

AGENDA

MEETING OF THE **HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL**

To be held on
25 November 2024

At 5.30pm

In the
Council Chamber, Civic Centre
18 Roberts Avenue, HORSHAM



**COUNCILLORS are respectfully requested to attend the Council Meeting
of the Horsham Rural City Council to be held on 25 November 2024
in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm**

Order of Business

PRESENT

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

1. PRAYER

Almighty God, we pledge ourselves to work in harmony for, the social, cultural and economic well-being of our Rural City. Help us to be wise in our deliberations and fair in our actions, so that prosperity and happiness shall be the lot of our people. AMEN

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY STATEMENT

Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the five Traditional Owner groups of this land; the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people. We recognise the important and ongoing place that all Indigenous people hold in our community.

We pay our respects to the Elders, both past and present, and commit to working together in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect for the benefit of the broader community and future generations.

3. OPENING AND WELCOME

The Chairman will formally welcome those in attendance to the meeting. The Mayor to advise that the meeting will be recorded to maintain a video archive, which will be available on the Horsham Rural City Council website as soon as practicable.

4. APOLOGIES

5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Recommendation

That the minutes emanating from the Council Meeting of the Horsham Rural City Council held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Horsham at 5.30pm on 21 October 2024 be adopted.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken.

Members of Staff

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, officers or people engaged under contract to the Council providing a report or advice to Council must disclose any conflicts of interests in the matter, including the type of interest.

8. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION	6
9. OFFICERS REPORTS	6
9.1 MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE MOUNT ARAPILES-TOOAN STATE PARK (DYURRITE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE) DRAFT AMENDMENT, PARKS VICTORIA 2024	6
9.2 COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL AND REGULATORY COMMITTEES	13
9.3 RECRUITMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	17
REPORTS FOR INFORMATION	21
9.4 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND GROWTH DEPARTMENT REPORT	21
10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	29
11. URGENT BUSINESS.....	30
12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS	31
13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS.....	32
13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS.....	32
13.2 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.....	32
13.3 INWARD CORRESPONDENCE.....	32
13.4 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES	32
14. NOTICE OF MOTION.....	33
15. CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS	
15.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE: ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR	
<i>Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(f) –Personal Information</i>	
15.2 CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF ALTERNATIVE DAILY COVER FOR DOOEN LANDFILL.....	
<i>Defined as confidential information in accordance with Local Government Act 2020 - Section 3(1)(g) – Private Commercial Information</i>	

CLOSE

CRAIG NIEMANN
Chief Executive Officer

REPORTS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

9. OFFICERS REPORTS

9.1 MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE MOUNT ARAPILES-TOOAN STATE PARK (DYURRITE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE) DRAFT AMENDMENT, PARKS VICTORIA 2024

Author's Name:	Fiona Gormann	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Manager Investment Attraction and Growth	Directorate:	Communities and Place
Department:	Investment Attraction and Growth	File Number:	F15/A15/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment, Parks Victoria 2024 (**Appendix 9.1A**)

Summary of submissions received in response to the public release of the Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment by Parks Victoria (**Appendix 9.1B**)

Purpose

To provide Council with an overview of the Community sentiment regarding the release of the Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment, Parks Victoria 2024.

Summary

- Since Parks Victoria released the *Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment*, Council has received over 130 submissions in response.
- The majority of the submissions are disappointed with the lack of consultation undertaken by Parks Victoria with key stakeholders, predominantly the rock-climbing community.
- The majority of submissions received, acknowledge that they respect and are sensitive to the cultural heritage significance and value of the site.
- The Natimuk Economic and Social Project Advisory Committee (PAC) at their meeting held 14 November raised a number of significant questions and concerns and proposed solutions
- Council has an opportunity to navigate a positive pathway forward through an advocacy role with all parties including Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) and State Government.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Write to the relevant Ministers and request that they meet with Council to discuss the Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment.
2. Invite Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC) to meet with Council to further understand the importance of the Dyurrite Cultural Landscape to Traditional Owners and the future preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and economic growth.
3. Write to the relevant Ministers, advocating to the State Government to request an extension of time of three months to ensure that effective engagement with the local community occurs, so that the community gains a full understanding of proposed changes to rock-climbing and other associated activities at Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) and the cultural importance of the site.
4. Write to the relevant Ministers, advocating to the State Government that a reference group be established representing a diverse range of users that have strong associations with Dyurrite and the local Natimuk community. That this group work together to oversee the implementation of the amended Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) including any State Government investment.
5. Request that the State Government fund an economic and social impact assessment of this site as a destination, including the number of visitors and professional people who as a result of *Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park* (Dyurrite) chose to move here.

REPORT

Background

Parks Victoria released the *Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment* (MPA) with the aim to balance recreational use and the protection of cultural heritage and the environment.

Parks Victoria advised that the plan has been updated to reflect what was rediscovered in the recent cultural and environmental surveys and listed below:

- Tens of thousands of artefacts, scarred trees, rock art with evidence dating back at least 3000 years, and one of the largest indigenous stone quarry complexes found in Australia
- Threatened plants including the Skeleton Fork Fern (*Psilotum nudum*) and the Western Pellitory (*Parietaria australis*).

The MPA outlines where recreational activities, including rock-climbing, can take place to protect cultural heritage and the environment.

The MPA has not been well received from the local community and business operators, visitors to our region and the rock-climbing community this is evident by over 130 submissions Council received.

Discussion

Since the release of the MPA, Council has received over 130 submissions (refer to summary of submissions received **Appendix (9.1B)**). Additionally, Council has closely monitored community reactions, including feedback from residents and stakeholders across the region. These insights have been gathered through meetings, local and national media coverage, Facebook discussions, as well as emails and phone calls. Council is concerned that if the community and key stakeholders are not given additional time to respond to the MPA, it could deepen the existing tensions and divisions within the community.

The Natimuk Economic and Social Project Advisory Committee (PAC) at their meeting held 14 November raised a number of significant questions and concerns and proposed solutions. They are predominantly concerned about the impact of the proposed changes to the local Natimuk community and economy and how this also may impact on the wider region.

A summary of key concerns and statements made in the submissions that Council received is as follows:

- There has not been meaningful consultation with rock-climbers and also peak climbing bodies
- Dyurrite is one of the most valued rock-climbing sites in the world
- There should be direct consultation between BGLC and rock-climbers
- Balance of usage rather than blanket bans
- Propose exploring more balanced approaches. Enhanced management strategies, increased education and awareness programs, and more stringent regulations on climbing practices could address environmental and cultural concerns without resorting to such significant closures
- There is strong commitment to and evidence of cultural values by rock climbing communities
- 'Gariwerd Wimmera Reconciliation Network (GWRN) provided a detailed 54-page report, from a rock-climbing perspective, to assist decision-makers', GWRN clearly state that 'We did not act on behalf of the climbing community or claim to act as 'consultation' with the climbing community. We have always been clear that our relationship as a reconciliation network is with the Traditional Owners.

- Call for a pause on the implementation of any new climbing closures until such a review can be conducted.

Regarding the MPA, Council's submission to the State Government aims to provide a balanced assessment, considering potential benefits, concerns and impacts, across our diverse community and acknowledge that there is a broad range of opinions not only within our municipality but further reaching to the broader region and global impact on rock-climbers who travel to Dyurrite from all parts of the world.

Council has established a strong partnership with Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC), and as we work through the various issues and concerns highlighted in the submissions received, as well as in our advocacy to the State Government, our goal is to further strengthen and uphold this partnership. We are committed to a collaborative approach, seeking shared opportunities to achieve positive outcomes

Options to Consider

1. Should Council decide not to take an advocacy role, there is a risk that our diverse community may experience division, and the Cultural Heritage of the Dyurrite landscape may not be fully recognised or understood.
2. By engaging with Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC), Council can deepen its understanding of the cultural significance of the Dyurrite landscape, build stronger relationships, and demonstrate respect and commitment to preserving cultural heritage.
3. If Council does not engage with Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC), it risks missing vital insights into the cultural importance of the Dyurrite landscape, potentially leading to decisions that lack inclusivity and harm relationships with Traditional Owners.
4. By writing to the relevant Ministers and requesting a meeting to discuss the Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment, Council can actively engage in shaping a well-informed approach, fostering collaboration, and advocating for outcomes that align with community interests.
5. If Council chooses not to write to the relevant Ministers and request a meeting to discuss the Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment, there is a missed opportunity to influence decision-making, potentially leading to outcomes that do not fully address community needs or priorities.
6. By requesting that the State Government fund an economic and social assessment of Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite) as a destination, including data on visitor numbers and individuals relocating to the area due to the site, Council can demonstrate the park's broader impact. This assessment would provide valuable insights to support planning, economic growth, and community development initiatives.
7. If Council does not request State Government funding for an economic and social assessment, critical opportunities to understand the site's visitor dynamics and professional impact may be lost. This could hinder informed decision-making and limit the potential to effectively advocate for the site's broader benefits to the community and economy.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

Feedback received through submissions to date has clearly highlighted concerns about the lack of community engagement in the development of the Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Draft Amendment. Council recognises an opportunity to advocate for an extended consultation period to ensure meaningful and inclusive engagement. This approach aims to enhance outcomes for all stakeholders, fostering a more collaborative and informed process.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Not applicable

Collaboration

Not applicable

Financial Implications

Not applicable

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Tourism Destination Local Area Action Plans

Section 2.1 Natimuk: Natimuk is a small town located approximately 30 kilometres northwest of Horsham. It is known for its artistic community and is a popular destination for rock climbers due to its proximity to the nearby Mount Arapiles, a renowned climbing area.

Tourism: Horsham Rural City has several attractions that draw tourists to the region. The Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park, located nearby, offers stunning natural landscapes, hiking trails, waterfalls, and wildlife. Mount Arapiles, renowned among rock climbers, is another popular destination. The region also hosts events and festivals, such as the Art Is... Festival, which showcases local arts and culture. Tourism-related businesses, including accommodation, restaurants, cafes, and tour operators, benefit from visitor spending and contribute to the local economy.

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

Horsham 2041 Community Vision

What do people love about living in the Horsham Region? What we heard from 937 people.

Rock climbing – 10.8% of comments highlighted the world-class climbing venues within the region, and the climbing community, to be what they love most about the Horsham region. “As a rock climber and lover of nature, living near Mt Arapiles and the Grampians has been a lifelong dream.”

What are the things that people are less happy about? What we heard from 418 people

Rock climbing restrictions – 21.8% of comments admitted their despair over the rock climbing restrictions in the Grampians and at Mount Arapiles, also mentioning the negative impact this will have on tourism to the region. “Now that Parks Victoria have severely restricted rock-climbing there is no reason I, or other international climbers, will visit.”

What is one thing people would change to make the municipality better? What we heard from 539 people
No climbing restrictions – 12.6% of comments expressed their desire for rock climbing restrictions to be removed at Mt Arapiles and the Grampians, highlighting the economic benefits of climbing and the importance of paying traditional respect. “Recognise the importance and value of rock climbing and rock climbers to the region.”

What gives people a sense of belonging, or makes them feel connected to the community? What we heard from 418 people.

Rock climbing – 13.9% of comments mentioned that the experience of rock climbing, and notably, the rock climbing community (especially in Natimuk), gave them a strong sense of belonging and connection to the community. “The rock climbing community. It is my family.”

2021-2025 Council Plan

Theme 2 Liveability: Horsham Rural City Council will actively work to create a healthy and connected community that is a great place to live, work invest and explore for all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

Initiatives and Priorities:

- Develop range of recreational opportunities with a focus on our natural environment and recreational waterways
- Promote recreational opportunities in our natural environment and recreational waterways to increase visitation

Theme 3 Sustainability: Horsham Rural City Council will actively lead in sustainable growth and development of the community and the economy.

- Plan for sustainable development which balances economic, environmental and social considerations
- Advocate for protection, conservation and management of our natural environment to sustain biodiversity and habitats.
- Promote recreational and social environments for people to enjoy (open spaces, waterways etc)

2022 Natimuk Economic and Social Plan

Priority area 2: Tourism attraction

2.1 Work in partnership with Parks Victoria to identify opportunities to improve the campground at Mount Arapiles and consider other infrastructure options that could increase visitation around Natimuk, e.g., improved river access or camping sites.

Priority area 11: Barengi Gadjin Land Council

11.1 Seek funding to facilitate dialogue between the group proposed in 8.1 and the Barengi Gadjin Land Council to:

- discuss the future use and restrictions at Mount Arapiles (Dyurrite)
- seek feedback on priorities that Traditional Owners and the community could collaborate on, e.g. cultural heritage and history promotion.

Destination Horsham- Investment Attraction Strategy 2022 onwards

The region possesses more than 40 parks and natural areas and has more than 50km of trails for cycling, walking or running including through the Little Desert National Park, Mount Arapiles and the Wartook Valley (page 6)

The Arapiles Big Sky Bicycle Trail - this bicycle trail offers visitors a 35km ride through Natimuk to Mount Arapiles (Dyurrite). The trail follows a loop which explores the highlights of the local landscape including large red gum forests and salt lakes which accommodate a variety of birdlife.

Natimuk Rock Climbing - to the West of Horsham is the picturesque township of Natimuk and the world-famous rock- climbing mecca of Mount Arapiles. Despite a few climbing routes closing due to cultural heritage protection, Mount Arapiles still boasts world class climbing routes. Natimuk has become a base for adventurers heading to the mountain and those inspired to explore their creative side within the towns many eccentric events.

Why Horsham is better suited for investment into nature-based tourism than other regions - Horsham has significant assets both within the region and nearby to leverage off. This includes Budj Bim World Heritage area, the Grampians National Park, Mount Arapiles, and Little Desert National Park. These areas attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year and put Horsham in a strong position to further develop tourist amenities to grow the sector.

2019 Open Space Strategy

Recommendation 4 - Enhance collaboration - The primary focus of this section of the strategy was working with BGLC and Parks Victoria to ensure a collaborative approach to planning and respect for cultural considerations in everything we do.

Risk Implications

There is a reputational risk for Council if it does not advocate on behalf of the community to the State Government regarding concerns raised in the submissions received.

Conclusion

Council is committed to its advocacy role, ensuring that all voices within our diverse community can provide input and be heard in a climate of collaboration and respect.

9.2 COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL AND REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Author's Name:	Kim Hargreaves	Director:	Kim Hargreaves
Author's Title:	Director Corporate Services	Directorate:	Corporate Services
Department:	Corporate Services	File Number:	F06/A12/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Nil

Purpose

To specifically nominate Councillor representatives to the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), the Audit and Risk Committee, and Wimmera Southern Mallee Development noting the pending meeting commitments for these committees.

Summary

- The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) require formal advice of the Councillors appointed following a resolution of Council. Noting the upcoming Annual General Meeting for the VLGA in November, Council is required to confirm representation prior to that meeting.
- Council has one Regulatory Committee, the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), that requires annual appointments to be made for representation by the Mayor plus one other Councillor. Noting the next ARC meeting precedes the December Council meeting, confirmation of Councillor representation is required in advance of the ARC meeting.
- Wimmera Southern Mallee Development also has an upcoming Board meeting and requires confirmation of Council representation for that meeting.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Nominate Cr Dean O'Loughlin as Council's representative for 2025 to the Victorian Local Governance Association.
2. Receive and note Committee appointments for the following Committees:
 - Audit and Risk Committee – The Mayor and Cr Angela Munn
 - Wimmera Southern Mallee Development– Cr Cam McDonald

REPORT

Background

There are various Committees that require representation or involvement by Councillors. While some Committees require the Mayor to be the representative there are other Committee responsibilities that can be undertaken by other Councillors.

Some of these Committees require confirmation of representatives following a resolution of Council. In particular, formal notification of Councillors appointed to represent Horsham Rural City Council at the Municipal Association of Victoria and Victorian Local Governance Association is required. The appointment for VLGA will be confirmed if the nomination is accepted by Council resolution with the nomination for MAV to be confirmed at the December council meeting.

Discussion

For consideration by Councillors in this instance are representatives for the following committees:

- *Victorian Local Governance Association*
 - The Association is an independent organisation that supports Councils, Councillors and communities in good governance.
 - Their vision for local government is to support a diverse and growing network of community leaders elected to local government who are more connected, informed, and capable of providing good governance for the communities they serve.
 - They provides a range of services to the benefit of council members.
 - More information is available at <https://www.vlga.org.au/>

Council has proposed the appointment of Cr O'Loughlin to the VLGA.

- *Audit and Risk Committee*
 - The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is an independent advisory committee to Council established under section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
 - The Committee's objective is to provide appropriate independent advice and recommendations to Council on matters relevant to the Committee's Charter to facilitate decision-making by Council in relation to the discharge of Council's accountability requirements.
 - The Committee consists of five members: three independent members and two Councillors.
 - The Councillors are appointed for a one-year period. Independent members are appointed for a three-year term and are eligible to be reappointed after the expiry of their term. Under the ARC Charter one of the Councillor representatives will be the Mayor.
 - More information is available at <https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Our-Council/Governance-and-Transparency/Audit-and-Risk-Committee>

Council has proposed the appointment of the Mayor and Cr Munn to the Audit and Risk Committee.

- *Wimmera Southern Mallee Development*
 - Wimmera Southern Mallee Development (WSMD) is the peak economic development organisation for the Wimmera Southern-Mallee region supporting existing local businesses and promoting economic development opportunities to investors.

- WSMD is a vital link between industry and government, lobbying for improved regional infrastructure, and advocating for regional priority issues.
- Membership comprises of representative from local government, commerce and industry, education and training, environment and sustainability, health and wellbeing, manufacturing, recreation and tourism, sustainable agriculture, Wimmera Sustainability Alliance.
- Council representatives (Municipal Members) are Member Directors of the Board.
- More information is available at <https://wsm.org.au/>

Council has proposed the appointment of Cr McDonald to the WSMD.

Options to Consider

Council can opt to change the nomination should they choose to however this report reflects the Councillor discussion of respective representation for the committees outlined in this report at a briefing on 19 November 2024.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

Council's involvement on these Committees is part of the overall process through which Council engages with some specific sectors of the community.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The involvement of Councillors on external committees provides opportunities to inform innovation and continuous improvement.

Collaboration

Collaboration with other Councils occurs by virtue of membership on these Committees. For example, the Wimmera Southern Mallee Development is a collaboration between five regional Councils - Hindmarsh Shire Council, Horsham Rural City Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council, West Wimmera Shire Council and Yarriambiack Shire Council.

Financial Implications

Provision for Councillor participation on Committees has been made within the existing Council budget.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan - Theme 5 – Leadership

Risk Implications

Several of the committees require formal notification of the Councillors appointed to represent Horsham Rural City Council following a resolution of Council. There is consequently a risk to Council associated with a failure to nominate councillor representation. The *Local Government Act 2020* (s53) also requires that Council establish an Audit and Risk Committee which includes members who are Councillors of the Council. This report prioritises those committees where there is an imminent meeting date thereby ensuring Councillor representatives are available to attend these meetings.

Conclusion

The 2025 Councillor appointments and nominations to certain Committees have been prepared for consideration and endorsement by Council. Following endorsement, the respective Committees will be notified of their 2025 Councillor representatives.

9.3 RECRUITMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Author's Name:	Craig Niemann	Director:	N/A
Author's Title:	Chief Executive Officer	Directorate:	N/A
Department:	Chief Executive Office	File Number:	F19/A01/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy (**Appendix 9.3A**)

Purpose

To outline and seek Council endorsement for a structured process to recruit a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the Horsham Rural City Council. This significant decision is aimed at securing leadership that will support the Council's long-term vision, including the Council Plan and the 2025-2026 Budget.

Summary

- A new CEO recruitment is necessary to lead the Council and deliver on the Council's strategic priorities.
- A qualified consultant will be engaged to facilitate the recruitment and provide a robust candidate selection process.
- The recruitment process will be guided by the CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy, with oversight from an independent expert.
- The timeline for the recruitment process aims for the CEO's commencement by May to align with strategic milestones.
- Council involvement and timely decision-making are crucial to maintaining the proposed schedule.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopt the project brief and proceed to invite proposals from qualified consultants for the recruitment of a CEO.
2. Appoint the Mayor and Interim CEO to evaluate submissions and recommend a consultant for Council's appointment.
3. Support the involvement of the Independent Member of the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee, Margaret Devlin, and the Local Government Monitor, Mr. Steven Kingshott, in supporting the recruitment process.

REPORT

Background

Appointing a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is one of the most significant decisions Councillors undertake. Under sections 44 and 45 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is responsible for appointing, managing, and reviewing the performance of the CEO. The CEO must be employed under a contract with a maximum term of five years.

A key priority for the newly elected Council is to appoint a new Chief Executive Officer. This decision will play an instrumental role in supporting the Councillors, managing the Council operations, implementing the Council Plan, and leading the organisation effectively. This recruitment aligns with the development of the Council Plan and the upcoming 2025-2026 Council Budget, both of which would benefit from the CEO's involvement and familiarity with Council's strategic direction.

The recruitment process will adhere to Council's CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy, ensuring an equitable and thorough approach. An Independent Member, Ms. Margaret Devlin, an experienced HR consultant, will support the process, offering valuable insights from her extensive experience in similar roles.

Discussion

The Horsham Rural City Council is preparing to initiate a vital process to recruit a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This decision will have lasting significance, as the chosen CEO will guide the Council through the strategic direction and day-to-day management of the organisation. With the 2025-2026 Council Plan and Budget underway, it is crucial that the appointed CEO possesses the vision and skills necessary to support these initiatives and continue strengthening Council's relationship with the community.

Recruitment Process Overview

The Council will engage an experienced consultant to ensure a robust, competitive, and transparent recruitment process that attracts top-quality candidates suited to Horsham Rural City Council's needs. This recruitment process will adhere to our CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy, which outlines the roles, responsibilities, and interactions between the Council and the CEO, both during recruitment and employment.

Council has appointed Margaret Devlin, a highly regarded HR consultant with extensive experience in CEO recruitment, as our independent advisor. Ms. Devlin has reviewed the project brief and is in alignment with our approach. At a suitable time, Ms. Devlin will be introduced to the Council.

The proposed timeline and key milestones for the CEO recruitment process are as follows:

1. **Request for Quote for Consultant** – November 26 to December 6
2. **Evaluation of Quotes** – December 9 to 13
3. **Council Report to Appoint Consultant** – December 16
4. **Consultant Engagement** – December 17
5. **Council Discussion on CEO Attributes & Search Commencement** – December/January
6. **Long List of Candidates Presented** – Early February
7. **Shortlist Presentation** – Late February
8. **First-Round Interviews** – Early March
9. **Final Interviews and Selection** – Mid-March
10. **Council Appointment of CEO** – End of March
11. **CEO Commencement** – May

Meeting these timelines will require Councillors' active participation and prompt decision-making.

Supporting the Recruitment Process

To meet the timeline outlined, Councillors will need to commit the necessary time to participate actively in the process, including interviews and making timely decisions. It will be essential to issue the Request for Quote promptly to enable Council to appoint a consultant by the upcoming December 16 Council Meeting. This timeline will allow the consultant to conduct a thorough candidate search throughout January, aiming to provide a shortlist by early February.

Councillors are encouraged to communicate their perspectives on the key attributes required for a successful CEO, ensuring the selection aligns with Council's goals. This process is unique, as the Interim CEO will be able to contribute independently throughout, providing valuable insights. Additionally, Local Government Monitor Steven Kingshott, a Human Resources expert, will be available to offer guidance, further strengthening the thoroughness of the process.

With the dedication of all involved, Council is well-positioned to identify a CEO who is not only highly qualified but also an ideal fit for Council's vision and the community's future needs.

Options to Consider

To ensure a successful CEO recruitment, it is essential that Council prioritise the timelines outlined in this report. It is therefore recommended that Council endorse the proposed recommendation.

Sustainability Implications

Nil

Community Engagement

Not applicable

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

This recruitment process emphasises best practices in executive hiring, leveraging expert consultation and ensuring transparency and fairness in Council leadership appointments.

Collaboration

The recruitment will be supported by collaboration with the Local Government Monitor and an independent HR consultant to ensure an unbiased, expert-guided process.

Financial Implications

The recruitment process will incur consultancy fees, which are accounted for in the current budget allocations.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan - Theme 5 – Leadership, by prioritising an effective CEO recruitment process.

Risk Implications

Timely recruitment is essential to avoid delays in strategic planning processes and ensure continuity in Council leadership.

Conclusion

Council's endorsement of this structured recruitment process is crucial to appointing a capable CEO who can lead the Council with integrity, expertise, and alignment with Council's strategic goals.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

9.4 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION AND GROWTH DEPARTMENT REPORT

Author's Name:	Fiona Gormann	Director:	Kevin O'Brien
Author's Title:	Manager Investment Attraction and Growth	Directorate:	Communities and Place
Department:	Communities and Place	File Number:	F15/A06/000001

Officer Conflict of Interest

Officer disclosure in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 130:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Status

Defined as confidential information in accordance with *Local Government Act 2020* – Section 3(1):

☐ Yes ☒ No

Reason: Nil

Appendix

Spendmapp Report September 2024 (data is from bank card transactions and may not capture all Ag Industry) **Appendix 9.4A**

Purpose

To receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Department Report for September 2024.

Summary

The Investment Attraction and Growth Department Report provides the progress and outcomes achieved through the delivery of the Investment Attraction Strategy and Implementation Plan during the reporting period.

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Investment Attraction and Growth Department Report for September 2024.

REPORT

Background

An Investment Attraction and Growth Department Report is tabled monthly at the Council Meeting.

Discussion

The work undertaken across Investment Attraction and Growth Department includes Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning, Building Services, Business Development and Tourism.

The Investment Attraction Strategy and Implementation Plan progress and key achievements for the month of September are articulated in the information and tables, as follow.

Actions are measured by goals and set timelines. The timelines are indicated by years which relate to financial years.

Year 1 - 2022-2023

Year 2 - 2023-2024

Year 3 - 2024-2025

Year 4 - 2024-2025

Year 5+ 2025+

Ongoing – life of plan

The teams will focus on delivering actions with in the current financial year whilst carrying out the necessary planning to ensure targets are meet in sequential years.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Council Priorities	Action	Goal Measured by	Progress
2.10 (Ongoing)	Undertake regular meetings between Wimmera Southern Mallee Development and Investment Attraction Department to inform and discuss economic development opportunities	10 forums held per year	Meetings held on a regular basis. Outcomes relate to business development opportunities that benefit the region overall. 8/10 meetings held to date in 2024.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Council Priorities	Action	Goal Measured By	Progress
2.6.1 (ongoing)	Promote recreational activities in our natural environment to increase destination tourism and visitation	Activities reported on in the Investment Attraction and Growth monthly Council Report	The Business Team and Visitor Services attended the VTIC Visitor Servicing Summit in September which provided an opportunity to gather information and ideas to increase destination tourism and visitation.
3.2.1 (ongoing)	Work with local business leaders throughout the municipality to	Two business forums held annually	The Business Team attended a Westvic Business event 'Spring

	develop business confidence and growth		Clean Your Business' in September which was very well received and provided informative information to businesses looking to refresh and enhance their business operations.
(ongoing)	Ensure constant communication through e-mails and business newsletters with tourism operators and local businesses regarding what is happening in the region	A minimum of 10 business newsletters distributed annually 4 business forums are held annually	Monthly newsletter was sent to 1,037 business contacts on 16 September with 414 opens and 43 clicks.
(ongoing)	Attract businesses to lease vacant shops in the Horsham city centre through the Wimmera Business Centre	Vacant shops reduced from 24 shops to 20 in the first year and maintained at or below 18 shops for the succeeding years	See table below

Tourism and Business Development



Image Left - David Hubble and Ian Gumela, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism Partnership Manager inside the old horse stables.

Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism (GWMT) and HRCC Business Development visited David Hubble owner of Fulham Homestead located in the Kanagulk area. Visitation related to partner membership with GWMT. Emphasizing the opportunities of the prospects by further expose Fulham Homestead as a farm stay facility through a wider audience base. Fulham Homestead has a huge potential to further expand with the already well-established accommodation facility as farm stay and yoga studio. David Hubble signed up as gold member with GWMT knowing very well that his membership will enhance his marketing reach to new potential visitors.

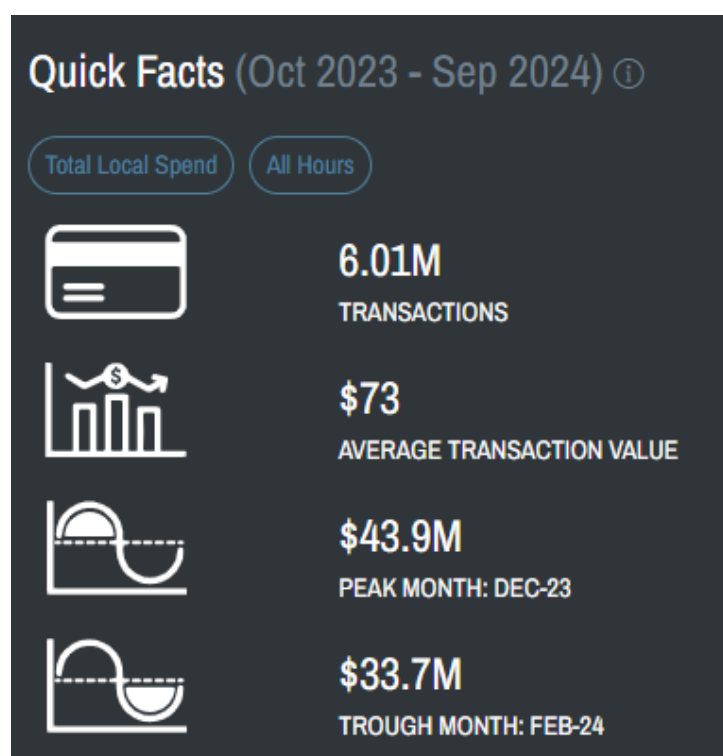
Industry Forum event in the Wimmera Mallee

GWMT is excited to bring the first Industry Forum to Dimboola on Friday 18 October from 2pm, where attendees will be treated to Industry guest speakers, networking, and even a cruise afterwards on the Dimboola River provided by As time goes by in Dimboola.

Monthly Tourism and Business Visitations for 2024

Month Visitation	Retail Services	Hospitality / Accommodation & General Tourism visits	Event contacts	Over all contacts for the month
January	8	6	20	34
February	20	13	18	51
March	23	16	7	46
April	10	14	4	28
May	30	10	20	60
June	20	15	10	45
July	15	30	5	50
August	12	8	4	24
September	20	15	6	41
Total	158	127	94	379

SPENDMAPP



Further detailed analysis included in the report **(Appendix 9.4A)**

Occupied Businesses:

Street and Number of Businesses	August 2024 Businesses Occupied	September 2024 Businesses Occupied	September 2024 Businesses Vacant	September 2024 Percentage Businesses Occupied
Darlot St – 43 car wash and businesses operating from a house included	42	43	0	100%
Firebrace St - 99	91	91	8	91%
Hamilton St - 17	17	17	0	100%
Wilson St – 34	28	29	5	85%
Pynsent St – 28 Cinema included	26	27	1	96%
Roberts Ave – 27 Coles included	24	24	3	92%
McLachlan St – 24 CFA & GWM included	24	24	0	100%
Total 272 Post February 2022 there were 262 shops identified in the study area	252/272	255/272	17	93%

(Businesses are determined by whether they are 1. A premises, 2. Have customers 3. Exchange money; i.e Centre Link and the Cinema are included, and the Public Library is excluded). There are four known shops that are not suitable for occupancy as they require major renovations or are being used as a secondary business not requiring a retail front. These shops are reflected in the vacant shop numbers and unfortunately reduce the percentage of occupied businesses.

