

**From:** [REDACTED]@delwp.vic.gov.au  
**Sent:** Thursday, 13 July 2017 11:22 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Rock Art and Rock Climbers

Hi [REDACTED]

That looks and sounds good to me. Thanks for updating me, I'm happy to do whatever I can to forward this.

Looking forward to seeing this work!

Cheers

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



 I acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria and pay my respect to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future.



**Munganin – Gadhaba**  
**'Achieve Together'**

Aboriginal Inclusion Plan 2016-2020

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**From:** [REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au>  
**To:** [REDACTED]@delwp.vic.gov.au>  
**Date:** 13/07/2017 11:10 AM  
**Subject:** RE: Rock Art and Rock Climbers

G'day [REDACTED]

Thank you for following this up. This is perfect and great timing as the VCC only asked us last week for some wording to include in their newsletter.

Well done. I think it is great. No need to catch up at the moment, [redacted] and I need to have some internal conversations in PV about the broader plan of attack. I am trying to get a project off the ground that is based around the following three points of action:

1. Providing clear advice to climbers in the form of park notes (1. Where can I climb? 2. Rock climbing bolts in the Grampians, 3. Where can I go bouldering?). These park notes would address section 1.9 of the VCC bolting policy and spell out the legal non-compliance issues of climbing in a friendly tone.
2. Community engagement – the above park notes would need a comms strategy and a plan of attack for how we engage with the climbing community. They may even be really supportive and offer to volunteer to remove inappropriate bolts.
3. Compliance – once the park notes are developed and engagement has occurred we will need to make it clear we are drawing the line in the sand because the climbing community self-regulation of the VCC climbing policy hasn't work. We will need a compliance focus especially when it comes to bolting and opening up of remote natural areas and cultural heritage sites.

Just FYI for the moment where we are trying to head. I will touch base once I have had further internal discussions.

[redacted]  
[redacted] Environment and Heritage (Grampians – Gariwerd)

[redacted] [@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:@parks.vic.gov.au)

From: [redacted] [@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Sent: Thursday, 13 July 2017 10:32 AM

To: [redacted] [@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:@parks.vic.gov.au); [redacted] [@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:@parks.vic.gov.au)

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: Rock Art and Rock Climbers

Hello [redacted]

I have an update from AV about this issue. [redacted] has sent through the below wording that we can use:

**Obligations of rock climbers and land managers under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006**

For the appropriate protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in areas utilised by rock climbers, Aboriginal Victoria considers it crucial that rock climbers and land managers are aware of their obligations under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (the Act). All Aboriginal places and objects in Victoria are protected by the Act. The Act states that a person must not do an act that harms or is likely to harm Aboriginal cultural heritage. It is important that rock climbers realise that climbing related activities like touching rock art panels, inserting a bolt, and lighting fires in rock shelters have the potential to interfere or even destroy Aboriginal places, especially rock art sites. Very often the rock art is faded and difficult to see and it is very easy to accidentally cause harm to these significant places. The loss of these sites, and the resulting loss of Aboriginal history, culture and heritage, would be a loss to all Victorians and cause great distress to Traditional Owners. Current maximum penalties for harming Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria is \$1,585,700. (as of 1 July 2017)

Please contact local land managers at Parks Victoria or DELWP on ????? for further information to ensure that Aboriginal heritage is not accidentally harmed by your Activities.

What do you think? I am happy to come in and have a chat to you both about this. Or we could meet in Ballarat and include [redacted] from AV in the meeting.

Let me know!

Cheers

[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted] | Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning  
[redacted]  
[redacted]



**From:** tracey skinner <[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)>  
**Date:** 25 October 2017 at 12:29:03 pm AEDT  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:@parks.vic.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: Bolt location clarification - Black Ranges

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your response. I agree, that stronger words and dialogue needs to occur and this is planned as a follow up over the next days to week. This immediate post is as I noted, to get the ball rolling, the thought implanted but is more specifically about what has occurred at the Black Range. This includes a request to cease development in the area with fixed protection, to note that further communications will be forthcoming and it has prompted the need for a much wider discussion.

What you are noting above is more information that is taken into an account in a larger overall approach. I'm not going to jump into that in this announcement and not before further discussions. We probably need to have quite a few discussions about the understanding of how the climbing community, progression of the sport and route development actually works. What 'bolting trad routes and newer style bolts rather than old style' actually means. Reality rather than perceived. So we are all on the same page. And how bolting unless done by the VCC is really not a workable solution. Self compliance does occur but the sheer number of people entering the sport means more education needs to be done and also, super important - thoughtful discussion with a community who love their sport. And like most sport participants, they want to see it grow and evolve. Our sport tends to take place in National and State parks which adds another layer of difficulty with how we use it. So how we do this, will be the tricky part. Despite some perceptions, climbers love the environment they climb in. There are just more of them now. It's taken a long time to bring climbers out from under the rocks and more open about their sport. I would hate to see it go back to the more secretive days.

