

Meeting notes

Meeting: Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) Meeting 5

Date: Tuesday 20 April 2021

Location: Online meeting

Independent Chair: Mark Dingle (Deloitte)

Parks Victoria staff: Stuart Hughes (Director Park Planning and Policy), Josh Chikuse (Manager Park Management Planning), Koel Wrigley (Stakeholder Engagement Advisor)

Parks Victoria observers: John Pandazopoulos (Parks Victoria Board Chair)

Participating organisations:

- Victorian National Parks Association
- Outdoors Victoria
- Grampians Tourism
- Bushwalking Victoria
- Rock climbing Founding Council
- Four Wheel Drive Victoria
- Horsham Rural City Council
- Southern Grampians Shire Council
- Ararat Rural City Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Grampians Advisory Group representative
- Aboriginal Victoria
- DELWP FFR Grampians Region

Apologies: Friends of Grampians Gariwerd

The below meeting notes have been prepared to reflect the major themes of the discussion during the Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) meeting for the Greater Gariwerd Landscape Draft Management Plan (the plan), and will be made publicly available from <https://engage.vic.gov.au/grampians-management-plan>. Organisations participating in the SRG are encouraged to share meeting notes with their community.

In this meeting confidential information was shared with SRG members before being publicly released. Therefore, some discussions will be omitted from these notes, which are outlined below.

Meeting purpose

- To share with SRG members the key feedback received through the engagement process and review key topics for further consideration as the plan is finalised.

Welcome and introductions

- The group was welcomed by Mark Dingle, the independent chair (the chair), who acknowledged country and the Traditional Owners.

- The chair introduced each participant.
- The chair began the meeting by outlining the agenda and purpose of the days meeting. They then recapped the SRG process and where we are in the development of the draft plan.

Presentation on the engagement process for the Draft Landscape Management Plan including; objectives, promotion, media and engagement events.

- An overview of the engagement process for the Draft Landscape Management Plan that ran from November 2020 to January 2021, was presented to the group.
- At the conclusion of the presentation, SRG member were asked to reflect on the question ‘*Are there ways we can improve the engagement process for your communities in the future?*’
- Their responses were:
 - There were elements of the plan that polarised people; local community members, recreational users, land holders, Traditional Owners, businesses, and Park Rangers. It would have been good to have seen the community being brought together not polarised, people have been pushed into different positions and they are holding them. When this is all finished how will we implement this together? In the future it would be good to focus in the engagement is bringing people together not dividing us.
 - Few things are more polarising than the use of public land. The actual purpose of a National Park was outlined at the start – which was good. Some elements were handled well however, one of the key requirements is to follow the National Parks Act and the obligations there. It is important to continue education about what these are as the Act is the basis of the plan.
 - The scheduling times for consultation created challenges, time of year and session times.
 - Investigating the re-introduction of the dingo was a very polarising issue – made it hard to have an in depth conversation. In the future would like to see early presentations to Councillors. Might have been helpful to use other case studies and other examples for dingos

Presentation of the high-level results from the engagement program, followed by questions and answers from the group.

- The presentation outlined the key findings from the engagement – at this stage these results are confidential. The full engagement summary report will be released with the final Landscape Management Plan.
- The questions asked were:
 - In the analysis is there any weighting for the accuracy of the feedback? Response: the report does not weight feedback by type, number or accuracy. Instead it aims to present the full breadth of feedback as the community provided it. The next process where the planning team considers whether any strategies need to be adjusted in the final plan, reviews for accuracy and feasibility.

- Was there much feedback on fire? Response: there was specific feedback on campfires from some people, but it was not one of the topics with the highest feedback.
- Was there much on authorised uses such as water collection and roads? Response: no that was not a key area of feedback.
- What will be presented in the final report. The final report will detail feedback by chapter, overall what the key messages were, and more detailed feedback on the key issue areas. The final Landscape Management Plan will also outline how community feedback was considered and responded to.

Steps to finalizing the plan and exploring key topics.

- The planning team outlined the next steps for considering feedback, doing further research and review, and making the decisions about what will be in the final plan. It was reiterated that the final decisions for the plan are made by the Project Control Group which includes senior Parks Victoria staff and representatives from the three Traditional Owners groups.
- Following the presentation four key topics were discussed with the SRG to get their feedback on possible benefits and risks. This discussion is confidential until the final plan is released.

Wrap up and next steps

- This was the last official meeting for the SRG. However, there was discussion and agreement that there will be a presentation once the final Plan is released to close out their process and ensure the SRG members and their communities have the up to date information.
- The chair thanked participants and closed the meeting.
- After the close of the full SRG meeting a separate conversation was held with the two SRG members with a particular interest in rock climbing (Rock climbing Founding Council and Outdoors Victoria). The purpose of this discussion was to provide more detail on the feedback around rock climbing management in the Draft Plan. The content of this discussion is confidential at this time, but the key message Parks Victoria heard was the importance to the climbing community of having an ongoing consultative process/group as the plan is implemented.