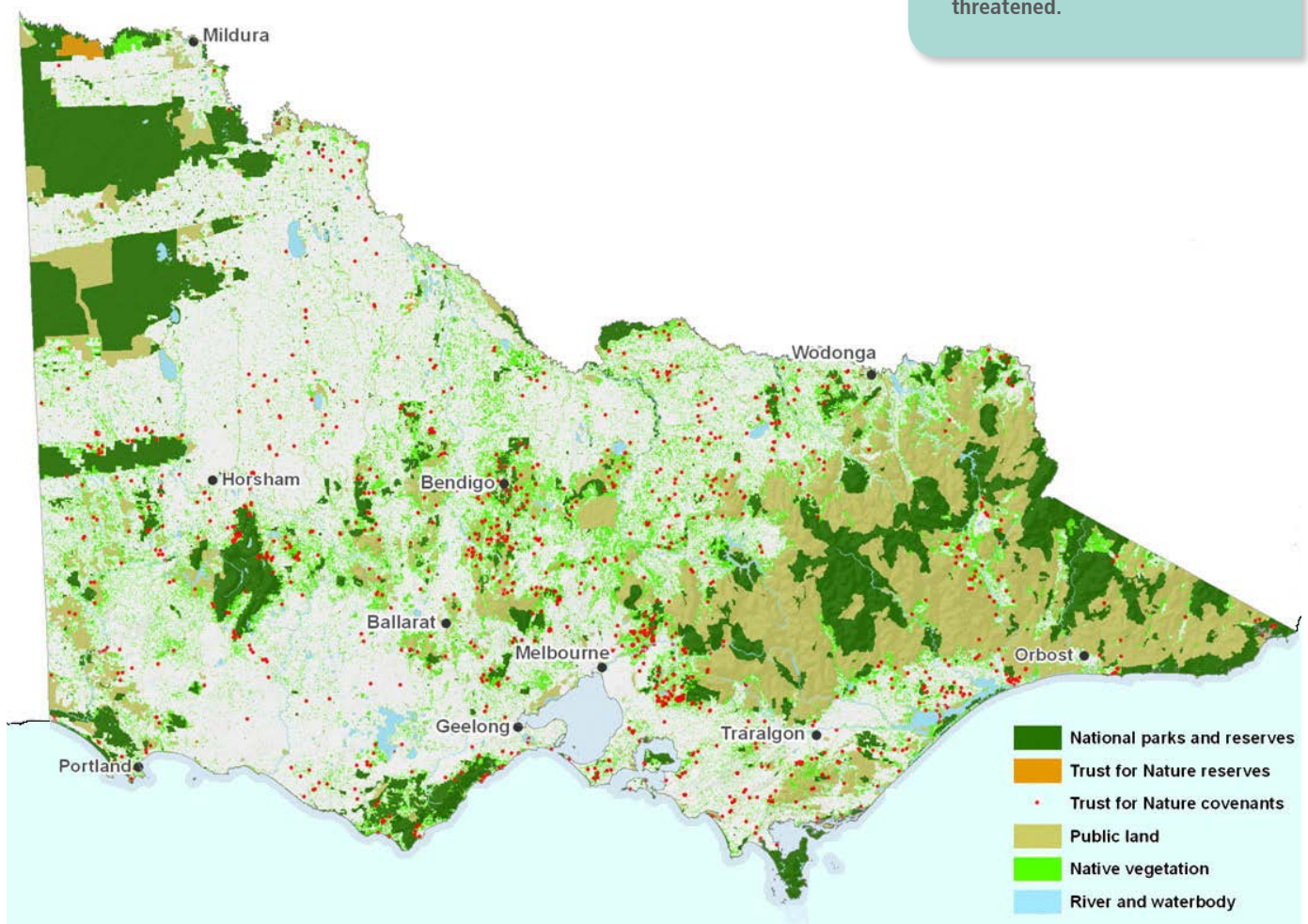
The only way to give long-term protection to our native plants and animals is to protect the places in which they live – their different habitat types.

While Victoria has a great network of parks and conservation areas, there are still significant gaps.

