

Engagement and communications plan
Rock climbing in Grampians

Document control

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Document purpose

This document outlines the proposed communication and engagement approach to support the implementation of the Special Protection Areas in the Grampians National Park, which under the Grampians National Park Management Plan prohibits rock climbing activity in these areas.

Background

Under the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan, rock climbing in Special Protection Areas at the Grampians National Park is a prohibited activity.

In the coming months, Parks Victoria will be working with partners, stakeholders and park users to phase out the activity in these Areas and support climbers and other park users to find alternate locations in the Grampians to climb.

In recent years rock climbing in the Grampians has significantly increased and contemporary rock climbing activities such as bouldering and the use of fixed protection (bolts and chain anchors) have emerged, creating significant risk to irreplaceable cultural assets and environmental assets.

From March 2019, Parks Victoria will be installing signs in eight initial locations that are at most risk due to increased climbing activity in the park. These initial locations are all in the Western part of the national park.

The implementation of the Special Protection Areas will be supported by the below engagement and communications activities:

- Stakeholder briefings with Traditional Owners, the rock climbing community and affected local businesses to discuss what the Special Protection Areas means
- The installation of temporary signage at eight key areas in the western area of the park to advise climbers that rock climbing is prohibited
- Distribution of letters, fact sheets and traditional and use of social media to communicate the implementation of the Special Protection Areas
- [REDACTED] to discuss excluded and permitted areas for rock climbing in the Grampians
- Establishing a stakeholder reference group to involve the community and rock climbers in next steps and the part we can all play in protecting our cultural heritage and environment and to identify where in the Grampians climbing can continue.
- The installation of permanent signage to communicate areas closed to rock-climbing.

Engagement objectives

Engagement and communications activities will aim to:

- Raise awareness of the implementation of the Special Protection Areas in the Grampians National Park, and what this means for rock climbing

- Educate around the current cultural and environmental risks and impacts from rock climbing in the Grampians
- Generate understanding around the need for the Special Protection Areas
- Communicate areas of the Grampians where you can and cannot climb
- Communicate timing for the installation of signage, and the start of compliance activity at the eight key locations.

Key messages

Key messages support the implementation of the Special Protection Zone in the Grampians National Park are below.

- Under the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan, rock climbing in Special Protection Areas at the Grampians National Park is a prohibited activity.
- In recent years rock climbing in the Grampians has significantly increased and contemporary rock climbing activities such as bouldering and bolting have emerged, creating significant risk to irreplaceable cultural and environmental assets.
- In the coming months, Parks Victoria will be working with partners, stakeholders and park users to phase out the activity in these areas and support climbers and other park users to find alternate locations in the Grampians to climb.
- From March 2019, Parks Victoria will be installing signs in eight focus areas, which are at most risk due to increased climbing activity in the park. These initial locations are all in the Western part of the national park.
- Enforcement officers will patrol from March:
- Parks Victoria will meet with affected partners, stakeholder groups and local businesses to work through what this means for them. Parks Victoria will also distribute supporting communications to raise awareness of this change.
- A stakeholder reference group will be established to involve the community and rock climbers in next steps and the part we can all play in protecting our cultural heritage and environment and to identify where in the Grampians climbing can continue.

Secondary messages

- The Grampians National Park Victoria was established in 1984 to protect environmental and cultural values of national importance.
- The park is listed on Australia's National Heritage List for its Aboriginal cultural heritage, landscapes, diversity of flora and fauna and protection of threatened species.
- Based on information on popular climbing routes in the Grampians National Park, we anticipate that the Special Protection Areas will effect around one quarter of the total climbing areas in the park.
- Parks Victoria is committed to conserving Victoria's natural and cultural assets and is focussed on protecting the state's biodiversity

Implementation plan

Engagement and communications activities to support the implementation of the Special Protection Areas in the Grampians National Park are below. Key communications materials will include:

- Media release
- Q&A
- Fact sheet
- Social media messaging, for all stakeholders to use and share

Table 1: Rock climbing engagement and communications implementation plan

Activity	Description	Target stakeholder groups	Supporting communications	Due date	Accountability	Task complete (Yes/ No)
Introducing Special Protection Areas						
Traditional Owner partnership meeting	Meeting with key Traditional Owner Groups to discuss implementation of the Special Protection Areas, management approach, next steps, timing for the installation of signage, and to seek feedback on key messages		Agenda		ST	Y
			Draft signage for review			
			Draft key messages for review			
			Draft letter			
Rock climbing industry stakeholder briefing	Meet with key stakeholders to discuss next steps, including the implementation of the Special Protection Areas and what this means for rock climbing		Key messages		ST/ LM	Y
			Q&A			
			Maps			

Activity	Description	Target stakeholder groups	Supporting communications	Due date	Accountability	Task complete (Yes/ No)
Media statement	Upload media statement to website	All Media	Key messages Q&A Media release	Respon ding to media	JC/ RS	Y
Map	Email map to rock climbing stakeholders		Fact sheet Map		LM/ ST	Y
	Update to website with supporting comms					
	Distribute media statement update		from communications Link to media statement		LM/ JC	Y
	Map		Map Email			Y
Stakeholder phone calls	Make phone call to advise of media statement and update on next steps		Key messages Media statement		Gavan Mathieson Lisa Patroni Simon Talbot Maria Pizzi	Y