STATUTORY PLANNING

Planning Applications Determined

Below are the number of Planning Permits issued for the month of **September 2024** and a comparison with the same period last year.

Type	SEPTEMBER 2024		SEPTEMBER 2023	
	No.	*Value \$	No.	*Value \$
Miscellaneous Domestic	1	11,491	3	2,270,000
Industrial/Commercial	4	4,930,000	-	-
Subdivisions	2 (2 Lots)	-	-	-
Other	-	-	--	-
Total	7	4,941,491	3	2,270,000

(*Please note: Not all applications have a \$ figure)

Total number of planning permits issued in the Horsham Rural City Council area from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 is 16 compared to 13 in the same period in 2023-2024.

Planning permits issued for subdivision have permitted 14 new lots from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 compared to 38 in the same period in 2023-2024.

Building Services

Below are the number of building permits issued for the month of **September 2024** and a comparison with the same period last year.

Permits issued by Horsham Rural City Council for this Municipality

Type	2024		2023	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	-	-	1	2,520,407
Alterations to Dwellings	-	-	-	-
Dwelling resittings	-	-	-	-
Misc Domestic (Carports, Garages etc)	-	-	2	55,670
Removal/Demolish	2	49,555	-	-
Industrial/Commercial	-	-	-	-
Signs	-	-	-	-
Total	2	49,555	3	2,576,077

Permits issued by other Private Building Surveyors for this Municipality or by Government Departments:

Type	2024		2023	
	No.	Value \$	No.	Value \$
Dwellings	4	2,752,842	5	2,513,757
Alterations to Dwellings	5	871,902	2	41,760
Dwelling resittings	-	-	1	87,615
Misc Domestic (Carports, Garages etc)	9	455,994	7	195,875
Removal/Demolish	2	40,900	-	-
Industrial/Commercial	2	156,065	9	8,106,446
Signs	-	-	-	-
Total	22	4,277,703	24	10,945,453

(*)

A total of 11 Building Permits have been issued by the Horsham Rural City Council at a total value of \$300,791 from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 compared to 11 Building Permits at a total value of \$2,855,098 for the same period in 2023-2024.

Private Building Surveyors have issued 57 Building Permits at a total value of \$13,183,088 from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 compared to 53 at a total value of \$22,749,558 For the same period in 2023-2024.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Council Priorities	Action	Goal Measured By	Progress
1.3.4	Develop an open space contribution rate(s) and a new local Public Open Space Contribution Policy.	Policy adopted by Council and Horsham Planning Scheme amended.	Internal consultation and benchmarking completed and drafting of a Council Policy to commence.
(4 years)	Prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the Horsham Cinema	Management plan endorsed by Council	Work has commenced on developing a Concept Plan for the theatre.
2.10.2 (2 to 3 years)	Develop and implement a Housing Affordability and Diversity Strategy and complete an amendment to the planning scheme	Strategy developed and implemented through a planning scheme amendment	An Engagement Summary Report for the consultation undertaken for the Discussion Paper has been completed and will be released after the caretaker period. Further investigation of development capacity continues in order to prepared an updated Background Report.
2.10.3 (2 years)	Prepare and implement the Horsham South Structure Plan (Stage 2)	Plan adopted by Council	Council endorsed going to public consultation on the Draft Horsham South Structure Plan. Engagement planning underway.
(2 years)	Complete a Planning Scheme Review as a vehicle for specifying desired outcomes across the municipality	Planning Scheme Review Completed and suggested changes implemented	Amendment documents for a Planning Scheme Amendment to implement the Planning Scheme Review are being prepared by the Department of Transport and Planning through a successful application made for support from the Regional Planning partnerships team.

Options to Consider

Not applicable – no decision required

Sustainability Implications

Report provides overview of the development and business activity across the region with no direct sustainability implications.

Community Engagement

Report has been prepared in consultation with range of agencies and will be made publicly available to Wimmera Southern Mallee Development (WSM), West Vic Business, and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism and on Council's website.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

Report provides overview of activity and assists with continuous improvement.

Collaboration

Report has been prepared in collaboration with Council officers across Planning, Building and Business Development and Tourism Support.

Financial Implications

Nil

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

Not applicable – no direct relationship or requirements

Council Plans, Strategies and Policies

2021-2025 Council Plan - Theme 3 - Sustainability - Horsham Rural City Council will actively lead in sustainable growth and development of the community and the economy.

Strategy 2: A sustainable economy where local business, agriculture, tourism and other diverse industries thrive.

Destination Horsham Investment Attraction Strategy and Implementation Plan 2022 onwards

Risk Implications

Not applicable – no decision required

Conclusion

The monthly Investment Attraction and Growth Department report provides the opportunity to give Council and the community an insight into the projects being undertaken to grow our municipality and Horsham as a regional city.

10. COUNCILLOR REPORTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

11. URGENT BUSINESS

12. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13.1 INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS – RECORD OF MEETINGS

- Council Briefing Meeting held on Monday 18 November 2024 at 5.30pm

Refer to **Appendix 13.1A**

13.2 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

Nil

13.3 INWARD CORRESPONDENCE

Nil

13.4 COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal Advisory Committee meeting held on 15 May 2024

Refer to **Appendix 13.4A**

Recommendation

That Council receive and note agenda items:

- 13.1 Informal Meetings of Councillors – Record of Meetings
- 13.2 Sealing of Documents
- 13.3 Inward Correspondence
- 13.4 Council Committee Minutes.

14. NOTICE OF MOTION

Management Plan for the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape)

(Mt Arapiles Management Unit)
Draft Amendment, Parks Victoria 2024

This version of the **1991 Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park Management Plan** includes draft amendments, for public comment. All changes are marked red.

Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) includes areas where rock climbing activities are prevalent.

The scope of this amendment is limited to the protection and management of cultural and environmental values. Please note that information in the 1991 plan that is outside of this scope remains unchanged, including language and concepts that Parks Victoria recognises are outdated in 2024.

This Management Plan for the Mt Arapiles section of the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park is approved for implementation. Its purpose is to direct all aspects of management in the Park until the Plan is reviewed.

A proposed plan for the Park was published in December 1987. A total of 47 submissions were received.

Copies of this plan can be obtained from:

The Regional Manager
Horsham Region
Department of Conservation & Environment
21 McLachlan Street
Horsham VIC 3400

Department of Conservation & Environment
Information Centre
240 Victoria Parade
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Copies of this 2024 draft amendment of the 1991 Management Plan are available via www.parks.vic.gov.au

Further information on this plan can be obtained from the Horsham Region, DCE (053 811 255)

© Crown (State of Victoria) 1991

A Victorian Government Publication.

This publication is copyright.

No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the **Copyright Act 1986**.

Published June 1991 by Department of Conservation and Environment
240 Victoria Parade East Melbourne 3002 Victoria

Printed on 100% recycled paper to help save our natural environment.

This Park Management Plan Amendment has been prepared in accordance with Section 47 of the Parks Victoria Act 2018 and is a Park Management Plan Amendment for the purposes of that Act.

Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria's network of parks and reserves are part of Aboriginal cultural landscapes, which have been modified over many thousands of years of occupation. They are reflections of how Aboriginal people engage with their world and experience their surroundings and are the product of thousands of generations of economic activity, material culture and settlement patterns. The landscapes we see today are influenced by the skills, knowledge and activities of Aboriginal land managers. Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these cultural landscapes, recognising their continuing connection to Victoria's parks and reserves and their ongoing role in caring for Country.

Copyright © State of Victoria, Parks Victoria 2024 Level 10, 535 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 Published on parks.vic.gov.au
This publication may be of assistance to you but Parks Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Front cover image: Mt Arapiles (Dyurrite), Parks Victoria

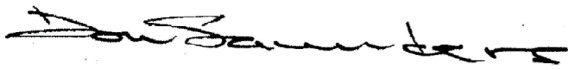
Approved Management Plan

This approved Management Plan for the Mt Arapiles section of the Mount Arapiles-Toooan State Park contains a summary of Park resources, a review of present and possible future use, management objectives and detailed management strategies.

A proposed Plan for the Park was released for public comment in December 1987 and 47 submissions were received. These submissions, and other comments made in meetings and discussions with interested parties, have been carefully considered in preparing this approved Plan.

We would like to acknowledge in particular the contribution of the Mount Arapiles-Toooan State Park Advisory Committee to the development of the Plan.

The approved Management Plan will now become the basis for all aspects of management of the Park.



Don Saunders
Director of National Parks and Public Land



Don Spence
Regional Manager, Horsham

Management Plan Amendment

This (draft) Management Plan Amendment refers to the Mount Arapiles landform as **Dyurrite**, and the Mount Arapiles-Toooan State Park as the **Dyurrite Cultural Landscape**.

The Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) has biocultural significance. Recent rediscoveries including scarred trees, rock art with evidence dating back 3000 years, and one of the largest stone quarry complexes found in Australia demonstrate that Mt Arapiles (Dyurrite) has been a significant place for the Wotjobaluk Peoples for tens of thousands of years.

Parks Victoria has legal obligations under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, *National Parks Act 1975*, and *Parks Victoria Act 2018* to protect and safeguard irreplaceable values in parks.

In 2020 Parks Victoria identified that significant Aboriginal cultural values within the Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) were at risk of harm from recreational activities. Comprehensive archaeological and ecological surveys of areas were conducted from November 2020 to February 2023. These surveys rediscovered and registered cultural heritage, confirmed the existence of threatened plant communities, and revealed widespread environmental impacts. In response, it was determined that the 1991 Mount Arapiles-Toooan State Park (Mt Arapiles Management Unit) Management Plan would need amendment to facilitate the popular activity of rock climbing while ensuring the protection of park values for the whole community.

The scope of this amendment, made in accordance with Section 47 of the *Parks Victoria Act 2018*, focuses on the protection and management of cultural and environmental values.

This (draft) amended version of the 1991 Plan includes new park management strategies that are the result of archaeological and ecological surveys.

New park management strategies identify where recreational activities can occur, and outline conditions that will apply to all recreational activities to protect cultural and environmental values that are present.

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Creation of the park	1
1.2	Park management	2
1.3	The Management Plan	2
2.	Principal management directions	4
3.	Management objectives	5
4.	Zoning	6
4.1	Derivation of the zones	6
5.	Management strategies.....	8
6.	Management for resource conservation	9
6.1	Conservation of native vegetation	9
6.2	Wildlife management.....	12
6.3	Aboriginal and historic sites	15
6.4	Landscape.....	16
7.	Management for park protection	18
7.1	Fire management	18
7.2	Introduced animals	20
7.3	Introduced plants	22
7.4	Erosion prevention and rehabilitation	23
8.	Management for tourism and visitor use	24
8.1	Tourism and visitor use activities	24
8.2	Monitoring and recreational use	28
8.3	Vehicle access.....	28
8.4	Visitor facilities.....	29
8.5	Information, interpretation and education.....	32
8.6	Public safety	33
8.7	Naming of features.....	33
9.	Management for resource utilisation	35
9.1	Firewood	35
9.2	Apiculture.....	35
9.3	Gravel extraction.....	36

10.	Management of authorised uses	37
10.1	Utilities and services.....	37
10.2	Defence training.....	37
11.	Management organisation and operations	39
11.1	Personnel.....	39
11.2	Buildings	39
11.3	Departmental facilities	39
12.	Summary of management proposals.....	40
	Appendix 1: Definitions of Harm	44
	Appendix 2: Climbing Categories.....	45
	Appendix 3: Maps.....	46
	3A: Management Zone	46
	3B: Designated Climbing Areas	47
	Appendix 4: Figures from the 1991 Management Plan.....	48
	Figure 1 – Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park locality map	48
	Figure 2 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit boundary	49
	Figure 3 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit management zones.....	50
	Figure 4 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit vegetation	51
	Figure 5 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit landscape management areas	52
	Figure 6 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit changes to existing road and track network.....	53
	Figure 7 – Mitre Rock	54
	Figure 8 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit utilities and services.....	55
	Bibliography.....	56

1. Introduction

The Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park of 5060 ha is located approximately 340 km by road west of Melbourne and falls within Victoria's Wimmera Region. The nearest major population centre is the City of Horsham (35 km east). The township of Natimuk is 10 km east, on the road from Horsham (Wimmera Highway). The location and extent of the Park are shown in figure 1.

For management purposes the Park has been divided into two sections of widely differing character and management requirements. Mt Arapiles and Mitre Rock are included in the Mt Arapiles Management Unit which is also referred to in this Plan as 'the Unit' (figure 2). The Tooan Scrub forms the Tooan Management Unit.

This Management Plan deals only with the Mt Arapiles Management Unit. The Tooan Management Unit will be dealt with in a future management plan. The impact of uses on the Mt Arapiles Management Unit necessitates the early completion of a plan, and to jointly plan the areas would have greatly slowed the preparation of the plan.

1.1 Creation of the park

The Land Conservation Council (LCC) Final Recommendations for the South-Western Area, District 2, of May 1982 proposed the creation of a Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park. This recommendation was adopted by the Government and the Park was enacted on 27 May 1987, by amendment to the National Parks Act 1975 (Vic.).

The Park incorporates the area previously reserved as the Mt Arapiles Forest Park and the area known locally as the Tooan Scrub. The LCC final recommendations for the Wimmera Study Area (LCC 1986) recommended the addition of Mitre Rock to the proposed Park. Mitre Rock was added to the Park by enactment on 6 June 1989.

In 1982 the LCC recommended that the Park be used to:

- a) provide opportunities for recreation and education associated with the enjoyment and understanding of natural environments
- b) conserve and protect natural ecosystems
- c) apiculture be permitted
- d) grazing be phased out within 10 years following the adoption of these recommendations
- e) the Fisheries and Wildlife Division prepare plans for the conservation of wildlife in consultation with the management authority and that, after agreement, these be incorporated into the management plan (particular attention should be given to the protection of the Peregrine Falcon)
- f) adequate access should continue to be provided throughout the area.'

The LCC also made the following comments of relevance to the preparation of this Plan:

'The fire lookout and communications installation on Mount Arapiles - and a minimal area around them - should continue to be managed by the relevant department and access to them permitted. It is possible that some expansion of the communications facilities may be required in order to improve the television reception in the region. Council cannot make specific provision for this work until a definite proposal is made'

'Council recognises that Mount Arapiles is an important recreational venue for large numbers of people. The management authority should continue to provide for recreational activities such as rock-climbing, vehicular access to camping and picnic sites and to viewing points, and facilities for the large numbers of campers that use the area.'

1.2 Park management

The Park is managed by the Horsham Region of the Department of Conservation & Environment (DCE), according to plans and prescriptions approved under the National Parks Act.

The Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park e (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) is managed by Parks Victoria with the support of Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation represents the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk People of the Wotjobaluk Nations - known collectively as the Wotjobaluk Peoples. The Wotjobaluk Peoples are recognised as the Traditional Owners of the Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) under Victorian and Commonwealth legislation:

- Barengi Gadjin Land Council's status as a Registered Aboriginal Party under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* provides the right and legal responsibility to Care for Country, and to be recognised as the primary source of advice and knowledge on matters related to the protection and management of Wotjobaluk cultural heritage.
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council is the Registered Native Title Body Corporate that represents the Wotjobaluk Peoples as native title holders under the *Native Title Act 1993*.
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council is the Traditional Owner group entity that represents the Wotjobaluk Peoples as rights holders under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*

Mt Arapiles Management Unit

The Mt Arapiles Management Unit of about 1510 ha (figure 2) is surrounded entirely by cleared freehold land. It is an area of State geological significance and an outstanding landscape feature. Although of limited area, the Unit has outstanding cultural, and recreation values. Approximately one seventh of the indigenous plant species in Victoria are found there, including a number of rare and significant species. In addition, the Peregrine Falcon nests on the rock faces. The Unit has historic significance associated with European exploration of the Wimmera Region and it is rich with cultural heritage.

The Mt Arapiles Management Unit is increasing in value as a recreation area for both tourists and local residents. The varied landscape encourages a variety of recreational activities, including camping, picnicking, walking, sightseeing, photography, nature study and pleasure driving. It should be recognised that Mt Arapiles is one of Australia's premier rock climbing areas, offering more than 2 000 different climbs. This 2024 (draft) amendment is based on a logic of 'climbing areas'. There were 153 documented climbing areas within the study area when Parks Victoria began its evaluation of values, and risks to values, in relation to climbing areas. These climbing areas contain, in total, thousands of climbing routes. The single most accessible data source concerning climbing areas and climbing routes is available on the Crag Website (www.thecrag.com). This community-based platform provides information in accessible spatial data format. Data was downloaded in November 2020 and examined using ArcGIS, and then used as the basis to identify the 153 climbing areas.

Tooan Management Unit

The Tooan Management Unit of about 3550 ha (which is not dealt with in this plan) is surrounded mainly by freehold land but adjoins three areas of uncommitted Crown Land and a Lake Reserve. It contains examples of woodland species now uncommon in the Wimmera Region. Several bird species are at the southern limit of their range in Victoria and the endangered Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo occurs there. The Unit has limited recreation use and no facilities are provided.

1.3 The Management Plan

Background information on resources and uses provided in this Management Plan is restricted to that necessary to define the planning issue. Greater detail including references is given in 'Mount Arapiles- Tooan State Park, Mt

Arapiles Management Unit, Inventory of Resources and Uses' (CFL 1987).

At the outset a statement of principal management directions is presented. The bulk of the Plan sets the long-term directions for management by establishing a coherent framework of objectives, a zoning scheme and management aims and strategies. The Plan is completed by a summary of management proposals.

Plan Period

The Plan is intended to guide management for a period of 5 years when the need for a review of the plan will be considered. The Plan will remain in force until reviewed. The Plan may be amended if, after adequate investigation, there is justification for the alteration of management based on additional resource data or new techniques. In this context it is important to appreciate that a plan of management is part of a continuous planning process. Consultation will be carried out through the Park Advisory Committee prior to amendment of the Plan in relation to issues which will have a significant impact on Park users.

2. Principal management directions

Priority is given to the protection and conservation of the natural environment of the Mt Arapiles Management Unit particularly the rare and significant animal and plant species. A balance is set between recreational use and the conservation of the natural environment. Potential conflicts between recreation and conservation are mostly avoided by zoning. Potentially damaging activities such as gravel extraction, firewood removal and grazing which occurred in the past have already been phased out.

The distribution and abundance of rare and significant animal and plant species will be determined, and impacts upon them will be assessed and minimised before works are undertaken.

Protection of diurnal raptors will be given particular consideration where conflict arises between birds and climbers. Restrictions on climbing in the vicinity of active nesting sites during the breeding season may be necessary to protect eggs and birds from disturbance.

Visitors numbers, particularly those associated with rock climbing, are expected to continue to increase. Opportunities for recreational experience in a largely undeveloped environment will be maintained. Existing visitor focal points, developed over a long period of time, will be improved and may be enlarged to cater for the increased numbers, rather than developing new areas. Visitor sites are concentrated mainly in the north-eastern section of the Unit, on the summit and on the fringes of Mt Arapiles. The central plateau area is largely undisturbed and will remain as the primary conservation area.

Rock climbing will continue to be encouraged as a major recreation activity. An additional camping area adjacent to the present one will be developed for rock climbers and other visitors. The simple character of existing camping facilities will be maintained, to preserve the experience of camping in the bush.

Increased emphasis will be given to public education and interpretation. Natural and historic features at the major visitor sites will be highlighted and explained.

The Department will continue to co-operate with the State Electricity Commission (SEC), Country Fire Authority (CFA), Telecom, Shire of Arapiles and other authorities with an interest in the management of the Mt Arapiles Management Unit and adjacent land. The existing fire spotting tower on the summit will be rebuilt. The communications functions it serves for a variety of organisations will be retained. The joint funding for staffing of the tower by the Department and the CFA will be maintained.

The principal management direction of this (draft) amended Management Plan is to enable rock climbing to continue within the Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) in a way that does not harm cultural and environmental values.

3. Management objectives

The following management objectives establish the primary long-term directions for use and management of the Mt Arapiles Management Unit, and form the basis of the management strategies in the Plan. They also help the manager to make decisions on issues that arise in day to day management that have not been specifically addressed in the Plan.

The management objectives established for the **Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape)** are:

- preserve and protect the **cultural and** natural environment, including **cultural** landscape, flora and fauna;
- allow natural processes to continue with a minimum of disturbance;
- maintain fire regimes appropriate to the ecological management of natural communities;
- preserve and protect historical and archaeological features;
- provide a range of opportunities for use and enjoyment of the Unit by the Public with special attention to the needs of the disabled, consistent with the above management objectives;
- provide for rock climbing as a major use **in a way that does not harm cultural and environmental values;**
- **allow rock climbing activities within designated climbing areas;**
- promote a better understanding of the natural and cultural environments through the provision of appropriate interpretation and environmental education programs and facilities;
- protect the Park, its visitors and adjacent landowners from wildfire;
- control introduced plants and animals;
- take adequate precautions for the safety of visitors;
- provide for and encourage scientific research and survey that is compatible with conservation objectives, particularly scientific research related to management problems.

4. Zoning

Zoning is a method for defining broad patterns of management by delineation of geographical areas in which certain management objectives are emphasised. Zoning assists management in ensuring that the patterns of management implement the management objectives, particularly the protection of areas of high conservation value and the provision of a range of recreation activities, with a minimum of conflict.

4.1 Derivation of the zones

The zones have been derived from consideration of:

- **cultural and** natural values and their sensitivity to damage
- landscape values
- historic sites
- opportunities for recreation and tourism
- predicted future visitor levels
- government approved LCC recommendations
- traditional resource uses, including authorised uses, firewood collection and apiculture.

Creation of small isolated zones based on small areas of significance, such as historic sites and areas containing rare plant species have been avoided. Specific sites requiring greater protection than their zoning classification affords them should be identified and managed according to their need for protection.

The three zones for the Unit are shown in figure 3 and their main attributes are described below. **The updated map showing management zones is Map 3A in Appendix 3.**

Zone 1: **Conservation**

Zone 1 includes areas that are least disturbed because accessibility is limited by both the terrain and the dense understory vegetation. Conservation is of primary importance. The main objectives for the zone are to protect **cultural and environmental** values, maintain the area in a natural condition and to provide opportunities for recreation in a semi-remote setting.

Management guidelines include:

- no new vehicular access, except for management or emergency purposes to maintain opportunity for recreation in areas relatively isolated from human sight and sound;
- **rock climbing activities are prohibited in this zone;**
- control level of visitor use to avoid unplanned track development;
- no visitor facilities;
- no camping;
- no firewood collection;
- minimal on-site management;
- no bee sites.

Zone 2: Conservation and Recreation

Zone 2 includes areas where there is much greater evidence of human activity. Conservation is a major objective but opportunities for a wider range of recreation activities than in Zone 1 are acceptable.

Management guidelines include:

- management of **cultural and environmental** values, particularly of the main rock climbing face (north-eastern escarpment), to be to the same standard as Zone 1, consistent with the following guidelines;
- **rock climbing activities are allowed in designated climbing areas – refer to Appendix 3 for a map of designated climbing areas;**
- vehicle access permitted on specified roads and tracks;
- provide opportunity for recreation in a predominantly unmodified environment;
- bee sites permitted.

Zone 3: Recreational Development

Zone 3 includes areas that have been subjected to considerable disturbance from recreation and other uses.

Conservation values are generally low (**note that cultural heritage was not well documented or well understood in 1991**). Structures and facilities not related to recreation, e.g. fire tower; Telecom repeater station, are included. The zone is suitable for moderate to intensive recreation. It is readily accessible by road and contains sites suitable for development to meet present and future recreational demand for developed camping areas, picnic areas and walking tracks.

Management guidelines include:

- recreation is of primary importance;
- **rock climbing activities are allowed in designated climbing areas – refer to Appendix 3 for a map of designated climbing areas**
- provide for moderate to intensive recreation in 'semi-developed' settings;
- sign-posting and developed interpretative facilities may be provided;
- structures and facilities not related to recreation, should be included in the zone where possible.

5. Management strategies

Chapters 6 to 11 set out the issues involved in managing the Mt Arapiles Management Unit, define specific management aims for the resolution of groups of related issues and present management strategies to achieve these aims. In some cases more detailed management actions to implement strategies are included.

In Chapter 12 the management proposals are summarised and given a priority ranking of high, medium or low depending on their importance and urgency for the protection, maintenance or development of the Unit. The relative time required to complete the projects is also listed as short, medium, long or ongoing.

This Plan will be implemented in conjunction with the following:

- *National Parks Act* and regulations thereunder;
- Parks Policy and Procedure Manual;
- Horsham Regional Profile;
- Horsham Regional Fire Protection Plan;
- Land Protection Division, Pest Animals General Manual (Vermin Pac);
- other Departmental policies relevant to Parks.

This amended management plan outlines specific management strategies that are a priority in 2024 regarding the protection of the natural and cultural environment.

6. Management for resource conservation

6.1 Conservation of native vegetation

The Mt Arapiles Management Unit contains more than 500 plant species including 93 exotic species. A comprehensive plant list is provided in the Inventory of Resources and Uses (Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands 1987). There are no endemic species but 29 species recognised as endangered, rare or locally significant are present. Six native vegetation communities have been mapped (figure 4) and are described in the Inventory of Resources and Uses (Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands 1987).

The vegetation has been affected by grazing (both domestic stock and introduced pests such as rabbits), burning (both pre and post European settlement) and extractive industries such as, firewood and gravel removal. Grazing, firewood removal and gravel extraction have not been permitted for many years. Cinnamon Fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) is a potential threat. It has not been identified in the Unit but is a major problem on similar soil types in the nearby Grampians National Park.

Environmental surveys of the Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) undertaken in 2021 and 2022, identified threatened species.

The aims for management of vegetation are to:

- protect plant species and communities recognised as being of special significance;
- **protect significant species from identified threats and monitor environmental impacts;**
- maintain vegetation communities as far as practicable in their natural condition;
- control and if possible eradicate exotic plant species, particularly where they seriously affect native species;
- rehabilitate disturbed areas;
- control grazing pressure caused by introduced animals;
- guard against introduction of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

6.1.1 Vegetation community management

Successful vegetation management involves minimising the disturbances associated with human activities, introduced herbivores and plant species, and the restoration of natural environmental conditions (particularly an appropriate fire regime).

Vegetation management, particularly using fire, is a complex task. The effects of fire on vegetation vary according to the intensity, frequency and season of burning, and weather conditions during and following the fire. Managers can influence the frequency, season of burning and fire intensities.

More than half the Mt Arapiles Management Unit has remained unburnt for decades and much of it has high fuel levels. The potential exists for a severe wildfire on relatively large areas which is undesirable given the Unit's small size and isolation from similar habitats.

Long unburnt areas have special conservation values, however the continued absence of fire in some communities may lead to a reduction in population and perhaps eventually to the disappearance of some species dependent on fire for their regeneration. At present not enough is known about the role of fire in maintaining the viability of the vegetation communities of the Unit to prescribe burning for vegetation conservation purposes.

The River Red Gum Open Forest Community needs special management because it occupies only one small area which is adjacent to Centenary Park, which is the focus of recreation activity in the Unit. Protection from vehicles has already been provided by installing log barriers.

Management strategies

- Protection will be provided for **vegetation** communities likely to be affected by grazing animals, introduced plants and human activities. **Recreational Rock climbing will be actively managed using a 'designated climbing areas' approach to minimise the impact¹ of this activity on native vegetation.**
- The River Red Gum Open Forest Community will be protected by prohibiting camping (a new camping area will be established further to the north, see Section 8.4), excluding firewood collection (see Section 9.1) and by using techniques other than fire to reduce the quantities of fine fuels.
- All pits proposed for use as a source of gravel for the Park will be tested for the presence of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* prior to their use as a source. Machinery known to have been at infected sites will be disinfected before it enters the Park.
- Machinery hygiene will be practised to prevent the spread of introduced plants.
- No prescribed burning for vegetation conservation purposes, other than experimental, will be undertaken until an ecological requirement for fire has been demonstrated.
- Ecological studies of the effects of fire on the Unit's vegetation will be promoted, and the effects of fire will be monitored. Experimental burns require approval of the Regional Manager and Director.
- Appropriate burning regimes for vegetation conservation purposes will be planned if fire ecology studies demonstrate that particular plant communities would benefit from fire. Planning for all prescribed burns will take into consideration the values of that area, including wildlife habitat and historic and cultural features. Special consideration will be given to the maintenance of a range of vegetation age classes within each community. Implementation of such burning regimes requires the approval of the Regional Manager and Director.

6.1.2 Significant plant species

There are 29 species of endangered, vulnerable, rare and locally significant plants recorded for the Unit. Existing and potential threats to these species include rabbits, illegal collection and damage resulting from recreation use and management action. The current distribution and population sizes of these species are not well known.

Table 1 contains plant species regarded as endangered, vulnerable or rare by Gullan et al. (1990). Table 1 also lists plants considered of significance because there are few Victorian records or locally significant because of the isolated nature of the recording, based on information provided by F. J. C. Rogers, A. C. Beauglehole, R. F. Parsons and others.

Management strategies

- The location of significant species will be identified and threats will be evaluated.
- Protection will be provided from identified threats.
- The locations of significant species will not be publicised.
- The status of all significant species will be monitored.
- Ecological studies of the effects of fire on the significant species will be promoted, and the effects of fire will be monitored.

¹ Archaeologists and ecologists recorded evidence of damage to native vegetation within climbing areas, during field surveys between 2020 and 2023.

6.1.3 Revegetation

Particular areas need revegetation to control erosion or re-establish native vegetation. Amenity planting can enhance developed recreation sites.

Management strategies

- Amenity planting will be undertaken in association with development of the camping area at Centenary Park.
- The possibility of revegetation planting at the base of the eastern cliffs from the Bluff to Melville Cave to provide protection for the cliff face fern growth will be examined.
- All revegetation and amenity plantings will use stock grown from seed collected from indigenous species growing within the Unit, except where non-persistent exotic species are essential for erosion control (see Section 7.4).

