

PARKS VICTORIA

Strategic Plan 2026-2029



Acknowledgement of Country

The land we know today as Victoria is a land of extraordinary contrast, from vast deserts to alpine snowfields, ancient rainforests to dormant volcanoes, rugged coastlines and inland waterways. This remarkable diversity is more than scenery; it is a living record of culture, connection, and care that stretches back thousands of generations.

Across the parks and reserves in Victoria lie cultural landscapes shaped by Aboriginal peoples through millennia of knowledge, stewardship, and deep relationship with Country. These places tell stories of resilience, ingenuity, and belonging, stories written not only in books, but in the land itself.

Parks Victoria respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these lands and waters. We honour their enduring connection to Country and their continuing role as custodians. Together, we commit to protecting and celebrating these landscapes so they remain vibrant for generations to come.



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Message from the Chair and Chief Executive Officer

Getting back to basics

This strategic plan sets our direction for the next 3 years, guided by a ‘back to basics’ approach that strengthens the foundations of our work as managers of public land and waters for current and future generations to benefit from.

We are privileged to care for Victoria’s most spectacular land and sea scapes. These places are special. They are special to Traditional Owners that have cared for this Country for tens of thousands of years; to the people and families that have a favourite camping and fishing spot that they enjoy each year; to the volunteers that have worked tirelessly for decades to restore ecosystems; and to the Park Rangers that have spent their careers welcoming visitors with pride. They are special because they protect Victoria’s unique plants and animals that underpin a healthy environment for us all.

With that privilege comes responsibility. We recognise that change is required so that Parks Victoria better meets the expectations of the communities we serve. Our changing climate, growing population and new technologies are also shaping how we manage our parks, ports and waterways into the future – creating new challenges and opportunities.

With the increasing importance of high-quality green and blue spaces for community connection and wellbeing, we must take an integrated approach that harmonises the needs of recreation and conservation – seeing them as complementary rather than in conflict.

In this dynamic context, simplicity and clarity matter more than ever. Our renewed focus is on getting the basics right, and thereby enabling access to great experiences in nature, supporting thriving natural environments, building stronger partnerships and empowering our people – ensuring that they are safe, accountable and outward looking.

By focusing on actions that create community value and doing them well, we’ll ensure enjoyment and protection of the parks, ports and waterways Victorians love.

Our strategy is anchored by a 10-year vision for the future, with clear outcomes driving the positive change we aim to achieve in the next 5 years. Our success depends on an engaged and capable workforce, and strong partnerships with Traditional Owners, local communities, volunteers and park users – supporting every Victorian to share a connection with nature.

The priorities in this strategy will shape the next wave of organisational improvement, positioning Parks Victoria for long-term success and ensuring our parks continue to support the health and resilience of communities and our precious natural environment.



Daniel Miller
Chair



Lee Miezis PSM
Chief Executive Officer

Strategy overview

This Strategic Plan is shaped by an outlook over 3 distinct horizons.



Our vision

Parks bringing people together

Our parks are places for connection – people with nature, communities with place, and generations with one another.

They are healthy and inviting spaces for recreation, safeguarding biodiversity, celebrating culture and maintaining our wellbeing.

Our purpose

We manage a diverse estate of parks, reserves and community facilities for all Victorians

We manage over 4 million hectares of Victoria's public land and waters, comprising more than 3,000 land and marine parks and reserves, and 70,000 built assets. We are the local port and waterway manager for Port Phillip Bay and Western Port; and the Yarra (Birrarrung), Maribyrnong and Patterson rivers.



Our strategic outcomes

Over the coming 5 years we want to achieve the following outcomes:

**All Victorians can
enjoy the outdoors**

**Natural and
cultural values and places
are well managed**

**Self-determination for
Traditional Owners is
advanced**

**Communities are vibrant
and prosperous**

**Volunteers feel valued
and supported**

**We have strong and
trusted partnerships**

About Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria is a statutory authority of the Victorian Government acting in accordance with the *Parks Victoria Act 2018*.