Released under Freedom of Information Act 1982 by Parks Victoria

Activity	Description	Target stakeholder groups	Supporting communications	Due date	Accountability	Task complete (Yes/ No)
Follow-up rock climbing phone calls	Call [redacted] to update on maps and advise media statement is available	[redacted]	Key messages	Align with map distribution	Lisa Patroni Simon Talbot	Y
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Key messages Media statement	[redacted]	Caroline Stanners Brett Ince	Y
Email [redacted]	Email [redacted] advising them of eight locations and next steps	[redacted]	Key messages Fact sheet Q&A Maps	[redacted]	Caroline Stanners	Y
PV local staff briefing #1	Brief local staff on announcement plans, key messages and Q&As	[redacted]	Key messages Fact sheet Q&A Maps	[redacted]	RM	
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Key messages Fact sheet Q&A Maps	[redacted]	[redacted]	
PV website updates	Upload information regarding the implementation of the Special Protection Areas and installation of temporary signage and next steps	All	Q&A Update Maps	Align with map distribution	JC/ RS	Y



Activity	Description	Target stakeholder groups	Supporting communications	Due date	Accountability	Task complete (Yes/ No)
TBC	Staffed info sessions, [redacted], to discuss the changes and answer any questions	[redacted]	Q&A Fact sheet (update)	[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]	TBC	
Installation of temporary signage	Installation of temporary signage at 8 key locations	[redacted]	Q&As Fact sheet (update)	[redacted] [redacted]	RN	
	[redacted], to discuss the changes and answer any questions	[redacted]	Q&A Fact sheet (update)	[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]	TBC	
PV local staff briefing #2	Local staff briefing to recap on signage installation, announcement activities and compliance processes	[redacted]	PPT	[redacted] [redacted]	RM	
Start compliance activities	Enforcement activity begins	[redacted]	Q&A Fact sheet (update) Speaking notes for enforcement officers	[redacted] [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]	TBC	
Establishing the stakeholder reference group						
Invitation to participate in the SRG	Distribute formal letter of invitation to SRG members	SRG members (below)	Letter of invite Agenda for SRG meeting 1	[redacted]	TBC	



Activity	Description	Target stakeholder groups	Supporting communications	Due date	Accountability	Task complete (Yes/ No)
SRG meeting 1	Hold SRG meeting 1 to review management approach to date, discuss next steps and identify other areas for climbing in the Grampians	[Redacted]	Agenda PPT	[Redacted]	TBC	
Ongoing behaviour change activity						
SRG meeting 2	Hold SRG meeting 2 to discuss next steps and management effectiveness to date	[Redacted]	Agenda PPT	[Redacted]	TBC	
PV local staff briefing #3	Local staff briefing to brief on next steps	[Redacted]	PPT	[Redacted]	RM	
PV website updates	Upload revised Q&A's to PV website for further information as needed	[Redacted]	Q&A	[Redacted]	JC/ RS	
SRG meeting 3	Hold meeting 3 to review effectiveness of management approach and behaviour change progress, and discuss next steps	[Redacted]	Agenda PPT	[Redacted]	TBC	



Stakeholder analysis

The following table lists the stakeholders potentially affected by the implementation of the Special Protection Areas in the Grampians National Park.

Table 2: Grampians rock climbing: stakeholder list

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder type	Engagement approach ¹
Traditional Owners		
[Redacted]	Influencer	Partner
[Redacted]	Influencer	Partner
[Redacted]	Influencer	Partner
[Redacted]	Influencer	Partner
[Redacted]	Influencer	Partner
Parks Victoria staff		
[Redacted]	Regulator	Inform
[Redacted]	Regulator	Decision-Maker
Rock climbing interest groups		
[Redacted]	Consumer/ Advisor/ Storyteller	Inform
[Redacted]	Consumer/ Advisor/ Storyteller	Inform
[Redacted]	Consumer/ Advisor/ Storyteller	Inform
[Redacted]	Consumer	Inform
[Redacted]	Consumer	Inform
[Redacted]	Consumer	Inform
Commercial operators		
[Redacted]	Consumer	Inform
[Redacted]	Consumer	Inform

¹ Partner, Collaborate, Consult, Inform

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder type	Engagement approach ¹
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
Local tourism and commercial operators		
[REDACTED]	Storyteller	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer	Inform
Environment interest groups		
[REDACTED]	Consumer/ Advisor	Inform
[REDACTED]	Consumer/ Storyteller	Inform
Government departments and agencies		
[REDACTED]	Regulator	Involve
[REDACTED]	Advisor	Inform
[REDACTED]	Advisor	Inform
[REDACTED]	Advisor	Inform
[REDACTED]	Advisor	Inform

Level of engagement and areas of influence

Parks Victoria commits to working with the Grampians Rock Climbing Stakeholder Reference Group at an 'Inform' level, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Levels of engagement (adapted from the IAP2 Spectrum)

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal: To provide the public with balanced and objective information to support understanding by the public Promise to the Public: To keep the public informed	Public Participation Goal: To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions Promise to the Public: To listen and to acknowledge the public's concerns	Public Participation Goal: To work directly with the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered Promise to the Public: To work with the public to exchange information, ideas and concerns	Public Participation Goal: To engage with the public on each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution Promise to the Public: To seek advice and innovations from and amongst various public parties	Public Participation Goal: To create governance structures to delegate decision-making and/or work directly with the public Promise to the Public: To work with the public to implement agreed-upon decisions

Source: VAGO (2015) *Public Participation in Government Decision-Making: Better Practice Guide*. Adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

There will be opportunities for interested and affected stakeholders to influence and provide feedback on:

- Next steps
- Identification of where in the Grampians climbing can continue
- Behaviour change opportunities.