Table 1: Significant plants

Threatened plants		
<i>Acacia rupicola</i>	Rock Wattle	r
<i>Callitriche cyclocarpa</i>	Western Water Starwort	r
<i>Comesperma polygaloides</i>	Small Milkwort	v
<i>Cyphanthera anthocercidea</i>	Large-leaf Ray-flower	r
<i>Goodia medicaginea</i>	Western Golden-tip	r
<i>Isolepis congrua</i>	Slender Club-sedge	v
<i>Prostanthera spinosa</i>	Spiny Mint-bush	r
<i>Psilotum nudum</i>	Skeleton Fork-fern	r
<i>Ptilotus erubescens</i>	Hairy-tails	e
<i>Pultenaea patellifolia</i>	Mt Bryon Bush-pea	r
<i>Quinetia urvillei</i>	Quinetia	r
<i>Senecio hypoleucus</i>	Pale Fireweed	r
<i>Stipa mundula</i>	Neat Spear-grass	r
<i>Stipa sectacea</i>	Corkscrew Spear-grass	r
<i>Tripogon loliiformis</i>	Rye Beetle-grass	r
<i>Vittadinia megacephala</i>	Giant New Holland Daisy	v
Significant plants		
<i>Bromus arenarius</i>	Sand Brome	
<i>Caladenia latifolia</i>	Pink Fairies	
<i>Calomeria amaranthoides</i>	Incense Plant	
<i>Crassula sp. *</i>	Crassula	
<i>Cyphanthera myosotidea</i>	Small-leaf Ray-flower	
<i>Danthonia monticola</i>	Hill Wallaby-grass	
<i>Eriostemon verrucosus</i>	Fairy Wax-flower	
<i>Howittia trilocularis</i>	Blue Howittia	
<i>Lepidium pseudohyssopifolium</i>	Pepper-cress	+
<i>Lepidium pseudotasmanicum</i>	Shade Pepper-cress	+
<i>Scaevola aemula</i>	Fairy Fan-flower	
<i>Stipa curticola</i>	Short-crown Spear-grass	
<i>Stipa macalpinei</i>	Annual Spear-grass	

- e Endangered in Victoria: rare and at risk of disappearing from the wild state if present land use and other causes continue.
- v Vulnerable in Victoria: rare, not presently endangered but likely to become so soon due to continued depletion.
- r Rare in Victoria but not considered otherwise threatened. This category does not necessarily imply that the plants are substantially threatened but merely that there are relatively few known stands.
- * *Crassula* sp. (sensu Beaglehole) - Beaglehole has identified an unusual form of *Crassula* which is most closely associated with *C. helmsii* (Swamp *Crassula*). Further taxonomic assessment is required to determine taxonomic status.
- + Recorded at Mitre Rock but not at Mt Arapiles.

6.1.4 Plant collection and removal

The collection of plant material, including seed, is often desired for research, monitoring, horticultural use and rural revegetation projects. In general the amount of material removed is minimised to reduce the impact of this practice. Unless carefully controlled, vegetation clearance near SEC power lines and other utilities can adversely affect vegetation and landscape values.

Management strategies

- The collection of plant material for horticultural purposes and research outside DCE will be controlled and authorised under permit.
- Removal of vegetation associated with works by public authorities will be subject to the conditions of a consent under Section 27 of the National Parks Act. Conditions will specify the area to be cleared, and will include or refer to guidelines for revegetation (see Section 6.1.3).
- The Department will consult with the SEC to establish guidelines for clearing vegetation near power lines, to meet the Commission's requirements under the SEC (Clearance of Lines) Act 1983 (Vic.), while maintaining landscape and vegetation values.

6.1.5 Research, survey and monitoring

The Unit has considerable potential for vegetation research because of the diversity of communities and the variety of species represented.

Management strategies

- Research directly relevant to the management of the area will be encouraged.
- The vegetation map and descriptions will be upgraded.
- Surveys will be undertaken to determine the distribution and abundance of endangered, rare and locally significant plant species, threats to their existence and protection required.
- The effectiveness of vegetation management will be monitored.
- Vegetation changes related to fire (or its absence) will be monitored.
- Vegetation will be monitored to detect the introduction of plant diseases and other damaging agents.

6.2 Wildlife management

A variety of mammal, bird and reptile species, as well as invertebrate species about which little is known are recorded for the Unit. No species of mammals, birds, reptiles or amphibians recorded for the unit are included in the various categories of threatened wildlife in Baker-Gabb (1990).

Native Habitat within the Unit is an isolate surrounded by cleared plains.

Effective wildlife management involves habitat management including control of disturbance from humans (both the public and management) and introduced predators. Habitat type and quality govern the species present. The availability of food, water, breeding sites and refuge, and the presence of competitors and predators, influence the abundance of a species within a habitat.

The aims of wildlife management are to:

- maintain the diversity of wildlife by the maintenance of suitable habitat;
- protect and conserve any species of wildlife recognised as being of special significance;
- control or eradicate introduced plants and animals, particularly those seriously affecting native species.

6.2.1 Habitat management

The condition of vegetation in an area is a major influence on the continued survival of all wildlife species. Some species have particular requirements independent of vegetation (e.g. rock faces for Peregrine Falcon eyries) but all are ultimately reliant on the vegetation for other aspects of their survival.

Although fire influences both the vegetation and wildlife present, no particular requirement for an applied fire regime has yet been demonstrated for wildlife management in the Unit.

Habitat management is dealt with below in terms of the various vegetation communities present (figure 4) and other clearly defined habitat types. Vegetation management is discussed more comprehensively in Section 6.1.

Management strategies

- No prescribed burning for wildlife management purposes will be undertaken unless a need is demonstrated (see Section 6.1.1).
- Experimental burning carried out for vegetation management purposes will be monitored to assess the effects on wildlife.

Forest and Woodland Communities. These communities are particularly rich in wildlife species. Together they form the most extensive habitat type in the Unit. Standing and fallen dead trees provide important habitat for a variety of species, including perching and nesting sites for birds and cover for small mammals, reptiles and invertebrates. Rabbits have depleted the understorey and continue to threaten regeneration.

- The diversity of the woodland understorey will be conserved. Control of the rabbit population is essential (see Section 7.2).
- Tree hollows and fallen trees and branches important for wildlife will be protected. Firewood collection for visitor use in the Park will be confined to specified areas (see Section 9.1).
- Any fuel reduction burning will be conducted with care to minimise destruction of habitat.

Grassland. The areas of native grassland form significant wildlife habitat.

- Native grasslands will be protected from overgrazing by rabbits, and from exotic plant species.

Sandstone Ranges. The cracks and crevices of rocky areas provide important habitat for reptiles and invertebrates. Common Ringtail Possums also use these areas as living sites and Peregrine Falcons nest on the cliffs.

- Disturbance of habitat of special significance for reptile and invertebrate species will be minimised.
- Protection measures will be considered for areas containing active Peregrine Falcon eyries (see Section 6.2.2).

6.2.2 Notable wildlife species

One bird and one mammal species could be considered as notable.

Peregrine Falcon

The Peregrine Falcon is one of the most widely distributed raptors in the world and numerous subspecies are recognised. The severe decline of this species in Europe and North America up to the 1970s, has been attributed to the effects of pesticide residues on reproductive success. Populations have shown increases since the 1980s.

Human disturbance at nesting sites can be a significant threat but possibly disturbance during courtship could be more significant and affect nest site selection. However, this did not appear to be the case in 1989 when a pair of birds nested on the main climbing face and raised at least one young to flight stage.

Disturbance at nesting sites of other raptors may affect their breeding success.

Management strategies

- The need for seasonal voluntary climbing closures should be assessed annually at the commencement of breeding to protect the nesting sites of all diurnal raptors. Conditions of any closure will be negotiated between the Department and the Victorian Climbing Club, after consultation with the Park Advisory Committee.
- The Victorian Climbing Club and other key user groups will be advised in writing of the dates of any closures and re-openings. Signs advising of any closure will be erected in the Park.
- No walking tracks or other facilities will be constructed near known raptor nesting sites.
- A program will be developed to promote the awareness among rock climbers of the need to protect Peregrine Falcons (and other raptors whose breeding may be affected) and to seek their co-operation in protecting the birds. Appropriate information will be provided. A code of conduct will be developed in conjunction with interested climbing groups, covering all aspects of environmental protection (see Section 8.1.1).
- The number of resident Peregrine Falcons, the location of nests and nesting success will be monitored. Particular emphasis will be placed on detecting disturbance and assessing its effect on nesting and breeding success.
- Surveillance of any closures will be undertaken. If voluntary measures prove inadequate, legally enforced closures will be introduced.

Red-necked Wallaby

Although the Red-necked Wallaby is abundant in some areas of the State, its dramatic decline in many other areas is a cause for concern. It has not been recorded from Mt Arapiles since 1974 and may no longer be present.

Management strategies

- The presence or absence of the Red-necked Wallaby will be verified by survey. If absent, the feasibility of re-introduction will be assessed, including suitability of habitat and threats to survival.
- If considered feasible, a program for the re-introduction of the Red-necked Wallaby will be planned. Implementation of such a program requires the approval of the Regional Manager and the Director.

6.2.3 Research, survey and monitoring

An essential part of wildlife management is the collection of relevant information on species requirements and the monitoring of distribution and abundance.

Management strategies

- Fauna surveys (vertebrate and invertebrate) will be conducted to identify and monitor the distribution and abundance of species. Emphasis will be given to identifying any additional species of significance.
- Information will be obtained on the habitat requirements of species and the presence of threats to survival.
- Competition for nest hollows by Common Starlings and feral bees will be monitored.
- The effects of visitor use on wildlife will be monitored.
- Research on the ecological role of fire will be encouraged and monitoring of the effects of fires (wildfire or prescribed) will be undertaken.
- Any population of Red-necked Wallaby introduced to the Unit will be monitored.

6.3 Aboriginal and historic sites

A few features of historical interest are recorded for the Unit. More is known of the Aboriginal history and archaeology of the Unit since archaeological surveys were undertaken between November 2020 and February 2023.

The management aims for Aboriginal and historic sites are to:

- fully investigate the historic and archaeological significance of the area;
- preserve, protect and restore, if necessary, all sites of historic and archaeological significance, as appropriate;
- raise public awareness of the area's historic and archaeological significance, and interpret features for public appreciation and education.

6.3.1 Aboriginal cultural heritage

Archaeological surveys were completed by Parks Victoria with the support of Barengi Gadjin Land Council between November 2020 and February 2023.

Archaeological surveys have confirmed the Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) is a place rich with cultural heritage including tens of thousands of artefacts, scarred trees, rock art with evidence dating back at least 3000 years, and one of the largest stone quarry complexes found in Australia.

Mount Arapiles -Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) is a living cultural and natural landscape for the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Traditional Owners who have been a part of and cared for these lands for tens of thousands of years.

Management strategies

- A systematic survey of the Park will be undertaken with the assistance of the Victoria Archaeological Survey (VAS) to locate Aboriginal sites and determine their significance.
- The VAS will be consulted on management decisions relating to any Aboriginal sites discovered.
- The VAS will be informed of any proposed works that may threaten archaeological sites.
- Departmental staff will be trained in the recognition of Aboriginal sites.
- Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative, Horsham will be consulted on the management of known Aboriginal sites.
- Recreational activities will not be permitted near cultural heritage. These areas will be managed for preservation.

6.3.2 Historic sites

Mt Arapiles is significant in the history of the Wimmera Region by Major Mitchell. On 22 July 1836, Mitchell camped on the gentle slopes west of the Mount and the following day he climbed to the summit. Subsequently he made several sketches of the area and named several features. Most of the sites described below are associated with his visit (figure 2). Several plaques in the Park commemorate the exploration. There are also some plaques marking the sites of rock climbing deaths.

Management strategies

- All sites associated with European history will be surveyed, and their relative importance determined to establish priorities for protection in consultation with the Arapiles Historical Society.
- Existing plaques will be retained. No additional plaques will be erected without the approval of the Director.
- Interpretative material for a self-guiding tour of historic sites will be prepared (see Section 8.5).

Major Mitchell Cairn. The cairn was erected in 1970 and is currently not sign-posted. It is located approximately 30 m from the track along the western boundary of the Unit.

- A sign-post pointing to the cairn will be erected on the track.
- The walking track from the car park to the cairn will be maintained.
- The site will be interpreted to the public.

The Bluff. A plaque commemorating Mitchell's discovery the area was erected in 1913. Interpretative material on Major Mitchell's discovery will be provided.

Centenary Park. This is the major camping and picnicking area in the Unit, and for many years was managed by a local Committee of Management. The pine trees in the camping area were planted by local identities in 1936 as part of the Centenary celebrations of Mitchell's expedition. Memorial Gates were erected at the former entrance to Centenary Park in the same year, but were later removed.

- Pines and other introduced plants of historic significance or recreational value will be allowed to remain until they die or become unsafe. They will then be removed and any revegetation programs will use indigenous species (see Section 6.1.3). All pine regeneration will be eradicated.
- The historic gates will be replaced but the gateway will not be used as an entrance.

6.4 Landscape

Mount Arapiles and Mitre Rock are outliers of the Grampians sandstones characterised by rugged and spectacular rocky escarpments. Mt Arapiles rising abruptly to a height of nearly 200 metres above the surrounding flat Wimmera Plains is an outstanding landscape feature complemented by excellent stands of forest and woodland. The Mt Arapiles Management Unit contributes to the visual diversity for travellers along the Wimmera Highway providing a sharp contrast to predominantly cleared grazing land. Extensive views of the surrounding flat countryside are available from a number of lookout points within the Unit.

Management activities can have an effect on landscape values. Guidelines for field management based on the Department's Visual Management System (Leonard & Hammond 1983) have been developed to ensure these values are maintained. The System is based on the identification of areas of relatively high visual importance (Landscape Management Areas) and provides Visual Quality Objectives for these areas. The Unit is located in the Murray Basin Plains Landscape Character Type, Subtype (b) Wimmera, and Mt Arapiles is defined as high scenic quality. The two Landscape Management Areas identified for the Unit are shown in figure 5 and the Visual Quality Objectives applying to them are summarised below. Most of the Unit is classified as Area A ('Highest concern for visual resources') because of the high scenic quality combined with a high level of sensitivity to change.

Visual Quality Objectives:

- Area A (Highest concern for visual resources) Alterations should be visually inevident (from critical observation points such as roads and lookouts) or temporarily apparent (no greater than one year). Some alterations may not be acceptable under any circumstances.
- Area B (Moderate concern for visual resources) Alterations may be apparent but must harmonise with the surroundings. Alterations may be visually dominant for a period of no greater than two years.

Management activities and structures such as roads, walking tracks, tree felling and buildings have the potential to impact visually on the landscape and should conform to the Visual Quality Objectives for each Landscape Management Area. In some areas landscape modifications resulting from past management practices do not meet the desired Visual Quality Objectives; the Telecom Repeater Station and the Fire Spotting Tower are particular examples.

The aims for management of landscape are to:

- protect and preserve the landscape;
- minimise the visual impact of management activities in all landscapes.

Management strategies

- Alterations to the landscape must be in accordance with the Visual Quality Objectives given above for each of the Landscape Management Areas.
- To assist with planning, a more detailed Landscape Features Map will be prepared identifying critical landscape elements such as the dominant forms and lines in the landscape (horizon lines, drainage lines and ridge lines, for example), the principal features, landmarks, nodes and viewshed characteristics and sites requiring rehabilitation.
- Staff supervising works which could have a marked visual impact will be trained in landscape management.
- The visual impact of existing sites and facilities will be reduced where possible. Rehabilitation plans will be prepared if required.
- The Visual Quality Objectives will be taken into account when a replacement fire tower is being planned/built.

7. Management for park protection

7.1 Fire management

Fire management involves both protection of the Park and surrounding areas from damage by wildfire, and the use of fire to conserve vegetation or to maintain or regenerate habitat for particular wildlife species. Fire management for vegetation and wildlife were considered in Sections 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.2.1. Protection requirements are identified in the Department's Horsham Regional Fire Protection Plan.

The Department has statutory duties to 'carry out proper and sufficient work for the prevention and suppression of fire in every State Forest, and National Park, and on all protected public land' (Section 62, Forests Act 1958), and (as agent of the Director of National Parks and Public Land) 'to ensure that proper and sufficient measures are taken to protect the Park ... from injury by fire' (Section 18, National Parks Act). This is taken to include protection from damage that might be caused by burning to protect other values.

The aims of fire management in the Unit are to:

- protect human life and property from fire;
- control all wildfires and confine them to a minimum area using control techniques which cause the least damage to Park values;
- protect recreation facilities, historical features and adjoining land from fire;
- minimise the impact of fire on important natural features, particularly rare or threatened plants and animals;
- maintain fire regimes consistent with maintaining the diversity of flora and fauna;
- maintain a core of unburnt vegetation within the Unit.

7.1.1 Fire management

Fire management for the Mt Arapiles Management Unit is conducted in accordance with the Horsham Regional Fire Protection Plan which was released in July 1989.

Fire prevention and pre-suppression measures for the Unit are detailed below.

Fire prevention

Public education. Centenary Park is used by climbers from a range of countries around the world, many with a poor command of the English language. The Region will investigate the production of multilingual leaflets, signs and cassette tapes as a means of informing these people about fire restrictions particularly Total Fire Ban days. Information including fire regulations will be displayed on information boards. Total Fire Ban signs will be erected at Centenary Park and on the Lookout Road on days of Total Fire Ban.

Supervision and enforcement. Regular patrols by Departmental officers will be maintained to assist members of the public with information including fire regulations, and to ensure the regulations are observed.

Fire pre-suppression

Fuel reduction burning. Mt Arapiles is designated as a Priority 4 Burning Zone - the lowest priority for protection burning. Burning in a Priority 4 Zone is based on the need to:

- protect and conserve natural and cultural features;
- achieve other management and biological objectives;

- supplement other higher priority works.

Burning will only be carried out at Mt Arapiles for vegetation and ecological management purposes or for wildfire control.

Firebreaks. Cultivated firebreaks have been maintained in the past in the vicinity of the northern and western boundaries, but these will be replaced by graded access tracks adjacent to the fenceline.

Peripheral firebreaks will be located on the unmade, unused road reserve along the northern and western boundaries of the Park. Breaks will be adjacent to the fenceline where this can be achieved with minimal tree clearance, or as near to the fence as possible where heavy vegetation occurs. Existing tracks or roads in close proximity to the boundary will be utilised where practicable. Breaks will be a maximum width of six meters which includes a fire access track. The possibility of breaks being maintained by the use of chemical control will be investigated.

Roads and tracks. The road and track system as detailed in Section 8.3 (figure 6) is considered to be adequate for fire control purposes within the Park. In addition, access tracks will be incorporated in the peripheral breaks for rapid access to boundary locations being threatened by fire from outside the Park. These additional fire access tracks will be closed to visitor vehicles.

Grazing. Grazing was discontinued at Mt Arapiles several years ago in accordance with Land Conservation Council recommendations.

Slashing. The slashing or mowing of grass will be carried out in camping and picnic areas where the terrain permits.

Water points. The two dams within the Park will be maintained as water storages for fire-fighting purposes.

Air support facilities. The Region's air support facilities are detailed in the Fire Protection Plan.

Fire equipment. Several four wheel drive vehicles with slip-on fire fighting units are located at Natimuk with one allocated for the use of the ranger. All fire equipment will be inspected before and after the fire season and will be maintained in good working condition at all times.

Communications. The Region will continue to maintain a VHF and HF radio network for local and statewide communications for fire suppression and other purposes. The fire lookout at Mt Arapiles summit will be maintained and staffed during the fire season. A radio on Country Fire Authority (CFA) frequencies will be provided in the tower.

During the fire season a single telephone number at the Horsham Regional Office will provide direct contact to the Duty Officer so that any fire calls will be promptly acted on at any time.

Liaison. Departmental officers from the Horsham and Natimuk Work Centres will liaise with officers of CFA Region 17 and local CFA brigades, the Shire of Arapiles, Municipal Fire Prevention Committee, Mt Arapiles Fire Tower Committee, and other relevant bodies.

Preparedness. Fire-fighters from Natimuk and other work centres and support staff from the Horsham office are rostered on standby outside working hours and at weekends to provide an adequate suppression force throughout the fire season. Procedures are in place to ensure the Department responds promptly to any wildfire in the Park.

Fire suppression. Fire suppression includes all activities connected with extinguishing a wildfire following its detection. Suppression of wildfires in the Park threatening life or property will be given priority over all Departmental activities.

Upon detection of a fire in the Park, suppression action will be fast, determined and thorough with the primary objective of safeguarding life and controlling the fire in the shortest possible time. The use of Phoschek will be avoided where possible. Suppression strategy is fully detailed in the Region's Fire Suppression Manual.

Rehabilitation and assessment. Following any wildfire rehabilitation works as appropriate will be carried out. Post wildfire assessments of the impacts of fire will be undertaken following major fires.

7.1.2 Fire Tower

The Fire Tower on the summit of Mt Arapiles is vital for the detection of fire and to house radio-communication facilities. However, it lacks security and is most unattractive, degrading the landscape at this very popular vantage point.

Management strategies

- A draft summit development plan will be prepared and referred to the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park Advisory Committee for consideration.
- The existing fire tower will be replaced with a more secure, more attractive and less visually intrusive tower. The new tower will be planned as part of the overall summit development plan (including the surrounds of the Telecom Repeater Station), in consultation with authorised tower users, and Telecom.
- The new fire tower will primarily provide facilities to detect fires and satisfy emergency service requirements.
- Contributions towards the construction of the replacement tower will be sought from the CFA and other Emergency Services that use the existing tower.
- Development and management of the new building will be the responsibility of the Department in consultation with other emergency service users, primarily the CFA.

7.2 Introduced animals

Eight introduced (non-native) pest animals species are recorded for the Unit. Five are declared vermin (Fox, Rabbit, Hare, Common Starling and Sparrow); the Cat, Black Rat and House Mouse are not declared. Rabbits, Foxes and Cats pose the greatest potential threat to the Unit. Goats are not known to be present but should be regarded as a potential management problem.

The Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act 1958 (Vic.) and the National Parks Act require the Department to exterminate or control introduced fauna within a Park. Domestic dogs including guide dogs are allowed into the Park under certain conditions. Honey bees may also be brought into the Park for apicultural purposes (see Section 9.2).

The aims for management of introduced fauna are to:

- control and if possible eradicate, rabbits, foxes and cats;
- monitor and, where necessary, control other introduced fauna;
- allow entry of guide dogs, and other domestic dogs under appropriate conditions;
- co-operate with adjoining landholders, organisations and Shires in the control of introduced animal species;
- develop cost-effective control programs which minimise adverse environmental effects and
- protect the public;
- prevent the introduction of other pest species.

Management strategies

The control methods to be used are presented below, in order of the priority for control of the animal.

Rabbits. 1080 poisoning using baits laid in trails has been the major rabbit control method used in the past. Although reducing rabbit numbers, the 1080 program failed to control numbers to acceptable levels. In addition, there are a number of problems associated with trails, including the creation of unwanted tracks, the possibility of increased erosion and the spread of introduced plants.

While myxomatosis outbreaks spontaneously occur in the Unit from time to time, the rabbit population has developed resistance to the current field strains. The rabbit flea has also been introduced to aid the spread of myxomatosis but its effectiveness is limited by the dry conditions.

There is an urgent need to modify present techniques so that non-target kills are minimised whilst developing alternative methods.

- A rabbit control program will be prepared. This program may include continued use of 1080 under modified conditions whilst investigating suitable alternative control techniques. The modified conditions may include bait stations, hand cut trails, more selective placing of baits, etc.
- Any use of 1080 poisoning will be based on Parks Policy 2.6.5P and the following guidelines:
 - the guidelines given in Vermin Pac;
 - for public safety reasons poisoning will not be used near camping and picnic areas (e.g. Centenary Park);
 - increase the effectiveness of control by identifying rabbit feeding areas prior to each application and poisoning only in those areas;
 - the use of ground broadcasting or, if desirable, hand-cut trails may assist in overcoming erosion, weed and other problems often associated with baiting along machine-cut trails;
 - minimise the chances of non-target species being affected by avoiding areas where possums and small mammals may feed upon baits and by using other techniques, such as bait stations.

Foxes. Fox numbers in the general area are currently low.

- Foxes will be monitored.
- If fox numbers increase or foxes become a problem in the general area, a poisoning program following the guidelines in Vermin Pac will be considered.

Cats. The number and the effects of cats within the Unit are not well known.

- The presence of cats will be monitored and if control is necessary the guidelines in Vermin Pac will be followed. Cage traps or shooting will be used in the first instance.

Hares. Specific control measures have not been necessary in the Park. Control measures will be considered if hares become a threat to vegetation or wildlife.

Other introduced animals. The impact of black rats, mice, sparrows, starlings and bees will be monitored and control measures will be implemented as necessary.

Dogs. It has been traditional for many campers and day visitors to bring dogs into the Park.

Dogs cause disturbance to wildlife. Dogs can also cause inconvenience and annoy other Park users, and there have been numerous complaints from Mt Arapiles about uncontrolled dogs.

- Guide dogs are permitted in the Park when acting as a guide for a blind person.
- All areas of the Park are set aside as areas in which dogs, other than guide dogs acting as a guide, are not permitted, except the following areas in which dogs are permitted:
 - Centenary Park (part of Zone 3), except in camping areas;
 - Zone 2 only in the vicinity of Centenary Park;
 - on the Lookout Road and the summit car park, only if retained in vehicles.

- All dogs must be under control, on a leash, and restrained from causing annoyance, damage or interference.

Other Domestic Animals.

- Horses. (see section 8.1 for conditions for horse riding).
- Other domestic animals including pets are prohibited.

7.3 Introduced plants

Introduced plants have the potential to compete with and disturb the native vegetation. The problem is usually more pronounced in disturbed areas, such as roadsides, ploughed fire breaks and mineral extraction sites. Not all of the 93 introduced plant species in the Unit are considered problem species. Undoubtedly Bridal Veil Creeper represents the greatest introduced plant problem in the Unit.

In the past chemical sprays have been used to effectively control a number of introduced plants in the Unit, but alternative control methods are now being given greater consideration. For example, introduced plants on disturbed sites can often be effectively controlled by establishing native species on the area.

The possibility exists for further introductions and spread of exotic plant species, by seeds and other plant parts brought in by people, vehicles, animals or the wind. Regular monitoring is essential to detect new introductions, and to ensure the effectiveness of control methods.

Pines planted in Centenary Park camping and picnic areas in 1937 by the Centenary Park Committee of Management to provide shade or as ornamentals have historical significance and currently provide shade and shelter for campers. However, their presence conflicts with the nature conservation objectives for the Unit (see Section 6.3.2) and the pines will become a danger as they age, shed limbs and die.

The aims for management of introduced plants are to:

- control or eradicate introduced plants except those of historical significance, or which enhance recreation sites for visitors without threatening natural values;
- replace introduced plants with indigenous plants in the long-term;
- adopt management practices that favour indigenous plants;
- minimise further establishment of introduced plants;
- co-operate with adjoining landholders, other organisations and Shire Councils in the control of introduced plants.

Management strategies

- Control of introduced plants will be in the following order of priority:
 - Bridal Veil Creeper, Horehound and Boxthorn
 - Skeleton Weed and Stinkwort
 - Saffron Thistle, Slender Thistle.
- The following control methods will be used, as appropriate:
 - the establishment of native species to exclude introduced species, to be used wherever possible (see Section 6.1.3);
 - biological control, where available;
 - hand pulling, cutting or seed removal;

- chemical sprays, for selected introduced plants, in accordance with Parks Policy 2.7.1P.
- Special attention will be given to the eradication of any occurrences of introduced plants established away from the main areas of infestation.
- New species introductions will be detected by regular monitoring, and eradicated as soon as possible.
- The distribution and abundance of weeds and the effectiveness of control measures will be monitored.
- Introduced plants with historic significance or which enhance the site for visitors without threatening natural values, will be retained until they die or are considered a hazard. Any regeneration from the parent plants will be eradicated.

7.4 Erosion prevention and rehabilitation

In general, steep slope and the skeletal nature of soils create a high erosion potential. Existing erosion is generally associated with gravel stripped areas, or tracks. It is localised and of minor severity, and can be readily controlled.

The aims for management of soil erosion prevention and rehabilitation are to:

- rehabilitate existing eroding sites;
- prevent any future soil erosion.

Management strategies

- The location of eroding sites within the Unit will be mapped and priorities and methods of erosion control will be determined.
- Indigenous vegetation will be used for revegetation work where possible (see Section 6.1.3). Any exotic species used should not be capable of existing for more than one or two seasons.
- Erosion control works will be carried out in accordance with guidelines for landscape (see Section 6.4) and Aboriginal sites (see Section 6.3.1).
- Control works will be monitored to determine their success.
- All future works will be designed to minimise the risk of soil erosion.
- Existing walking tracks will be modified and new tracks will be designed, where required, to minimise the likelihood of erosion, e.g. by steps, stone paving, water turns etc.

8. Management for tourism and visitor use

8.1 Tourism and visitor use activities

Mt Arapiles (Dyurrite) is one of Australia's most spectacular natural rock formations. Ascending from the Wimmera Plains, Mt Arapiles-Toon State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) is home to one of the largest stone quarry complexes in Australia.

Mt Arapiles and Mitre Rock are spectacular, picturesque areas attracting many visitors. Mt Arapiles is also recognised internationally as a premier climbing area. The natural beauty of the area, the soundness of the sandstone rock faces, the large number of climbs (over 2000 described climbs), and the wide range in degree of difficulty of climbs, from beginners to the most difficult in Australia, attract many visitors from interstate and overseas. The beauty of the area, the lack of development and the opportunity to watch climbers working on the cliffs also attracts many local day visitors to the Park, and increasing numbers of tourists travelling by bus and car.

A small but significant section of the Major Mitchell Trail passes through Mt Arapiles.

Recognised as regional tourist attractions Mt Arapiles and Mitre Rock are part of a sign-posted circuit from Horsham to Mount Arapiles and Mitre Rock, through the Little Desert National Park, Wail Forest and back to Horsham. Information is available from the Wimmera Tourism Office, Horsham. The circuit is increasingly popular with tourist and holiday bus lines as an alternative route to the highway.

Mt Arapiles is popular for camping, picnics and barbecues and use by school groups is increasing. A short steep climb from the summit car park at Mt Arapiles provides access to spectacular views over the Wimmera Plains and lakes to the Little Desert National Park in the distance, or the Grampians and Black Range in the opposite direction. The steep climb prevents access by visitors with disabilities.

Mitre Rock is also increasingly popular, both with climbers and local residents for picnics and barbecues.

Visitor usage is estimated to be increasing at about three per cent per annum with in excess of 50 000 visitor days per year and about 14 000 camper nights. Recreation is a legitimate use of the area but must be managed to protect Park values, maintain the range of recreational settings and experiences, and minimise conflicts with other uses.

Water supply could be a future management problem. At present the existing bore is providing sufficient water for the current level of Park usage. The aquifer is known to be limited in volume and its potential to provide additional water is uncertain. This must be taken into account when considering future Park use. Water is not available from other sources, except at very high cost.

The aims for management of recreation activities are to:

- provide a range of recreation opportunities for tourists and other visitors;
- minimise the impact of recreation on cultural heritage and the environmental values;
- minimise the conflict between different activities;
- promote tourism in association with Wimmera Tourism;
- provide for and regulate appropriate commercial recreational use.

Management strategies

- Manage, in accordance with the Unit objectives (Chapter 3) and the zoning scheme (Chapter 4), to provide or maintain an appropriate range of recreational opportunities.
- Prohibit the following activities in the Unit:

- dispersed camping (camping outside of defined camping areas)
- para gliding
- hang gliding
- off-road driving.
- Investigate construction of a circuit walking track.
- Develop a lookout at a suitable location with access for people with disabilities.
- Rehabilitate the previously grazed area abutting the eastern boundary of the Unit for development in the long-term as a camp ground with a toilet block.
- Assist Wimmera Tourism in the development of appropriate tourist publications describing the circuit drive linking Horsham and the Unit and the attractions of the Unit for tourists.
- Permit major recreation activities as shown in table 2 subject to the following conditions.