Victoria is mostly privately owned with almost 15 million ha, or 65% of the state, in private hands. The remaining 7.9 million ha, or 35% of the state, is public land. About half of this is in national parks and the conservation system and the other half is in state forests (including timber harvesting areas) and roads.

Victoria is the Australian state most cleared of native bushland, with 50-70% gone. On private land around 80-90% has been cleared.

- More than 80 terrestrial species are already extinct, and more than 1000 are still threatened.
- About a fifth of Victoria's mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs and plants are threatened.
- More than half of the state's habitat types (ecological vegetation classes) are threatened.



Map 1: The only remaining large areas of relatively intact native bushland in Victoria are on public land. The park and conservation reserve system is the foundation of our efforts to keep what is left as healthy as possible.

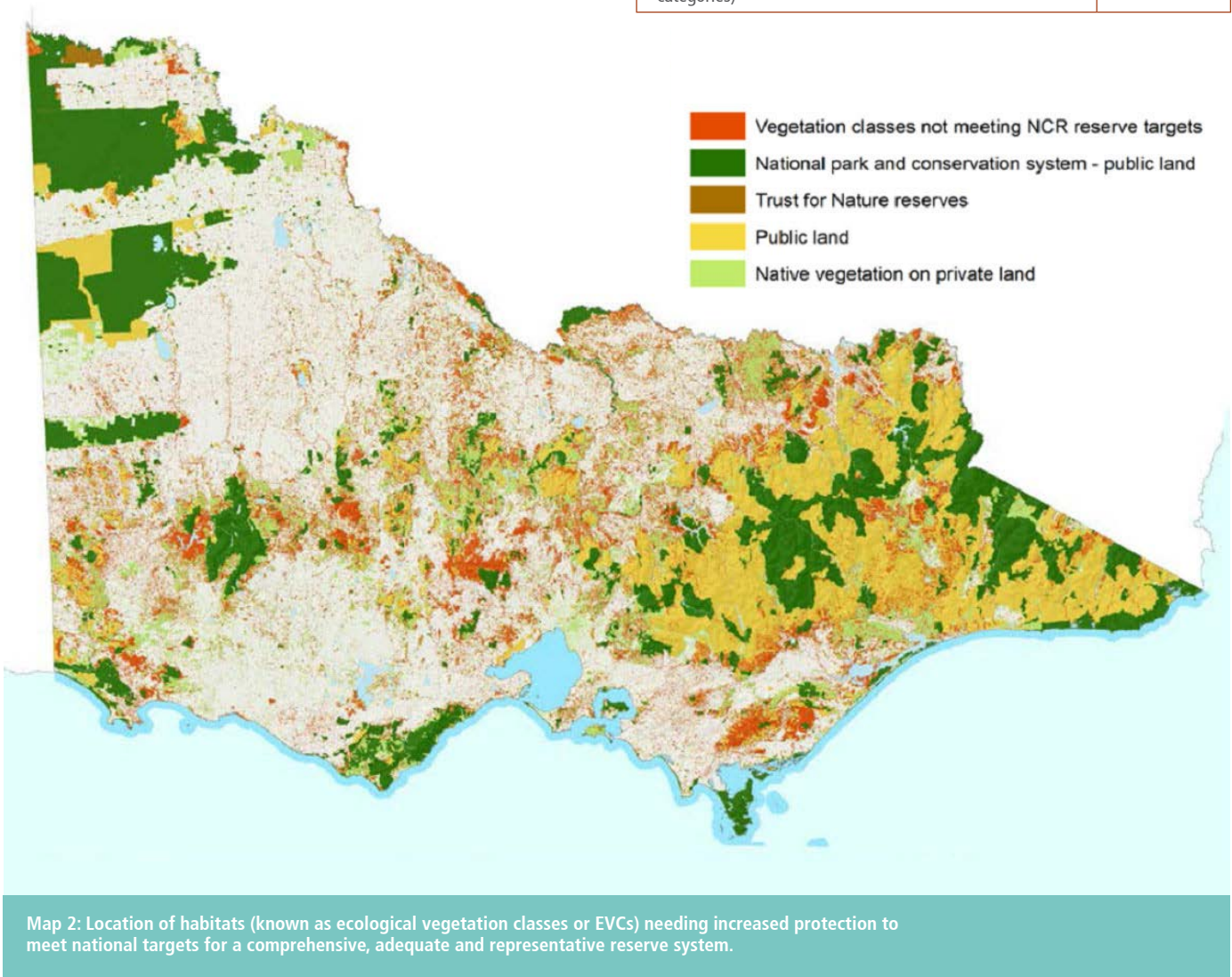


View from Mt Tarrengower, near Maldon in Central Victoria.