Roles and responsibilities

The table below outlines Parks Victoria roles and responsibilities relating to engagement and communications activities to respond to the issues associated with rock climbing in the Grampians National park and surrounds.

Table 3: Meeting roll-out strategy

Position	Name	Responsibility
Chief Operating Officer	Simon Talbot	Executive sponsor Member of SRG Final project decision-maker
Executive Director Marketing, Communications and Partnerships	Lisa Patroni	Final approver for engagement and communications approach
Director, Public Affairs	Laura Miller	Reviewer of engagement and communications approach and messaging

Position	Name	Responsibility
Director, Park Planning and Policy	Stuart Hughes	Reviewer of park planning documentation, including Special Protection Areas
Director, Managing Country Together	Maria Pizzi	Content specialist Key project decision-maker
Senior Manager, Managing Country Together	David Lucas	Traditional Owner liaison point Content specialist
District Manager	Gavan Mathieson	Local insight/ information Oversight of signage installation
Area Chief Ranger, Grampians	Rhonda McNeil	Local insight/ information Oversight of signage installation Local staff updates
Manager, Stakeholder Relations	Lucy Marshall	Development of stakeholder engagement approach and advice
Communications Officer (portfolio lead for Managing Country Together)	[REDACTED]	Development of key messaging, Q&As and supporting communications
Corporate Communications Manager	Roxy Sinclair	Oversight of communications Communications approvals
Communications Advisor, West Region	[REDACTED]	Support distribution of rock climbing communications amongst west region stakeholders

In addition to the above roles, regular internal news updates will be distributed to the below staff:

1. Sally Lewis, Regional Director West
2. Peter Livitsanis, Regional Operations Manager
3. Brigid Isacc, Community Engagement and Partnership Manager
4. [REDACTED], Aboriginal Heritage Coordinator
5. [REDACTED], Ranger Team Leader, Grampians
6. [REDACTED], Community Engagement and Tourism Operator, West Region

Communications materials

Parks Victoria takes steps to protect environmental and cultural heritage from climbing impacts

Friday 15th February 2019 In the coming months, Parks Victoria will be focussed on ensuring eight key locations in the western part of the Grampians National Park are protected and will be asking all climbing activity to cease in these areas indefinitely.

Parks Victoria is committed to conserving Victoria's natural and cultural assets. In recent years, rock climbing in the Grampians has significantly increased and contemporary rock climbing activities, such as bolting, have emerged creating significant risk to Aboriginal cultural heritage, rock faces and vegetation and visitor safety.

In the first instance from March, signage will be installed and compliance activity will take place in eight key locations. There are still hundreds of known climbing areas still available for international climbers and other visitors to enjoy and only a small percentage are affected. Detailed maps and information sheets are being prepared to assist and inform climbers. There are no changes to all main visitor sites and they will continue to remain open.

Parks Victoria are working with partners, stakeholders, local businesses, Licenced Tour Operators and park users to implement a compliance strategy for certain locations within the current Special Protection Areas.

Under the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan, rock climbing in Special Protection Areas is a prohibited activity however we recognise this plan is 10 years old and we need to review these areas in partnership with key stakeholders which may result in changes to boundaries. Further to the Special Protection Areas identified in the current management plan, 29 additional areas have also been set aside as Special Protection Areas, in which climbing is prohibited to protect their cultural and natural values. The materials being prepared will also have details of these places.

Nationally listed for its biodiversity and cultural heritage, the Grampians National Park was established in 1984 to protect environmental and cultural values of national significance.



The park is the most important area for floristic richness and endemism in eastern inland Australia, with more than 800 indigenous plant species; it is home to one third of the Victoria's flora. It also supports a wide range of wildlife with more than 40 mammals and an abundance of bird species.

Known by Traditional Owners as Gariwerd, the Grampians National Park and other protected areas such as Black Range, Mount Arapiles-Tooan, Red Rock and Mount Talbot, contain the majority of surviving Aboriginal rock art sites in south-east Australia.

Parks Victoria has legislative requirements to protect these natural and cultural values and we're committed to acting on our obligations.

Quotes, attributed to Simon Talbot, Chief Operating Officer, Parks Victoria

"Our main priority is protecting the natural and cultural values of this precious landscape that is the Grampians National Park. We are working to support climbers and other park users to find alternate locations in the Grampians to climb. We'll also work with local businesses and Licenced Tour Operators over the coming months to clearly identify where climbing can continue."

"A stakeholder reference group will be established to involve the community and rock climbers in next steps and the part we can all play in protecting our cultural heritage and environment and to identify where in the Grampians climbing can continue."

ENDS

For more information please contact:

██████████
██████████

About Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria is a statutory authority that manages more than 3,000 of Victoria's different parks and reserves making up 18 per cent of Victoria's landmass, 75 per cent of Victoria's Wetlands and 70 per cent of Victoria's Coastline.



Healthy Parks Healthy People is at the core of everything Parks Victoria does. Parks and nature are an important part of improving and maintaining health, both for individuals and the community. Parks Victoria has a clear role to play in connecting people and communities with parks.

