

action 9: comprehensive network of parks

Victoria has established a comprehensive system of parks and reserves that aims to represent the State's diverse natural environments. Our parks and reserves not only provide us with opportunities for sport and leisure, they also play important roles in providing ecosystem services, such as clean air and water or acting as carbon sinks. 400 hectares is being added to a range of parks across the State. These include French Island, Grampians, Great Otways and currently Mornington Peninsula National Parks, Broken Boosey State Park and the Castlemaine Diggins National Heritage Park. Airey's Inlet will also receive a 2.2 hectare recreation reserve.

Our commitment to enhancing the parks system overall will include creating new metropolitan and regional parks, adding strategic areas to existing national parks where appropriate.

What we will do

9.1 Better Parks

We will provide \$13.3 million over four years to establish new metropolitan parks in growth areas - Melton, Werribee and Craigieburn; and improve visitor amenities at *Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park*. The four parks will benefit from enhanced visitor facilities and landscape works.

9.2 Recreational Forests

We will invest \$5 million in our State forests to improve the condition of popular sites and reduce the conflict between trail bike riders, four-wheel drivers, walkers, horse-riders, picnickers, landholders and other recreational users.

We want everyone to enjoy our wonderful forests. This is our first step to balance the interests of the four million visitors who visit our forests for recreation each year.

We will create new buffer zones to protect residential areas and environmental assets, rehabilitate tracks and fix fences, and establish new trail bike unloading areas away from hotspots.

A statewide trail bike off-road motorcycling strategy will look at more legal venues for riding and help the trail bike and four-wheel drive community to self-regulate their recreational use.

As a large amount of the damage to our forests is caused by unregistered users, we will increase our education, prevention and enforcement efforts, and increase noise testing.

We will be working with community and industry to implement a new approach to public land stewardship. This will involve improving and simplifying governance and working more closely with the community to manage public land.

9.3 Parks for neighbourhood renewal communities

We will upgrade three community parks in partnership with neighbourhood renewal communities facing disadvantage.

These upgrades will be funded through the Sustainability Fund, and will transform these areas into attractive and accessible assets for local communities. Funding will be used to establish facilities such as paths, signage, bridges, picnic areas, native vegetation planting and toilets and to protect environmental values. This will specifically include:

- \$42,000 for the Eaglehawk Neighbourhood Renewal Community for the Jobs Gully Natural Features Reserve Project. The project will deliver environmental remediation of the reserve, signage and habitat restoration.
- \$55,000 to the Doveton-Eumemmerring Neighbourhood Renewal Community and City of Casey for the Eumemmerring Creek Parklands Project. The project involves a community planting initiative of 16,000 indigenous trees and shrubs, appropriate fencing, improvements to river health and quality, development of eucalyptus arboretum, entrance nodes and public art display.
- \$78,000 for the Long Gully Neighbourhood Renewal Community and City of Greater Bendigo for the Linear Park Improvement Project. The project will involve landscaping, revegetation and weed control, construction of a low bridge across the drainage swale to reduce soil erosion, protect grasslands and provide greater connectivity / accessibility for residents to surrounding shops.

Great Otway National Park

The new Great Otway National Park is the largest on Victoria's coast, linking the existing Otway National Park and the Angahook- Lorne, Carlisle and Melba Gully State parks with tracts of former State forest.

Adding more than 60,000 hectares to Victoria's park areas, the Great Otway National Park fulfils a commitment to protect old growth forest and threatened flora and fauna by phasing out logging, and improving the management of the area. An additional 17 park managers have been employed. Around 40,000 hectares will also be set aside as a Forest Park. The development of this new category of public land is in response to community desires to have a diverse range of recreation activities available in the Otways, not usually allowed in national parks.