Photo: John Sampson

Major land use	Land area
Public land (7.9 million hectares)	34.6%
National park & conservation system	16.8%
State forest	13.8%
Services & utilities (roads, sewerage, etc)	2.6%
Parks (metropolitan, regional, forest)	0.5%

Major land use	Land area
Private land (14.9 million hectares)	65.4%
Agricultural holdings	55.8%
Urban & industrial	3.5%
Plantation forestry	2.2%
Rural residential	0.9%
National park & conservation system (included in above categories)	0.4%



Q. HOW ARE NATIONAL PARKS PROTECTED?

Under State Government legislation national parks are, first and foremost, about preservation and protection of the natural environment.

National parks are managed under Victoria's National Parks Act, which says the objectives of national park management are:

- i) for the preservation and protection of the natural environment including wilderness areas and remote and natural areas in those parks;
- ii) for the protection and preservation of indigenous flora and fauna and of features of scenic or archaeological, ecological, geological, historic or other scientific interest in those parks; and
- iii) for the study of ecology, geology, botany, zoology and other sciences relating to the

conservation of the natural environment in those parks; and

- iv) for the responsible management of the land in those parks;

Within that context, the legislation says the use and enjoyment of national parks by the public should be promoted and encouraged.

And the global significance of national parks and other conservation reserves is recognised by the International Convention on Biological Diversity, which Australia is a signatory to. It says we must:

- "Promote the protection of ecosystems, natural habitats and the maintenance of viable populations of species in natural surroundings."

As of 30 June 2014 there were 139 areas with more than 3.45 million ha (about 17% of the state) managed under various

provisions of the National Parks Act:

- 45 national parks.
- 26 state parks (smaller than national parks, but with the same protection).
- 13 marine national parks.
- 11 marine sanctuaries.
- 3 wilderness parks.

In addition, under the National Parks Act and other legislation, Victoria has:

- 30 metropolitan parks.
- 60 other parks (including regional and reservoir parks).
- More than 2700 natural features and conservation reserves.
- More than 11,000 formally registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places.

■ The global significance of national parks and other conservation reserves is recognised by the International Convention on Biological Diversity, which says we must promote the protection of ecosystems, natural habitats and the maintenance of viable populations of species in natural surroundings.

Q. IS IT EASY TO EXPLORE OUR PARKS?

Yes, our parks are open to everyone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Victoria's national parks attract 35 million visitors each year. If we include all of the types of parks in Victoria, that figure would almost triple to 96 million visitors a year.

Some key facts:

- Parks are open to everyone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Victoria's national parks alone attract 35 million visitors each year. If we include all of the types of parks in Victoria, that figure would almost triple to 96 million visitors every year.
- There are 14,000km of roads in Victoria's parks, and 3700km of walking tracks. Built assets managed by Parks Victoria are worth \$1.8 billion.
- Many parks have facilities and special tracks for people who are less mobile or need a wheelchair. In some parks, all-terrain wheelchairs are available – call 131 963 or visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au for more information.
- There are 157,000 face-to-face education and interpretation programs held in Victoria's parks a year, 21,000 of them for school students.



Q. DO NATIONAL PARKS GET SPECIAL MANAGEMENT?

Yes. Each national park has a plan of management that outlines how threats to the park will be managed, and also specifies zones for visitor access in ways that give people great experiences, while minimising any impacts.

- Parks are definitely not 'locked up' and left uncared for. They are

actively managed for weed and pest animal invasions. While that work is not as well-resourced as it should be, parks get considerably more of the pest management budget than most other public land, such as state forest areas.

- Importantly, bushfire management in Victoria is planned and managed across

all public land, including in our national parks.