Parks Victoria is committed to delivering works on the ground across Victoria's park network to protect and enhance park values. It is our primary responsibility to ensure parks are healthy and resilient for current and future generations. This includes world class conservation projects, facilities and experiences across the estate.

WORKING DRAFT

Rock climbing in the Grampians National Park

February 2019 update

Background

Nationally heritage listed for its biodiversity and significant cultural heritage, the Grampians National Park Victoria was established in 1984 to protect environmental and cultural values of national importance.

The park has more than 800 indigenous plant species and is home to one third of Victoria's flora. It also supports a wide range of wildlife.

The Grampians National Park, which is part of the Gariwerd landscape, contains the majority of surviving Aboriginal rock art places in south-east Australia.

Key Issues

In recent years, rock climbing in the Grampians National Park has increased. Contemporary rock climbing activities such as bouldering and the use of fixed protection (bolts and chain anchors) has emerged, creating risk to irreplaceable cultural assets and environmental values.

A phased approach to compliance

From March 2019, Parks Victoria will be installing signs in eight initial locations within one of the Special Protection Areas. These eight locations are in the western part of the park and most at risk due to increased climbing activity ([see map overleaf](#)). Enforcement activity will begin following the installation of signs.

There are still hundreds of known climbing locations in the Grampians National Park, which are not in protected areas, for visitors to enjoy. These include the Bundaleer, Mount Stapylton Amphitheatre, The Watch Tower, Wonderland Area and Halls Gap Valley.

Special Protection Areas

A Special Protection Area protects specific natural or cultural values.

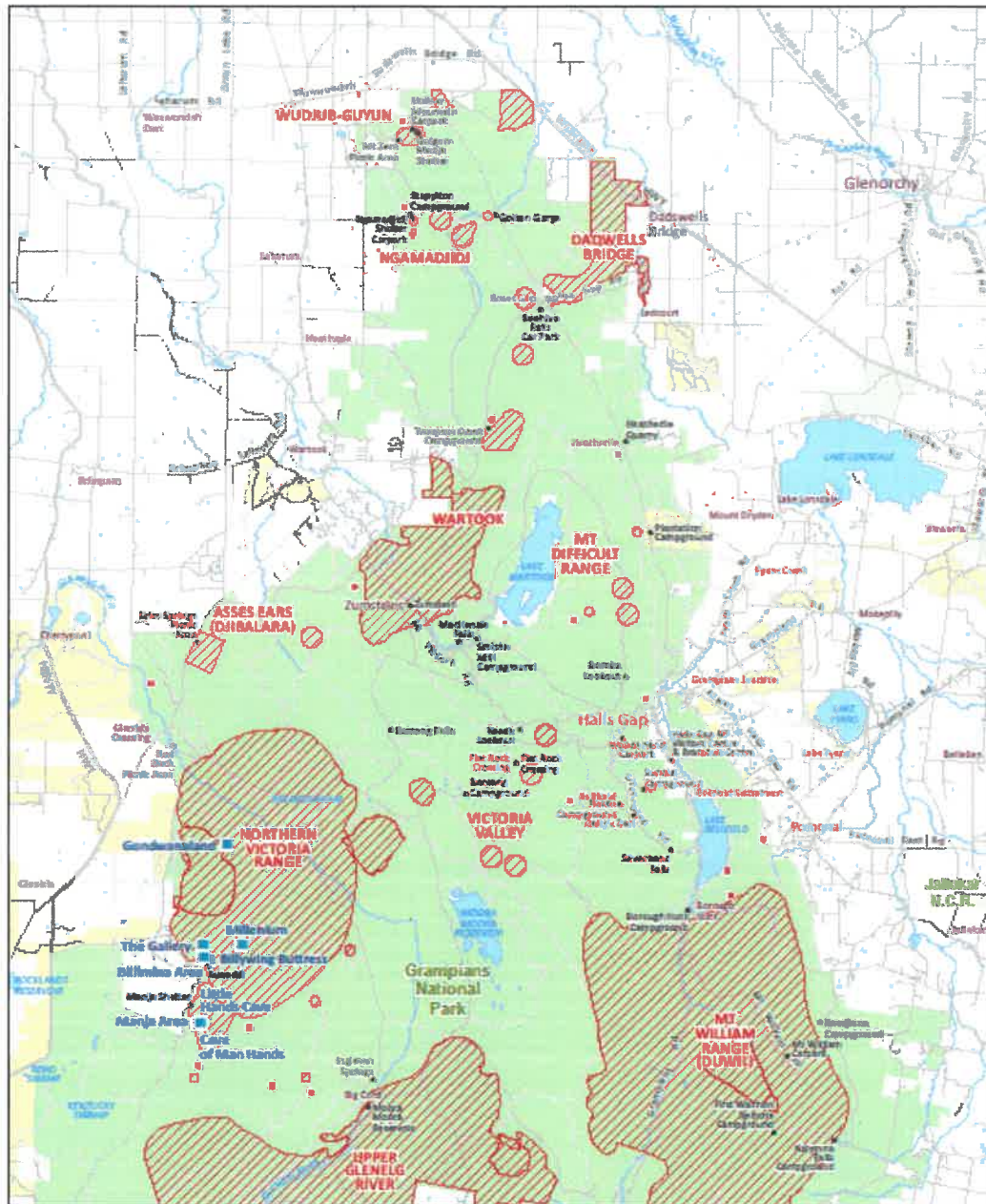
Special Protection Areas are identified in the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan and are for the protection of cultural heritage and environmental values. Climbing is prohibited in all Special Protection Areas and a few other identified locations. Maps showing these no climb locations are available on Parks Victoria's website.