From the Alps to Gariwerd, the Murray River valley to Point Nepean, and Wilsons Promontory to St Kilda Pier, we are responsible for managing over 4 million hectares of public land and waters that together attract more than 100 million visits annually and are home to more than 4,300 native plants and around 1,000 native animal species. Parks Victoria plays a vital role in enabling people to enjoy Victoria's great outdoors, while protecting our natural environment and cultural heritage – the things that make our parks so special.

We operate under direction of a Board appointed by the Governor in Council, on recommendation of the Minister for Environment. The Board is responsible for directing and monitoring the business of Parks Victoria and is accountable to the Minister for its overall performance. It delegates day-to-day responsibility for operations and administration to Parks Victoria's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and executive team.

Our team of over 1,000 dedicated staff operate out of more than 100 locations across Victoria to ensure parks, ports and waterways are healthy and resilient for current and future generations. In doing so, we work in partnership with Traditional Owners, government and non-government organisations, volunteer and user groups, licensed tour operators, lessees, research institutes and the broader community.

Our regional boundaries



Managing Country together

The parks estate we oversee is more than land; it is Country with deep cultural significance, shaped by over 65,000 years of Traditional Owner knowledge and history.

These landscapes are rich with stories, practices, and relationships that continue to guide our approach to caring for them. As managers of parks, ports and waterways we recognise that we are on a learning journey, working alongside Traditional Owners to ensure these lands are managed for everyone's benefit. Traditional Owner cultural landscapes hold both tangible and symbolic meaning, encompassing unique worldviews, histories, and connections between people, ancestors, plants, animals, and places.

Parks Victoria understands the important role it plays in protecting the rich cultural values in our parks, ports and waterways, and supporting current and future generations to access and experience these areas to enjoy all that they offer.

In Victoria, legal frameworks support the recognition of Traditional Owner rights and responsibilities, including cultural heritage protection and land management. Parks Victoria is dedicated to respectfully partnering with Traditional Owners, as well as government, non-government, and community groups, to ensure Traditional Owners are at the heart of Country's management and care.

Our Traditional Owner Legislative Framework sets out statutory obligations under key legislation, including:

- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Victoria)
- *Native Title Act 1993* (Australia)
- *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* (Victoria)
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Victoria).

Statewide Treaty for Victoria

Victoria is the first Australian jurisdiction to have signed a treaty with Traditional Owners. Treaty sets a new benchmark for partnering with Traditional Owners in joint management and advancing self-determination.

In realising Treaty, Parks Victoria is committed to enabling more empowered partnerships and governance arrangements with Traditional Owners to managing Country. Building upon existing relationships, Parks Victoria will work to:

- Strengthen governance towards greater power sharing with Traditional Owners
- Embed Treaty compatibility and self-determination in our park management operations
- Deliver on existing commitments through existing agreements with Traditional Owners
- Reform funding and accountability mechanisms.

Partnerships with other agencies, departments and Traditional Owner bodies will be key in successfully implementing Treaty.



Our organisational structure

Our structure and governance arrangements provide clear accountabilities and oversight of our activities.



Our people and values

Putting our people first

Our people are the foundation of everything we achieve.

We are committed to building a diverse workforce – and creating a safe, respectful, and accessible place for all. We drive a supportive and engaging workplace through continuous investment in learning and development. We value diverse perspectives and teamwork, striving for a welcoming culture with shared goals in a ‘one-Parks Victoria’ environment.

The safety and wellbeing of our people is foremost. Many work outdoors in remote environments, which we know carries inherent safety risks. We encourage a culture of speaking up and acting to prevent physical and psychological harm. Our focus is on prevention through safe work practices and the proactive identification and management of hazards by everyone.

We are also committed to building on our progress and achievements in diversity and inclusion – ensuring Parks Victoria is a place that everyone feels safe to be themselves and to work to their full potential. This approach also underpins our relationship with volunteers and partners, who are so critical to our success.

A vibrant organisational culture

The Victorian public sector values guide how we work and serve our community. At Parks Victoria, these values are lived every day in how we care for people and places.

Our commitments build on these values and are at the core of the culture we aspire to build together – the way we go about our work and behaviours that are expected and celebrated at Parks Victoria.