I look forward to working with yourself and the team at Parks Victoria as well as traditional owners and the climbing community, to come up with realistic, sustainable climbing practices.

If someone could let me know the location info, it would be much appreciated.

Cheers,  
Tracey

On Wed, Oct 25, 2017 at 11:38 AM, [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)> wrote:

G'day Tracey, [REDACTED]

I would like to see stronger wording sent out to the rock climbing community please. Self-management / industry self-regulation hasn't worked and it needs to be made very clear that the practice of bolting is being reviewed and is now out of hand and inappropriate. This latest incident follows from my own investigations highlighting there is an element within the rock-climbing community actively replacing old bolts without any consultation, bolting trad-routes, and opening up new climbing sites with bolted routes. The reason for the urgency and need for clear, concise advice is that the modern stainless steel, epoxy glued bolts will have a far longer-lasting impact than the old style bolts and we need to jump on this issue ASAP as community self-compliance is failing.

I would like to see the following included in correspondence please:

- It is apparent widespread and uncontrolled installation of bolts is occurring
- Any new bolting is to adhere to Action 14 of the Grampians rock climbing strategy (1997) – only installed by recognised rock climbing groups such as the VCC and with approval of Parks Victoria. If no approval from PV than no bolting permitted.
- No replacement of bolted routes is to occur within Special Protection Zones or Remote Natural Areas as bolting has always been prohibited in these areas.

For consideration however, as [REDACTED] has mentioned in previous emails we need a coordinated communications program, education and engagement campaign as some tough decisions now need to be made.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Environment and Heritage (Grampians – Gariwerd)

[REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)>

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)>  
Sent: Wednesday, 25 October 2017 11:20 AM  
To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)>; [REDACTED]

@parks.vic.gov.au>;

@parks.vic.gov.au>

**Subject:** Bolt location clarification - Black Ranges

Hi,

I am putting together a brief(in my words,brief) post re the recent bolting in the Black Range. More comms to follow but wanted to start the ball rolling quickly. Could you please clarify for me the location as I think I only visited there once many moons ago.

*We visited [redacted] (the shelter immediately north of the caged [redacted]) where we noticed at least two bolts in the wall at the northern end.*

*Just outside the shelter (to the north) a pair of rock climbers were attempting a climb that used at least 8 bolts.*

*My knowledge of the shelters and art sites are coming from text from googling really*

The Black Range Shelters- Mugadgadjin and Burrunj  
Black Range Picnic Area  
Via Western Hwy, Campbells Rd and Black Range Rd

Bunjils Shelter  
Black Range State Forest  
Pomonal-Stawell Rd

I'm kinda assuming they are the first ones as there has been some climbing in the Burrunji area but this was always trad and not extensive.

Also what artwork is it? I know there is a hand stencil as [redacted] noted. Anything else?

As soon as you can get back to me would be great as would like to get this out today. Interstate tomorrow and most of Friday.

Cheers,

Tracey

Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer

[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)



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Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer

[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)







**From:** [REDACTED] tracey skinner <cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 November 2017 9:54 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: CLIMBING BOLTS IN ART SITE [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for this. I haven't for one moment doubted the seriousness of the issue and apart from some necessary work I have attended to in other areas, my head has been focused on this. I am putting some thoughts down on this and will speak soon.

cheers,  
Tracey

On Wed, Nov 1, 2017 at 9:23 AM, [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)> wrote:  
Hi Tracey,

In the spirit of open communications, I wanted you to see the response below from Aboriginal Victoria manager [REDACTED] regarding the placement of Bolts in and around registered sites, the requirements for removal and their interest in pursuing a legal investigation.

I'm don't want to be too alarmist, but the line in the sand is approaching quickly and the VCC and climbing community along with PV and TO will need to engage in some challenging conversations around how we manage cultural and environmental values and provide clarity for climbers around what the rules and regs are around the various activities.