Table 2: Major recreation activities in each zone

Recreation Activity	Zone		
	Conservation	Conservation Recreation	Recreational Development
Camping	No	No	Yes
Picnicking	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rock Climbing	No	Conditional*	Conditional*
Bushwalking	Yes**	Yes**	Yes
Pleasure Driving	No	Yes	Yes
Cycling	No	Yes	Yes

* Only allowed in designated climbing areas

** Approved tracks only

Camping - Permit only at Centenary Park camping area (not in the picnic area). Fires (except gas appliances) in constructed fire places only.

Picnicking - Allow in all Zones; facilities provided only in Zone 3. Fires (except gas appliances) in constructed fire places only.

Rock climbing - (see Section 8.1.1).

Bush walking - Permit in all areas.

Horse riding - Permit on roads and tracks open to public vehicles and on fire breaks along the western and north-western boundary of the Unit. Monitor the impact on park values and other recreational activities and further restrict horse riding if appropriate. Prohibit camping with horses or corralling. Horses are not permitted in camp grounds.

Pleasure driving - Permit on all open, defined roads in registered vehicles driven by licensed drivers. The circuit track will be seasonally closed in winter. Prohibit on closed roads designated for management vehicles only (see Section 8.3).

Cycling - Permit on all open, defined roads.

Orienteering - Consider potential environmental and recreational impacts on the Park, if an application is received. Assess impacts after events.

8.1.1 Rock climbing activities

Mt Arapiles is one of Australia's premier rock climbing sites, and both rock climbing and abseiling are popular recreation activities.

Rock climbing can affect the Park in a number of ways. Disturbances in the vicinity of raptor nesting sites, from immediately prior to nesting and through the breeding season, may have a detrimental effect on nesting success. The notable species Peregrine Falcon is particularly susceptible to disturbance in such periods. Plants growing in cracks on cliff faces, such as the rare plant Skeleton Fork-fern (*Psilotum nudum*), can be destroyed. Permanent fixtures (bolts in particular) and practices such as wire brushing and chipping can damage rock formations and be visually displeasing. The use of chalk as an aid to climbing can result in the formation of unattractive deposits. With cooperation from climbers, these impacts can be minimized without the need to unduly restrict rock climbing. **It is necessary to actively manage rock climbing to protect cultural heritage and environmental values.**

Many operators run rock climbing instruction courses in the Unit. A permit for a period, with conditions and fees payable, is required for such commercial recreation activities. Permits are granted by the Director of National Parks and Public Land. Where the period exceeds six weeks, the Minister determines the fees and conditions.

The following rock climbing activities occur in Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) including:

- **Traditional Climbing** which involves ascending a route using natural or temporary protection devices
- **Abseiling** which involves descending a rock face, or other near-vertical surface, using ropes and devices
- **Sport Climbing** which relies on fixed protection / permanent anchors at the top of a sport climb
- **Bouldering** which involves a short sequence of climbing moves, at a height of less than 4 meters from the ground, without the use of rope or fall protection measures but with a bouldering mat on the ground beneath the climbing area.

In 2019 and 2020, Parks Victoria and Barengi Gadjin Land Council rediscovered cultural heritage in the Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) and found evidence that the cultural heritage was being harmed or at risk of harm. In response, Parks Victoria and Barengi Gadjin Land Council initiated thorough archaeological and environment surveys of the Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape).

Below is a description of the management categories for rock climbing areas, and outlines what is allowed.

1. Designated Climbing Area

There are no known risks to cultural heritage or the environment, or site management measures to protect values have been implemented.

- These areas are open for climbing.
- Licensed tour operators may use these areas.
- Bouldering, and the use of bouldering mats, will be permitted in some designated climbing areas.

2. Designated Climbing Area that requires site management action to protect values

There are known risks to cultural heritage and/or the environment, and site management measures to protect values have not yet been implemented.

- These areas will be open for climbing when management measures, to protect values, are in place.

3. Designated Climbing Area for Licensed Tour Operators only

There is a known risk to cultural heritage in this area. Site management measures have been implemented to mitigate those risks in accordance with a permit under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

- Administrative and supervisory requirements apply. Access for climbing is limited to operators who hold a current Tour Operator Licence issued by Parks Victoria and an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Permit issued under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, and have completed a cultural heritage induction.

4. Climbing Not Permitted

Rock climbing activities (including bouldering) are not permitted because there are known risks to cultural heritage and/or the environment. These values are sensitive to the impact of climbing activities. The risk of these values being directly harmed by climbing activities cannot be adequately managed or mitigated.

5. Possible Climbing Area (Unassessed/Under Review)

These areas have not yet been assessed, or an assessment outcome has not been determined.

Eighty designated climbing areas² have been established across the Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) – refer to Appendix 3 for a map of designated climbing areas. Of these eighty areas:

- Sixty-four areas are open for climbing (category 1 above), and eleven of these areas allow bouldering and the use of bouldering mats (identified as “Bouldering” on the map of designated climbing areas)
- Fifteen areas require site management action, to protect values, before they will be open for climbing (category 2 above)
- One area is designated for licensed tour operators only (category 3 above)

Management strategies

- Rock climbing is permitted in designated climbing areas only. Some areas may be seasonally closed to rock climbing for the protection of Peregrine Falcon (see Section 6.2.2).
- ~~Rock climbing groups will be invited to participate in the preparation of a code of conduct for climbers. The code will cover minimising the use of permanent fixtures, discouraging the use of wire brushing and chipping, encouraging the use of chalk coloured to match the rock face, protecting the Peregrine Falcon and other raptors (see Section 6.2.2), protecting vegetation on rock faces and other Park values. The code will be on display on Park notice boards and readily available to climbers.~~
- ~~Operators of commercial rock climbing instruction courses will require a permit under section 21(1)(c) of the National Parks Act.~~
- ~~Organisers of events likely to attract more than 40 people will be requested to consult with the Regional Manager, prior to events.~~
- New climbing areas cannot be established.
- Bouldering is allowed in the designated climbing areas identified as “Bouldering” on the designated climbing areas map (Appendix 3).
- Climbers will be made aware of the following:
 - Parks Victoria cannot warrant that any fixed protection measures (bolts, anchors, belay points, abseil stations etc.) have been installed or maintained to a suitable standard.
 - Use of fixed protection points is at the climber’s discretion.

² Each climbing area contains multiple climbing routes.

- Climbers must assess and accept the risk of using fixed protection points.
- Climbers must adhere to site restrictions and conditions (such as temporary closures) that will be communicated via on-site signage and the Parks Victoria website.
- Climbers are allowed to use temporary protection and temporary anchors consistent with minimal impact ('clean') climbing techniques.
- Climbers are allowed to use chalk with a preference for a colour that matches the rock.
- Climbers must use designated trails and routes to access climbing areas. All informal tracks will be closed and rehabilitated.
- Fixed protection points will be removed from areas where climbing is not allowed.
- Climbing and bouldering events and competitions are not allowed.
- Visitor information about rock climbing activities within the Dyrurrite Cultural Landscape will be maintained on Parks Victoria's website. Visitor information will:
 - show where designated climbing areas are located, and
 - outline climbing conditions.

8.2 Monitoring and recreational use

Limitations on past monitoring of recreation use have created difficulties in planning for future use. Knowledge of the types, locations, levels and impacts of recreation activities, and of the expectations of users greatly facilitates planning.

Management strategies

- A survey will be conducted to assess the needs and expectations of Park visitors.
- A traffic counter will be installed on the road to the summit of Mt Arapiles (Lookout Road). Vehicle counts will be made for at least 12 months to gauge the level of use throughout the year.
- The impact of all recreation activities will be monitored.
- Numbers of camps in the Centenary Park camping area will be sampled, at least fortnightly for a full year with more frequent counts in holiday periods, to identify peak usage levels and provide data for future planning for the replacement camping area (see Section 8.4).

8.3 Vehicle access

The road and track system within the Unit (figure 6) is considered to provide adequate access for recreation, management and emergency purposes, but several vehicle tracks are no longer required or are inappropriate. Some tracks can become unsuitable for conventional vehicles in the wetter months of the year.

Roads to the Mt Arapiles Management Unit are managed by the Vic Roads and the Shire of Arapiles. There are no road reserves within the Unit and all internal roads are the responsibility of the Department.

The aims for management of vehicle access are to:

- provide access to recreation sites where appropriate;
- provide for pleasure driving;
- provide access for management and emergency vehicles;

- maintain other Park values.

Management strategies

- No new roads or tracks will be constructed in the Unit.
- The road to the summit of Mt Arapiles, Lookout Road, will be maintained. Disturbance to existing road fringing vegetation will be minimised.
- The internal ring road will be maintained to provide conventional vehicle access for most of the year. Seasonal closure will apply during winter.
- The existing car park and turning area at the base of the walking track to the Summit Lookout will be maintained.
- Other roads and tracks will be maintained at their current standard.
- Any track may be temporarily closed to the public if necessitated by track conditions, or other substantial reasons.
- Temporarily closed tracks will be open to management and emergency vehicles.
- The following vehicle tracks (indicated in figure 6) will be permanently closed.
 - The access road on the north side of pines camp ground will be closed to unauthorised vehicles.
 - The access road on the west and south sides of the pines camp ground will be closed to all vehicles. The track will be ripped and planted with indigenous vegetation. The drainage gutter along the west side will be maintained with a contour drain to be continued south into the gully.
 - Gravel extraction tracks linking Natimuk Golf Course and Lookout Road, west of the former wildflower reserve.
 - The duplicated sections of access tracks in the south-west, north-west and north-east corners of the Unit.
 - The track from Centenary Park to Declaration Crag and Lookout Road.
- Tracks identified for closure but required for fire/emergency vehicle access will be maintained and locked gates will be installed. All other closed tracks will be revegetated.
- Erosion control works will be carried out on tracks identified for closure.
- Bicycle riding will be permitted on all vehicle tracks open to public vehicles.

8.4 Visitor facilities

Recreation opportunities can often be considerably enhanced by the provision of simple visitor facilities such as access tracks, barbecues and lookouts.

All developments at recreation sites should comply with the zoning scheme and guidelines for the protection of landscape values.

Recreation sites (figure 2) include picnic areas, camping areas, lookouts, historic sites and tracks. General strategies for site development are presented, followed by strategies and actions for development at specific sites.

Management of the few walking tracks within the Unit is also addressed.

The provision of visitor facilities in relation to historic sites is detailed in Section 6.3. The aims of management for the provision of visitor facilities are to:

- increase the enjoyment of visitors;
- provide suitable recreation opportunities for visitors;
- minimise the impact of recreational activities on other Park values.

Management strategies

- Recreation sites will be developed in accordance with zoning and will consider other Park values. Most development will be located in Zone 3.
- Facilities in Zone 3, in particular camping areas and new toilet facilities, will be designed to be accessible to people with a disability.
- Developments proposed below will be assessed for environmental impact on Aboriginal sites, significant flora and other Park values, and will be designed to be compatible with landscape values.

Centenary Park. Centenary Park is the major recreation facility within the Unit, providing both for camping and picnicking. The layout of the camping area is unsatisfactory and, with increasing numbers of climbers coming to the Unit, its capacity is sufficient in busy periods.

Camping

- The existing area available for camping at Centenary Park will be better defined. Areas where camping is not permitted will be clearly indicated. The pines area will be fenced inside the outer row of pines to restrict vehicles.
- Adequate space for group camping will be provided away from other campers.
- Basic camping facilities only will be maintained. (Facilities, such as powered sites and showers, are available at Natimuk Lake see figure 1).
- Existing type of fireplaces will be retained and two communal pit fireplaces will be installed at suitable camping locations one for use by school groups.
- The possibility of charging camping fees will be investigated.
- A new camping area with basic facilities will be developed on the 2.5 ha area of cleared land previously held under grazing licence located in the north-east corner of the Unit adjacent to Centenary Park following revegetation of the area. Centenary Park camping area will be phased out as the replacement camping area is developed. The possibility of continuing to provide camp-sites in appropriate locations in Centenary Park at Easter and Christmas holiday periods will be investigated at the appropriate time. A development plan for the camping area will be prepared giving due consideration to environmental impact, adequacy of site drainage and capacity of the existing bore to supply an additional storage tank.
- The new camping area will include:
 - an additional toilet block, sites suitable for school groups and provision for caravans; no showers, powered sites or other non-basic facilities will be provided; the number of camping sites will be determined by the availability of a sustainable water supply;
 - some sites for visitors confined to wheelchairs and other disabled visitors and link pathways to other facilities in the camping area;
 - locally occurring native species planted to screen sites and provide shade and shelter. (Quick growing species, e.g. Golden Wattle, Mt Arapiles form, will be used to provide short-term temporary shelter).

Picnicking

- Picnicking facilities will be maintained at the existing site; the picnic shelter and facilities will be retained; a public notice board will be installed in the shelter; and the feasibility of replacing the five existing wood fire barbecues with a sufficient number of electric barbecues will be investigated.
- A new picnic area will be developed to replace the existing picnic area following the senescence or death of a high proportion of the existing pine trees; this is unlikely to occur within the period of this Plan.
- Pine trees will be lopped or removed as necessary to maintain public safety. Any revegetation program will use indigenous species (see Section 6.1.3).
- Strategies and actions for the use of firewood in the Park in Section 9.1 will be implemented to reduce the use of firewood and minimise the impact of its collection. Firewood for camp-fires may be supplied for peak usage periods. Wood should be supplied to a central point and be made available in large pieces.

Melville Cave. Melville Cave is a popular site on the way to Summit Lookout. The area is suitable for development and is zoned accordingly (Zone 3).

- The access track from Lookout Road will be maintained in a condition suitable for conventional vehicle access.
- The existing, single picnic table, barbecue and rubbish bin will be maintained.
- Stabilisation work on the walking track to the cave will be carried out as required.
- Interpretation of the possible use of the area by the bushranger Captain Melville will be provided at the cave site.

Summit Picnic Area. This is one of the main picnic areas and offers panoramic views without persons having to leave their vehicle.

- Access to the picnic area from Lookout Road will be maintained in a condition suitable for conventional vehicles.
- Existing barbecues, rubbish bins and picnic tables will be maintained. Consideration will be given to minor changes to improve the accessibility of the site to visitors with disabilities.
- The lookout at the northern end of the picnic area will be modified to provide safe access for people with disabilities without any substantial change to the character of the area.

Summit Lookout. The lookout is adjacent to the Mt Arapiles fire spotting tower, and is one of the focal points of recreation in the Unit.

- Existing picnic tables, barbecues and rubbish bins will be maintained.
- The existing information board and brochure box will be maintained and the display will be reviewed, regularly. Information including fire regulations will be kept current.

Mitre Rock. Mitre Rock will be managed in accordance with the objectives of the Conservation Zone – refer to Map 3A at Appendix 3 for updated management zones.

Mitre Rock attracts substantial numbers of visitors.

- The access track to Mitre Rock from the Goroke-Natimuk Road will be maintained to provide comfortable access for conventional vehicles.
- A development plan including car park, picnic facilities and making provision for rehabilitation of the eroded area will be prepared. Implementation of the plan will require approval of the Regional Manager and Director (figure 7).

Declaration Crag. This area, also known as Taylors Rock, **is not a designated climbing area.**

- The access track from Centenary Park will be closed to vehicles other than management and emergency vehicles.

Walking Tracks

- Existing walking tracks will be assessed and erosion control works will be carried out as required.
- Walking tracks will be sign-posted. Track routes will be shown on the information boards at Centenary Park and Summit Lookout.
- A tracks brochure will be prepared detailing length, degree of difficulty, time required and self-guiding notes for each walk.
- The need for additional walking tracks, including the desirability and feasibility of a long loop walking track suitable for family groups will be investigated
- DCE design standards for construction and maintenance of walking tracks will be applied to all track design and construction works.

8.5 Information, interpretation and education

Interpretation (explanation of natural and cultural features, their relationships, significance and implications for management) can greatly enhance public enjoyment through developing a keener awareness, appreciation and understanding of the Unit. Basic information such as the location, access, size, features and controls on use is essential for the enjoyment of visitors and the protection of the Park. Direct communication between a Ranger and Park users is the most effective and flexible means of interpretation. Non-personal services including information boards, displays, publications and self-guided walks or drives are generally cheaper on a per visitor basis, but have several disadvantages including loss of flexibility and reliance on the visitor's initial interest. The levels of vandalism and illegal activity can also be higher. The education potential of the Unit is considerable, offering opportunities for the study of geology, botany, history, recreation and other related fields.

The aims for management of information, interpretation and education are to:

- provide information and interpretative services to encourage appropriate uses and enhance visitor enjoyment;
- provide educational opportunities for all Park visitors, particularly school, tertiary and community groups;
- provide educational materials and services to enhance educational opportunities;
- assist the development of educational programs focused on the Unit by schools and others by assisting in the development of educational materials which reflect a standpoint both environmentally sensitive and balanced in respect of the inherent conflict between increasing visitor use and protection of the environment.

Management strategies

- Existing interpretative facilities (pamphlet and information boards) will be retained and revised as appropriate.
- Additional interpretative material will be prepared for:
 - self-guide notes on the sites of historical significance or interest;
 - Park note on the geological features of interest;
 - self-guide notes on walking tracks.
- Ranger-guided activities such as guided walks, spotlighting and camp-fire nights will be provided as appropriate.

- Departmental staff will be made available to talk to visitor groups where practicable.
- Develop resource materials on the Unit's flora, fauna and geology in consultation with education groups.
- Education activities will be encouraged in Zone 2 and 3 areas. The impact of educational usage of Zone 1 will be monitored.
- Signs advising of the Park Regulations 1984 and restrictions on dogs will be erected in Zone 3 picnic areas and the camping area.
- Appropriate directional, warning and feature signs conforming to the guidelines contained in the Departmental Signs Manual will be provided.

8.6 Public safety

The Department has a responsibility for Public safety in the Unit. There is potential for visitors to be injured by falling tree limbs and accidents associated with rock climbing, bush walking and driving vehicles. Search and rescue operations may be necessary when such accidents occur.

There is a telephone in the Park at the entrance to Centenary Park. Surrounding farmland provides suitable helicopter landing sites close to the Unit boundary. Protection of visitors from fire is dealt with in Section 7.1.

The aims for management of public safety are to:

- avoid the exposure of visitors to hazards through careful design of facilities;
- promote and encourage Public awareness of hazards and safe use of the Park.

Management strategies

- Search and rescue operations will be controlled by the Police. The Department of Conservation and Environment will take initial action and provide assistance as required.
- Ambulance access to some sections of rock face is via management gates. Keys will be provided to the local Doctor, the CFA, the State Emergency Service and the Horsham Ambulance station.
- A sign will be erected in Centenary Park advising of facilities and procedures in case of accident.
- The existing telephone booth located at the entrance to Centenary Park will be retained.
- The ranger will be trained in first aid procedures.
- Hazardous trees and tree limbs in the vicinity of picnic areas and the camping area will be removed.
- Advise climbers of climbing hazards through notices provided on information boards and information in publications.
- The Park is available for training purposes to emergency services on application to the Regional Manager.

8.7 Naming of features

The established name of some features of special interest to rock climbers have, in some instances, become confused. Some long established names have fallen into disuse as a result of the common practice of rock climbers in adopting new names and establishing these through frequent use.

An effort should be made to standardise the names of features (as distinct from the names of actual climbs or climbing routes) and to preserve historic names where these are known.

Management strategies

- Parks Victoria with Barengi Gadjin Land Council will rename the park and significant places.
- The names of major features in the Park should be standardised and used consistently in all publications and Departmental activities.
- Naming procedures should conform to procedures established by the Victorian Place Names Committee and Departmental policy (see Parks Policy 3.1P).
- Historical names not now in common usage should be re-established with advice and assistance of the Arapiles Historical Society.

9. Management for resource utilisation

9.1 Firewood

The removal of fallen limbs and hollow logs destroys habitat (see Section 6.2.1).

Licensed firewood removal, allowed in the former Mt Arapiles Forest Park, is not considered an appropriate use following incorporation of the Unit in the State Park.

A firewood shortage exists at camping and picnic areas and demand for firewood is increasing.

The costs involved prohibit the provision of firewood by the Department on a regular basis, although the Department can supply firewood derived from management operations from time to time.

The aims for management of firewood removal in the Unit are to:

- provide for the collection of firewood for on-site use in picnic and camping areas;
- reduce the impact of concentrated firewood removal on wildlife habitat and other Park values.

Management strategies

- The use of alternative fuels for cooking and heating will be encouraged.
- Visitors may continue to collect and use firewood for camp-fires and barbecues in the Park, only from designated areas.
- Designated areas and appropriate methods of firewood collection will be advised through the Information Board at Centenary Park. Firewood collection areas will be changed as appropriate. No firewood collection will be allowed in Zone 1.
- Firewood will be burnt only in the constructed fireplaces provided.
- Removal of firewood from the Park for outside use will not be permitted.
- A public education program will be developed to reduce the use of firewood and improve collection methods so as to minimise impact on the natural ecology (see Section 6.2.1).
- The possibility of providing a woodlot outside the Park should be investigated to provide a long-term solution.

9.2 Apiculture

The area is attractive to apiarists because the Long-leaf Box provides pollen and nectar for building up hive strength, and the variety of eucalypt species provide an extended flowering season.

Two permanent bee sites were previously established in the area. Conflicts between apiarist and other activities were not apparent.

No temporary sites have yet been approved in the Unit.

The aims for management of apiculture in the Unit are to:

- allow apiculture in accordance with the LCC recommendation approved by Government;
- minimise impacts on conservation values and conflict with recreational activities;
- issue licences in accordance with the provisions of the National Parks Act 1975 and Departmental policy.

Management strategies

- Bee sites will only be permitted in Zone 2.
- A maximum of two temporary bee sites will be licensed with appropriate conditions under the National Parks Act.
- Feral bee populations will be monitored, and control measures will be implemented where there is conflict with conservation or recreation objectives.

9.3 Gravel extraction

Extraction of gravel (all road making material and stone) was a significant activity within the area until 1958.

Unlicensed extraction of stone from Mt Arapiles for local rock gardens in the surrounding area has occurred from time to time in the past; amounts extracted were generally small.

Management strategies

- Gravel and stone removal for either private or Departmental use will not be permitted.
- Existing gravel-stripped areas will be stabilised and rehabilitated where necessary (see Sections 6.1.3 and 7.4).

10. Management of authorised uses

Public authorities have established a range of facilities in the Unit including electricity lines, telephone cables, a trigonometric station, a fire tower and a repeater station (figure 8). The Military Forces carry out training exercises.

Public Authorities require the consent of the Director to perform their functions and exercise their powers in the Unit, now it has been incorporated in Park.

The aim for management of authorised uses is to:

- allow public authorities to perform their functions and exercise their powers in the area in ways which minimise impacts on the environment, and activities in the Unit.

10.1 Utilities and services

Electricity Lines. The SEC has installed electricity lines to supply the Telecom repeater station, the fire spotting tower and the motor on the bore pump at Centenary Park. Power lines can have a visual impact and increase the risk of fire. Management strategies for clearing vegetation near power lines and removal of vegetation associated with works are detailed in Section 6.1.4.

Telephone Cables. Cables have been installed to service the Telecom repeater station, a public phone booth at Centenary Park and the fire spotting tower on Mt Arapiles. No additional telephone cables are planned.

Trigonometric Station. The station is located near the fire spotting tower on Mt Arapiles and is the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance.

Fire Tower. The tower on the summit of Mt Arapiles plays a vital role in fire prevention and communications. A number of Emergency Services make use of the tower. The existing facility will be replaced (see Section 7.1.2). Emergency Services using the existing tower will be able to continue this use in the new tower.

Repeater Station. The Telecom Repeater Station on the summit of Mt Arapiles has been subject to an annual lease. The structure has major visual impact and additional works are planned.

Management strategies

- National Parks Act Section 27 Consents, including appropriate conditions will be issued to Public Authorities for the maintenance of existing uses and facilities; in the interim, access to existing facilities for maintenance will be permitted.
- Consents for any new works or modifications to existing facilities will be thoroughly investigated and Consents will be issued as appropriate.
- The Consent to be issued to Telecom will provide for vehicle access and minor new works, and include conditions to ensure future rationalization and reduction of the visual impact of the communication facility (see Section 7.1.2).
- Prior to the issue of the consent, the following management strategies will apply:
 - existing lease arrangements are to continue;
 - vehicle access to the lease area will be maintained;
 - the Department should be consulted before any works are carried out.

10.2 Defence training

Military training is currently limited to a few exercises a year involving rock climbing and rescue technique.

Management strategies

- Defence training exercises, restricted to Level One training (adventure training and bushcraft/field exercises) for small groups at specified times, will be permitted.
- The only permissible activities will be rock-climbing **activities (in designated areas)** and use of the camping area; written approval of the Regional Manager is required for all exercises.
- In accordance with Departmental policy, conditions will apply to all exercises. Director's approval is required for any carriage of weapons. Use of ammunition (live or dummy), or explosives, will not be permitted.
- Support vehicles must use existing roads and tracks

11. Management organisation and operations

The Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park is managed by the Horsham Region.

Currently the Public Land Ranger South Wimmera who is responsible for the Park allocates about 60% of time to the Park as a whole. A work crew regularly visit the Park to carry out maintenance work. Various other staff members allocate time to the Unit.

11.1 Personnel

Management strategies

- The ranger responsible for the Unit will receive extensive training in education and interpretation skills and be familiarised with the sport of rock climbing.
- A crew will be made available for maintenance work in the Unit as necessary.

11.2 Buildings

Existing buildings within the Park include:

- the toilet block and picnic shelter at Centenary Park;
- the fire spotting tower, and various buildings associated with the Telecom communication facility within the Commonwealth lease area, at and near Mt Arapiles.

Management strategy

- Construct a basic toilet block as part of the development of the proposed camping ground to service the proposed camping area adjacent to Centenary Park.

11.3 Departmental facilities

The Mt Arapiles fire tower serves both a fire protection and communication role.

Management strategy

- Existing Departmental fire protection and communication facilities provided by the fire tower will be maintained (see Sections 7.1.2 and 10.1).

12. Summary of management proposals

The management proposals in this plan are summarised in table 3, and for each of them implementation priority and duration are listed. They are grouped under four headings: Field Management Actions, Resource Assessment and Planning, Monitoring, and Research.

Priority. The classifications are High, Medium and Low. Classifications are intended as a relative guide to management and will be continually open to review.

Duration. Projects are classified as Short, Medium, Long and Ongoing. Classifications indicate the relative time requirements for a project's completion.

Table 3: Summary of management proposals

(Numbers refer to chapter sections of this document)

Field management actions		
Priority	Duration	Project
6.1 Conservation of native vegetation		
High	Ongoing	Protect communities from grazing, introduced plants and human activities.
High	Ongoing	Prevent introduction of <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i> .
High	Ongoing	Undertake experimental burning if required, in conjunction with NPPL Division.
High	Ongoing	Use prescribed burning for vegetation management if a need is demonstrated.
High	Ongoing	Protect significant species from any threats identified.
Medium	Short	Establish guidelines for clearing vegetation near power lines.
6.2 Wildlife management		
High	Short	Re-introduce Red-necked Wallabies if their absence is confirmed in conjunction with NPPL Division.
High	Ongoing	Protect raptor nesting sites by seasonal closure to rock climbing when justified.
Medium	Ongoing	Control rabbits to maintain vegetation diversity.
Medium	Short	Prepare program to promote the awareness of rock climbers to the need to protect raptors.
Medium	Ongoing	Observe conditions for removal of fallen timber.
6.3 Aboriginal and historic sites		
High	Short	VAS to carry out systematic survey of the Unit for Aboriginal sites.
Medium	Ongoing	Maintain parking bay and walking track to the Major Mitchell Cairn.
Medium	Short	Provide interpretative material on European historic sites.
6.4 Landscape		
Medium	Short	Reduce visual impact of existing sites and facilities where appropriate.
7.2 Introduced animals		
High	Ongoing	Control population levels of introduced animals as necessary.
Medium	Ongoing	Prepare and implement a rabbit control program.
7.3 Introduced plants		

High	Ongoing	Control problem introduced plant species.
Medium	Ongoing	Eradicate regeneration from historic introduced plants.
8.1 Recreation activities		
High	Ongoing	Ensure conditions for recreation activities are observed.
High	Ongoing	Regulate commercial recreation.
High	Short	Manage visitor access. Limit rock climbing activities to designated climbing areas only, to protect cultural and environmental values from harm.
8.3 Vehicle access		
High	Ongoing	Implement seasonal track closures.
High	Short	Implement permanent track closures.
High	Ongoing	Maintain all internal roads.
Medium	Ongoing	Maintain turning area at the start of the walking track to the Summit Lookout.
Medium	Medium	Rehabilitate permanently closed tracks not required for management.
8.4 Visitor facilities		
High	Short	Develop Centenary Park picnic area.
High	Short	Improve existing camping area at Centenary Park.
High	Short	Prepare Mitre Rock development plan and implement.
High	Long	Develop new camping area at Centenary Park.
Medium	Short	Investigate loop walking track.
Medium	Ongoing	Maintain Melville Cave, Summit picnic areas, Summit lookout and Declaration Crag.
Medium	Medium	Prepare Summit development plan and implement.
Medium	Short	Sign-post walking tracks and reclaim any eroded sections of track.
Medium	Short	Prepare walking track brochures.
8.5 Information, interpretation and education		
High	Short	Revise existing interpretative facilities.
High	Medium	Prepare additional interpretative material.
Medium	Short	Erect signs advising of Park regulations.
Medium	Medium	Develop educational material.
Medium	Medium	Provide directional, warning and feature signs.
8.6 Public safety		
High	Ongoing	Remove hazardous trees in Zone 3 areas.
High	Short	Erect appropriate warning signs and signs advising of facilities and procedures in case of accident.
9.1 Firewood		
Medium	Short	Prepare information for Information Board in Centenary Park on the use of firewood.
Medium	Ongoing	Develop and implement a public education program.
9.3 Gravel extraction		
Medium	Medium	Rehabilitate gravel stripped areas where necessary.

10.1 Utilities and services		
Medium	Medium	Issue consents to public authorities.
High	Short	Issue permits to the Defence Forces.
11.2 Buildings		
High	Long	Construct an additional toilet block to service the proposed new camping area at Centenary Park

Resource assessment and planning

Priority	Duration	Project
6.1 Conservation of native vegetation		
High	Short	Determine the status and distribution of significant plant species and threats.
Low	Short	Update vegetation map and descriptions.
6.2 Wildlife management		
High	Short	Confirm absence of Red-necked Wallabies.
High	Medium	Assess disturbance to nesting raptors.
High	Medium	Determine locations of all Peregrine Falcon nest sites.
Medium	Ongoing	Survey distribution and abundance of vertebrate and invertebrate species.
6.3 Aboriginal and historic sites		
High	Short	VAS to determine Aboriginal sites.
Medium	Short	Document significance of European historic sites.
6.4 Landscape		
Low	Short	Prepare Landscape Features Map.
7.1 Fire management		
Medium	Long	Prepare overall Summit development plan including the replacement of the existing fire tower, and implement.
8.1 Recreation activities		
High	Ongoing	Monitor usage of Centenary Park.
Medium	Short	Prepare a code of conduct for rock climbers.
Low	Short	Conduct visitor survey.