Reviewing the Grampians National Park Management Plan

In the coming months, Parks Victoria will review the Grampians National Park Management Plan's Special Protection Areas. Through this process, Parks Victoria will work with partners and key stakeholders, including licenced tour operators and the rock climbing community. The review may result in further changes.



For further information, please contact: communications@parks.vic.gov.au



Grampians National Park - Rock Climbing Exclusion Zones (North)

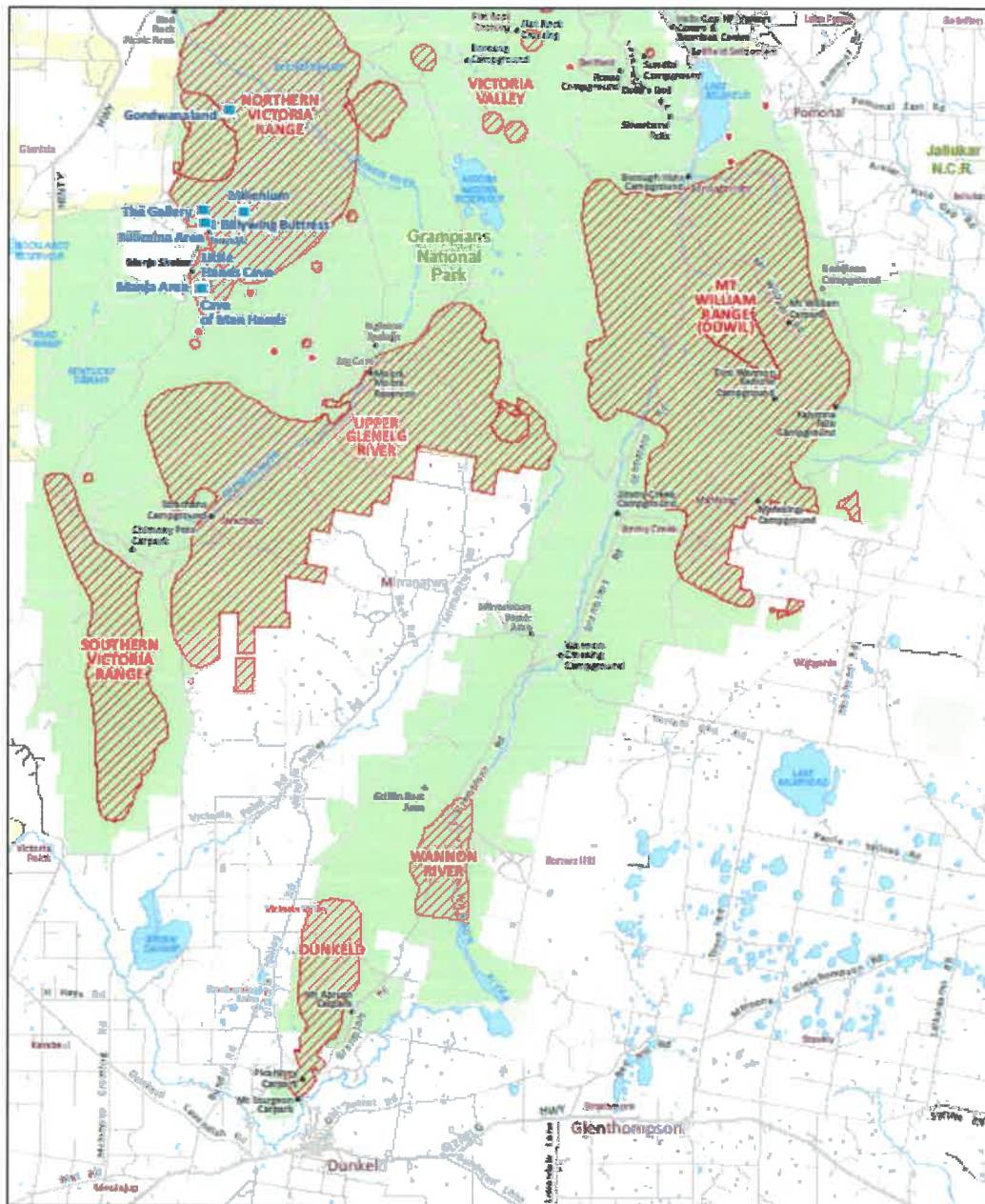
- ▲ Protected Areas - restrictions apply
- Eight focus sites where signage will be installed and compliance activities occurring
- National Parks
- Parks and Reserves
- State Forest
- ▨ Protected Areas - restrictions apply
- Parks Victoria Visitor Sites
- LOCALITY REGIONS



Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without error and therefore disclaims all liability which may arise from you relying on this information. Data source: geospatial.vic.gov.au. The State of Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

26/02/2019





Grampians National Park - Rock Climbing Exclusion Zones (South)