- Around 30,000 volunteers also help out in Victoria's parks each year.

4 Parks deliver \$1.02 billion every year to Victoria's bottom line through tourism and **contribute \$330 million by supplying clean water.**

Grampians National Park. Photo: John Sampson

Q. ARE PARKS COSTLY TO MAINTAIN?

No, parks more than pay their way. They contribute strongly to the Victorian economy.

Victoria's national parks alone attract 35 million visitors each year. If we include all of the types of parks in Victoria, that figure would almost triple to 96 million visitors a year.

Key facts:

- Parks generate \$1.02 billion annually to the state economy through park tourism.
- They contribute \$330 million through supplying clean water.
- They contribute at least \$180 million because of avoided community health costs.
- There 372 licensed commercial tour operators operating in parks, providing activities for 240,000 people a year.
- A recent global study found that protected areas around the world generate more than US\$600



Mt Buffalo Gorge.

Photo: Geoff Durham

billion each year, but only 2% of this figure is reinvested in the safeguarding of their future.

- Parks also contribute significantly to the physical and social well-being of the community, and in turn that helps the economic wellbeing of Victoria.

Note: See <http://journals.plos.org/plosbiology/article?id=10.1371/journal.pbio.1002074>

A recent global study found that protected areas around the world generate more than US\$600 billion each year, but only 2% of this figure is reinvested in the safeguarding of their future.

Q. ARE PARKS WELL-SUPPORTED BY THE VICTORIAN COMMUNITY?

Yes indeed! National parks are supported almost unanimously by the Victorian community.

Victorians overwhelmingly support national parks, and recognise their role in protecting threatened species. People also recognise the need for increasing resources for managing these important areas.

An independent statewide poll by polling company Essential Research (October 2014), commissioned by the Victorian National Parks Association, showed that:

- 89% of Victorians support Victoria having a comprehensive network of national parks and other conservation reserves across land and sea.
- 96% of Victorians recognise the importance of national parks for conserving nature and protecting native wildlife. Around 70% consider them very important.
- 81% of respondents support increasing funding for protecting nature, including threatened species and national parks across Victoria.
- 42% said they would be more likely to vote for a party committed to increasing funding and staff, such as park rangers, in national parks. Only 3% said this would make them less likely to vote for such a party.

Note: See <http://vnpa.org.au/page/publications/nature-news-hub/survey-shows-victorians-love-their-national-parks>



Q. WHAT ABOUT ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT?

There are many ways in which Aboriginal people and communities are involved with national parks.

For a start, consultation with Traditional Owners is an important part in the development of park management plans, and includes prescriptions for the protection of all recorded sites of significance for Aboriginal cultural heritage in the area.

In parks where Native Title has been formally established, co-management agreements are arranged for a park, though the prime objective of the park, the protection of nature, remains.

When Native Title has not been formally established, a new Victorian law, the Traditional Owner Settlement Act (2010), provides a number of ways for consultation and participation of Traditional

Owners in managing natural resources, continuing cultural practices and achieving Land Management Agreements.

Parks Victoria has an active program for the employment of Aboriginal people in parks.



Traditional Owner rangers for the red gum parks, and below, celebrations at the official opening of the new parks.

Photo: Shepparton News

Q. WHY ARE THERE SO MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARK?

The park system is complex because nature is complex, and so are the many impacts people have on natural areas.

The idea is to create a conservation network made up of different land tenures and management systems, matching the conservation importance of each area, its condition, and current and potential appropriate uses.

The public land tenure system in Victoria is governed by a number of pieces of legislation, but also reflects a range of national and international treaties and policies.

Generally speaking, a protected area is a park or reserve with a primary aim of biodiversity conservation – creating areas in which our native plants and animals can survive and flourish. International thinking has been led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which has developed globally recognised standard definitions and classifications for protected areas. The internationally recognised categories are:

Ia Strict Nature Reserve: managed mainly for science

These are strictly protected areas set aside to protect biodiversity and geological features, where human visitation, use and impacts are strictly controlled and limited.