Monitoring

Priority	Duration	Project
6.1 Conservation of native vegetation		
High	Ongoing	Monitor the effectiveness of vegetation management.
High	Ongoing	Monitor the effects of fire (or its absence) on vegetation.
High	Ongoing	Monitor the status of all significant species.
High	Ongoing	Monitor the presence of plant diseases and other damaging agents.
6.2 Wildlife management		
High	Ongoing	Monitor the effects of visitors on wildlife.

High	Ongoing	Monitor the competition for nest hollows by starlings and bees.
7.2 Introduced animals		
High	Ongoing	Monitor the presence of cats and goats, and the impact of black rats, mice, sparrows and starlings.
High	Ongoing	Monitor rabbit numbers and distribution as part of the rabbit control plan.
7.3 Introduced plants		
High	Ongoing	Monitor the distribution and abundance of weed species, the occurrence of new introductions and the effectiveness of control measures.
7.4 Erosion prevention and rehabilitation		
High	Ongoing	Monitor the success of erosion control works.
8.1 Recreation activities		
High	Ongoing	Monitor the level of use of sites.
High	Ongoing	Monitor the impact of recreation activities.

Research

Priority	Duration	Project
High	Ongoing	Encourage external research of relevance to vegetation management.
High	Ongoing	Promote ecological studies of the effects of fire on the Unit's vegetation communities and significant flora and fauna, and of the habitat requirements of wildlife.

Appendix 1: Definitions of Harm

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* provides the following definition:

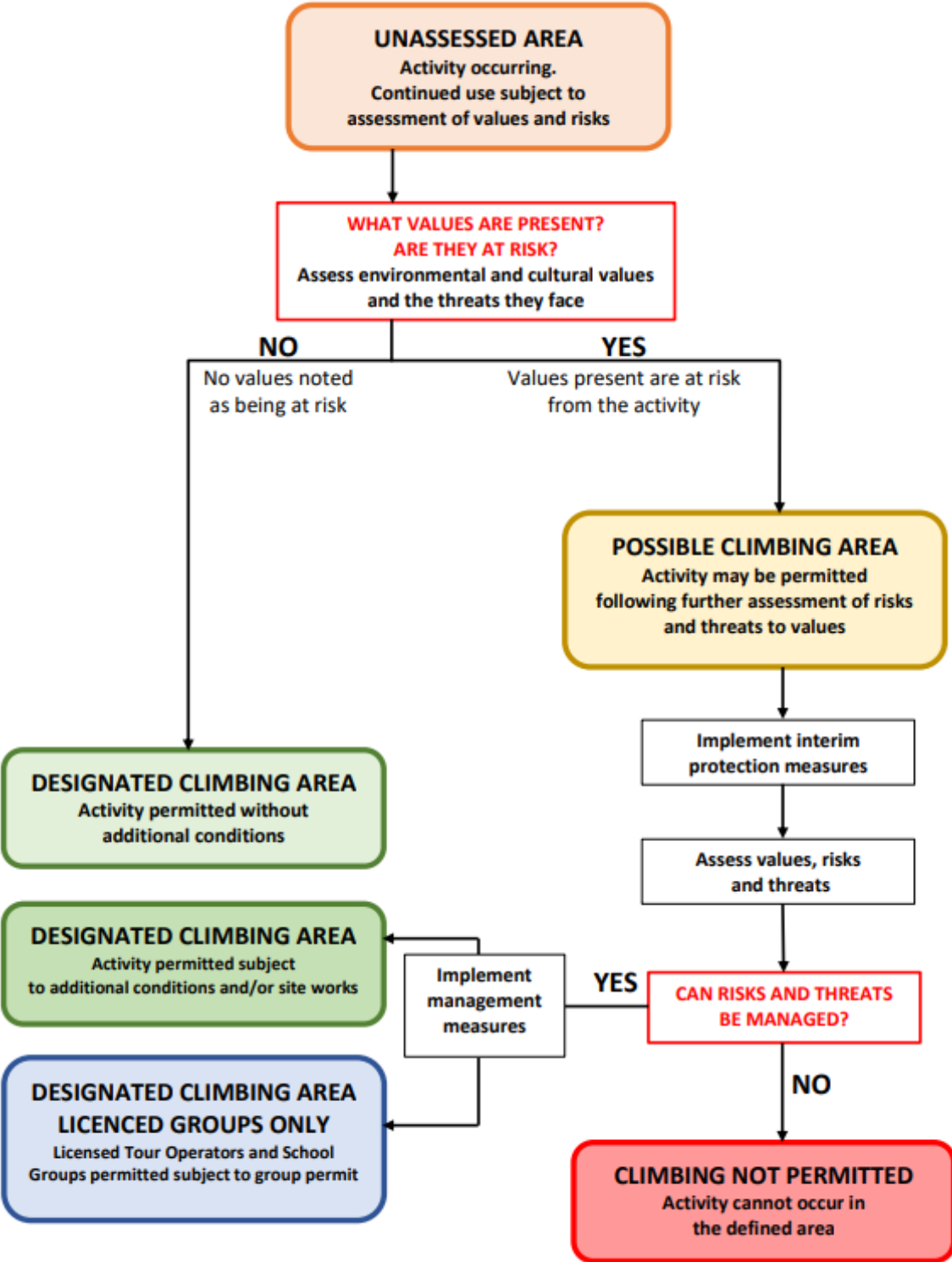
harm, in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage, includes damage, deface, desecrate, destroy, disturb, injure or interfere with.

The terms *damage, deface, desecrae, destroy, disturb, injure*, and *interfere with* are **not defined** in the Act so we rely on their common dictionary definitions.

Common terms for describing 'harm'	Common definitions
Damage	Inflict physical harm on (something) so as to impair its value, usefulness, or normal function.
Deface	Spoil the surface or appearance of (something), for example by drawing or writing on it.
Desecrate	Treat (a sacred place or thing) with violent disrespect.
Destroy	End the existence of (something) by damaging or attacking it.
Disturb	Interfere with the normal arrangement or functioning of something.
Injure	Harm or impair [weaken or lessen] (something).
Interfere with	Prevent something from operating or existing in the correct way.

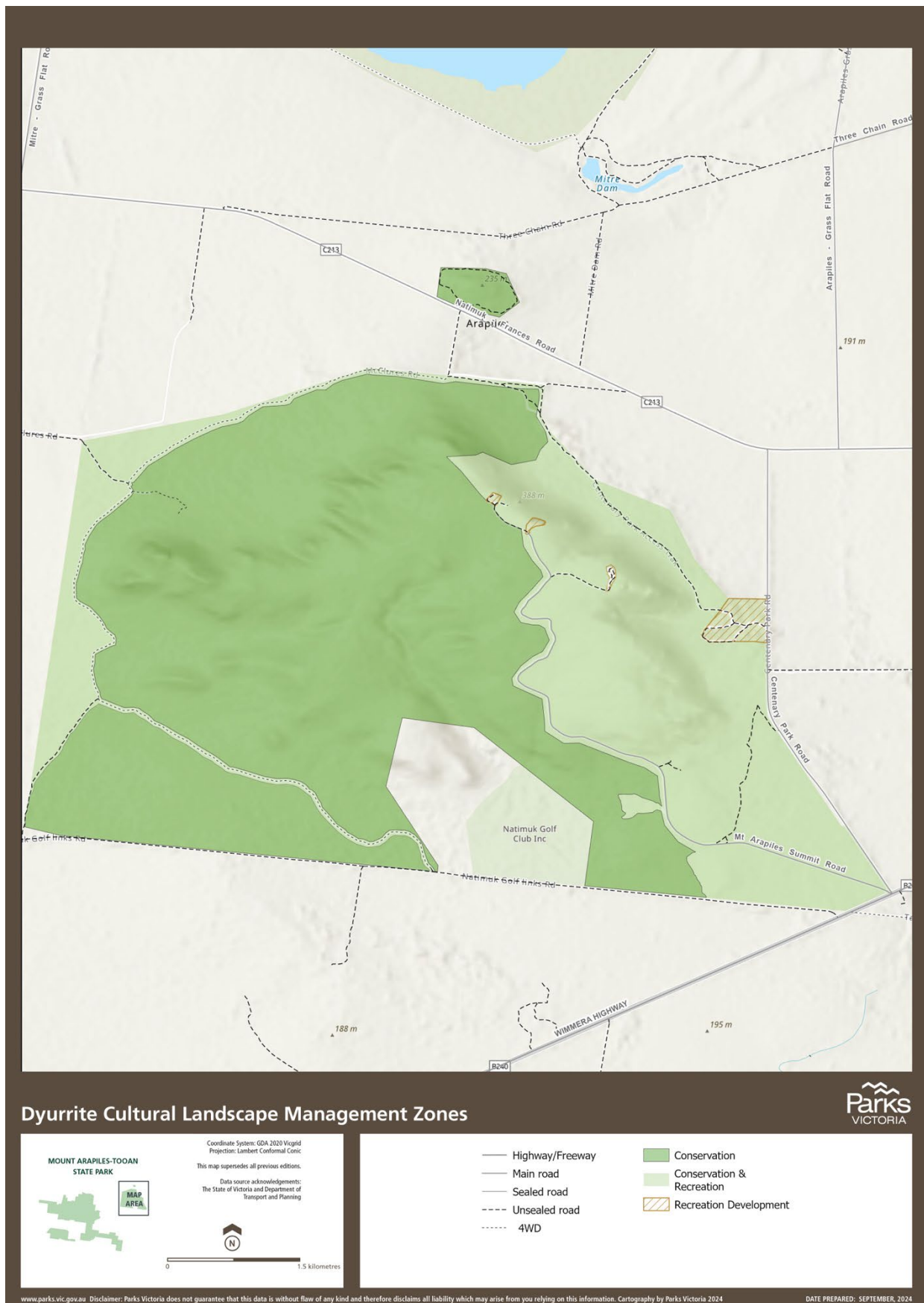
Appendix 2: Climbing Categories

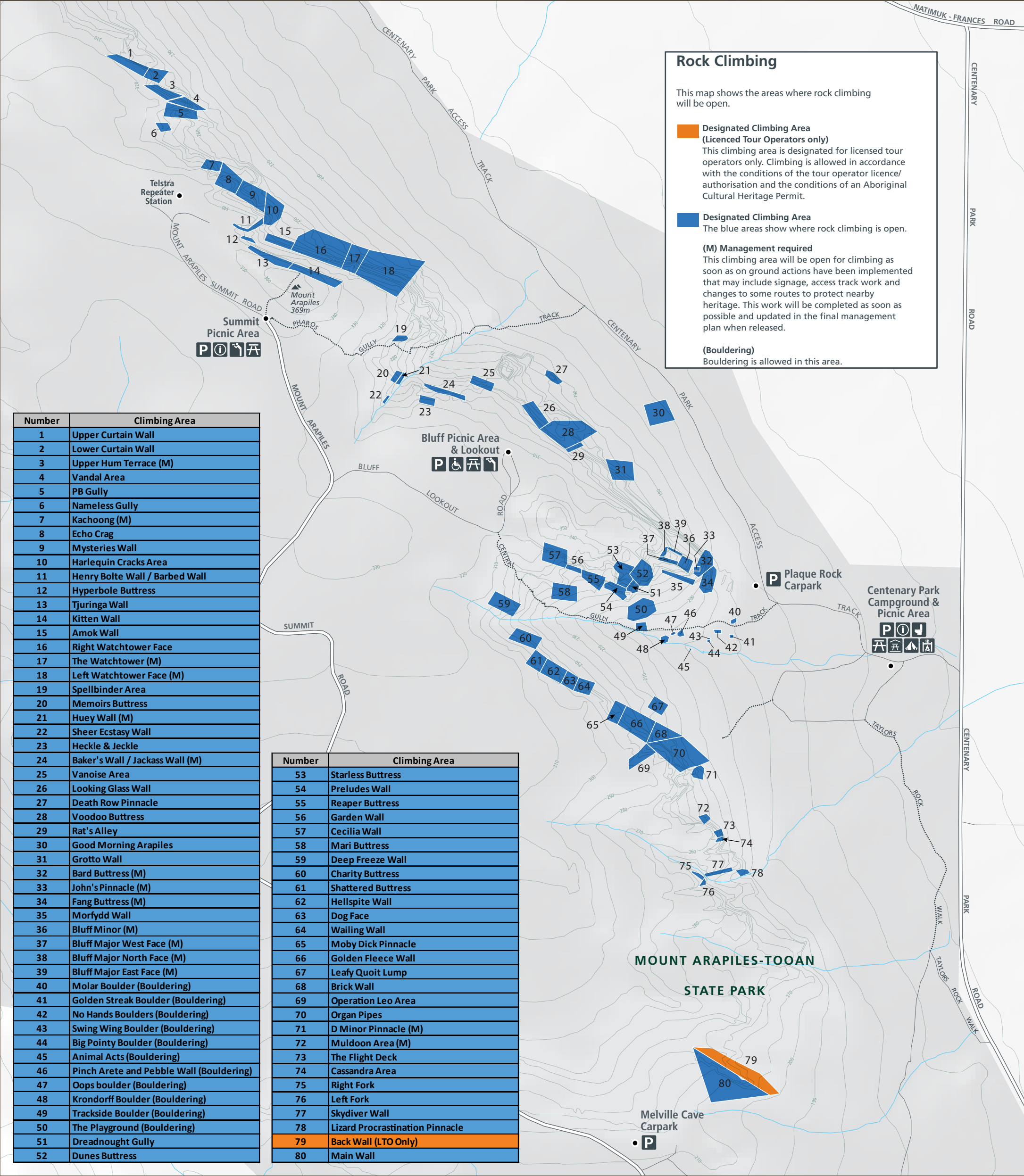
Figure 1: Decision Process



Appendix 3: Maps

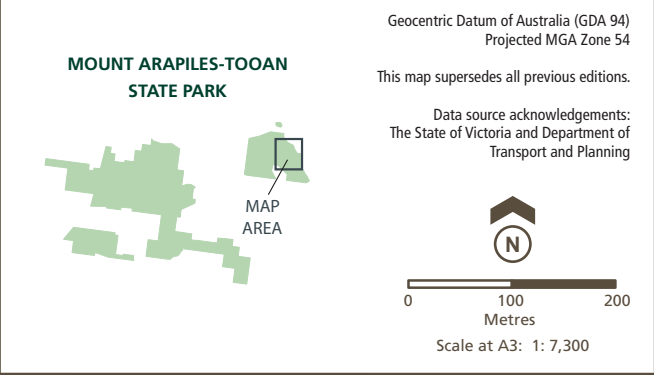
3A: Management Zones





DYURRITE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE (Mount Arapiles – Tooan State Park)

Designated Climbing Areas



Planning Area Land Tenure

Parks Victoria estates

Visitor Sites
(indicative only & subject to change)

- Site location
- Camping
- Toilets
- Lookout
- Barbecue (wood)
- Disabled access
- Information
- Parking
- Picnic area
- Sheltered area

Roads & Tracks

- Main road
- Unsealed road
- Walking track

Water Features

- Creek

Elevation

- 10 metre contour

Appendix 4: Figures from the 1991 Management Plan

Figure 1 – Mount Arapiles-Toooan State Park locality map

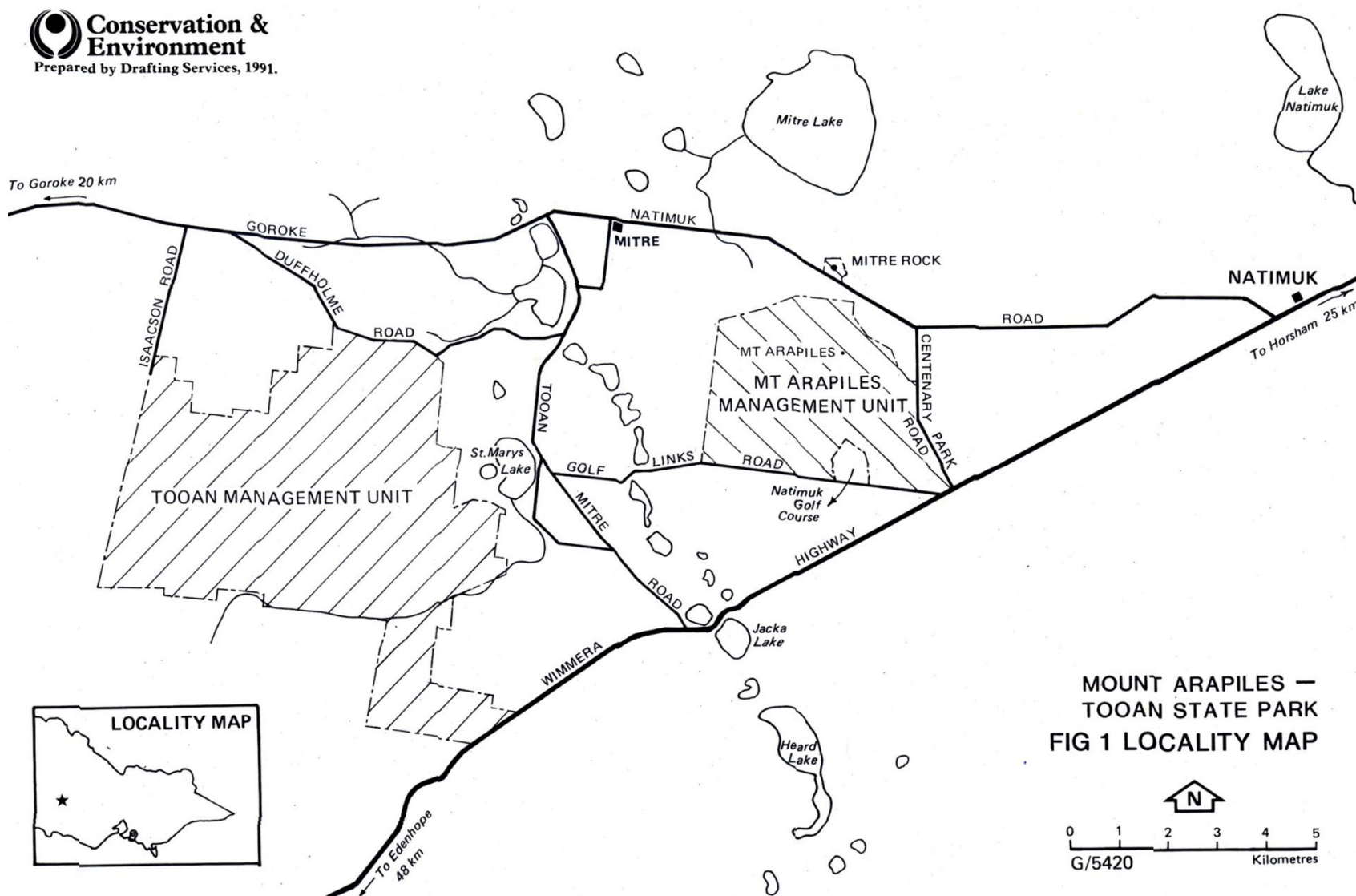


Figure 2 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit boundary

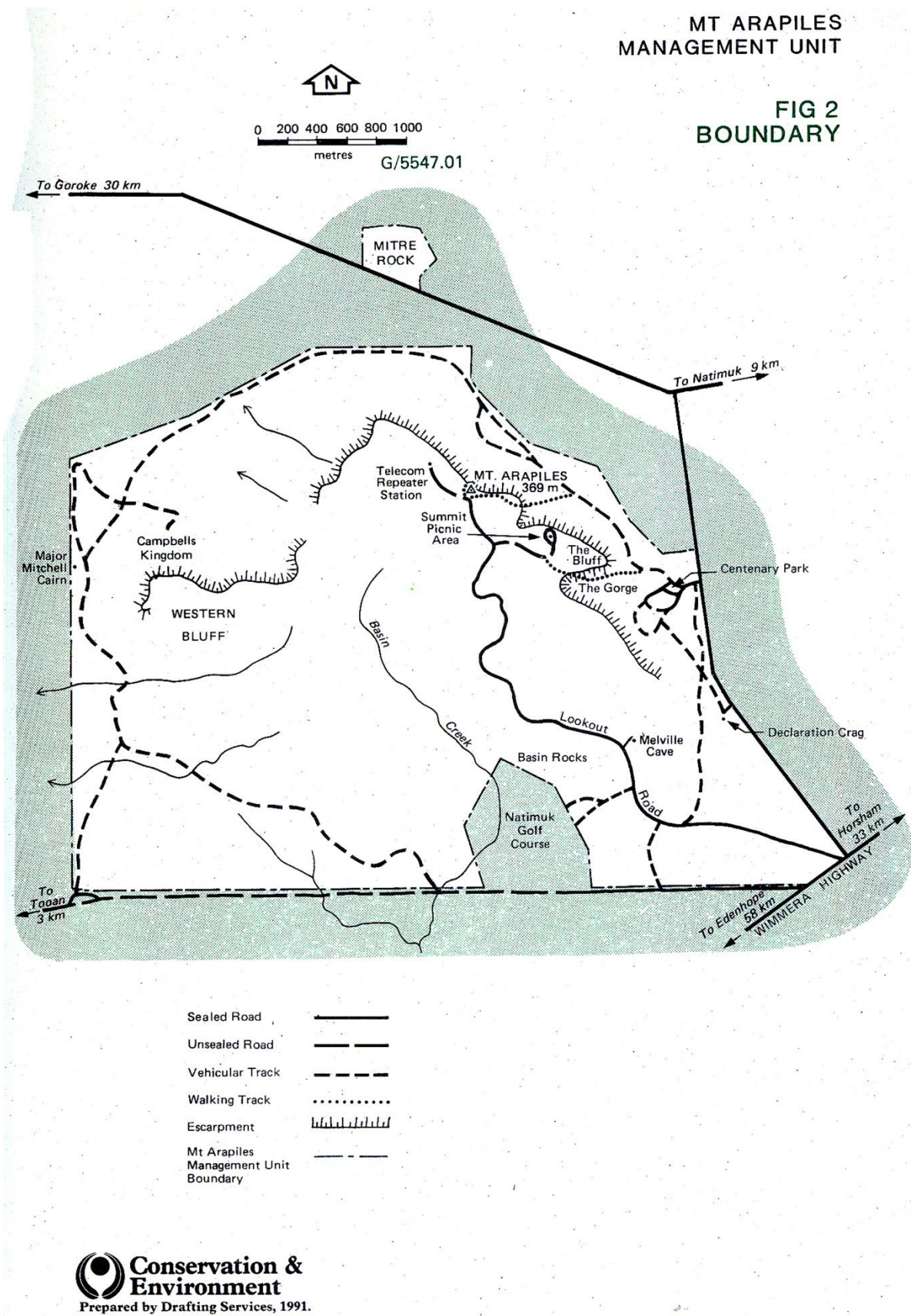


Figure 3 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit management zones

Figure 3 has been replaced by the Management Zones map (Map 3A) at Appendix 3.

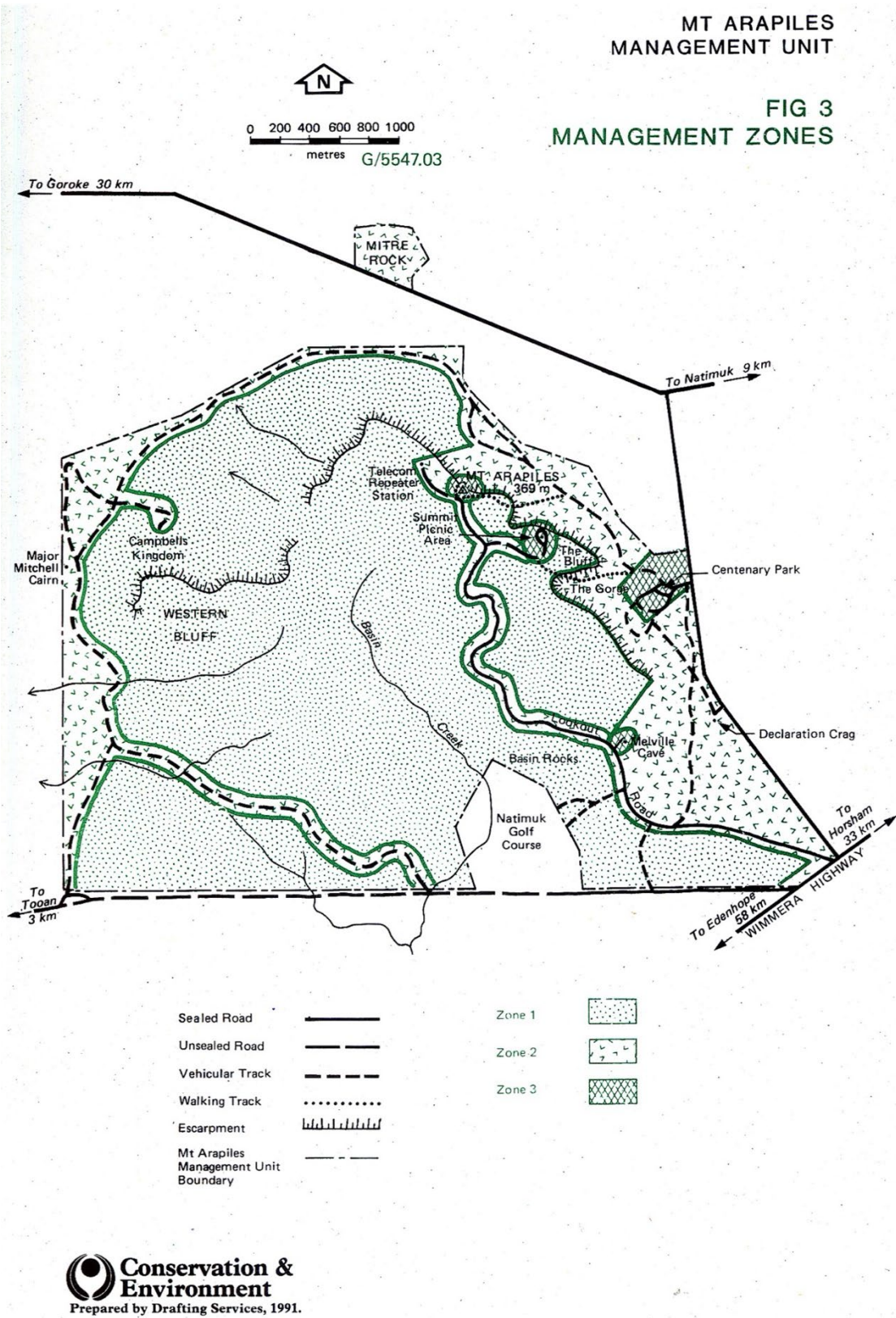


Figure 4 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit vegetation

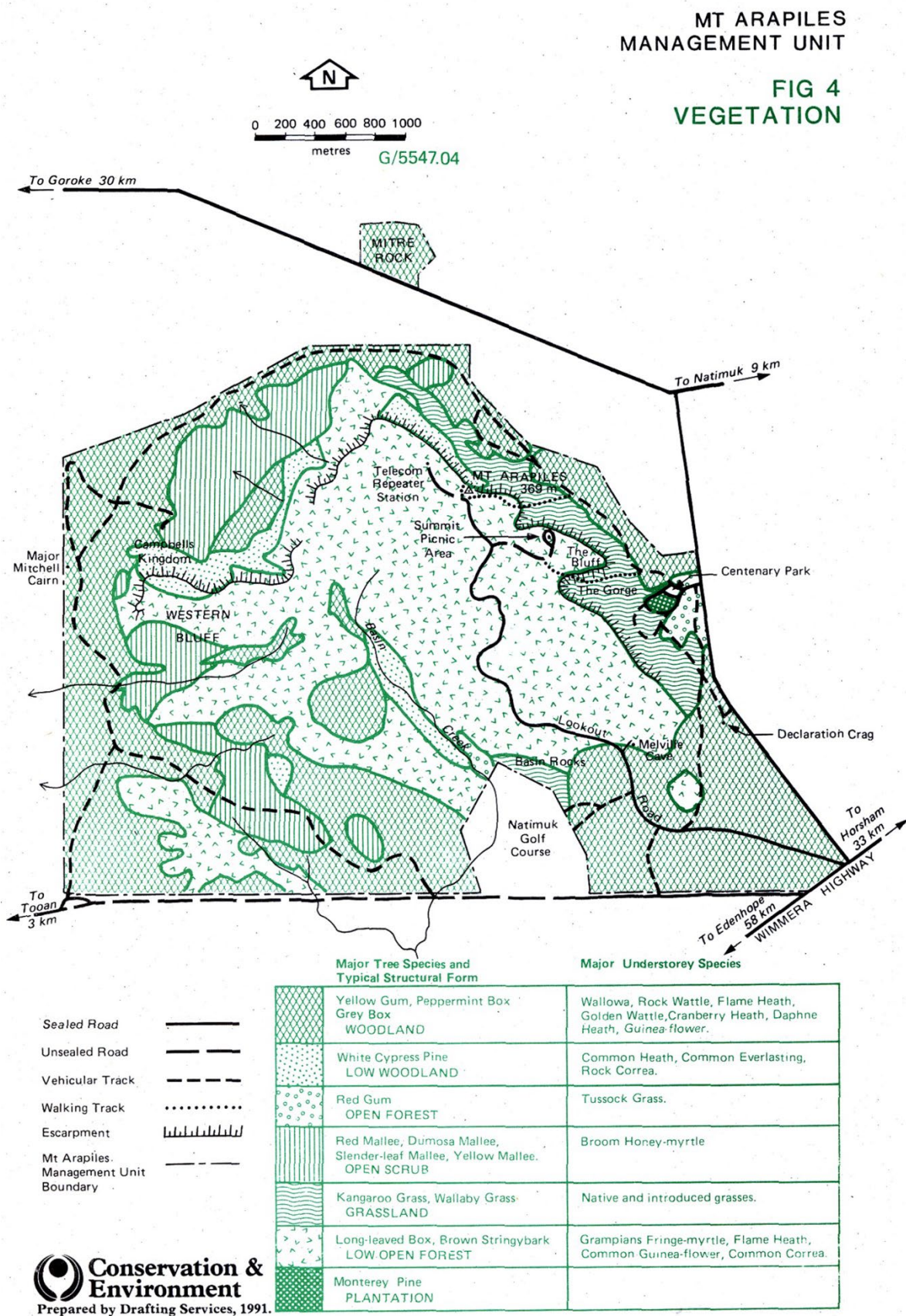


Figure 5 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit landscape management areas