We'll continue to include you in our deliberations and welcome any observations or lessons learnt from yourself or others about this issue and others.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@dpc.vic.gov.au)>  
**Date:** 31 October 2017 at 2:42:32 pm AEDT  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: CLIMBING BOLTS IN ART SITE [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

sure

[REDACTED]  
Aboriginal Victoria | Department of Premier & Cabinet  
[111 Armstrong St Nth, Ballarat Vic 3350](http://111.Armstrong.St.Nth.Ballarat.Vic.3350)



*We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future*

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@parks.vic.gov.au>  
To: [redacted] /DPC@DPC,  
Date: 31/10/2017 11:12 AM  
Subject: RE: CLIMBING BOLTS IN ART SITE [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Hi [redacted]

Would you be comfortable if I was to forward you email response to the Victorian Climbing club - Tracy Skinner, as a sign of how the department is responding to this issue and the seriousness of the matter?

Regards

[redacted]

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@dpc.vic.gov.au>  
Sent: Tuesday, 31 October 2017 10:29 AM  
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@parks.vic.gov.au>  
Cc: [redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
Subject: RE: CLIMBING BOLTS IN ART SITE [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Hi [redacted]

Sorry its taken me a week to respond to this issue

If I understand the situation correctly climbing bolts have been placed in the rock surface very near to Black Range [redacted]. On the face of it it appears that the action is an offence under s28 Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (A person must not do an act that harms or is likely to harm Aboriginal cultural heritage). This has a maximum penalty of 60 penalty units.

Given that there is available some information about who may have put in place the bolts, I think it is worth making some initial inquiries at least and see how far we can get. I'll need to speak with Ben and inspect the location first and then will be able to follow up on the vehicle and registration.

If Parks Victoria have other avenues to seek information from Victoria Police in relation to identity of the vehicle owner that would be very useful.

cheers

[redacted]

Aboriginal Victoria | Department of Premier & Cabinet  
[111 Armstrong St Nth, Ballarat Vic 3350](#)





**Barengi Gadjin**  
LAND COUNCIL  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION LIMITED



*Member of*  
**Federation of  
Victorian Traditional  
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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 23 October 2017 11:59 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** CLIMBING BOLTS IN ART SITE

Hi All,

Saturday I took the Wimmera Bushwalkers over to the Black Range.

We visited [REDACTED] (the shelter immediately north of the caged [REDACTED]) where we noticed at least two bolts in the wall at the northern end.

Just outside the shelter (to the north) a pair of rock climbers were attempting a climb that used at least 8 bolts.

When asked if they had initiated the climb, the woman at the bottom said they had, but immediately the guy on the ropes said no!

They had driven in to below the site on the old management track (is it or was it closed?). Photo of vehicle attached).

The bolts need to be removed from the shelter immediately as the climb is adjacent to a hand stencil. Hopefully the bolts can also be removed from the other climb as well.

Please see what can be done.

Cheers,

[REDACTED]

[attachment "2017-09-01 vehicle.jpg" deleted by [REDACTED]]

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Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer



**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 November 2017 5:08 PM  
**To:** tracey skinner  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Bolt removal Black Range art site

Hi Tracey,

I think you should plan on attending the site visit this Friday at Burrunj, so you can hear, contribute and inform the conversation with Traditional Owner Reps, Aboriginal Victoria and PV staff.

I'd like to first and foremost resolve the steps to remove the bolts within and around the art work and shelter. This is where advice from [redacted] and [redacted] will be valued to inform the Methodology and ultimate removal process. Beyond this point, the conversation may and could go anywhere.

Would 11am at Mudagadjin picnic area suit you.

Regards

[redacted]  
[redacted] Grampians Gariwerd  
[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

**Parks Victoria**

PO Box 18, Halls Gap VIC 3381

[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

**From:** [redacted] tracey skinner  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 November 2017 2:53 PM  
**To:** [redacted] <[redacted]@parks.vic.gov.au>  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: Bolt removal Black Range art site

Hi [redacted]

Any update on this?

Cheers,  
Tracey

On Thu, Nov 2, 2017 at 3:23 PM, tracey skinner <[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)> wrote:

Friday suits me.

I would also be keen to be present on site.

Cheers  
Tracey

On Wed, Nov 1, 2017 at 2:16 PM, [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)> wrote:

Hi Tracey,

Thurs/Fri this week are no good for me.

There may be an opportunity next Friday(10<sup>th</sup> Nov), to catchup and discuss the range of issues, ideas, initiatives etc as previously discussed. This would be later in the day, possibly in Horsham??

PV intends to meet with TO's and AV on site at Burrunj, to discuss the appropriate removal techniques, which will take priority over the next steps discussion.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Grampians Gariwerd

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**Parks Victoria**

PO Box 18, Halls Gap VIC 3381

[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

**From:** [REDACTED] tracey skinner

**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 November 2017 10:21 AM

**To:** [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)>



Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Bolt removal Black Range art site

Hi [REDACTED]

Once again, many thanks for keeping me in the loop with this issue. I am working on ideas from our side as well so hopefully together we can work together and come up with a path that minimizes the pain for all parties. Would you be available for a meeting either tomorrow - Thursday 2nd between 12 - 4 or Friday 9-1?