Victorian public sector values

Responsiveness



Impartiality



Respect



Human Rights



Integrity



Accountability



Leadership



Our commitments



Delivering as One

Working together to achieve our shared goals



Our People First

Genuine care, serving others and the employee experience



Being Our Best

Doing the best we can while being the best we can

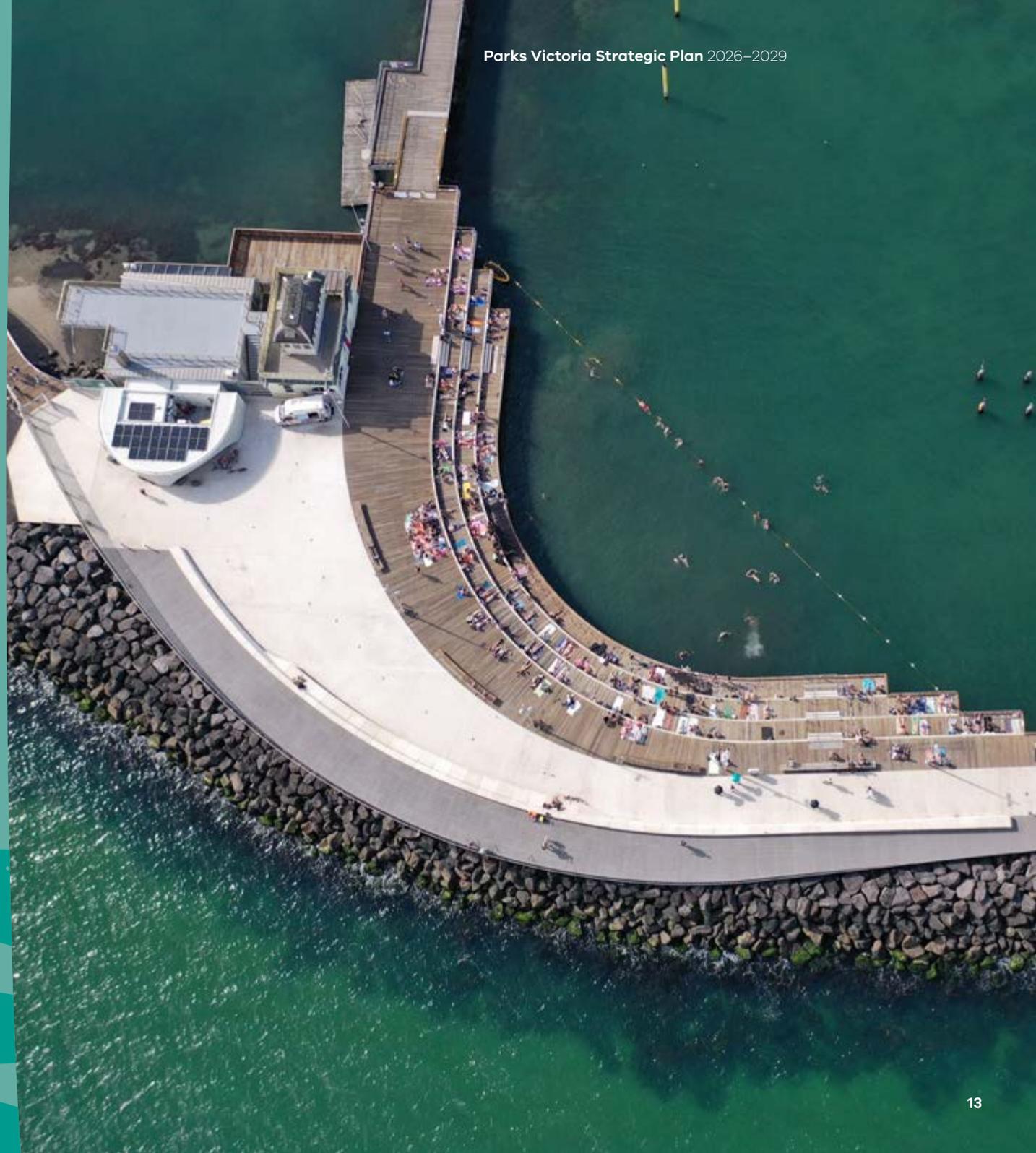


Image: Aerial image taken at St. Kilda Pier, Bunurong Sea Country.

Our priorities

To achieve the strategic outcomes, our focus for the next 3 years is balanced across 4 priority areas.