Ib Wilderness Area

These protected areas are usually large, unmodified or slightly modified areas of land or sea, retaining their natural character

and influence without permanent or significant human habitation. They are managed to protect their natural condition.

II National Park

These protected areas are large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible, spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational, and visitor opportunities.

III Natural Monument or Feature

Category III areas protect a natural or cultural feature, such as a landform, submarine cavern, or even a living feature such as an ancient grove. They are generally quite small protected areas and often have high visitor value.

IV Habitat/Species Management Area

Category IV protected areas aim to protect particular species or habitats and management reflects this priority. Many Category IV protected areas will need regular, active interventions to address the requirements of particular species or to maintain habitats.

V Protected Landscape/Seascape

These are protected areas where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and/or scenic value.

VI Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources

Category VI protected areas conserve ecosystems and habitats together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems. They are generally large, with most of the area in a natural condition, but where low-level non-industrial use of natural resources is compatible with nature conservation it is seen as one of the main aims of the area.

In Victoria, protected areas include reference areas, national, state, wilderness and some regional parks, nature conservation reserves, heritage rivers and some natural features reserves.

Some other categories of land known as 'parks' or 'reserves' are not considered true protected areas because their primary purpose is not biodiversity conservation (e.g. some regional parks, historic reserves, lake reserves, highway parks and metropolitan parks).

The dedicated status of land in the categories included in the reserve system is conferred by one of four Parliamentary Acts. Broadly speaking, national, state and some other parks are scheduled and managed under the National Parks Act 1975, nature conservation reserves and natural features reserves are reserved and managed under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, reference areas are proclaimed and managed under the Reference Areas Act 1978, and heritage rivers are proclaimed and managed under the Heritage Rivers Act 1992.

Q. WHAT SORT OF AREAS ARE PROTECTED IN VICTORIA?

There are different types of parks to match the different levels of protection needed for the conservation or natural attributes and uses of an area.

In Victoria, protected areas include reference areas, national, state, wilderness and some regional parks, nature conservation reserves, heritage rivers and some natural features reserves.

Some other categories of land known as 'parks' or 'reserves' are not considered true protected areas as their main purpose is not biodiversity conservation (e.g. some regional parks, historic reserves, lake reserves, highway parks and metropolitan parks).

The dedicated status of land in the categories included in the reserve system is conferred by one of four Parliamentary Acts. Broadly speaking, national, state and some other parks are managed under the National Parks Act 1975, nature conservation reserves and natural features reserves are reserved and managed under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, similar smaller reserves are managed under the Land (Conservation) Act, reference areas are proclaimed and managed under the Reference Areas Act

1978, and heritage rivers are proclaimed and managed under the Heritage Rivers Act 1992.

Victoria's main protected area types

- **National Parks** are generally substantial tracts of public land with outstanding natural features and diverse land types, primarily set aside to conserve and protect natural ecosystems. They also provide for public enjoyment, education and inspiration in natural environments.

- **State Parks** are generally not as extensive as national parks and their natural features are usually less outstanding, but they are important contributors to Victoria's park system and enjoy a similar level of protection as national parks. They are primarily set aside to conserve and protect natural ecosystems and provide for public enjoyment, education and inspiration in natural environments.

- **Regional Parks** allow for more intensive recreational activity in fairly natural surroundings. They are commonly near major regional centres and offer opportunities for activities such as picnicking and walking in a forest environment. Minor resource use is often permitted in regional parks.

- **Wilderness Parks**, which are often remote areas that aim to have a high level of protection from interference: "... the protection, enhancement and management of those parks as wilderness so as to maximise the extent to which those parks are undisturbed by the influences of the European settlement of Australia." Examples of wilderness parks include the Big Desert Wilderness, Avon Wilderness, Wabba Wilderness.

- **Nature Conservation Reserves/ Natural Feature Reserves:** They are generally smaller than national and state parks, but nevertheless areas with important ecological significance or areas sensitive to human use. Generally provision for public use is limited to passive recreation such as nature observation. Timber removal, grazing by domestic stock, and hunting and firearms are generally not permitted.

- **Indigenous Protected Areas** are areas where Traditional Owners have entered into an agreement with the Australian Government to promote biodiversity and cultural resource conservation.