Cheers,

Tracey

On Mon, Oct 30, 2017 at 3:55 PM, [REDACTED] [@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)> wrote:

Hi Tracey,

Thanks for the email. It would be good to catch up on this topic later this week for a clear way forward. There are 3 key elements we are working through.

- Firstly, we have received some advice from Aboriginal Victoria, which we are confirming, associated with permit requirements and techniques for bolt removal around culturally sensitive areas. We want to ensure the removal is minimal impact and that Traditional Owners and AV are comfortable with the approach. The last thing we want to do is simply rip out bolts and create a bigger impact in doing so.
- The second element is understanding and agreeing on the safety standards/expectations for this activity as it will be overseen, managed and therefore under the responsibility of Parks Victoria.
- The third element we need to plan out and agree to, is the location and scale of bolts earmarked for removal, and the engagement and communication of these decisions based on AV's advice, the National Park Act and Traditional Owner directions. This component is probably the most time consuming and probably most divisive, which is why I'll take your Advice about the best way to engage with climbers about this topic.

For these reasons, could you please standby for some more information on the next steps and put your thinking cap on around how we can collaborate on a management plan to respond to this issue and the collective growing pains being experienced.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Grampians Gariwerd

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

**Parks Victoria**

PO Box 18, Halls Gap VIC 3381

[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

**From:** [REDACTED] tracey skinner

**Sent:** Monday, 30 October 2017 9:39 AM

**To:** [REDACTED] [@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au); [REDACTED] [@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au); [REDACTED] [@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parks.vic.gov.au)

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Bolt removal Black Range art site

Hi [REDACTED]

I have located someone with experience of bolt removal. They will be available after the end of this week so am keen to get this organized as soon as possible.

Let me know dates that suit.

Cheers,

Tracey

Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer

[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)



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Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer



Hi [REDACTED]

Dear all,

I note with interest an article in the Weekend Australian promoting sport climbing routes in the Victoria Range (article here <https://readnow.isentia.com/Temp/84684/875320017.pdf>). This article demonstrates that climbing in the Grampians is getting national promotion and we can't delay our messages any longer surrounding the issue of banning bolting

The climbing site mentioned in the article is called 'the man who sold the world'. I checked on 'the crag' website and it was installed in 2014 by a bloke called [REDACTED] who I have tracked down on Instagram as a prolific bolter and is even called 'the bolting mayor of the Grampians' in one social media post. What scared me and made me quite upset is the amount of sport climbing going on in the Victoria Range. Plus, it appears since about 2011 - development of the Victoria Range has truly exploded.

Key links from the Crag website are here:

- A map showing the climbs around camp of the emu foot  
<https://www.thecrag.com/climbing/australia/grampians/eureka-wall>
- A big map showing the nine promoted climbing areas in the Victoria Range  
<https://www.thecrag.com/climbing/australia/grampians/victoria-range> This is the best map to use as you can click on each of the climbing areas then drill down to each site.

I would like to see if we can fast track our joint communication ASAP before the peak of the climbing season to ban all bolting immediately across the Grampians and Black Range. I am concerned the "bigger-picture" project will take some time and delay the urgent messaging we need to get out ASAP.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Environment and Heritage (Grampians - Gariwerd)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Paula Toal [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 25 September 2018 9:37 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** re RE: Grampians rock art issues

Hi [REDACTED]

That's no worries. If it helps with scheduling, Friday morning next week is clear for me and I can do pretty much anytime after 10:30 on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> and anytime at all on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> as the meeting I have booked in are all internal and flexible.

FYI – We have our monthly Victorian Climbing Club Committee meeting on Tuesday evening the 9<sup>th</sup>. It would be ideal if I could meet with Matthew and the others prior to that meeting so that I can share the outcomes/direction with my committee and make sure we are in a position to take whatever actions are required to communicate to our members swiftly.

Best  
Paula

**Paula Toal**

**From:** [REDACTED] @parks.vic.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Monday, 24 September 2018 15:43  
**To:** Paula Toal [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Grampians rock art issues

Hi Paula,

Matt isn't able to do this week. We are heading to Mildura this evening for our Board meeting and not back until midday Thursday.

The earliest I can fit this meeting in would be late next week or the start of the following.

I will look at options over the next few days and send them through to you Paula.

Apologies for the delay.