01 Access and experience

Greater opportunities to enjoy our parks, ports and waterways

- 1.1 Improve engagement with park users to better understand and deliver on their needs.
- 1.2 Build stronger partnerships with Traditional Owners, supporting their cultural, economic and environmental aspirations on Country.
- 1.3 Prioritise repair and maintenance of our built assets so parks are more reliably open and accessible.
- 1.4 Accelerate delivery of new infrastructure in parks to support improved visitor experiences.
- 1.5 Increase the diversity of recreational and commercial opportunities in our parks.

02 Management and conservation

Healthy and resilient parks, ports and waterways

- 2.1 Direct more conservation investment to on-ground action, focusing on the greatest threats to park values and securing Victoria's biodiversity.
- 2.2 Reform park management planning to better guide practical on-ground action that meets legal requirements and community expectations.
- 2.3 Improve monitoring, evaluation and reporting on park management activities to enhance transparency and decision making.
- 2.4 Drive behaviour change to ensure our parks are valued, cared for and used responsibly.
- 2.5 Strengthen how we prepare for, respond to and recover from impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

03 Partners and stakeholders

Strong partnerships underpinned by trust and shared purpose

- 3.1 Communicate early, honestly and regularly with Traditional Owners, local communities and stakeholders about decisions that impact them.
- 3.2 Empower volunteers and partners by giving them the access, tools and support they need to contribute to the management of our parks.
- 3.3 Collaborate with communities, businesses and philanthropy to drive more integrated approaches to managing and enhancing our parks.
- 3.4 Deliver education and citizen science programs to increase awareness, understanding and knowledge of our environmental and cultural values.

04 People and systems

A more connected, empowered and accountable team

- 4.1 Grow the capability, experience and resilience of our people to meet current and future challenges.
- 4.2 Increase accountability, agility and resourcefulness in making decisions, managing risk and realising opportunities.
- 4.3 Improve our systems, processes and ways of working, so that we are more efficient, effective and safe in delivering our core functions.
- 4.4 Ensure we are operationally sustainable through strong financial management, continuous improvement and innovation.



01

Access and experience



Greater opportunities to enjoy our parks, ports and waterways

Providing access and opportunity for great experiences in parks sits at the heart of our connection with the community. This focus ensures parks are safe, inclusive and welcoming, with assets and services that support great visitor experiences. By enabling people to engage with nature, and expanding the diversity of experiences available, we can further strengthen the social, cultural and economic value parks create for Victoria.

Strategic priorities

Our focus for the next 3 years:

- 1.1 **Improve** engagement with park users to better understand and deliver on their needs.
- 1.2 **Build** stronger partnerships with Traditional Owners, supporting their cultural, economic and environmental aspirations on Country.
- 1.3 **Prioritise** repair and maintenance of our built assets so parks are more reliably open and accessible.
- 1.4 **Accelerate** delivery of new infrastructure in parks to support improved visitor experiences.
- 1.5 **Increase** the diversity of recreational and commercial opportunities in our parks.

Signals of success

Changes we expect to see:



- Improved park user satisfaction and engagement.
- Growth in partnerships and joint initiatives with Traditional Owners.
- More of our parks and assets remain open, more of the time.
- Infrastructure projects delivered on time and on budget.
- More recreational and commercial opportunities available across parks, ports and waterways.





02

Management and conservation



Healthy and resilient parks, ports and waterways

Effective management and conservation are the foundation of Parks Victoria's role in protecting the environment. Caring for the health and resilience of Victoria's parks, ports and waterways safeguards our natural assets against environmental threats. Ensuring parks are managed with transparency, evidence and accountability strengthens their habitat quality and long-term climate resilience.

Strategic priorities

Our focus for the next 3 years:

- 2.1 **Direct** more conservation investment to on-ground action, focusing on the greatest threats to park values and securing Victoria's biodiversity.
- 2.2 **Reform** park management planning to better guide practical on-ground action that meets legal requirements and community expectations.
- 2.3 **Improve** monitoring, evaluation and reporting on park management activities to enhance transparency and decision making.
- 2.4 **Drive** behaviour change to ensure our parks are valued, cared for and used responsibly.
- 2.5 **Strengthen** how we prepare for, respond to and recover from impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

Signals of success



Changes we expect to see:

- More area treated for pest plants and animals.
- Fit for purpose park management plans.
- Better data informing park management.
- Responsible enjoyment of parks, ports and waterways.
- Faster recovery and improved resilience to climate and disaster impacts.