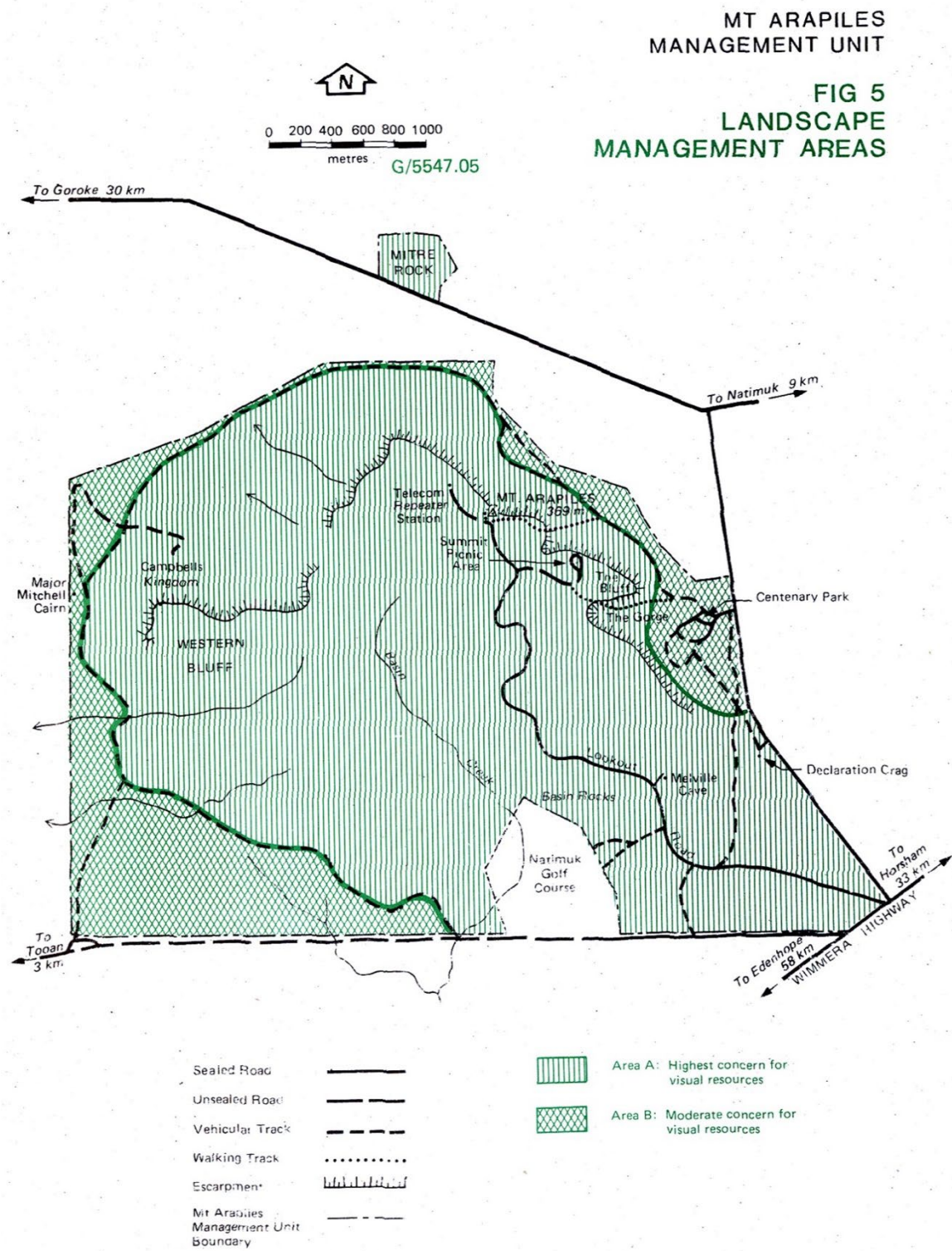


Figure 6 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit changes to existing road and track network

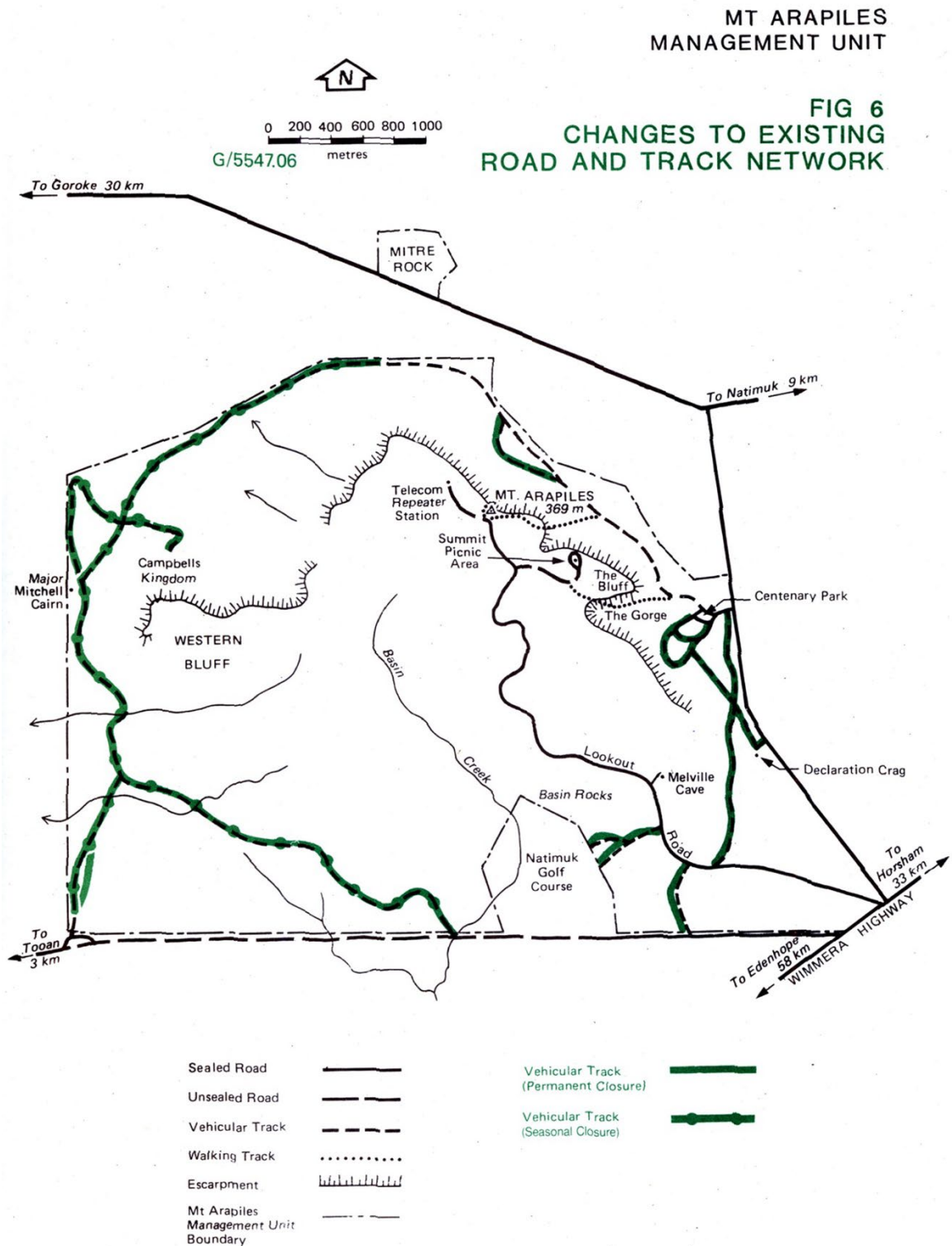


Figure 7 – Mitre Rock

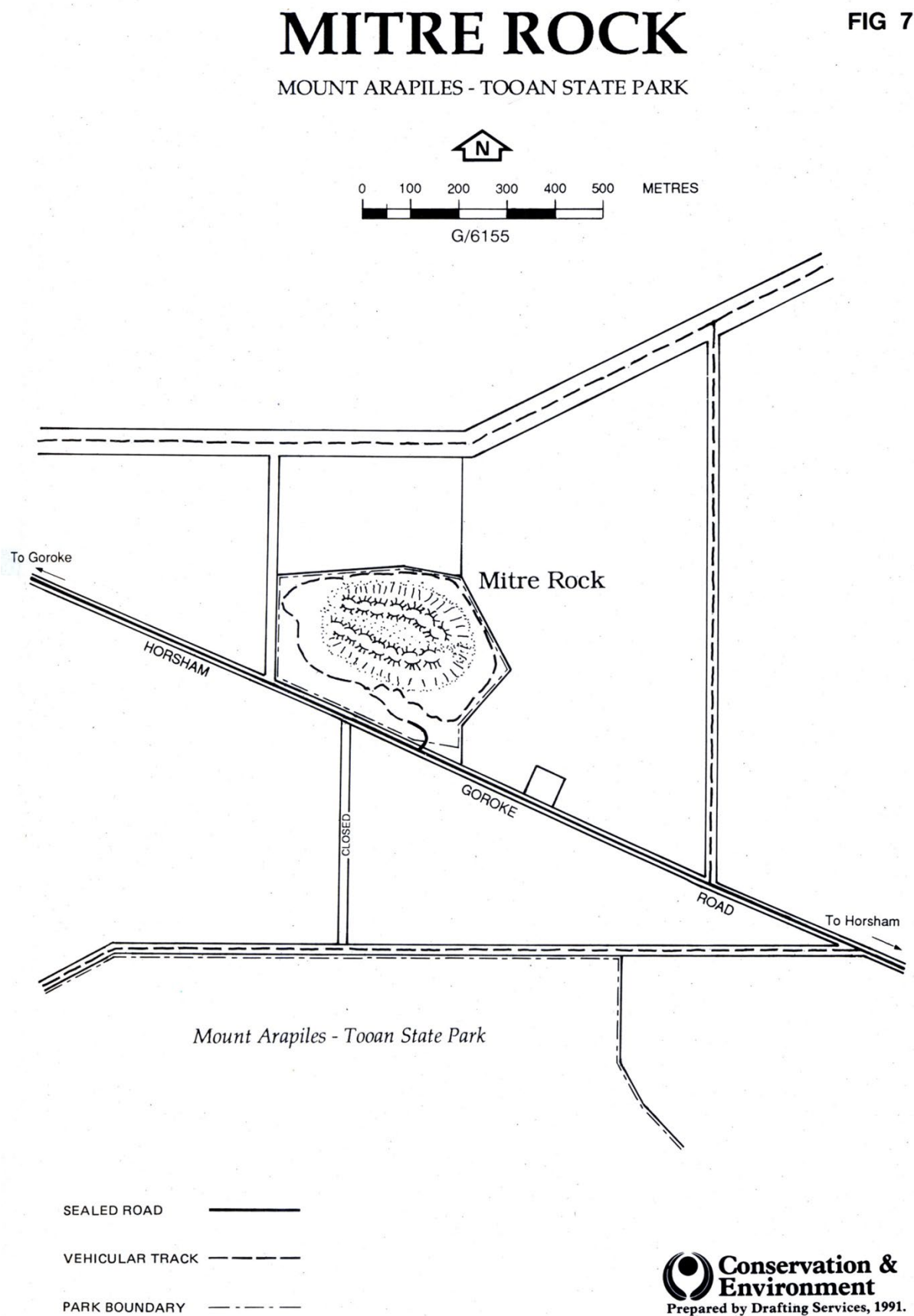
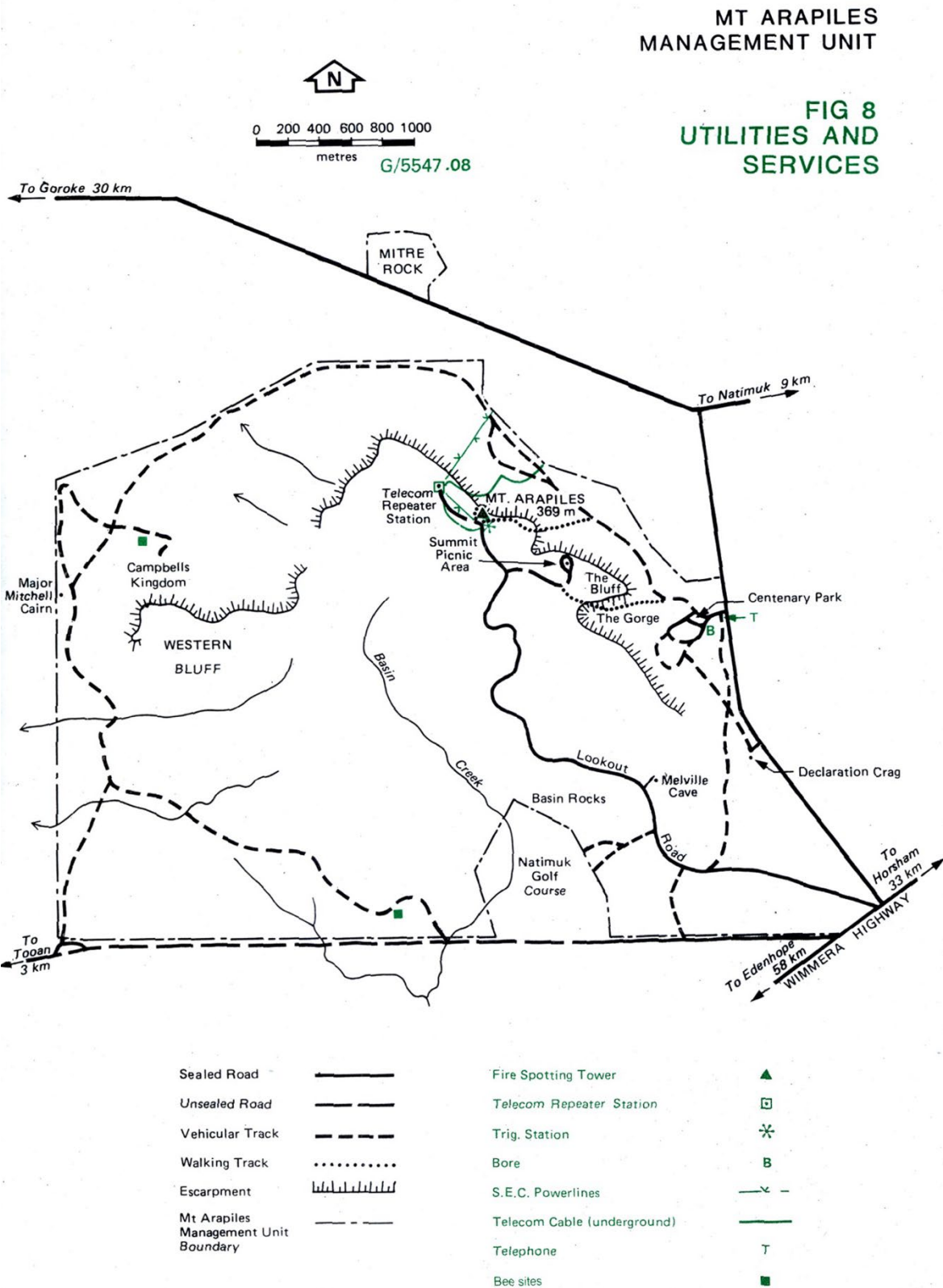


Figure 8 – Mount Arapiles Management Unit utilities and services



Bibliography

Baker-Gabb, D. 1990, List of Threatened Fauna in Victoria 1990, Department of Conservation and Environment, Victoria.

Blackburn, G. 1971, The Soils of Western Victoria in The Natural History of Western Victoria, Douglas, and O'Brien, L. Eds., Aust. Inst. of Agric. Sci., Horsham.

CFL 1987, Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park, Mt Arapiles Management Unit, Inventory of Resources and Uses, NPWD and Horsham Region, Victoria.

Dell, M. 2022, Dyurrite and Mitre Rock targeted threatened flora survey, DellBotany, Victoria.

Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, Summary of the Visual Management System. Landscape Management Branch, State Forests and Lands Service, unpub.

Eccleston, G.C. 1985, Major Mitchell's 1836 Australia Felix Expedition, Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, Victoria.

Emison, W.B., Porter, J.W., Norris, K.C., & Apps, G.J. 1978, Survey of the vertebrate fauna in the Grampians-Edenhope area of South Western Victoria, Mem. Nat. Mus. Vic. 39; 281-363.

Gullan, P.K., Cheal, D.C. & Walsh, N.G. 1990, Rare or threatened Plants in Victoria, Department of Conservation and Environment, Victoria.

LCC 1979, Report on the South-Western Area, District 2. Land Conservation Council, Victoria.

LCC 1981, Proposed Recommendations, South-Western Area, District 2. Land Conservation Council, Victoria.

LCC 1982, Final Recommendations, South-Western Area, District 2. Land Conservation Council, Victoria.

LCC 1986, Final Recommendations, Wimmera Area, District 2. Land Conservation Council, Victoria.

Leonard, M. & Hammond, R. 1983, Landscape character types of Victoria with frames of reference for scenic quality assessment. Forests Commission, Victoria.

Sibley, G.T. 1967, A Study of the land in the Grampians Area. Soil Conservation Authority, Victoria. Stabb, E.I. 1974, Mt Arapiles Forest Park : Vegetation Map and Explanatory Notes. Forests Commission, Victoria.

Tindale, N.B. 1940, Distribution of Australian Aboriginal Tribes: A Field Survey. Trans. R. Soc. S. Aust. 64.

White, C.M., Pruett-Jones, S.G., & Emison, W.B. 1981, The Status and Distribution of the Peregrine Falcon in Victoria, Australia, The Emu, Volume 80 Supplement; 270-280.

Willis, J.H. 1978, A List of Rare, Very Localised and Endangered Indigenous Plants of Victoria. Forests Commission, Victoria.

Willis, J.H. 1982, A List of Rare, Very Localised and Endangered Indigenous Plants of Victoria. Forests Commission, Victoria

Number	Summary of Submission
#1	<p>Local Economy Local Businesses Climbing tourism Creates Jobs Economic benefit to Natimuk Commitment to respecting and protecting cultural heritage Sustainable access and responsible climbing Impact on community Collaboration and open dialog</p>
#2	<p>Significant closures of existing established climbing areas (Pharos & Pharos Gully, Pinnacle Faces, many more). Intent to phase out the primary and only camping area in the park, with vague plans for a replacement. the local climbing-guiding industry and other industries reliant on climbing-related tourism. The climbing community at large care deeply about the area, have done much to look after it in the past and want the opportunity to continue to do so without simply being banned from accessing it. The Victorian peak climber's body (Climbing Victoria) was not consulted the proposed amendments to the management plan do not present the changes to climbing access as 'closures', they simply leave dozens of established climbing areas off the new map of approved climbing areas 1. Aid in calling for a review of the decision-making process used by Parks Victoria in developing this amendment. 2. Aid in calling for a pause on the implementation of any new climbing closures until such a review can be conducted. 3. Aid in calling for a pause on the closure and redevelopment of the camping facilities in Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park.</p>
#3	<p>Climbing Victoria, our peak body representing us climbers were never consulted Climbers love and respect the cultural significance of Arapiles/Dyurrite and we want to be able to appreciate it and share it with future generations. These closers only serve to harm the sharing of culture and it creates further division between First nations people and climbers.</p>
#4	<p>These changes threaten not only the climbing community but also the economy and cultural vibrancy of nearby towns, particularly Natimuk. This area attracts outdoor enthusiasts from across Australia and the world, bringing significant tourism and business to the local region. Potentially driving away skilled residents who are integral to the area's climbing culture. While I respect the importance of cultural preservation, limiting Arapiles to "cultural tourism" without climbing access risks diminishing the site's unique appeal due to its remote location. Parks Victoria's limited 28-day public consultation window and lack of direct engagement with stakeholders like Climbing Victoria</p>

#5	<p>I fully appreciate the significance of protecting areas of cultural importance to the First Nations people.</p> <p>I am concerned about the far-reaching impact this proposal may have on the local and climbing communities.</p> <p>Reducing access to climbing areas could result in considerable economic loss, especially for those reliant on tourism and related industries. Climbers often choose to relocate to nearby towns like Horsham and Natimuk due to the climbing opportunities, bringing valued professionals such as doctors, nurses, teachers, and other skilled workers into the community. A rare site where both preservation and recreational use can coexist sustainably.</p> <p>I respectfully request that you consider a balanced approach to protecting Dyurrite that ensures cultural respect while also safeguarding the livelihoods, lifestyle, and traditions of the local community and climbing enthusiasts.</p>
#6	<p>Public lands are held in trust for all citizens, and introducing fees, restricted access, or prioritised zones for commercial interests, can make it difficult for people, especially for younger individuals or those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to enjoy these spaces as freely as they can today. I urge you to advocate for policies that respect our state forests and national parks as protected spaces, free from the pressures of access control or commercial exploitation, free to access for all Australians.</p>
#7	<p>We absolutely respect Aboriginal cultural heritage and believe strongly that climbing and cultural heritage can coexist through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative protection measures • Joint stewardship programs • Educational initiatives • Specific guidelines for sensitive areas <p>Instead, Parks Victoria has proposed non-negotiable blanket bans without transparent assessments or genuine consultation.</p> <p>I strongly urge you to intervene and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Halt the current process 2. Mandate genuine community consultation 3. Consider alternative management approaches that protect both cultural heritage, climbing heritage and community interests
#8	<p>I urge you to reconsider these restrictive measures and to involve the climbing community in a real, transparent consultation process. Arapiles is more than a park; it is the beating heart of climbing in Australia. Please do not silence its pulse.</p>
#9	<p>People come from all over the world to climb at Mount Arapiles - quite arguably truly the best traditional rock climbing on earth. Imagine the thing you love most, it's true mecca - then imagine it is slowly but surely becomes inaccessible for you and everyone else who adores that music, sport, place, etc.</p> <p>You have the power to intervene and find a healthier balance than just progressively removing more and more of it from those that call it home.</p>
#10	<p>Key recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement Targeted Closures and Adaptive Management: Rather 2. Engage with Stakeholders and Include Climbing Representatives in Consultations: 3. Educational Initiatives and Preservation Efforts

#11	This is a huge impact for the climbing industry. I doubt we will bother coming interstate for school trips anymore – this means no employing Natimuk guides, no staying at the Natimuk Lakeside Caravan Park and no spending on gear, food, drinks in Natimuk. I hope this shows the significance of the bans economically and socially.
#12	The proposed changes have gone too far. I understand the importance of indigenous heritage and protection of land but there needs to be some sort of compromise.
#13	These closures not only affect climbers but the entire region, as climbing tourism significantly supports the local economy., I urge you to request Parliament to consider alternative management strategies that allow sustainable climbing access alongside heritage protection.
#14	I'm trying to understand the reasons behind these closures and what discussions have taken place among user groups, local communities, and First Nations groups. This goes far beyond a few climbers losing access to favourite spots; it's a major hit to our industry, local businesses, community, culture, and history.
#15	I respectfully submit this letter to urge Parks Victoria to adopt a balanced, evidence-based approach to managing Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park. Key recommendations 1. Implement Targeted Closures and Adaptive Management: Rather 2. Engage with Stakeholders and Include Climbing Representatives in Consultations: 3. Educational Initiatives and Preservation Efforts
#16	Climbers, Parks Vic and Traditional Owners have co existed peacefully for years until 2019 when Parks switched to a cultural tourism agenda. Similar issues have arisen in the USA and systems have been put in place that allow climbing, environmental sensitivity and the wishes of traditional owners. Climbers were not even offered this. This is like banning Bells Beach to surfers. It will be fought. We care about this place more than you think.
#17	<p>This abrupt restriction is likely to displace a significant portion of the community that has grown around Arapiles, diminishing the flow of visitors and skilled residents who currently support the economies of Natimuk and Horsham. The management plan has also lacked transparency, with limited community consultation and no meaningful input from key climbing organizations. By moving forward without considering the impact on local economies, this decision may jeopardize Horsham's role as a service hub and affect the stability of businesses that rely on the steady influx of visitors drawn to Arapiles.</p> <p>I urge the Horsham Council to advocate for a balanced approach that preserves access to climbing areas at Arapiles while also respecting cultural and environmental values. We respectfully request that Council engage with Parks Victoria to ensure the community's voice is heard and that the climbing community, which has been integral to Natimuk and Horsham's vitality, continues to thrive in the region.</p>
#18	We are both rock climbers, and spend most of our weekends enjoying the beauty of the Grampians/Gariwerd and Arapiles/Dyurrite. I fear too, that for those climbers who live in the region, working as nurses, doctors, teachers etc, will similarly find that too much of what they loved has been taken from them to continue living there.

#19	Draft Management Plan - Dyrurrite CLMP - I would like Council to lobby the state government regarding the excessive closures of climbing access at Mt Arapiles. At the very least, an extension for submissions is required to enable the new council to be fully informed of the implications and to consult with the local community members on the impacts of this CLMP.
#20	Rather than imposing such broad restrictions, I propose exploring more balanced approaches. Enhanced management strategies, increased education and awareness programs, and more stringent regulations on climbing practices could address environmental and cultural concerns without resorting to such significant closures. I urge you to reconsider the decision to close these critical climbing routes at Mount Arapiles and to engage in a constructive dialogue with all stakeholders. The climbing community is eager to work alongside authorities, local Indigenous communities, and environmental organizations to develop solutions that protect the area while still allowing for the cherished activity of climbing.
#21	As an educator and teacher for 34 years in Outdoor Education I have dedicated my professional life to provide personal development to young people and allowing them access to the outdoors. In this time, I have had the pleasure of leading over 20,000 students on adventures in the outdoors. Outdoor Education plays a significant role in the development of young people for their personal development and appreciation of nature. It is through this appreciation of nature that our future generations develop and foster a connection with the outdoors and the natural world. As these young people development into adulthood they now have a much greater connection to the natural world and as a consequence a greater tendency to care for the natural environment. This environmental stewardship is a cornerstone of Outdoor Education. Please consider the impact to future generations and reengage conversations with the wider community with the intentions of cancelling the current draft management plan and initiating a more inclusive and open plan for the future.
#22	I strongly object to the proposed changes of climbing rules near Mount Arapiles. I have several objections: 1. disproportionate impact, 2. recreational Value impact, 3. consultation process. I urge you to reconsider these proposed restrictions and instead work towards a solution that preserves reasonable access for the all Victorians who cherish this unique location.

#23	<p>Regarding the Dyurrite Cultural Landscape Management Plan Amendment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I do not support this management plan 2. A legitimate consultation has not taken place <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. No climbing organization was consulted regarding these climbing area bans b. Please revisit the consultation process with any of the following: Climbing Victoria Incorporated (Members: Victorian Climbing Club, Crag Stewards Victoria, Outdoor Victoria, Climbing QTs, RMIT Outdoors Club & Western Victoria Climbing Club) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Climbing Association Victoria • Climbers Club of Tasmania • Australian Climbing Association NSW Inc • Australian Climbing Association Queensland • Canberra Climbers Association • Climbers Association of Western Australia • Sydney Rock Climbing Club • Climbing Club of South Australia 3. You do not need to DESTROY climbing culture to preserve culture of Traditional Owners 4. The bans on climbing areas are entirely inappropriate and excessive
#24	<p>We recognise and respect the need for preservation and environmental stewardship. Like many climbers, we are deeply committed to protecting the places we love, often volunteering for conservation efforts and advocating for responsible climbing practices. We urge you to consider alternative solutions that balance access with environmental concerns, so that we, and others like us, can continue to live, work, and climb here in a sustainable and mutually respectful way.</p>
#25	<p>I am requesting that the draft management plan is discarded and that a new amendment be developed after proper consultation with all stakeholders including climbing groups and the local community. We all deserve consultation and engagement.</p>
#26	<p>Mount Arapiles is a special place to many people and its cultural connections are most keenly felt by the rock-climbing community. For myself, I have visited for over 20 years and have shared many special moments with family, friends and my young children in this beautiful natural environment. To read about the bans to rock-climbing that will be put in place next year is heart-breaking and I would like your support to overturn these unfair restrictions on the people of Victoria to enjoy the natural world.</p>
#27	<p>Here are my concerns regarding the draft Dyurrite Cultural Landscape Management Plan Amendment, which align with those expressed by my climbing community: 1. Economic consequences for local communities, 2. Cultural and historical value for climbers, 3. Lack of community consultation and inclusion, 4. Environmental and cultural stewardship by climbers, 5. Broader implications for public access and land use, 6. Questionable timing of the draft plan amendment</p>

#28	<p>I write to you for my own sake, my love for the climbing in these areas comes from somewhere deep inside similar to the love most people have for their faith. I write to you for the future generations (my children included) of people called to the adventure that the routes here impart, adventures that carry unfathomable life lessons crucial to living fulfilling and worthwhile lives.</p> <p>I Write to you for the communities of the townships of Natimuk and Horsham that rely upon the travellers and transplants these majestic cliffs draw from around the world.</p>
#29	<p>I respectfully urge decision-makers to consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open Dialogue: Engage with the climbing community, including organizations like Climbing Victoria, Melbourne climbing school, Victorian climbing club to collaboratively develop a management plan that respects both cultural heritage and climbing access. 2. Adaptive Management: Explore adaptive approaches, such as timed or seasonal closures, to allow access where it can be managed responsibly while protecting sensitive areas. 3. Recognize Climbing's Positive Impact: Acknowledge the extensive care climbers have shown for this land and consider the benefits an active climbing community provides in terms of passive security, local economic support, and conservation efforts.
#30	<p>I urge you to advocate for renewed dialogue between the BGLC, climbing representatives, and other stakeholders. Together, we can create a plan that honours Indigenous heritage, supports local communities, and maintains respectful access to Dyurrite.</p>
#31	<p>While this might give some at Parks Victoria a warm and fuzzy feeling, and look great in social media campaigns for the unaffected, this is absolutely devastating for many everyday Victorians who climb as a vehicle for mental health, connection, community, physical health, environmental engagement and purpose in an institutionalised, disconnected and misguided social landscape.</p> <p>This is a political agenda that has been pointed in the wrong direction and must be reconsidered. The proposed ban will have impacts that are almost impossible to describe to those who have not learnt to get by in today's world by returning time and time again to the realness of experience that is climbing at Mt Arapiles. I urge you to respect what this place means to us as climbers.</p>
#32	<p>concerns- 1. Missed Opportunity for Reconciliation and Community Involvement, 2. Impact on Natimuk and the Wimmera Communities, 3. Environmental and Cultural Stewardship, 4. The Uniqueness of Dyurrite, 5. Ancient Quarry Sites and Lithic Rock Scars, 6. The Path Forward: Cooperation and Respect</p>
#33	<p>The act of climbing has been instrumental in teaching me self-control and soothing. Due to learning how to conduct myself on technical terrain. I'm now a valuable asset for rescue rolls. Please do not allow these closes to happen.</p>

#34	First I wish to convey that I am not against cultural surveys nor protection of sacred sites. This is of utmost importance and 99% of climbers feel the same way. We would like to see “the gap” closed and working together for an outcome that supports both our needs and connections. I implore you to open the conversation, consider both sides to this story and do what you can to help this be a success story rather than a wall creating movement.
#35	I am writing to urge you to advocate for the reconsideration of the recent decision to impose permanent restrictions on rock climbing at Dyurrite without meaningful consultation with the climbing community. This decision represents a missed opportunity for reconciliation, collaboration, and conservation. The climbing community, who deeply value and respect Dyurrite, are natural allies in protecting this culturally and ecologically significant area./Concerns- 1. Missed Opportunity for Reconciliation and Community Involvement, 2.Impact on Natimuk and the Wimmera Communities, 3. Environmental and Cultural Stewardship, 4. The Uniqueness of Dyurrite, 5. Ancient Quarry Sites and Lithic Rock Scars, 6. The Path Forward: Cooperation and Respect
#36	I ask you to reconsider the methods employed so far. Methods of closing whole large areas including unaffected areas, with less than proper consultation with the climbing organisations.
#37	There is a current, very special and very unique, culture around climbing specifically at Mt Arapiles. People travel from all over the world to get here... The energy around such a place is hard to put into words and explain. It truly is a special place for climbing globally. There is a future where both indigenous heritage and climbing can exist hand in hand, and I hope we can find it.
#38	I am writing to urge you to advocate for the reconsideration of the recent decision to impose permanent restrictions on rock climbing at Dyurrite without meaningful consultation with the climbing community. This decision represents a missed opportunity for reconciliation, collaboration, and conservation. The climbing community, who deeply value and respect Dyurrite, are natural allies in protecting this culturally and ecologically significant area
#39	I am writing to urge you to advocate for the reconsideration of the recent decision to impose permanent restrictions on rock climbing at Dyurrite without meaningful consultation with the climbing community. This decision represents a missed opportunity for reconciliation, collaboration, and conservation. The climbing community, who deeply value and respect Dyurrite, are natural allies in protecting this culturally and ecologically significant area.
#40	I am planning to visit and stay in Natimuk early next year, and have been looking for a place to stay. However, I have been told that Parks Victoria has put out a plan of management that bans climbing at most of Mt Arapiles. Is this true? It was the only reason for visiting your area, and if it is the case, I will need to make plans to go elsewhere. Can you please reply clarifying this? I find it difficult to believe that this could possibly be true.
#41	I’m a veteran, I have sacrificed more for this country than you will ever know, since leaving the Army I have turned to climbing as a way of coping with suicidality and depression that occurred as a result of my service.