Regards

Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer

-----Original Message-----

From: Paula Toal

Sent: Monday, 24 September 2018 11:18 AM

To: Matthew Jackson - CEO

Cc:

Subject: RE: Grampians rock art issues

Hi Matthew

Thanks for touching base on this. Very happy to meet to discuss at your earliest convenience - at VCC we are already talking about this as a Committee and working on education campaign collateral.

- please let me know some times that suit. If it helps, at this stage any time Thursday before 2pm or after 3pm is looking quite good for me. I'm happy to come to Parks offices.

Cheers

Paula

Paula Toal

-----Original Message-----

From: Matthew Jackson - CEO

Sent: Monday, 24 September 2018 11:12

To: Paula Toal

Cc:

Subject: Grampians rock art issues

Hi Paula

Recently we discussed the issues in the Grampians with rock art damage from unofficial climbing points.

Can we please arrange to meet and discuss the approach with your members and moving forward to indicate appropriate areas etc and removing unauthorised climbs etc

will be in touch to schedule a meeting with all of the included on this email.

Regards

Matthew Jackson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Parks Victoria

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 27 September 2018 1:56 PM  
**To:** Paula Toal  
**Subject:** RE: Rock art protection

Thanks Paula, I'll pass that onto [REDACTED] and do our best to accommodate.

One of us will touch base with you soon.

Regards,

[REDACTED] I Parks Victoria  
Executive Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Paula Toal [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 27 September 2018 1:41 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] @parks.vic.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Rock art protection

Hi [REDACTED] -

Thanks for the clarification. Unfortunately I won't be able to get away from Melbourne on the 9th as I have a number of commitments that day. I believe Tracey will also be in Melbourne, but she may have greater flexibility than I do. I know that [REDACTED] is trying to organise a meeting with Simon and Matthew and myself - so if you are able to check in with her, it would be ideal if we could have that meeting on Friday the 5th - so that I get a chance to meet with Simon prior to his Grampians trip.

Please do check in with Tracey to see if she is able to join at the Rock Art meeting. If she can't it might be possible for us to get another member of our committee who is actually based in Horsham to attend.

Best  
Paula

Paula Toal  
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** [REDACTED] @parks.vic.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 27 September 2018 13:02  
**To:** Paula Toal [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Rock art protection

Hi Paula,

[REDACTED] here, Simon's assistant.

Just wanted to let you know Simon will be visiting the Grampians the week after next, not next week as he indicated to you earlier.

The Rock Art meeting and shelter visit will more than likely go ahead on the morning of Tuesday 9th October, 2018, but I will confirm that with you.

Let me know if you're able to join Simon and team otherwise I'm happy to liaise with Tracey that you introduced in the below email.

Thanks,

[redacted] I Parks Victoria  
Executive Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer [redacted]  
[redacted]

-----Original Message-----

From: Paula Toal [redacted]  
Sent: Wednesday, 26 September 2018 5:20 PM  
To: Simon Talbot [redacted]  
Cc: [redacted]  
Subject: Re: Rock art protection

Hi Simon

Thanks for your message and I do look forward to meeting soon. What are the details for your trip/inspections next week? Although I may not be able to attend, I have copied Tracey Skinner who is the VCC's Cliffcare Access & Education Officer. It would be great if Tracey is able to join you as she has been engaged with addressing these issues from the start.

I am waiting to hear from [redacted] who is trying to coordinate diaries for us to meet with you & Matt. Hopefully that meeting will be late next week or early the following.

Best  
Paula

On 26 Sep 2018, at 17:09, Simon Talbot [redacted]  
wrote:

Hi Paula hope your well - next week. I happen to be inspecting rock climbing in the greater Grampians and rock art protection- very short notice but you would be welcome to attend.

In any case we need to have a discussion on emerging issues and proactive measures to address some of the impacts our team are recording.

Regards

Simon

Simon Talbot  
Chief Operating Officer  
Parks Victoria  
[redacted]

[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)<<http://www.parks.vic.gov.au>>



**From:** Matthew Jackson - CEO  
**Sent:** Thursday, 4 October 2018 5:31 PM  
**To:** Paula Toal  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: VCC and Parks Vic working together  
**Attachments:** PROPOSAL\_letter1.pdf; PROPOSAL\_letter2.pdf

Hi Paula

Thank you for these also much appreciated (Tracey) and they will set the scene well for tomorrow.  
We are looking forward to working with VCC.

Regards

**Matthew Jackson**  
Chief Executive Officer

**From:** Paula Toal [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 4 October 2018 5:26 PM  
**To:** Matthew Jackson - CEO [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** VCC and Parks Vic working together

Hi Matt

Apologies that this is a bit last minute, but I thought I would forward you a couple of letters that Tracey drafted regarding how VCC and Cliffcare would like to collaborate with Parks to address some of the current issues facing the Grampians and Parks in general. I was debating whether to send these before our meeting or after, but I think they provide a nice intro to discuss our openness to working together to get the best outcomes for all stakeholders in the usage and management of our parks.