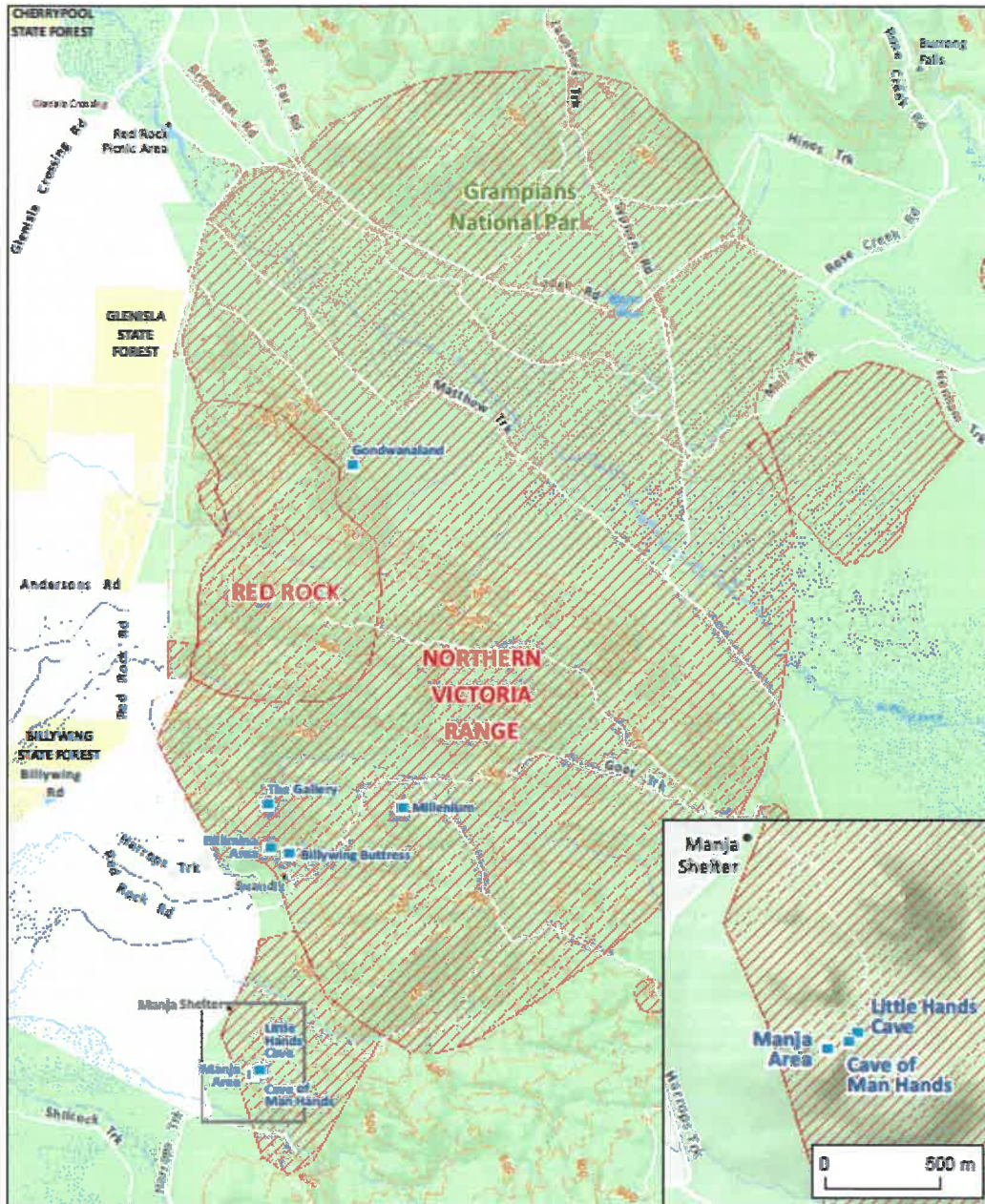
- Protected Areas - restrictions apply
- ▨ Protected Areas - restrictions apply
- Eight focus sites where signage will be installed and compliance activities occurring
- Parks Victoria Visitor Sites
- National Parks
- Parks and Reserves
- State Forest
- LOCALITY REGIONS



Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without error or of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability which may arise from you relying on or this information. Data source: statewidegreens: State Digital Mapbase. The State of Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

26/02/2019





Eight Focus Areas

- Eight focus sites where signage will be installed and compliance activities occurring
- Protected areas - restrictions apply
- ▲ Parks Victoria Visitor Sites
- Grampians National Park
- State Forest

LOCALITY REGIONS



Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without error or that there are no omissions or that the information is up to date. The State of Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

26/02/2019



Grampians National Park rock climbing Q&A

Speaking notes only, not for distribution

SUMMARY: From March 2019, Parks Victoria will be focussed on ensuring eight key locations in the western part of the Grampians National Park are protected and will be asking all climbing activity to cease in these areas indefinitely.

1. What is happening?

From March 2019, Parks Victoria will install signage in eight focus areas within the Grampians National Park where climbing is prohibited and Enforcement Officers will patrol from March onwards.

The eight focus areas where enforcement activity will take place from March are:

- Gondwanaland
- The Gallery
- Millenium
- Billimina Area
- Billywing Buttress
- Little Hands Cave
- Manja Area
- Cave of Man Hands

2. Why has this happened?

The increase in visitation and changes in climbing technique have impacted irreplaceable cultural places of significance, areas of unique environmental value and rare and endangered flora and fauna.