#42	The proposal to prohibit climbing on over 900 additional routes, including the iconic “Punks in the Gym” (the world’s first 14a route), will have significant repercussions. This is in addition to the Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan implemented a few years ago, which already restricted around 79% of climbing across the state. Originally from Malaysia, I had heard of Arapiles' famous climbing areas even before arriving
#43	I am writing regarding the extensive closures in these areas. While protecting cultural heritage is very important, it seems that Parks Victoria has taken this to an extreme
#44	I feel despondent and powerless so please fight for the climbing and guiding community do whatever you can within your power to help stop these bans as they are about removing a user group rather than promoting reconciliation
#45	I respectfully urge decision-makers to consider the following: Open Dialogue: Engage with the climbing community, including organizations like Australian Climbing Association Victoria, to collaboratively develop a management plan that respects both cultural heritage and climbing access. This is an opportunity to create a model for reconciliation, where environmental stewardship and cultural respect go hand in hand, ensuring that all who love and respect these landscapes have a role in their preservation
#46	This decision by Parks Victoria is an abuse of process and power, and should be looked into immediately with at least a formal inquiry
#47	I’m writing to ask for your opposition on the newly released management plan by Parks Victoria related to the Dyurrite / Mount Arapiles park. On the surface it looks like climbing is still welcomed, with Parks Victoria stating that only 48% of climbing banned. However, in reality almost all the areas with high quality rock-climbing have been closed, including all the areas offering easy climbing for children and beginners. In reality, the proposed closures will destroy rock climbing in this area and prevent children and new climbers from being able to use this space.
#48	I respectfully urge decision-makers to consider the following: 1. Open Dialogue: Engage with the climbing community, including organizations like Climbing Victoria, to collaboratively develop a management plan that respects both cultural heritage and climbing access. 2. Adaptive Management: Explore adaptive approaches, such as timed or seasonal closures, to allow access where it can be managed responsibly while protecting sensitive areas. 3. Recognize Climbing’s Positive Impact: Acknowledge the extensive care climbers have shown for this land and consider the benefits an active climbing community provides in terms of passive security, local economic support, and conservation efforts. This is an opportunity to create a model for reconciliation, where environmental stewardship and cultural respect go hand in hand, ensuring that all who love and respect these landscapes have a role in their preservation
#49	I’m a rock climber with over 9 years experience, that has spent cumulatively around a year of that time camping and climbing in the Dyurrite / Mount Arapiles park. This area holds an incredibly special place in my heart and has felt like a second home. Over the years I have developed a strong connection to the land and have formed deep and lasting connections with other climbers that have given me a sense of community

#50	I am writing to urge you to advocate for the reconsideration of the recent decision to impose permanent restrictions on rock climbing at Dyurrite without meaningful consultation with the climbing community. This decision represents a missed opportunity for reconciliation, collaboration, and conservation. The climbing community, who deeply value and respect Dyurrite, are natural allies in protecting this culturally and ecologically significant area.
#51	This is why it is critical that the Dyurrite Cultural Landscape Management Plan is reviewed, that the climbing community is engaged in the process and has direct consultation with the Barengi Gadjin Land Council. Through this trust and buy-in the broader climbing community respects and keeps an eye on the most significant heritage sites, which is a significant win in itself - the climbers have the most continuous year round presence there after all. Please, I urge you - before this proposal devastates all it stands for
#52	The Dyurrite Cultural Landscape Management Plan is heavily biased against rockclimbing, has included no legitimate consultation, and offers no scope for discussion or broader consideration. It in no way 'manages' interests in the area, but bans one interest in preference for another
#53	I was wondering if your council has done modelling around the economic benefit to Horsham and Natimuk as a result of climbing tourism in Mt Arapiles.
#54	I urge you to advocate for the reconsideration of this draft plan in favour of a more balanced solution that supports both cultural preservation and the longstanding recreational heritage of the area.
#55	I hope that these decisions can be reconsidered and that the voices of those who deeply value these natural spaces, specifically members within rock climbing, guiding, hiking, etc communities, be heard and involved in finding solutions to better protect our beautiful environment, the national heritage, and continue the inspiration of humans now and generations to come
#56	I respectfully request that you advocate for renewed dialogue between all stakeholders impacted by this Management Plan, and raise this issue with the Hon Jacinta Allan in parliament. I hope that together we can create a future that honours indigenous heritage, supports the local community, and fosters reconciliation
#57	One of the main reasons is climbing at Arapiles, these closures are a huge hit to the council for many reasons, people travel from world wide to climb at Arapiles as well as from all over Australia. Surely the council can see how this greatly affects Horsham and the region itself, not to mention the small town of Natimuk which will surely suffer greatly from this.

#58	<p>I respectfully urge decision-makers to consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open Dialogue: Engage with the climbing community, including organizations like Climbing Victoria, to collaboratively develop a management plan that respects both cultural heritage and climbing access. 2. Adaptive Management: Explore adaptive approaches, such as timed or seasonal closures, to allow access where it can be managed responsibly while protecting sensitive areas. 3. Recognize Climbing's Positive Impact: Acknowledge the extensive care climbers have shown for this land and consider the benefits an active climbing community provides in terms of passive security, local economic support, and conservation efforts. <p>This is an opportunity to create a model for reconciliation, where environmental stewardship and cultural respect go hand in hand, ensuring that all who love and respect these landscapes have a role in their preservation</p>
#59	<p>I respectfully urge decision-makers to consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open Dialogue: Engage with the climbing community, including organizations like Climbing Victoria, to collaboratively develop a management plan that respects both cultural heritage and climbing access. 2. Adaptive Management: Explore adaptive approaches, such as timed or seasonal closures, to allow access where it can be managed responsibly while protecting sensitive areas. 3. Recognize Climbing's Positive Impact: Acknowledge the extensive care climbers have shown for this land and consider the benefits an active climbing community provides in terms of passive security, local economic support, and conservation efforts. <p>This is an opportunity to create a model for reconciliation, where environmental stewardship and cultural respect go hand in hand, ensuring that all who love and respect these landscapes have a role in their preservation.</p>
#60	<p>I respectfully urge decision-makers to consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open Dialogue: Engage with the climbing community, including organizations like Climbing Victoria, to collaboratively develop a management plan that respects both cultural heritage and climbing access. 2. Adaptive Management: Explore adaptive approaches, such as timed or seasonal closures, to allow access where it can be managed responsibly while protecting sensitive areas. 3. Recognize Climbing's Positive Impact: Acknowledge the extensive care climbers have shown for this land and consider the benefits an active climbing community provides in terms of passive security, local economic support, and conservation efforts
#61	<p>Please consider looking into the situation and making whatever changes possible to make a more equitable situation.</p>
#62	<p>I implore you to use your voice to raise this concern and advocate on the climbing community's behalf to reach a compromise that celebrates indigenous culture, while still allowing climbers and other outdoor enthusiasts to connect with this wonderful land. I truly believe all parties can work together in the spirit of reconciliation.</p>
#63	<p>To address these concerns, I respectfully request that Parks Victoria consider the following, 1. Implement Targeted Closures and Adaptive Management: 2. Engage with Stakeholders and Include Climbing Representatives in Consultations: 3. Educational Initiatives and Preservation Efforts:</p>

#64	I would kindly ask you to re-assess the management plan and re-open the consultation process to allow actual input from the rock climbing community. Contrary to what is stated at the Parks Victoria page under Rock climbers input 'Gariwerd Wimmera Reconciliation Network (GWRN) provided a detailed 54-page report, from a rock-climbing perspective, to assist decision-makers', GWRN clearly state that 'We did not act on behalf of the climbing community or claim to act as 'consultation' with the climbing community. We have always been clear that our relationship as a reconciliation network is with the Traditional Owners.'
#65	I implore Parks to acknowledge that the lack of collaboration or consultation was a mistake, and undertake to rectify this through good faith consultation with the broader climbing community and the traditional owners. Can we please move forward with a true sense of reconciliation and togetherness, which requires Parks to be transparent, clearly outlining the tangible cultural heritage that needs protecting and not hiding the evidence as privileged information. I hope that together, solutions can be found to protect and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage, such that we are not the last generation to enjoy the unique and incredible climbs that are under threat
#66	Climbers do not want to damage Dyurrite. Climbers want more than anything to cherish it. And preserve all that is truly magical about it. They want to idolise the climbs, each unique and special. They want to seek refuge in the shady gulleys while watching and listening to the animals, birds, insects and reptiles. They want to savour the smells, the sounds, the calm and the laughter. Please help us to secure future access to Mount Arapiles.
#67	I ask that you advocate for renewed dialogue between the Barengi Gadjin Land Council, climbers, and other stakeholders to develop a plan that honours Indigenous heritage, supports local communities, and sustains respectful access to Dyurrite.
#68	Overall I feel these management plans need to be reviewed
#69	We understand the Traditional Owners have an ancient connection to the land and we all agree we should protect cultural artefacts, however banning access to most of the mountain for generations to come does not seem like the right decision.
#70	I am writing to express my concerns about the Draft Management Plan for Arapiles/Dyurrite proposed by Parks Victoria. I understand that you do not have any direct power in making decisions regarding this plan, however I do ask that you hear my concerns as they relate directly to your community, and use your contacts and position to support this cause.
#71	A few key take aways are the drastic number of areas to be closed and the potential closure of the pine's campground. The pines campground is a very special place equivalent to camp 4 at Yosemite national park. Not only does it provide an economical place for people to stay whilst they work on their climbing, which is now recognised as an Olympic sport, but it also provides a stepping stone for people from all over the country and the world to come visit get to know the local people and see if they want to join the Natimuk or Horsham community. I moved here after spending time there and I know this is a familiar story in town with other professionals and tradespersons joining the community in a very similar way helping to fill vital roles and skills shortages.

#72	In light of these points, I respectfully request that you advocate for renewed dialogue between the BGLC, climbers, and environmental stakeholders. By doing so, we can develop a plan that honours Indigenous heritage, supports the local economy, and fosters reconciliation. Together, we can make Dyurrite a landmark example of how communities can work in harmony to protect and celebrate the land
#73	If you could act and stop any drastic action from taking place until the wider climbing community has been engaged to create a plan that works for everyone that enjoys the park today.
#74	The bans will decimate our local climbing, international climbing tourism, and the Natimuk businesses and town residents squarely reliant on this income, without community or stakeholder consultation and with the evidence behind bans bizarrely not provided for any user group scrutiny or feedback, making the chance of working together on solutions impossible. Where are the community meetings and chances for all stakeholders to work respectfully together on solutions? Please help us get these things happening and ensure a balanced and transparent process.
#75	I do support conservation efforts to protect the landscape at Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park, and so therefore support a limit on how many people visit the park, and even even permits to aid this and help fund conservation and infrastructure, especially given the increasing interest in climbing and the number of climbers visiting the area as unsustainable human population numbers continue to increase in Victoria and across the country generally, in addition to the large numbers of overseas visitors. I'm concerned that the current Victorian government is becoming increasingly authoritarian and undemocratic, by failing to engage with all stakeholders and interest groups with decisions that affect their interests, in this case, climbers, who I would argue are the majority of people visiting the Park and who also highly value the landscape.
#76	The decision to ban climbing on more than 900 additional routes, including the world's first grade 32 (8b+/5.14a) route, Punks in the Gym, will have far-reaching consequences. This comes on top of the Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan from a few years ago, which already restricted around 79% of climbing across the state. Losing access to these climbs—including classic beginner routes where climbers develop essential skills, intermediate and advanced climbs that inspire progression, and globally significant routes like Punks in the Gym, which held the title of hardest climbing route in the world when first established—represents a profound and painful loss for the climbing community. This decision drastically limits the diverse climbing heritage of Victoria and the opportunities for climbers of all levels to engage deeply with this iconic landscape. Further, decisions such as this will only create further division and widen the gaps between Traditional Owners and Australians. We need to work to heal the past but not by dividing ourselves further and refusing to find common.

#77	During time overseas I have met countless rock climbers who have travelled across the world to visit this special place and are always excited to share their stories and express how grateful they were to have made the effort to visit. Finally I will close with a hope that face to face consultation can be achieved between the Traditional Owners, Parks Victoria and the rock climbing associations can be achieved.
#78	We absolutely embrace Aboriginal culture and are eager to coexist with and learn from all Traditional Custodians. Climbing and Cultural Heritage can exist alongside each other through collaboration, educational initiatives, and specific guidelines for significant sites.
#79	As a local resident of the Wimmera, the new management plan and Dyurrite - Mt Arapiles Tooan State Park is nothing short of devastating. Its impact on myself and my family cannot be quantified. It goes well beyond the significant economic and community impact it will certainly have, and cuts deeply into the identity of the local area and its people
#80	I respectfully suggest that a revised management plan be considered that: Implements targeted protections for specific cultural and archaeological sites Allows for controlled access to areas that don't impact cultural heritage. Includes input from all stakeholder groups. Considers the economic impact on local communities Maintains the positive environmental stewardship that currently exists.
#81	I am asking for your assistance to advocate for the following: 1. Expand the scope of the consultation process to include banned areas 2. Extend the consultation period beyond 28 days 3. Engage community representatives and major user groups in consultation, including: Climbing Victoria, Horsham Rural City Council and Natimuk Township 4. Incorporate an economic impact assessment of Natimuk and Horsham into the consultation.
#82	Could you please express your concern that the closures of large parts of Mt Arapiles and the Grampians will be detrimental to the communities within the HRCC
#83	It just takes communication between stakeholders, TO's and parks bodies to develop more nuanced management strategies.
#84	I respectfully request that you advocate for renewed dialogue between the BGLC, climbers, and environmental stakeholders. By working together, we can create a sustainable plan that preserves Dyurrite's cultural and environmental integrity, setting an example of reconciliation and collaboration between the passionate people in the Dyurrite climbing community and the Traditional Owners, the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples.
#85	I have been involved with scouting for 30 years and learning adventurous skills at Dyurrite/Mt Arapiles is the same pathway I took and the same way we teach youth members today. It would be a serious error of judgement to allow the draft Amendment to proceed in its current form without consultation from any active user group like scouting.
#86	I'm sure climbers would be open to solutions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal Closures • Mandatory Cultural Heritage education • Payment of license fees to climb at the location. • Some bans in particularly important locations

#87	Climbing is an amazing sport. It caters for a wide range of people-young people from 5 to older climbers in their 80's. It develops physical attributes, skills confidence, abilities to overcome challenges, contact with nature and the environment plus it is an international sport recently added to the Olympics.
#88	I implore you to advocate to Parks Victoria to undertake good faith consultation with the broader climbing community and the traditional owners such that we are not the last generation to enjoy the unique and incredible climbs that are under threat.
#89	However, that is NOT to say that we should prioritise recreational rock climbing over the preservation of Cultural Heritage and/or endangered flora. The message I wish to convey is that both can be achieved, with a nuanced approach, with collaboration, communication and effective resourcing.
#90	I implore you to look further into this matter and put a stop to this continuing further until the appropriate communities, organisations and businesses have been both consulted and an analysis been made it to the true impacts of these discussions by Parks Victoria. I would also implore you to investigate the behaviour and actions of Parks Victoria in relation to the handling of this draft management plan. The climbing community is more than willing to work with the Traditional owners and Parks Victoria if given the opportunity to find an appropriate solution to preserving relevant cultural heritage in the park and ensuring the safety of the native ecosystems whilst maintaining access to the globally significant climbing areas, ensuring the survival of many businesses and tourism in the Wimmera region after already being decimated by Parks Victoria's actions and decisions in the Grampians National Park.
#91	I implore you to look more deeply into the impacts of this decision and please, please reconsider the way forward. Climbers have been continuously stonewalled through this process and have had no effective voice in the discussions.
#92	I ask that you use your influence and contacts to request for a full and proper consultation with the climbing community and other affected stakeholders before the Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park Plan of Management is amended.
#93	I urge you to support the climbing community and encourage Parks Victoria to engage in a more transparent process to developing the future management of the area with due consideration to the overwhelming significance the mountain plays in the climbing community.
#94	I implore you to use whatever powers and influence you have to improve the outcome for Mt Arapiles/Dyurrite and for rockclimbers who have cared for the place for the last 50 years. The current plans will have massive economic impacts on regional communities if recreational tourists and outdoor education programs no longer visit Mt Arapiles or the Grampians.
#95	Please use your position to enforce Parks Victoria to conduct proper consultation with primary stakeholders and redraft a management plan that takes the climbing community into consideration.

#96	I am writing to express my concerns over the proposed amendment to the Mount Arapiles management plan, which will involve significant access restrictions and the permanent closure of over 50% of climbing routes at the mountain. Amongst these routes are many of the very best - internationally significant climbs such as Punks in the Gym, the hardest rock climb in the world in the mid 1980s, and still a world class test-piece attracting crowds of international climbers. None of these closures have involved any genuine consultation with rock climbers, who are the main user group of Mount Arapiles.
#97	Climbing in Arapiles provides the state with income via climbers purchasing gear, hotels/campsites and local bars and restaurants benefitting. There is also a knock on benefit of other establishments via this increase in visitors.
#98	Climbers, Parks Vic and Traditional Owners have co existed peacefully for years until 2019 when Parks switched to a cultural tourism agenda
#99	I am writing to urge you to advocate for the reconsideration of the recent decision to impose permanent restrictions on rock climbing at Dyurrite without meaningful consultation with the climbing community Dyurrite is regarded as one of the best climbing destinations in the world—a unique and irreplaceable site in Australia’s natural and cultural heritage. Dyurrite is more than just a climbing location; it is a place of community, healing, and identity. In light of these points, I respectfully request that you advocate for renewed dialogue between the BGLC, climbers, and environmental stakeholders. By doing so, we can develop a plan that honors Indigenous heritage, supports the local economy, and fosters reconciliation. Together, we can make Dyurrite a landmark example of how communities can work in harmony to protect and celebrate the land.
#100	I respectfully request that the decision making process be transparent and inclusive, allowing climbers, Traditional Owners, and all stakeholders to work together in a way that honours Dyurrite’s natural and cultural significance, ensuring its protection and enjoyment for generations to come.
#101	This is an opportunity to create a model for reconciliation, where environmental stewardship and cultural respect go hand in hand, ensuring that all who love and respect these landscapes have a role in their preservation.
#102	The loss of 80% of high-quality climbing routes within the Grampians area has already ripped away areas used by the climbing community. Limiting access within the Arapiles/Dyurrite area is yet another blow to climbers/outdoor enthusiasts have access too. Where are they to go?
#103	I am writing to urge you to advocate for the reconsideration of the recent decision to impose permanent restrictions on rock climbing at Dyurrite without meaningful consultation with the climbing community
#104	No a submission a request for a media article
#105	I am 36 years old and have been climbing since I was 18. Ive been visiting Arapiles and the Grampians nearly every year and usually multiple times a year since I was 23. I am writing to you in the hope that something can be done to preserve the place we love and somehow change the horrible direction we are currently moving in

#106	In a world where we seem to see kids and people getting outside less and less, you think banning climbing in one area is a good thing? I love it how government approves land clearing for all kinds of developments lol but for these nature living people you slap bans in them lol.
#107	As an experienced local climber born and raised in Victoria, I have a deep connection to this landscape. Through open communication and collaboration, we can create a shared stewardship of Dyurrite. This would ensure that it remains a place of meaning for generations to come. I urge you to reconsider the current approach and move towards a more inclusive consultation process that welcomes both Indigenous custodians and the climbing community to the table.
#108	I am writing to urge you to advocate for the reconsideration of the recent decision to impose permanent restrictions on rock climbing at Dyurrite without meaningful consultation with the climbing community. This decision represents a missed opportunity for reconciliation, collaboration, and conservation.
#109	Please find a formal letter relating to the draft Dyurrite Landscape Management Plan amendment attached to this email.
#110	I respectfully urge you to encourage Parks Victoria to revisit this draft with meaningful input from the climbing community. I hope there is some way that with more climbing specific input, much of the climbing areas could remain open with no impact on the cultural values of Dyurrite.
#111	Your support on this matter would send a powerful message about the need for democratic processes and fair management of our public lands.
#112	it is my strong belief that the draft Dyurrite/Mt Arapiles Cultural Landscape Management Plan Amendment has been de-railed and mis-guided from the very beginning. What has been labelled as a 'Landscape Management Plan' is merely a 'Rock-climbing Mgt Plan', which is completely reasonable however must not masquerade as something it is not.
#113	I ask you to please pressure the Victorian Government to halt the 'consultation process' and develop a meaningful and inclusive consultation process for the future management of the Park. I ask you to please pressure the Victorian Government to withdraw the Mount ArapilesToon State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) Management Plan Draft Amendment 2024. It is essential that it is fully updated, based on the proper consultation and research.
#114	The combined restrictions at both Arapiles and the Grampians are likely to deter not just seasoned climbers but also reduce the influx of international tourists. This undermines the recent \$1.7 million investment in Arapiles, potentially leading to a significant decline in tourism that has long supported the local community in Natimuk.
#115	This is wrong on so many levels- No consultation, targeted study, heritage values, protection does not imply exclusion, parks Victoria appears to want climbers removed from parks completely, world renowned climbing destination, destruction of livelihoods and economy of Natimuk.
#116	We are respected people in our community, engineers, health care workers etc - we're not dirtbags and shouldn't be treated as such. Families camping with children shouldn't have to feel threatened by Parks Victorian officials. And where does this stop? Are all our national and state parks going to be off limits on a look but don't touch basis without consultation.

#117	Further collaboration and consultation (with all stakeholders) needs to be had to develop this plan the right way.
#118	The issues at stake have already been expressed more eloquently than I can hope to, and I attach to this submission a letter from [REDACTED] which I fully endorse and encourage you to read and consider. My own story is that I have been an enthusiastic climber for some 30 years, and have had the joy and privilege of visiting Dyurrite 3 times, including recently when I returned after an absence of over 25 years to climb with my 18 year-old daughter. My experience of climbing at Dyurrite has been, like other places I have climbed, one of appreciation, wonder, awe, and ultimately love for the natural beauty of this landscape. Climbing has brought me closer to the land than merely passing through and observing from afar.
#119	I urge you to consider a more balanced approach to the recreational use of Mount Arapiles Tooan State Park / Dyurrite. Please advocate for changes to be made to the draft management plan released by Parks Victoria. The proposed changes threaten the economic and social vitality of Natimuk, Horsham and the surrounding areas, and set a dangerous precedent for the rest of Victoria and Australia.
#120	Please help me promote excellence in Parks plans by demanding a longer consultation period that engages with the Natimuk and Horsham communities, so their own goals can be achieved and our community can live.
#121	Collaborating with traditional owners and the climbing community as environmental stewards, I am confident that Parks Victoria can create a management plan honouring all facets of Mount Arapiles' rich heritage. I look forward to your response and a management approach that safeguards Indigenous cultural sites and climbing history.
#122	Time to respect all users and have transparency in how public lands are managed for the public.
#123	This Management plan is being introduced without fair consultation of a key user group and an alarming lack of transparency. I ask you to raise this issue with the Premier and the Minister for Environment and help secure fair consultation and community collaboration. I am asking to extend the consultation period offered, expand its scope to include proposed banned areas and engage all major user groups
#124	Until these bans were announced in November 2024, we were planning to buy a house and begin working as social workers in Horsham. This would have enabled us to continue our life pursuit of rock climbing at our favourite climbing area in the world
#125	I respectfully urge the Legislative Assembly of Victoria and Parks Victoria to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the scope of the consultation process to include banned areas. 2. Extend the consultation period. 3. Engage community representatives and major user groups in consultation. 4. Incorporate an economic impact assessment
#126	I urge you to reconsider the consultation process surrounding the Djurrite Management Plan. Open dialogues, workshops, and forums where climbers and other stakeholders can share their perspectives will foster a more inclusive environment. Together, we can find solutions that protect cultural heritage while allowing climbers to continue enjoying and caring for these remarkable landscapes.

#127	I am also extremely concerned about the social and economical impact the draft management plan is going to have on our local businesses and the wider fabric of our community. Climbing is estimated to contribute \$12.3 million to local communities (from a 2021 economic assessment of the value of rock climbing to the Grampians and Mount Arapiles/Dyurrite).
#128	I urge the Victorian Government to reconsider its approach and to embrace a solution that promotes coexistence and shared stewardship of Dyurrite. The climbing community is ready and willing to contribute to a management plan that respects both cultural and environmental priorities, ensuring that Dyurrite remains a place of spiritual connection for all who revere it.
#129	To this end, I urge you to advocate for: 1. Site-Specific Management: Adopt a more targeted approach that identifies areas of legitimate concern and focuses restrictions only where necessary, instead of broad closures. 2. Fair and Equitable Solutions: Ensure that restrictions take into account the economic, social, and recreational value of climbing, particularly for younger generations who may otherwise disengage from the park system altogether.
#130	Forgive my anger, and my grief. It has taken me over a week to find the time and strength to put these words to paper (digitally), and the only way I can describe the pain that stalks my days and haunts my nights is that I am heartbroken. For the last five years a stone has weighed down my chest and climbing in areas still open to us has granted me solace. The stone has just gotten a lot heavier, and though I need time to process what has happened, I also feel that I must act now to try to make a positive difference.
#131	Extend the management plan to include consultations with climbers Conduct further work to assess risk of harm at a route level rather than area level Consider harm mitigation strategies that are not blanket bans More generally, seek an informed perspective on park user groups
#132	I am writing today to add my voice to the collective disquiet surrounding the proposed management plan for the Dyurrite/Mt Arapiles. I am a business owner and avid climber, and have spent literally hundreds of days immersed in the spirit of Dyurrite. Please assist in any way that you can to force the abandonment of the proposed management plan in favour of a more considered approach. Not the abandonment of the idea per se, but rather how it is being conducted and controlled.
#133	Recommendations include implementing targeted closures and adaptive management, rather than broad bans. Restrictions should be based on clear cultural significance, with seasonal or site-specific closures to protect vulnerable areas while maintaining access to most of the mountain. Climbing representatives should be included in discussions about future management plans to ensure a more inclusive, balanced approach that respects all perspectives. Educational programs should be enhanced to foster understanding of the site's cultural importance. A well-designed management plan, with seasonal or targeted closures, would allow all users to respect the site's cultural and environmental value. By collaborating with both traditional owners and the climbing community, Parks Victoria can develop a management plan that preserves Dyurrite/Mt Arapiles' diverse heritage while ensuring continued public access.
#134	Banning recreation is destroying reconciliation

CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy (Council)



1. PURPOSE

The Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy of Horsham Rural City Council is made in accordance with section 45 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

This Policy provides for the following matters which Council is responsible for under the Act or as a requirement of this Policy:

- 1.1 the recruitment and appointment of the Chief Executive Officer;
- 1.2 approving the Contract of Employment entered into between Council and the Chief Executive Officer;
- 1.3 the provision of independent professional advice in relation to the matters dealt with in this Policy;
- 1.4 the monitoring of the Chief Executive Officer's performance;
- 1.5 an annual review of the Chief Executive Officer's performance; and
- 1.6 determining the Chief Executive Officer's remuneration.

2. INTRODUCTION

This Policy outlines the mechanisms which support Council in fulfilling its obligations regarding the CEO's employment and under the Act. Council will establish a CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee for this purpose that may consist of all councillors or a subgroup of councillors (see Section 4.1)

The aims of Council (including via the Committee) in relation to this Policy are to:

- 2.1 establish the Committee;
- 2.2 provide processes for the recruitment of a natural person, and their appointment, to the position of CEO;
- 2.3 draft and approve the Contract of Employment entered into between Council and the CEO;
- 2.4 seek and be guided by independent professional advice in relation to the matters dealt with in this Policy;
- 2.5 provide processes for determining and reviewing the CEO's Remuneration Package;
- 2.6 provide processes for the monitoring of the CEO's performance including setting the Performance Plan and conducting an annual review;
- 2.7 determine, whether any variations to the Remuneration Package, and terms and conditions of employment of the CEO are required.

CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy (Council)



The aims of the CEO in relation to this Policy are to:

- 2.8** work collaboratively with the Committee in determining the Performance Plan on an annual basis;
- 2.9** actively participate in the performance appraisal process as required by the Committee;
- 2.10** make use of constructive feedback from Councillors and Committee Members in relation to performance appraisals;
- 2.11** undertake professional development on an as needed basis, or as part of the Performance Plan; and
- 2.12** promptly draw the Committee's attention to any situation where any variation of the Performance Plan may be required in light of the current circumstances.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors, Council staff and peoples involved in matters pertaining to:

- 3.1** the establishment and duties of the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee;
- 3.2** the recruitment and appointment of the CEO;
- 3.3** the contract of employment between Council and CEO;
- 3.4** the remuneration package provided to the CEO; and
- 3.5** the Performance Plan and Annual Review Report for the CEO.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee

- 4.1.1** Council will establish a CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee.
- 4.1.2** The Committee will be an advisory committee to Council.
- 4.1.3** The purposes of the Committee are to consider, and make recommendations to Council with respect to, the:
 - selection and appointment of the Independent Advisor when required;
 - independent advice received from time to time from the Independent Advisor;
 - performance monitoring of the CEO, including with respect to achievement of the KPIs;
 - annual review of the CEO's performance, including against the KPIs;
 - CEO's remuneration;
 - recruitment and appointment of a CEO, if required;
 - provisions to be included in the Contract of Employment from time to time;
 - implementation of this Policy.

CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy (Council)



4.1.4 The Committee will include all Councillors.

4.1.5 The Committee is to be chaired by:

- an Independent Advisor, if appointed and present,
- the Mayor; or
- if the Mayor is absent, a Councillor who is present at the Committee meeting and is appointed by the members of the Committee who are also present.

4.1.6 The Committee is to hold meetings quarterly to:

- prepare documentation relevant to the CEO's employment and remuneration, including Council reports and contractual documents, for the approval of Council;
- conduct and maintain appropriate records regarding performance reviews of the CEO; and
- review the Remuneration Package and conditions of employment of the CEO,

4.1.7 The Committee will provide a report to a Confidential Meeting of Council following each meeting describing its activities and making recommendations about any action to be taken by Council.

Where any item in the report relates to a Council resolution regarding recruitment, appointment, reappointment, or contract of employment of the CEO, the item will not be reported in the Minutes of the Council Meeting until the matter has been determined by Council, in accordance with Section 125 of the Local Government Act 2020.

4.1.8 The Committee will determine its procedures at its first meeting, which will include:

- the rules for its meetings, noting that whilst meetings should be conducted with as little formality and technicality as appropriate to fulfil the Committee's purposes the rules must outline how recommendations will be voted and resolved upon to ensure clear decision-making and outcomes;
- quorum, provided that the quorum is not less than the Mayor and three Councillors;
- means of attendance at Committee meetings (e.g. in person or electronically); and
- the taking of the minutes of the Committee meetings, and will communicate the procedures to Council.

4.2 Recruitment of CEO

4.2.1 The Committee will establish and manage the process to recruit the CEO, designed to ensure that Council can select the best available candidate from a short list of preferred candidates (with or without a recommendation from the Committee).

4.2.2 The Committee will determine, and make a recommendation to Council, as to:

- whether there is a need to engage an Executive Search Consultant to run the recruitment process; and, if so
- the Executive Search Consultant to be appointed to run the recruitment process.

CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy (Council)



4.2.3 If an Executive Search Consultant is engaged, the Committee must liaise with the Executive Search Consultant in connection with the recruitment process. The committee must be presented with the full list of applicants received by the Consultant, before determining any shortlist and/or a recommendation for consideration by Council. The chair of the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee will be liaison person with the Executive Search Consultant on behalf of the committee.

4.2.4 The Committee must have regard to Council's Recruitment Policy when considering the recruitment of the position of CEO to:

- ensure that the recruitment decision is based on merit;
- support transparency in the recruitment process and the public advertising of the position; and
- ensure that regard is had to gender equity, diversity and inclusiveness.

4.2.5 The Committee will decide if the Executive Search Consultant publicly advertises the CEO role.

4.2.6 The Committee must direct the Executive Search Consultant to prepare, and provide to Council, a schedule of dates for key decisions to be made by resolution of Council throughout the recruitment process.

4.2.7 The Committee must provide a report and recommendation to Council so that each key decision identified in the schedule prepared under paragraph 4.2.6 can be made by resolution of Council.

4.2.8 The recruitment of the CEO must be made by resolution of Council and remains confidential until Council has determined, via resolution, that it can be made public.

4.3 Appointment of the CEO

4.3.1 Council will receive a report from the Committee on the completion of its role in the recruitment process, and Council will proceed to decide on a preferred candidate with the support of the Committee to negotiate and finalise the Contract of Employment.

4.3.2 The Committee will provide a recommendation to Council on the provisions to be contained in the proposed Contract of Employment.

4.3.3 The appointment of the CEO must be made by a resolution of Council and remains confidential until the contract is signed as per Clause 4.11.

4.4 Reappointment of the CEO

4.4.1 At least 6 months prior to the expiry of the current CEO's Contract of Employment, the Committee will provide a recommendation to Council on:

- whether the CEO should be reappointed under a new Contract of Employment; and
- if the recommendation is to reappoint the CEO, the proposed provisions of the further Contract of Employment, and
- authorise remuneration benchmarking of equivalent CEO's remuneration packages to inform the CEO's reappointment contract negotiations, and

- authorise the Mayor and the Independent Advisor (if appointed) to commence the Contract of Employment negotiations.

4.4.2 Any reappointment of the current CEO must be made by a resolution of Council and remains confidential until the contract is signed as per Clause 4.11.

4.5 Contract of Employment

4.5.1 The Contract of Employment is to be read in conjunction with this Policy (but the terms of the Policy are not incorporated into the Contract of Employment).

4.5.2 The Contract of Employment will, at a minimum, outline the following:

- the employment term, which must not exceed 5 years in accordance with section 44(2) of the Act;
- the responsibilities and duties of the position, including compliance with the Act and the Code of Conduct;
- the conflict of interest management requirements;
- the CEO's Remuneration Package and other entitlements;
- any legislative and contractual obligations, including those during and continuing after appointment;
- the CEO's leave entitlements;
- dispute resolution procedures;
- processes for managing unsatisfactory performance;
- processes for early termination, including notice of termination provisions; and
- any other matters required to be contained in the Contract of Employment by the Regulations.

4.5.3 The Contract of Employment may only be varied by a resolution of Council and accepted by the CEO, and recorded in a deed of variation.

4.6 Remuneration and Expenses

4.6.1 The Remuneration Package provided to the CEO will form part of the Committee's annual review, having regard to (in accordance with section 45(3) of the Act):

- any statement of policy issued by the Government of Victoria which is in force with respect to its wages policy (or equivalent); and
- any Public Sector Wages Determination.

4.6.2 Remuneration will be reviewed on an annual basis, in accordance with the CEO's Performance Plan and contractual requirements.

4.6.3 Expenses incurred by the CEO will be reimbursed in accordance with any specific requirements within the CEO Contract

CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy (Council)



4.7 Performance monitoring

- 4.7.1** Council will adopt an annual Performance Plan for the CEO, which will include KPIs. The Performance Plan must be developed collaboratively between the CEO and the Committee.
- 4.7.2** The CEO is to provide progress reports against the Performance Plan to the Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 4.7.3** The Committee may meet with the CEO following each progress report to discuss the matters contained in the progress report.
- 4.7.4** Within 6 months of the new CEO's term, a workshop with Councillors and the CEO should be coordinated so that:
- the CEO can prepare and present an overview of their findings during the early months, and highlight any projections or forecasts of relevance to Council during their tenure;
 - Councillors can provide feedback to the CEO on their perspective of the CEO's performance during the initial period; and
 - Council and CEO can agree to projects and priorities for inclusion in the CEO's Performance Plan and KPIs.
- 4.7.5** Nothing in this Policy prevents the Committee and/or Council from monitoring the CEO's performance on an ongoing basis.

4.8 Annual review

- 4.8.1** In preparation for Council's review, the Committee is required to submit an annual review report (**Annual Review Report**) to Council which includes recommendations on the following:
- whether, and to what extent, the CEO has met the KPIs under the Performance Plan;
 - whether any KPIs or other criteria ought to be varied under the Performance Plan; • whether the Remuneration Package ought to be varied; and
 - any other necessary matters.
- 4.8.2** The Committee will submit the Annual Review Report to Council only after meeting with the CEO to discuss the Committee's proposed recommendations.
- 4.8.3** Council shall, after receipt of the Annual Review Report, review the recommendations in the Annual Review Report and advise the CEO of the outcomes of the review process.

4.9 Independent advice

- 4.9.1** An Independent Advisor is responsible for providing independent professional advice in relation to the matters dealt with under this Policy in accordance with section 45(2)(a) of the Act.
- 4.9.2** The Committee may appoint an Independent Advisor, and determine:
- the term of appointment of the Independent Advisor; and
 - the remuneration of the Independent Advisor.

The Committee must follow a process to seek experienced and suitably qualified persons and the Independent Chair/Advisor but must not be the Executive Search Consultant appointed by Council to assist in the recruitment process.

4.9.3 The Committee can, as needed, obtain additional independent professional advice in relation to the matters dealt with under this Policy.

4.9.4 The Mayor will be the liaison person in respect of (a) Council seeking further advice and (b) the Committee seeking further advice from other sources.

4.10 Interaction with Act and Regulations

4.10.1 This Policy applies subject to any inconsistent obligations in the Act or the Regulations.

4.11 Confidentiality

4.11.1 Council is not required to disclose any personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

4.11.2 All committee minutes, negotiations and details of the CEO's employment contract will remain confidential.

4.11.3 Council resolutions to appoint or reappoint the CEO may only be released into the open Council minutes once the employment contract is signed.

4.11.4 Council resolutions to recruit a new CEO may only be released into the open Council minutes once the Council has determined, via resolution, that it can be made public.

4.12 Delegations

4.12.1 Council must not delegate the power to appoint the CEO, whether on a permanent or acting basis, however, it may delegate to the CEO the power to appoint an Acting CEO for a period not exceeding 28 days (sections 11(2)(d) and 11(3) of the Act).

4.12.2 Council must not delegate the power to make any decision in relation to the employment, dismissal or removal of the CEO (section 11(2)(e) of the Act).

5. COMMUNICATION

Placed on Intranet/HRCC Website and Councillor Portal.

6. RESPONSIBILITY

Policy Owner: Manager People and Performance

7. DEFINITIONS

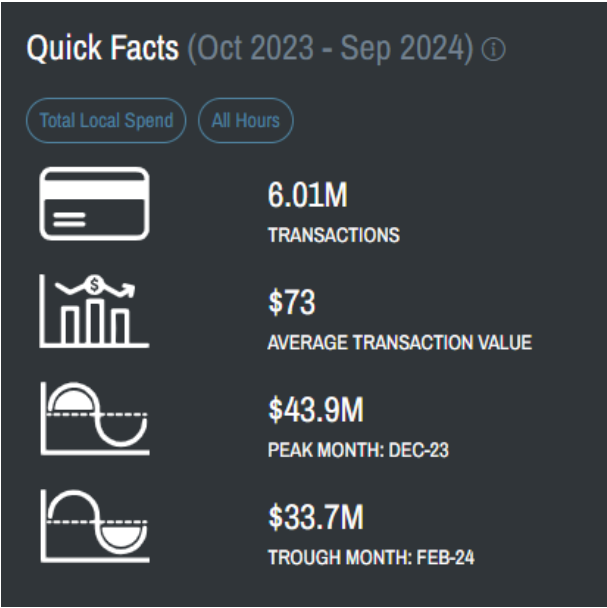
Term	Meaning
Act	Act means the Local Government Act 2020.
Annual Review Report	Annual Review Report has the meaning given in paragraph 4.8.1.
Chief Executive Officer	Chief Executive Officer or CEO means the Chief Executive Officer of Horsham Rural City Council.
Committee	Committee means the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee established under this Policy.
Contract of Employment	Contract of Employment means the contract of employment between Council and the CEO, including any schedules.
Council	Council means Horsham Rural City Council.
Councillors	Councillors means the individuals holding the office of a member of Horsham Rural City Council.
Council meeting	Council meeting has the same meaning as in the Act.
Executive Search Consultant	Executive Search Consultant means a consultant with specialist expertise in sourcing and evaluating candidates for senior executive roles.
Independent Advisor	Independent Advisor means a consultant appointed by the Committee from time to time to provide independent advice or appointed as Independent Chair of the CEO Employment and Remuneration Committee in accordance with section 45(2)(a) of the Act.
KPIs	KPIs means Key Performance Indicators or performance criteria however described.
Mayor	Mayor means the Mayor of Horsham Rural City Council.
Performance Plan	Performance Plan means the annual performance plan setting out KPIs for the CEO.
Policy	Policy means this <i>CEO Employment and Remuneration Policy</i> adopted in accordance with section 45 of the Act.
Public Sector Wages Determination	Public Sector Wages Determination means any Determination that is currently in effect under section 21 of the <i>Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019</i> in relation to remuneration bands for executives employed in public service bodies.
Recruitment Policy	Recruitment Policy means the recruitment policy adopted by the CEO under section 48(2) of the Act.
Regulations	Regulations means the Regulations made under Division 7 of Part 2 of the Act.
Remuneration Package	Remuneration Package means the total gross remuneration package paid to the CEO pursuant to the Contract of Employment.
Resolution	Resolution means a resolution of Council made at a properly constituted Council meeting.

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
HRCC Recruitment Policy	Intranet
Local Government Act 2020	https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/local-government-act-2020/003

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Number	Approval Date	Approval By	Amendment	Review Date
01	13 December 2021	Council	• New Policy	31 December 2025
02	26 September 2022	Council	Revised Policy to include that an independent Advisor may Chair the Committee and additional wording around confidentiality of the process	26 September 2026
2.1	March 2023	n/a	New logo	26 Sept 2026



For the month of September 2024:

- Resident Local Spend was \$23.1M. This is a -0.9% decrease from the same time last year.
- Visitor Local Spend was \$12.3M. This is a 3.28% increase from the same time last year.
- Total Local Spend was \$35.4M. This is a 0.52% increase from the same time last year.
- Resident Escape Spend was \$9.4M. This is a -10.19% decrease from the same time last year.
- Resident Online Spend was \$15.9M. This is a 9.04% increase from the same time last year.

The 10.19 % decrease in Resident Escape Spend is a positive sign that local goods and service providers are meeting local consumer market demand.

Night Time Economy for September:

The biggest spending night of the month of September 2024 was Thursday 26 September with Total Local Spend of \$0.2M. This was made up of \$0.1M in Dining and Entertainment spending and \$0.2M spending in all other categories.

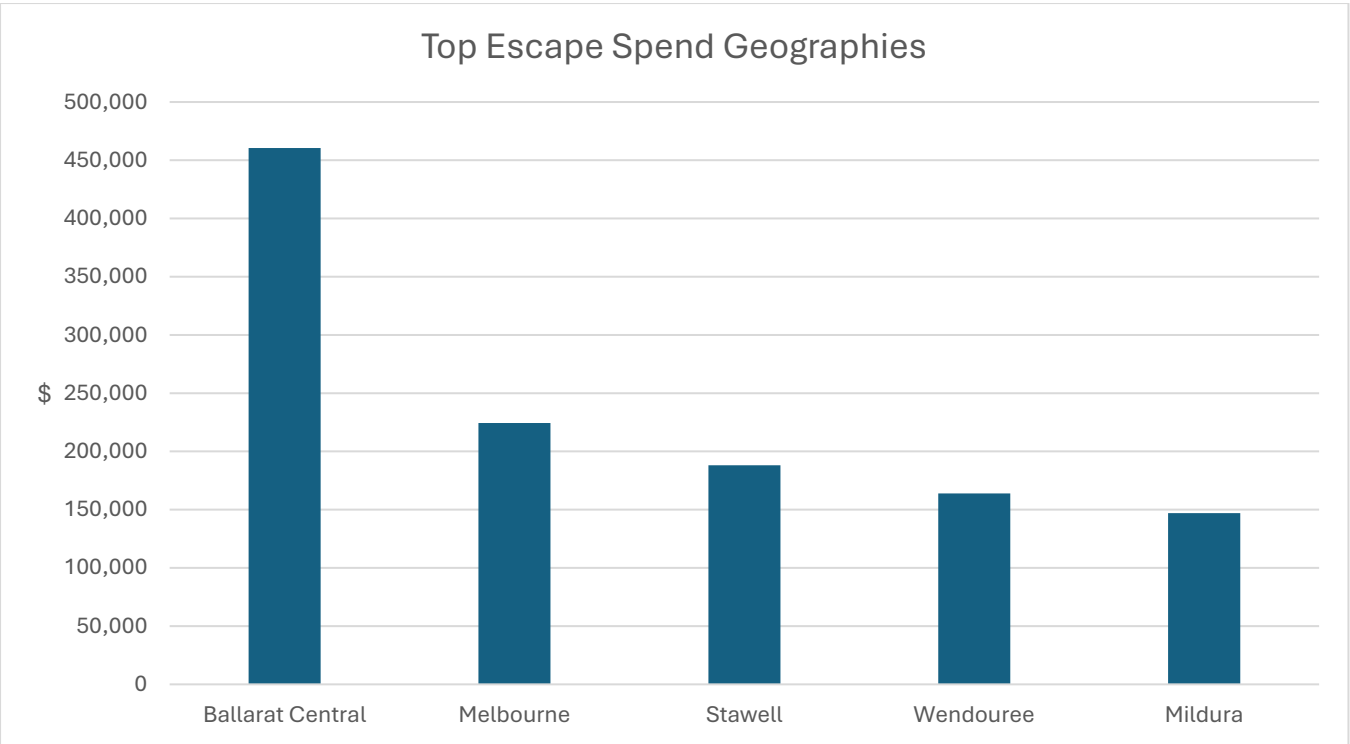
It is unusual for our biggest spend to occur on a Thursday night, however this was the night before the AFL Grand Final Public Holiday which would’ve encouraged more people to be spending on Dining and Entertainment.

Year on year changes:

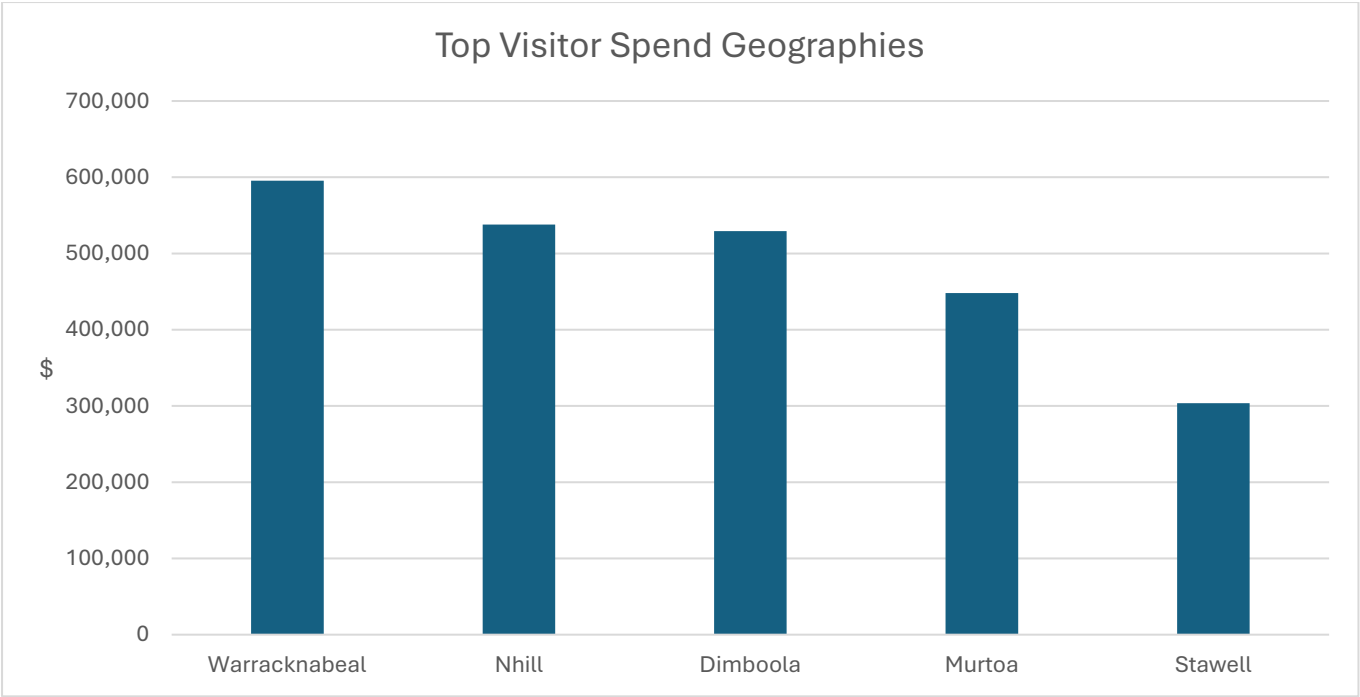
We can see below that there has been a 10.19% decrease in Resident Escape Spend in comparison to last year. This may be due to the Term 3 School Holidays starting later in September this year which may lead to an increase in Resident Escape Spend in October.

Year-on-Year Changes ⓘ			
<div>End Month: Sep 2024All HoursDownload Data</div>			
Expenditure Type ↕	Sep 2023 ↕	Sep 2024 ↕	Change ↕
Total Local Spend	\$35.2M	\$35.4M	0.52%
Resident Local Spend	\$23.3M	\$23.1M	-0.9%
Visitor Local Spend	\$11.9M	\$12.3M	3.28%
Resident Escape Spend	\$10.5M	\$9.42M	-10.19%
Resident Online Spend	\$14.6M	\$15.9M	9.04%

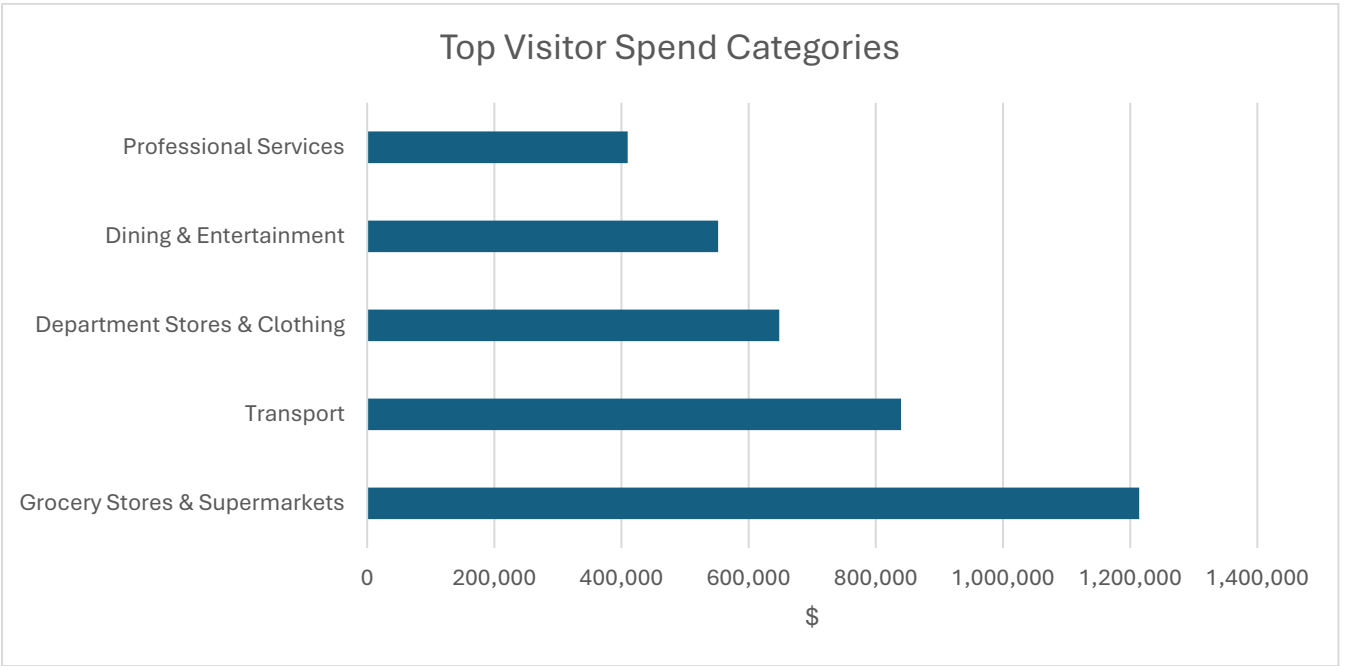
Location and Category Analysis:



There was more spending in Ballarat Central and less in Wendouree this month which tells us Ballarat is still the most popular destination for escape spend for Horsham residents.



There was an increase in spending from Warracknabeal, Nhill and Dimboola residents this month which could be due to the local football finals series being held at various locations in the Wimmera and people travelling through Horsham.



The overall visitor spend this month was down in comparison to last month, however there was an increase of 3.28% for the same time last year.

**MINUTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS
 COUNCIL BRIEFING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
 MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 5:30PM**

ATTENDED BY: Brian Klowss, Cam McDonald, Angela Munn, Ian Ross, Rebecca Sluggett, Todd Wilson, Craig Niemann, Chief Executive Officer; Kim Hargreaves, Director Corporate Services; Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities and Place; John Martin, Director Infrastructure; Steven Kingshott, Monitor

APOLOGIES: Cr Dean O'Loughlin

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

2. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST SEC 130 and 131, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020 AND HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL GOVERNANCE RULES

Nil

3. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------|
| 3.1 | CEO Recruitment (Appendix 3.1) | 5.30pm – 5.45pm |
| 3.2 | Contract for Supply of Alternative Daily Cover for Dooen Landfill (Appendix 3.2) | 5.45pm – 5.50pm |
| 3.3 | Audit and Risk Committee Chair's Appointment (Appendix 3.3) | 5.50pm – 6.00pm |

4. COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------------|
| 4.1 | Dyurrite Cultural Landscape Management Plan Appendix 4.1
Attending: Fiona Gormann (<i>virtual attendance</i>) | 6.00pm – 6.30pm |
| 4.2 | Term of Mayor (Appendix 4.2) | 6.30pm – 6.35pm |
| 4.3 | Election of the Mayor (Appendix 4.3) | 6.35pm – 6.40pm |
| 4.4 | Term of Deputy Mayor (Appendix 4.4) | 6.40pm – 6.45pm |
| 4.5 | Election of the Deputy Mayor (Appendix 4.5) | 6.45pm – 6.50pm |
| 4.6 | Speech by the Incoming Mayor (Appendix 4.6) | 6.50pm – 6.55pm |

5. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------------|
| 5.1 | Investment Attraction & Growth Report Appendix 5.1
Attending: Fiona Gormann (<i>virtual attendance</i>) | 6.55pm – 7.10pm |
|-----|--|------------------------|

There was discussion about the amount of completed actions in the Natimuk Economic and Social Plan. Council staff acknowledged that the completion of actions had previously been overstated by staff (by error) in a report and that this had now been corrected. An apology was provided at a meeting of the NESP Project Advisory Committee the previous week. The group will review the action plan further and agree on completion levels.

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------|
| 5.2 | VCAT, Building and Planning Permits Report Appendix 5.2
Attending: Fiona Gormann (<i>virtual attendance</i>) | 7.10pm – 7.20pm |
|-----|---|------------------------|

7. VERBAL REPORTS

- 7.1 Councillor Committees (Wimmera Southern Mallee
Development Committee Appointment)

7.20pm – 7.25pm

6. GENERAL DISCUSSION (Craig Niemann)

7.25pm – 7.40pm

- Internal Committees of Council

7. CLOSE

CRAIG NIEMANN
Chief Executive Officer



WIMMERA INTERMODAL FREIGHT TERMINAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

10:30 am, Wednesday, 15 May 2024

TEAMS ONLINE

Meeting No. 2024/2*

Attendees

John Martin	Director Infrastructure Services HRCC
Matt Eryurek	GM Head of Ports Development SCT
David Hill	Department Transport and Planning
Bryce Spittle	Department Transport and Planning (Roads)
Annie Minter	Minute taker
Lyn Barnes	Department Transport and Planning
Ian Mond	Policy & Strategy / Freight Victoria,
Glen Richmond	ARTC
Fiona Gormann	Manager Investment Attraction and Growth HRCC
Mark McKenzie	Regional Development Victoria

Apologies

Sarah Henderson	Regional Development Victoria
Dianna Zammitt & Pauline Zahra	Finance/Commercial SCT
David Pratt	Operations SCT

Confirmation of previous Minutes (21 February 2024)

Moved: Glen Richmond

Second: Fiona Gormann

Actions arising from Meetings

Action	Responsible Member	Date Completed
Maintenance report to be shared with advisory committee when received.	Matt/Fiona	Prior to each meeting
Throughput figures report to be shared for next quarter with advisory committee	Matt/Fiona	Prior to each meeting
Road Safety Forum information to be shared with Advisory Committee - Rescheduled Feb 2024 date tbc	John	Event was cancelled Planning for September now



1. Operational Update – (SCT)

1.1. Maintenance

- Asphalt required for internal road – these works have been completed

1.2. Throughput Figures

- 13500-14000 predicted for the year – 40% increase
- Modeshift incentive, condition of our roads and availability of equipment post covid has contributed to this
- Rail preferred option due to deteriorating roads
- Bookings are consistent
- Tariffs for pulses into India have been lifted
- Modeshift has been extended but reduced – working through what the impact will be
- Details currently being sorted through. Operators will be advised by DTP when confirmed – weren't expecting to get anything so at least it will still give operators some support over next 2 years

1.3. General

- Diverse team male/female ratio
- Appointed new operations manager from Bendigo – commences 27 May
- Has been a good year, now focussing on diversification and potential for bulk and more customers into WAL Hub.

1. WAL HUB Development (Fiona)

1.1. Bergin Drive

- Sold 3 lots one under contract 3 on hold 2 on market

1.2. Landscaping plan

- Parks and gardens rolling out landscaping including tree planting to enhance appearance of the site

1.3. Truck Bay

- Design work and costings being undertaken – will require funding

1.4. Signage

- Being manufactured will provide space for up to 14 businesses to be identified on the sign

1.5. Johnson Asahi moving second site to the Dooen site planning to be done by Sept/Oct

2. Regional Development Advocacy (Mark)

2.1. RDV manager appointed

2.2. Coordinator and Project Officer will be appointed and based in Horsham

2.3. Regional partnership seeking new chair and deputy chair currently



2.4. State budget

- Received significant funding last year
- Tiny Towns funding currently being rolled out
- Regional workers accommodation fund
 - Half a dozen from Wimmera Southern Mallee have been accepted for further development
- Grain supply chain study close to receiving final report – RDV commented that there should be more focus on rail
 - DTP also raised the issue of more focus on rail
 - Will the supply chain study made public? Not sure at this stage Mark will advise as there is interest from outside parties.
- Portland line budget – 150 million over 3 years
 - No further information received
 - ARTC another 500 million to upgrades across the nation
 - Glen to provide more information when received

3. Wimmera Regional Port Logistics Industry Event (Matt)

3.1. Four key speakers, tour of WAL Hub and WIFT, refreshments and networking at the Town Hall

- Range of industries are registering
- Bryce to email to Grampians DTP network
- Mark to advise new Manager

4. General Business

4.1. DTP (Lyn)

- Policy work being done within rail freight management act
 - Maximum prices will be published as a public document
 - Community input received for rail freight access guidelines
 - Reviewing Victorian freight plan
 - Public consultation period will be undertaken
 - Lyn to clarify process for consultation

* Post meeting information received from Lyn

- A website will be set up to receive community comment, and this will include a questionnaire and a discussion paper
- Lyn will let us know when it is up and running

4.2. Chairing of Committee

- The Chair should be a member of the committee, rather than a Council staff member
- All members to consider this role and a decision can be made at the next meeting

5. Next Meeting:

5.1. Informal face to face meeting on the date of the industry event

- Fiona to organise



6. Future Meetings
 - 6.1. 13 June Industry Event
 - 6.2. 21 August 2024
 - 6.3. 20 November 2024

7. Meeting Close
11:15am

Wimmera Intermodal Freight Terminal Advisory Committee meetings are held quarterly on the third Wednesday of the month.

* Please note the meeting numbers have been reset to reflect year and the meeting number. (This is post Council's review undertaken of committees)