Tracey and I look forward to meeting with you, Simon and Emma in the morning.

Have a good night.

Best  
Paula

**Paula Toal**

**VCC CLIMBING POLICY UPDATE PROPOSAL**

4 October 2018

ATTENTION: Re: *Victorian Climbing Club/CliffCare proposal to collaborate on an updated climbing policy code of conduct for Victorian parks.*

The Victorian Climbing Club and CliffCare, on behalf of the Victorian climbing community, would welcome the opportunity to discuss and collaborate on an updated, and therefore more relevant, climbing code than that which currently sits within the suite of codes and policies that Parks Victoria operate under (dating back to 2003).

The current code as it stands no longer works for the modern recreational activity of climbing. This allows for inconsistent messages from park staff and can mean that park users from the climbing community can compromise outdated park codes of conduct by simply engaging in an activity they love.

Concerns from Land Managers about the impact to both environmental and cultural values from increased visitation to the parks is understandable. Our wish, as the peak representative body for climbing in Victoria, is to encourage active involvement in coordinated efforts - to help preserve these park values and the cliff environments where we climb and to ensure that climbing as a recognized and promoted activity in the parks, can continue sustainably, as it evolves. As an important user group in many of the parks in Victoria, we feel our needs and values as such, should be respected and taken into account.

It is also our wish to maintain good relations and collaborations with Traditional Owners, Land Councils and other park users and stakeholders.

An updated code or Operational Policy for rockclimbing in the parks of Victoria, would benefit both the climbing community and Land Managers in a number of ways.

- Updated recognition of the evolving and growing sport of climbing in all its forms, including: traditional climbing, sport climbing, and bouldering. This would allow the wider climbing community to engage more actively in a role of stewardship which we feel is the way forward to helping to manage climber impacts.
- Provide a framework to further build on codes of conduct and Climbing Management Plans for specific parks addressing specific issues and requirements. Including the provision to be flexible and vary the policy for individual parks.
- Provide clearer boundaries for both climbers and land managers in current and future use of the parks, such as styles and practices employed.
- Provide ongoing and consistent guidance and advice to changing park staff resources and park stakeholders.

We look forward to further discussions on the above proposal. I can be contacted via phone [REDACTED] email: [cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)

Regards,

Tracey Skinner

VCC Access & Environment Officer

Paula Toal

VCC President



VCC CLIMBING MANAGEMENT PLAN PROPOSAL

4 October 2018

ATTENTION:

The Victorian Climbing Club and CliffCare, on behalf of the Victorian climbing community, would like to propose establishing a Climbing Management Plan for the Grampians National Park.

The Grampians is an internationally renowned climbing area that has value for many users of the park - both locally and internationally. As an important user group, we want a new management plan that protects cultural heritage and natural values, whilst also taking into account the needs and values of climbers. A plan that makes it very clear what is allowed and where, and that makes sense to all stakeholders including climbers.

We are willing to work closely with Parks Victoria and Traditional Owners to help create, what we believe, to be a state of the art management plan that satisfies all stakeholders. As a user group that has great respect for the park and all of its values, we understand that there will be compromises.

We believe that in most cases, a fine-grained approach rather than a blanket ban is a much better and workable option. Whilst we understand that in places a blanket ban will be what is appropriate to adequately protect cultural and natural values, we also want to ensure that the most important values to climbers are considered in the plan.

We believe that this approach benefits all. As the sport of climbing continues to evolve and grow, clear boundaries that look after park values whilst respecting the needs and values of climbers as an important user group, has more potential to create ownership of responsibility and stewardship opportunities, for future generations of park users.

We are keen, committed and organized and welcome the opportunity to come to the table, to negotiate and collaborate.

We look forward to further discussions on the above proposal. I can be contacted via phone [REDACTED] email: [cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)

Regards,

Tracey Skinner

VCC Access & Environment Officer

Paula Toal

VCC President



**From:** tracey skinner <cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 October 2018 4:46 PM  
**To:** Matthew Jackson - CEO  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** VCC/CliffCare Proposal - Climbing Policy update  
**Attachments:** VCC CliffCare Climbing policy update proposal Oct 2018.pdf

Hi Matthew,

Many thanks for an informative and positive first meeting on 5th October, 2018 with Parks Victoria.

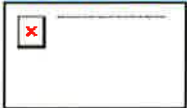
I have resent the Climbing policy update proposal we sent through on the 4th October and cc'd other relevant people.