3. Where can't you climb?

Climbing is prohibited in all Special Protection Areas and designated no climb areas in the Grampians National Park. These areas are indicated on maps which can be found on the Parks Victoria website. Special Protection Areas are also listed in the Grampians National Park Management Plan.

4. Where can I climb?

You can climb outside of the Special Protection Areas. Over time Parks Victoria will be clearly signposting these areas so you will know when you are within a Special Protected Area. There are still hundreds of known climbing locations in the Grampians National Park including the Bundaleer, Mount Stapylton Amphitheatre, The Watch Tower, Wonderland Area and Halls Gap Valley.

There are no changes to all main visitor sites and they will continue to remain open.

Maps can be viewed on our website.

5. Will I be penalised or fined for climbing in a Special Protection Area or no climb area?

In March, signage will be installed and officers will be patrolling at eight key locations. Climbing in any of the eight key locations could result in penalties being issued. Officers will also be providing advice on the Park Regulations and promoting voluntary compliance.

Breaches of Park Regulations will be enforced; however it is our preference that people voluntarily comply with Park Regulations.

Action will be taken against any person engaging in littering, destroying vegetation, driving off defined tracks, damaging park infrastructure including signs and barriers, illegally camping and lighting fires and disobeying or obstructing Authorised Officers. Detailed maps and fact sheets to assist and inform climbers are available on the Parks Victoria website.

6. What is a Special Protection Area?

A Special Protection Area protects specific natural or cultural values where a special management focus is required. Page 11 of the [Grampians National Park Management Plan](#) outlines activities that can take place in Special Protection Areas and states bush walking and picnicking are permitted.

7. In October 2016 Parks Victoria issued a rock climbing and bouldering update which showed the south-western crags were open. Why has this changed?

An October 2016 statement released by Parks Victoria titled *Rock Climbing and Bouldering Update* is to be considered void as it contained incorrect information noting climbing is permitted in certain Special

Protection Areas which conflicts with the Grampians National Park Management Plan. We apologise for the confusion this has caused and are preparing a revised update with correct and clear information on climbing in the Grampians National Park.

8. Can I continue to climb in other parts of the Victoria Range and Red Rock Special Protection Areas?

Under the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan, rock climbing in Special Protection Areas is a prohibited activity. The Grampians National Park Management Plan will be reviewed with key stakeholders and Special Protection Area boundaries may change. There are still hundreds of known climbing locations in the Grampians National Park which are not located in the protected areas.

9. I have booked a climb with a Licenced Tour Operator operating inside a Special Protection Area.

Will my tour be cancelled?

There are still many other climbing options in the Grampians National Park that are not inside Special Protection Areas or no climbing areas. Speak with your Licenced Tour Operator to find out what it means for your booking.

10. Will Parks Victoria make any changes to the Special Protection Areas outlined in the Grampians National Park Management Plan?

Parks Victoria will begin a process to review the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan's Special Protection Areas. As part of this review, boundaries to the Special Protection Areas may change.

11. What impact will this have on tourism to the area, including small businesses?

Parks Victoria will meet with affected partners, Licenced Tourism Operators, stakeholder groups and local businesses over the coming months to work through what this means for them and to help find alternative climbing options for visitors that are outside the Special Protection Areas.

There are hundreds of climbing sites throughout the park that remain open and sit outside the Special Protection Areas for visitors to enjoy. Detailed maps and information sheets are available on our website to inform climbers.

There are no changes to the to all main visitor sites, which will continue to remain open.

12. What damage has been caused?

Our Rangers in the Grampians National Park observed instances of impact to cultural and environmental values which prompted these changes. This included instances of damage to rock faces through use of bolts, chalk and graffiti, damaging plants by pulling them from cracks in the rock, using drop mats and cutting new access tracks through forested areas and leaving rubbish including toilet paper as well as establishing campfire rings.

13. What are the impacts of climbing on environmental values?

Vegetation, including rare and endangered species, can be impacted as a result of people creating bush camps, cutting new access tracks and campfires in forested areas, damaging plants by pulling them from cracks in the rock and using drop mats which disturb fragile ecosystems. Additionally, rubbish and human waste, including toilet paper, negatively impacts natural areas.

14. How long will it take to review the Grampians National Park Management Plan's Special Protection Areas?

We will be working with key stakeholders and partners throughout the review process and will be providing more information about the review in the coming weeks.

15. Are you going to communicate and educate park users about behaviour change?

A stakeholder reference group will be established to involve stakeholders in next steps and the part we can all play in protecting our cultural heritage and environment and to identify where in the Grampians National Park climbing can continue.

We will communicate ongoing as the plan review progresses.

16. Why hasn't Parks Victoria restricted access to these sites previously?

Previously, these sites did not experience the high level of visitation and impact as they have in recent years. The increase in activity and changes in technique have impacted irreplaceable cultural and environmental assets to a level where enforcement is necessary in eight key locations in order to preserve these special places.

17. What if we climb carefully on these eight areas and refrain from using bolts and mattresses?

The eight locations have been closed to climbing indefinitely due to their significant cultural and environmental values. Parks Victoria is committed to ensuring they are preserved and protected and has identified climbing to have a detrimental impact on these special places hence implementing enforcement measures.

There are still hundreds of known climbing areas available for international and domestic visitors to enjoy.