Q. HOW ARE NEW NATIONAL PARKS CREATED?

By government legislation, after extensive work. Since the 1970s Victoria has had one of the best systems in the world for deciding which areas should be national parks. It is a system based on extensive community consultation and independent expert input.

In the 1970s, faced with some difficult decisions on the use of public land, Victoria's environment minister of the time, Bill Borthwick, wanted decisions to be evidence-based. He formed an independent investigative organisation called the Land Conservation Council (LCC), saying:

"There is no humbug about this. The Government is perfectly sincere in its endeavour to take the consideration and recommendation about the future use of public land out of the realm of political and emotional argument and place it in the hands of a competent, technically qualified body, which can act on behalf of the people."

He also insisted that there should be extensive public consultation before the LCC made any recommendations to government.

Since that time, the LCC and its successors have conducted more than 40 investigations, and generally the recommendations have been accepted by the government of the day. A great many of these recommendations have been based on the need to protect adequate areas of different ecosystems in national parks and other protected areas.



Wilsons Promontory National Park.

Photo: Paul Sinclair

The agencies responsible for these investigations have been:

- Land Conservation Council (LCC), 1971-1997.
- Environment Conservation Council (ECC), 1997-2001.
- Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC), 2001 onwards.

The current Victorian Environmental Assessment Council was established under the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001. At the request of the Victorian Government, it conducts investigations into how our public land is sustainably managed and used.

The council is made up of five members including a chairperson and other people with a range of experience, skills and knowledge related to the management of public land and natural resources. Its scientifically-based investigations generally take up to two years and involve extensive community consultation.

Following investigations, the government of the day either accepts or rejects VEAC's recommendations. If a recommendation for a park is accepted, legislation is prepared and must pass both houses of the Victorian Parliament before a park is created.



MORE INFO

For examples of VEAC's reports and investigations visit their website:
>> <http://www.veac.vic.gov.au/>

Q. HOW ARE NATIONAL PARKS MANAGED?

National parks and other conservation areas are managed by Parks Victoria, which is a dedicated Victorian Government agency.

Parks are protected and managed in essentially four ways:

- **Tenure:** The legislation that creates the park protects the park in perpetuity, removing existing rights for activities such as logging, mining or grazing and giving the management agency control over the site.
- **Management Planning:** Under legislation, each national or state park requires a management plan. Park management plans articulate the vision, goals, outcomes, measures and long-term strategies for parks.

Management plans are prepared in consultation with the community. When approved, plans will guide future management of the park. Management plans have a 15-year time frame and increasingly adopt a landscape-wide approach, so they can consider things bordering the park that influence how a park operates. Zones and overlays provide further prescriptions for management within defined areas. Some zones are defined through legislation, such as Reference Areas, while others are



Our parks are managed by Parks Victoria.

set through the management plan, such as Conservation Zone, Recreation Zone. Examples of management plans can be found online at <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/park-management/plans-underway/planning>.

- **Park Regulations:** Park staff such as rangers can enforce regulations including fines for damaging parks. There are also various permit systems, to allow appropriate park activities.
- **Works programs:** Park officers such as rangers, sometimes with the help of volunteers from organisations like Friends Groups, undertake works to remove weeds, pest animals, undertake

fire control and manage visitor facilities. Management is adaptive, and can change as experience and knowledge grows.

While resources for environmental management are always hard to get, the national park, state park and conservation estate generally have higher levels of management than state forests, which are generally used for a wide variety of productive and recreational uses.

Q. IS HORSE RIDING ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Yes, in many parks, but they are usually on designated routes to best protect the environment and avoid clashes with other users.

National park management plans determine the location of horse trails to reduce conflict between different parks users, reduce potential environmental impacts and maximise experiences.

Regulations about horse riding, including where you can ride a horse, vary from park to park. It is best to speak to the local park office to make sure you are doing the right thing, and also getting the most from your visit. You can be connected free of charge to any Parks Victoria office on 131 963.