Regards,

Tracey Skinner

Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer

[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)



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4th October, 2018

Victorian Climbing Club/CliffCare  
G.P.O. Box 1725  
Melbourne Victoria 3000



**ATTENTION:** Matthew Jackson  
Chief Executive Officer - Parks Victoria

**VICTORIAN CLIMBING CLUB/CLIFFCARE PROPOSAL  
CLIMBING POLICY CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE FOR VICTORIAN PARKS**

The Victorian Climbing Club and CliffCare, on behalf of the Victorian climbing community, would welcome the opportunity to discuss and collaborate on an updated, and therefore more relevant, climbing code than that which currently sits within the suite of codes and policies that Parks Victoria operate under (dating back to 2003). The current code as it stands no longer works for the modern recreational activity of climbing. This allows for inconsistent messages from park staff and can mean that park users from the climbing community can compromise outdated park codes of conduct by simply engaging in an activity they love.

Concerns from Land Managers about the impact to both environmental and cultural values from increased visitation to the parks is understandable. Our wish, as the peak representative body for climbing in Victoria, is to encourage active involvement in coordinated efforts - to help preserve these park values and the cliff environments where we climb and to ensure that climbing as a recognized and promoted activity in the parks, can continue sustainably, as it evolves. As an important user group in many of the parks in Victoria, we feel our needs and values as such, should be respected and taken into account.

It is also our wish to maintain good relations and collaborations with Traditional Owners, Land Councils and other park users and stakeholders.

An updated code or Operational Policy for rockclimbing in the parks of Victoria, would benefit both the climbing community and Land Managers in a number of ways.

- Updated recognition of the evolving and growing sport of climbing in all its forms, including: traditional climbing, sport climbing, and bouldering. This would allow the wider climbing community to engage more actively in a role of stewardship which we feel is the way forward to helping to manage climber impacts.
- Provide a framework to further build on codes of conduct and Climbing Management Plans for specific parks addressing specific issues and requirements. Including the provision to be flexible and vary the policy for individual parks.
- Provide clearer boundaries for both climbers and land managers in current and future use of the parks, such as styles and practices employed.
- Provide ongoing and consistent guidance and advice to changing park staff resources and park stakeholders.

We look forward to further discussions on the above proposal. I can be contacted via phone [REDACTED] email: [cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)

Regards,

Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer

Paula Toal  
VCC President

CC: Simon Talbot - Chief Operating Officer, Parks Victoria  
Stuart Hughes - Director Park Planning & Policy



**From:** Communications Mailbox  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 February 2019 11:33 AM  
**To:** cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Parks Victoria media statement

**Importance:** High

Good morning,

Thank you very much for your time on Tuesday in Halls Gap to discuss rock climbing in the Grampians.

Our media statement is now available at: <https://parkweb.vic.gov.au/about-us/news/parks-victoria-takes-steps-to-protect-environmental-and-cultural-heritage-from-climbing-impacts>

We are currently finalising the maps and fact sheet and will distribute them as soon as these are ready. Our intent was to have these detailed maps ready yesterday at the latest. However, naming of the eight specific sites is complex as they are referenced differently by different groups and are not adjacent to easily identified landmarks being in a natural environment. We want to ensure the maps are accurate, clear and easy to understand before we issue them to ensure they are useful to you.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss anything further.

Regards,

Simon Talbot

**Simon Talbot** l'Parks Victoria  
Chief Operating Officer  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)





**From:** tracey skinner <cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 19 February 2019 3:58 PM  
**To:** Simon Talbot  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Grampians Access Working Group response - Stakeholder meeting 12th February  
**Attachments:** Grampians Access Working Group response - PV Stakeholder meeting 12th Feb, 2019.pdf  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Good Afternoon Simon,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us in person last Tuesday 12th February, to explain Parks Victoria's upcoming changes to the management of rock climbing in the Grampians. As a stakeholder group, we do very much appreciate the challenges posed to park managers by the growth of participation rates in climbing and other adventure sports, by changes in modern rock climbing practices and attitudes and by the recently altered legislative environment.

Nonetheless, we do feel a need to express our disappointment that the decision to ban rock climbing in the areas described has been made without prior discussion with representatives of the climbing community. PV has previously had a long history of consulting with climbers and other stakeholders to understand and find mutually acceptable solutions to management problems, both in the Grampians and elsewhere. Many members of this stakeholder group have been involved with this collaborative process for many years and hence feel a particular disappointment that this has been lost in this case. There is great concern that this same approach will be used to extend further climbing bans in the Grampians.