18. Has Parks Victoria been remiss in its responsibilities to protect these sites?

Parks Victoria is focused on ensuring natural and cultural values are protected for future generations and are working closely with Traditional Owners in the Grampians region to protect important cultural heritage. The increase in activity and changes in technique have impacted precious cultural and environmental assets to a level where enforcement is necessary to preserve these special areas.

19. What is special about the Grampians National Park?

The Grampians National Park is assigned the World Conservation Union (IUCN) category II of the United Nation's list of National Parks and Protected Areas. Category II areas are managed primarily for ecosystem conservation and appropriate recreation. It is the fourth largest parks in Victoria and it is a core area for biodiversity and is recognised as the single most important botanical reserve in Victoria.

20. What do climbers need to be aware of when climbing in the Grampians National Park?

All parks visitors should be aware of **National Parks Regulations (2013)**. Under these regulations it is an offence to

- Interfere with vegetation. A person must not cut, fell, pick, remove, take, damage or destroy any vegetation
- Damage, remove or otherwise interfere with any rock or similar natural object in a park 53(1)

Therefore, it is an offence to:

- Remove vegetation to gain better access to a climbing site or bouldering problem
- Install or replace fixed rock-anchor protection (i.e. bolting). Any 'bolting' is illegal
- Trample vegetation by placing bouldering mats around the base of cliffs
- Construct informal walking paths to access climbing or bouldering site

Rock climbing in the Grampians:

Communications plan: initial phase/ week 1

10-15 Feb 2019

Purpose

- To discuss plans for the implementation of the Special Protection Areas and what this means for rock climbing in the Grampians National Park [REDACTED]

Approach

- Meet with [REDACTED] (Monday 11 February 2019)
- Meet with [REDACTED] (Tuesday 12 February 2019):
- [REDACTED]
 1. [REDACTED]
 2. [REDACTED]
 3. [REDACTED]
 4. [REDACTED]
 5. [REDACTED]
 6. [REDACTED]
 7. [REDACTED]

Key messages/ staff speaking notes

Key messages for the initial engagement with Traditional Owners and rock climbing community are below:

- Under the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan, rock climbing in Special Protection Areas at the Grampians National Park is a prohibited activity.
- In recent years rock climbing in the Grampians has significantly increased and contemporary rock climbing activities such as Bolting have emerged, creating significant risk to precious cultural and environmental assets.
- In the coming months, Parks Victoria will be working with partners, stakeholders and park users to phase out the activity in these areas and support climbers and other park users to find alternate locations in the Grampians to climb.
- This means that from March 2019, Parks Victoria will be installing signs in eight initial locations, that are at most risk due to increased climbing activity in the park. These initial locations are all in the Western part of the national park.
- There remain more than 300 known climbing locations in the park that will be unaffected by this change to ensure climbing remains in the Grampians.
- Parks Victoria will meet with affected partners, stakeholder groups and local businesses to work through what this means for them. Parks Victoria will also distribute supporting communications to raise awareness of this change.
- A stakeholder reference group will be established to involve the community and rock climbers in next steps and the part we can all play in protecting our cultural heritage and environment and to identify where in the Grampians climbing can continue.
- Starting this year, we will also be reviewing the Grampians National Park Management Plan.

Issues management

- Holding lines options prepared (see below)
- Social media monitoring of rock climbing pages and on key words
- West Region Communications Advisor to be briefed for all media enquires
- Simon Talbot, Chief Operating Officer, to act as project spokesperson if required

Media holding lines

- Parks Victoria has been working with Traditional Owners and the rock climbing community to find a resolution to ongoing impacts of rock climbing in some parts of Grampians National Park.
- We are currently working through what this looks like and will share the outcomes once they are determined.
- We are committed to preserving cultural and environmental values and will continue to work with Traditional Owners and the rock climbing community to ensure these are protected and impacted stakeholders are support through the transition, and climbing remains in the Grampians.

Ministerial

- Parks Victoria has been discussing with Traditional Owners a resolution to ongoing impacts caused by rock climbing in some parts of Grampians National Park.
- They are working closely with the rock climbing community and affected stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition during this process.
- The cultural and environmental values of these special places are of utmost importance and it's critical that they are preserved.
- There remain more than 300 known climbing locations in the park that will be unaffected by this change to ensure climbing remains in the Grampians.

Grampians National Park rock climbing LTO Q&A

Speaking notes only, not for distribution

1. Are LTO's affected by enforcement activities at the eight locations?

We will be working closely with affected Licensed Tour Operators to find new climbing locations within the Grampians National Park.

2. I currently operate in a Special Protection Area; how will these changes affect me?

Parks Victoria is working with partners, stakeholders, local businesses, Licensed Tour Operators and park users to revisit and review the Special Protection Areas which form part of The Grampians National Park Management Plan. This may result in changes to existing boundaries. We will be providing more information about the review process in coming weeks, including timelines for the review process.

3. Isn't it true that some of these are Licensed Tour Operators are working in Special Protection Areas in Summerday Valley and Hollow Mountain?

We are investigating and assessing the situation in Summerday Valley and Hollow Mountain over coming weeks and we will keep everyone affected informed of any changes that may impact their business.

4. When is enforcement planned to take place in other locations in Special Protection Areas?

Our key priority at this time is the eight initial locations where enforcement activity will begin. We will be undertaking reviews of other Special Protection Areas across the park and will communicate when we have any further updates or if anything changes.