03

Partners and stakeholders



Strong partnerships underpinned by trust and shared purpose

Partner and stakeholder relationships are essential to how Parks Victoria delivers value. Caring for parks, ports and waterways is a shared responsibility that depends on trust, collaboration and collective effort. This priority area focuses on building strong, transparent relationships with volunteers, partners and communities. By working together and empowering others to contribute, we can achieve more integrated, innovative and enduring outcomes for nature and communities.

Strategic priorities

Our focus for the next 3 years:

- 3.1 **Communicate** early, honestly and regularly with Traditional Owners, local communities and stakeholders about decisions that impact them.
- 3.2 **Empower** volunteers and partners by giving them the access, tools and support they need to contribute to the management of our parks.
- 3.3 **Collaborate** with communities, businesses and philanthropy to drive more integrated approaches to managing and enhancing our parks.
- 3.4 **Deliver** education and citizen science programs to increase awareness, understanding and knowledge of our environmental and cultural values.

Signals of success



Changes we expect to see:

- Greater community and stakeholder confidence and trust in Parks Victoria.
- Growth in active volunteer numbers and partner contributions.
- Increase in joint projects and co-funded initiatives.
- More participants in education and citizen science programs.





04

People and systems



A more connected, empowered and accountable team

Our people and systems drive how we manage Victoria's parks, ports and waterways, and connect with communities who enjoy them. Our success depends on capable and connected teams, supported by clear processes and reliable systems that help them make good decisions to deliver safely and efficiently. By continually improving how we work, we strengthen our ability to meet new challenges and opportunities across the diverse landscapes we manage.

Strategic priorities

Our focus for the next 3 years:

- 4.1 **Grow** the capability, experience and resilience of our people to meet current and future challenges.
- 4.2 **Increase** accountability, agility and resourcefulness in making decisions, managing risk and realising opportunities.
- 4.3 **Improve** our systems, processes and ways of working, so that we are more efficient, effective and safe in delivering our core functions.
- 4.4 **Ensure** we are operationally sustainable through strong financial management, continuous improvement and innovation.