Some important things to know are:

- If in doubt about availability of access or permit requirements, check with the responsible land manager.
- Respect the rights of other visitors. You will meet walkers and others unfamiliar with horses and unsure about passing them on the track. Ensure all horses in your party are walking quietly when passing other users on a track.
- Stay on the road or designated horse trails. Do not ride 'off-road' or on tracks closed to horses as you may damage the environment you have come to enjoy.
- When riding, be prepared for the unexpected. Timber trucks, 4WDs, hikers, cyclists and native animals may also be using your chosen track.

Parks where horse riding is allowed include:

- Baw Baw National Park
- Bunyip State Park
- Dandenong Ranges National Park
- Enfield State Park
- Hepburn Regional Park
- Kooyoorra State Park
- Macedon Regional Park
- Mornington Peninsula National Park

- Warrandyte State Park
- You Yangs Regional Park
- Kinglake National Park.

Horse riding and horse camps are allowed in:

- Alpine National Park
- Cobboboonee National Park
- Howqua Hills Historic Area
- Kurth Kiln Regional Park.

- Before leaving on a trip, check road conditions. Do not use roads and tracks when they are wet or likely to be damaged.
- Be safety conscious – plan your trip carefully, carry a first aid kit, maintain your saddlery equipment and be fully equipped. Leave details of your proposed trip with a responsible person.
- Hold horses at least 30 metres from streams, huts and camping areas unless otherwise directed by departmental staff. Use hitching rails or other holding facilities where provided. Avoid damage to vegetation when tethering. Do not tie horses to small limbs and shrubs. Tethering directly to trees overnight is prohibited because it causes unacceptable ground damage – use hobbles or a ground tether instead.
- Horses retain weed seeds in their gut which can germinate in manure in the forest. Your horse should be fed with clean feed (ie. commercial cracked grain, proprietary and processed feeds) for at least 48 hours before entering a park or other natural area. Feed your horse with a nose bag – do not spread feed on the ground.
- Where horse camping is allowed camp only in a designated horse campsite and keep at least 30 metres from watercourses.
- Avoid crossing areas easily damaged by horses such as swamps and steep or boggy creek crossings.
- Horses should be watered downstream from camping areas. To avoid stream bank erosion, bucket water to horses.
- Do not wash yourself or your horse in streams. Carry water to your camp for all washing purposes, including washing horses, and scatter wash water well away from streams.
- Report fallen trees or limbs across roads to the nearest Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning office (for state forest) or Parks Victoria office (for parks and reserves).
- Leave no trace. Take all rubbish home.
- Take care with fire – observe all fire regulations and Total Fire Ban days.

Q. IS FISHING ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Yes, it is allowed in waterways within land-based parks, but not in marine national parks and sanctuaries.

There are no limits in land-based parks for fishing in rivers, streams,

lakes etc, but you must follow relevant bag limits and seasonal restrictions.

Unless you are under 18 or a pensioner you will need a Recreational Fishing Licence [http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/recreational-fishing/fishing-licence)

[hunting/recreational-fishing/fishing-licence](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fishing-and-hunting/recreational-fishing/fishing-licence)

Note: Fishing is not allowed in marine national parks and sanctuaries, which cover approximately 5% of Victoria's coastal waters.



Q. IS HUNTING ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Generally, hunting is not allowed in national parks, but there are exceptions, particularly for Sambar Deer in particular places, at particular times.

Regulations relating to hunting in

Victoria's public land are complex, as they have to take public safety into account as well as environmental considerations.

In addition, in some national parks, specially qualified volunteer hunters take part in pest eradication

programs planned and supervised by Parks Victoria.

Hunting regulations are explained on the Parks Victoria website: <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/visit/popular-activities/hunting>



Q. ARE MOTOR OR TRAIL BIKES ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Yes. The rules around 4WD vehicles also apply to motorcycles.

Victoria has approximately 36,000km of public roads through state forests, parks and reserves available for use by licensed riders on registered motorcycles. Some of this road network is made up of unsealed 2WD roads, but much of it is 4WD tracks (also referred to as roads) available for public

use. Many of these tracks offer an adventurous riding experience through the forest.

You may ride on any of the forest, park and reserve roads open to the public, but for environmental protection reasons it is illegal to drive off formed roads. Some of these roads are designated Management Vehicles Only and some public roads are closed

during winter for safety reasons or to protect the road surface. These roads will have barriers and sign posting to advise they are not open for public use.



