

Summary of relevant Park Victoria and governmental initiatives developed since the 2017-2018 State of the Parks assessment

The 2017-18 *State of the Parks* report is based on quantitative and qualitative data gathered over 2017 and early 2018. For many findings and indicators, subsequent management decisions and approaches, prioritisation processes, new funding streams, new policy and plan development, and uplifts in capability and capacity will have influenced these reporting areas.

The tables below summarise specific management actions and contextual changes that have occurred since 2018 (by major themes) that have made, or are making, a material difference to a number of reported indicators with poor results, status and/or trends.

The scale, severity and ongoing impacts of the 2019 - 2020 major bushfires across Australia, including on 1.5 million hectares in eastern Victoria, has had a major influence on many of the natural, cultural, social and economic indicators for the parks estate addressed in the 2017-18 *State of the Parks* report. Impacts and management implications of these fires will be addressed in the next State of the Parks evaluation.

1. Management of Nature Conservation

State of the Parks 2018 finding	Response since 2018 SoP assessment
Extent objectives met for weeds, pest animals, non-compliance and visitor impacts has declined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority parks (e.g. Mallee, Grampians, Alps) have implemented well-planned, resourced and monitored weed, pest animal and habitat restoration initiatives (e.g. Semi-arid woodland total grazing management and revegetation, implementation of grazer controls in Grampians, and weed and grazer controls for Alpine peatlands). • Targeted compliance programs (e.g. illegal firewood removal).
Extent objectives met for nature conservation of terrestrial parks has declined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive development of Conservation Action Plans for each of 18 landscape units across the state is identifying conservation assets and threats, setting conservation objectives and prioritising required actions and resourcing. • Since 2018, Conservation Action Plans have been released for the Mallee, Wimmera and River Red Gum Landscapes.
50% of the streams in the River Red Gum and Western Port and Port Phillip landscapes are in poor or very poor condition (2010 ISC results).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks Victoria has appointed a dedicated Program Lead (Ecological Water) in its Environment and Science Division. • Consequently, Parks Victoria is increasingly collaborating and coordinating with Catchment Management Authorities in developing Seasonal Watering Plans for priority locations, in delivering works that increase the area of water-dependent ecosystems that can receive floodwater or

	<p>environmental water, and in establishing water quality monitoring with EPA and community groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This collaboration and coordination was recently recognised as improving in the recent VAGO audit of effective management of Victoria’s Ramsar wetlands. • Collaboration with Melbourne Water is also delivering improvements in streamside vegetation within urban and peri-urban parks.
Extent objectives met for nature conservation of conservation reserves and NP Act terrestrial parks has declined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation programs that commenced in 2018 under Biodiversity 2037 funding through the Biodiversity Response Funding initiative (BRP) are delivering cost-effective reduction of threats to high priority conservation values which largely occur on the parks estate.

2. Management of Traditional Owner cultural values

State of the Parks 2018 finding	Response since 2018 SoP assessment
Condition of Traditional Owner cultural values was unknown in just over a third of relevant parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of <i>Managing Country Together Framework</i>. • Growth in Parks Victoria’s <i>Managing Country Together</i> team capability and capacity. • Program of rock art re-discovery and condition assessments. • Cultural heritage surveys in north-west Victoria and Gippsland. • Data integrity audit of PV Aboriginal places and commenced program of correcting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) records. • Updated procedures for complying with the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>. • Development and release of online <i>Aboriginal Heritage Assessment System</i>, replacing previous paper-based assessment systems. • Three new <i>Joint Management Plans</i> (covering 17 parks) developed by Traditional Owner Land Management Boards.
Less than 30% of parks fully or substantially met objectives for non-compliance and visitor impacts on Traditional Owner cultural values.	

3. Management of Historic Heritage

State of the Parks 2018 finding	Response since 2018 SoP assessment
Condition of historic heritage places and objects has declined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks Victoria has recently developed a new <i>Heritage Framework and Action Plan</i> that guides conservation and management priorities for significant heritage places. • Parks Victoria now undertakes condition monitoring of priority heritage buildings and structures using its <i>Heritage Asset Management App</i> (HAMA), with this data being used to prioritise maintenance funding to

	<p>where it is most needed and to build strong business cases for funding of essential repairs and restoration of those places of greatest significance at greatest risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A program of community events and interpretation at sites at key heritage places have been initiated to raise awareness of heritage places on the parks estate as shared community assets. • Parks Victoria is also working more closely with lessees with responsibility for conservation of heritage buildings to ensure that conservation maintenance obligations are being met.
Condition of priority parks (those with places on the Victorian Heritage Register) has declined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous places of State heritage significance have been, or are in the process, of undergoing essential repairs through funding sources such as the Victorian Government's <i>Living Heritage Grants</i> program (e.g. Coolart homestead, Werribee Mansion, Days Mill), <i>Pick my Project</i> and other sources (e.g. Mount Buffalo Chalet, Point Nepean). • Further condition assessments have and are being undertaken to quantify maintenance and repair requirements of other priority heritage places on the Heritage Register.
Extent objectives met for priority parks (those with places on the Victorian Heritage Register) has declined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the condition of several significant built heritage assets has improved through external funding grants, there remains a backlog of essential repairs. • New programs of community events at key heritage places have been implemented and new ways of connecting to heritage (e.g. interactive online tours) have been and are in development. • Detailed condition assessments are providing valuable evidence to build funding business cases for essential repairs and community connection and activation.

4. Management for Visitors and Community

State of the Parks 2018 finding	Response since 2018 SoP assessment
Asset condition (considering all assets within a park) has declined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued roll out of the <i>Visitor Experience Framework</i> (VEF) to assist prioritisation. • Infrastructure improvements at a range of priority parks and sites. • <i>Great Victorian Outdoors</i> funding secured from the state government to create 30 new campgrounds, upgrade 30 campgrounds, upgrade four-wheel-drive tracks and develop new walking trails. • Appointment of 53 <i>Strengthening Parks Victoria</i> (SPV) rangers across the state.
The extent to which relevant parks met objectives for visitor opportunities, asset management, park servicing, visitor facilities and visitor safety has declined.	
50% of visitors are dissatisfied with the maintenance of playgrounds.	

<p>Adequate opportunities for learning about nature or heritage were provided in 44% of relevant parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the <i>Learning in Nature</i> plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expansion of <i>Junior Ranger</i> program both on line and face-to-face. ○ Launch of <i>Bush Kinder</i> handbook; 16 new <i>Bush Kinders</i> established (77 active <i>Bush Kinder</i> groups). ○ Collaborated with EarthWatch to establish 15 <i>ClimateWatch</i> trails across the State on PV sites. ○ New <i>Learning in Nature</i> website. ○ New education programs. ○ <i>Volunteer Guide Interpretation Program</i> developed. ○ On-site interpretation projects developed at key parks.
<p>Community satisfaction with the management of metropolitan parks has declined since 2016.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential artefact of changes in methods of data collection.

5. Park Planning

<p>25% of National Park Act parks have a management plan older than 15 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four new management plans, covering 20 parks managed under the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i> have been developed and released. • A further two plans (covering four National Park Act parks) are currently in development.
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