Signals of success

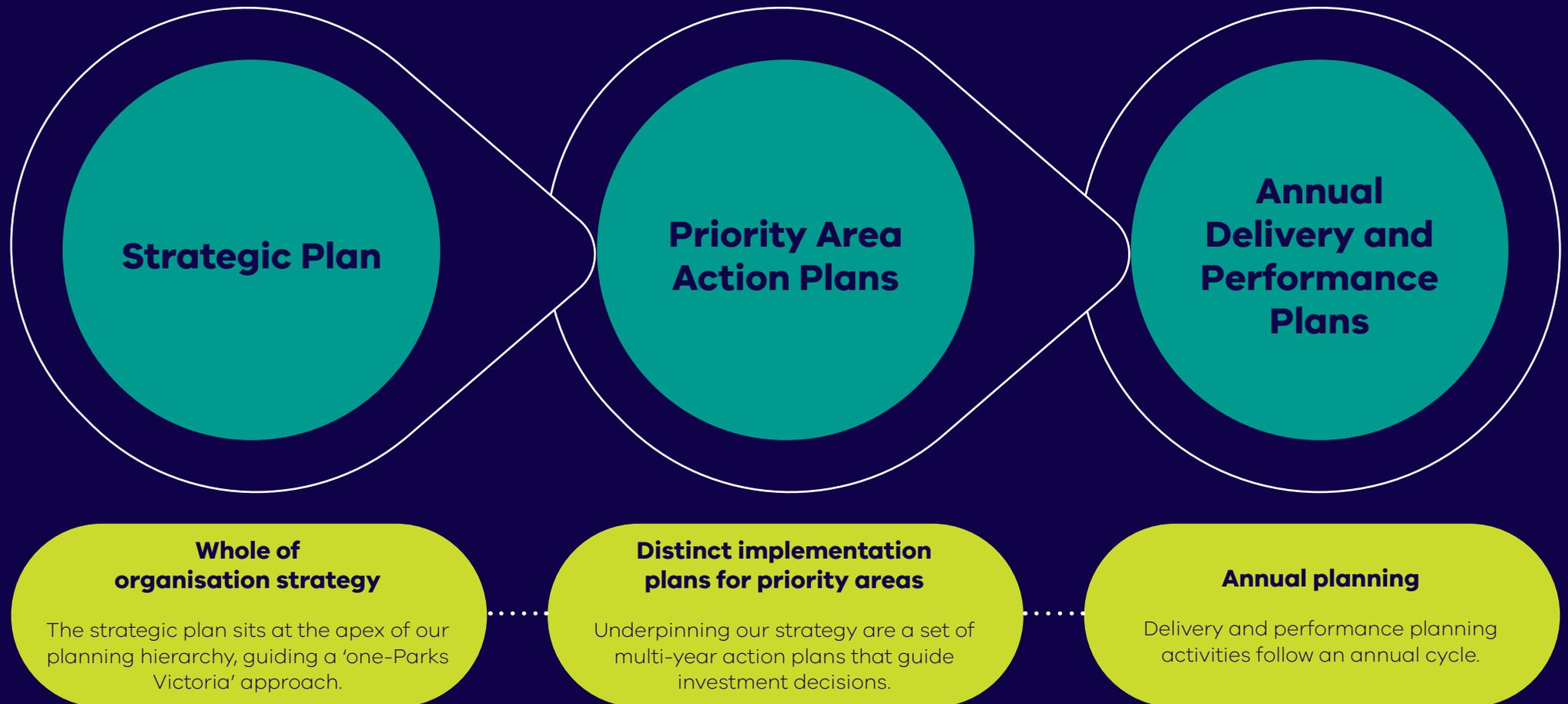


Changes we expect to see:

- Our people are safe, capable and supported to deliver their work.
- We are an employer of choice.
- Systems and processes are streamlined and fit for purpose.
- Strong financial performance and resource management.
- Great ideas are embraced and implemented.
- We are a learning organisation.

Our planning framework

Alongside this strategic plan, we are implementing a simple and clear framework for aligning Parks Victoria’s investment decisions, risk management, delivery and performance planning with the strategic outcomes we want to achieve.



Annual planning and reporting

This Strategic Plan 2026–29 defines our purpose and the signals of success we want to see in this period.

Each financial year, Parks Victoria produces an Annual Delivery Plan describing what we plan to deliver that year, aligned to our strategic outcomes and priority areas. We publish our Annual Delivery Plan on our website. We report on our performance each financial year in our Annual Report, which is tabled in the Victorian Parliament and published on our website.



Image credits

Cover - People enjoying camping at Lerderderg State Park, Wurundjeri Country.

Page 2 - View taken at Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park, Djab Wurrung, Jadawadjali and Gunditjmara Country.

Page 6 - People enjoying a barbecue at Point Nepean National Park, Bunurong Country.

Page 9 - Working in partnership with the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation on Gunditjmara Country.

Page 11 - A ranger talking to a group of children at Ocean Grove Nature Conservation Reserve, Wadawurrung Country.

Page 12 - A ranger walking in Little Desert National Park, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Country.

Page 13 - Aerial image taken at St Kilda Pier, Bunurong Sea Country.

Page 15 - A ranger leading children through Dandenong Ranges National Park, Wurundjeri Country.

Page 16 - A ranger monitoring shorebirds at Mornington Peninsula National Park, Bunurong Country.

Page 17 - Staff at the Aboriginal Staff Conference, Yorta Yorta Country.

Page 18 - Volunteers clearing tracks at Wilsons Promontory National Park.

Page 19 - Werribee Park community vegetable garden volunteers, supporting community food relief.

Page 20 - A boat cruising the Yarra River (Birrarung), Wurundjeri Country.

Page 21 - Conservation monitoring on remote islands by Parks Victoria and Zoos Victoria staff at Wilsons Promontory National Park.

Page 22 - A ranger fixing pathway at Wilsons Promontory National Park.

Page 24 - Two campers in the snow at Mount Buffalo, Alpine National Park, Taungurung Country.



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