MORE INFO

You can get the Ride Safe, ride legal information pack from the Victorian Government website:

>> <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/forestry-and-land-use/visiting-parks-and-forests/visiting-state-forests/activities/trail-bike-riding/ride-safe-ride-legal>

Q. ARE 4WD VEHICLES ALLOWED IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Absolutely. The rules around 4WD vehicles in national parks are essentially the same as in state forest, or anywhere else in Victoria: it is legal to drive a registered vehicle on declared roads and tracks.

This is consistent with Victoria's 4WD sustainable driving policy which is to "Drive vehicles only on formed roads and vehicle tracks that are open to the public".

"Bush-bashing" off tracks is illegal, damaging to the environment and inconsistent with the policies of Victoria's 4WD clubs.

The rules are:

- Unsurfaced roads and tracks in Victoria's parks are governed by the same road rules that apply to surfaced roads.
- Like any other road, you need to be fully licensed to drive on a national park road or track, and your vehicle needs to be roadworthy.
- 4WD motor vehicles and trail bikes are permitted in national parks on approved tracks only.

- Quad bikes cannot be registered for public road and track use in Victoria and as a result are not permitted in Victorian national parks. Fines of up to \$1000 apply.
- Drivers found travelling away from signed open tracks (ie. on closed roads, bushwalking paths, or through unpathed terrain) risk serious fines.
- Parents of unlicensed children driving trailbikes, monkey bikes, quad bikes, go-karts or motor vehicles in national parks can also face heavy fines and in serious cases where injury or damage is caused, a court appearance. These regulations are there to protect public safety.
- Please note that all parks are attended regularly by Victoria Police and Parks Victoria rangers to ensure each park's facilities are responsibly enjoyed by all.

Note: See <http://www.fwdvictoria.org.au/iconic4wd/important.html>

4WD Touring Code for Public Land

- Stay on the track and drive lightly. Drive only on roads that are open to the public.

- Never bush bash or create new tracks. Avoid using muddy tracks.
- Plan your trip – think safety. Check your proposed route and road conditions before leaving.
- All native plants and animals are protected. Do not cut down or damage standing trees or plants. Leave wildlife alone and do not disturb their homes.
- Think of others. Respect others' rights to peace and solitude in the bush. Respect landowners' rights and get permission to travel across private land.
- Leave no litter. Take your rubbish home.
- Camp carefully. Practise "minimal impact" camping.
- Join a 4WD club and support responsible 4WD touring.
- Enjoy your visit. Take a last look before leaving an area – will the next visitor know you have been there.

Note: See <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/forestry-and-land-use/visiting-parks-and-forests/visiting-state-forests/>

When planning your 4WD trip think safety. Check your proposed route and road conditions before leaving.

Q. WHAT ABOUT CAMPING IN NATIONAL PARKS?

Camping is allowed in most national parks, at all times of the year.

In most parks, camping is allowed in designated campsites, and facilities vary from very basic to campgrounds with toilets, showers

and a kiosk. In a few larger parks, such as the Alpine National Park, dispersed camping for off-track hikers is allowed. Fees vary (and are subject to changes), but currently camping is free in sites with few or no facilities. In some small or

heavily forested parks, camping is not allowed.

For more information, and booking information please visit the Parks Victoria website at <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/visit/popular-activities/camping>



Q. CAN I BRING MY DOG?

No, dogs (and other pets) are generally not allowed in national parks and many other conservation reserves.

Dogs scare or interfere with native wildlife, and even the scent of a dog can affect some native animals.

In just a few national parks they

are allowed in specially designated areas, and at particular times, but your dog must be on a leash. Dogs are sometimes allowed in regional or metropolitan parks close to townships, or where the impact of dogs is considered to be small.

Check with Parks Victoria on 131 963, or at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/

[visit/popular-activities/dog-walking](#)

Often when new parks are being designed, around towns, special arrangements are made to allow for recreational uses. This highlights the importance of having a robust park establishment and planning process.



Camp grounds at Mt Arapiles. Photo: John Sampson



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