Many of the Victoria range climbing areas are very significant climbing areas with a worldwide reputation; photographs and articles have featured prominently in many local and international publications. As such they are important in drawing local, interstate and international visitors keen to experience the unique qualities of climbing in the Grampians. The experience of particular iconic climbs cannot be transferred to alternative climbing sites. An analogy has been made to closing Bells beach and telling people to surf at Port Melbourne.

The overwhelming majority of climbers visiting the Grampians are very respectful of indigenous cultural heritage and their own environmental impact. Avoiding climbing near indigenous art sites is enshrined in the climbing code of practice and normally very well observed. Many climbing visitors to the Grampians are multiple repeat visitors who have a long lasting and passionate association with the park. The vast majority have never placed a bolt and will never do so.

There are several good local examples of past collaborative solutions to perceived conflict between climbing and indigenous cultural values. A notable example followed an onsite meeting at Bundaleer that involved Traditional Owners, Cultural Heritage team, climbing representatives, a professional archaeologist and park managers ([REDACTED]). The issues were graffiti and dispersed aboriginal worked stone scatter below a climbing site. A solution was found that involved removal of the graffiti and the construction of a small

boardwalk to avoid climbers trampling on the stone scatter site. Signage was put in to educate and explain the cultural values of the site and it was recognised that climbing per se did not interfere with its cultural values. All involved were happy with the solution. Another collaborative solution to concerns of Traditional Owners was the re-alignment and signing of an alternative access route to a climbing area at Buandik to avoid the Billimina art site. Similar meetings have also found solutions at Hollow Mountain and Summer Day valley, Lil Lil at Red Rock reserve (Black Ian's rocks) and at Mount Arapiles.

Desktop analysis can determine areas where there is the potential for conflict between climbing and cultural values, but more detailed investigation may find that there is actually no conflict or that restrictions can be localised or otherwise managed without a complete ban on climbing. This approach is likely to result in much wider acceptance and voluntary compliance if there is found to be a need to restrict climbing and to avoid the potential for inadequately justified climbing bans to alienate what is a mostly cooperative user group.

We are determined to continue to work with PV and AV to address the issues identified at Tuesday's meeting. We do recognise the real damage done to the reputation of climbing as a recognised and valued activity by the recent incidents in the Black range and that restrictions on climbing at certain areas may be the only course of action. We welcome the opportunity to input to a contemporary management plan for climbing in the Grampians and will continue to advocate and educate within the climbing community for acceptable and responsible climbing practices, including the observance of all access restrictions.

Thank you,

#### **GRAMPIANS ACCESS WORKING GROUP**

--  
Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer

[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)



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19th February, 2019

Victorian Climbing Club/CliffCare  
G.P.O. Box 1725  
Melbourne Victoria 3000



Simon Talbot  
Chief Operating Officer - Parks Victoria  
535 Bourke Street,  
Melbourne Vic 3000

Good Afternoon Simon,

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Thank you,

**GRAMPIANS ACCESS WORKING GROUP**



**From:** Maria Pizzi  
**Sent:** Monday, 25 February 2019 8:24 AM  
**To:** Harry Webber (DPC)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Letter regarding the Gallery Shelter, Grampians National Park  
**Attachments:** 25 02 19 Letter to H Webber re the Gallery.pdf; Fixed drilled bolted climbing support apparatus the Gallery.docx; Graffiti at the Gallery.JPG; [REDACTED] Tha Gallery 2018.JPG; [REDACTED] The Gallery Shelter 1.JPG; [REDACTED] The Gallery Shelter.JPG

Dear Harry  
Please find letter and attached images regarding the above place.

A hard copy will follow by surface mail.

Please let me know if you have time to meet, as I'd value the chance to discuss a few issues with you.

Kind regards  
Maria

**Maria Pizzi**  
Director Managing Country Together

**Parks Victoria**  
Level 9, 535 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

🇦🇺 I acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of country throughout Victoria and pay my respect to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future



Healthy Parks  
Healthy People®

**Parks Victoria**  
Level 10, 535 Bourke St  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
**Telephone (03) 8427 2456**  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)  
ABN 95 337 637 697

25 February 2019

Harry Webber  
Director Heritage Services  
Aboriginal Victoria  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Level 3, 1 Treasury Place  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Harry,

RE: THE GALLERY SHELTER [REDACTED]

I am writing to notify you of Parks Victoria's concerns in regards to the Gallery Shelter and the arrangements that have been put in place in response.

Parks Victoria has identified and implemented additional management practices to better deal with changed activities and levels of activity in the Grampians National Park. Originally climbing was a niche activity, with smaller numbers of park visitors participating in the activity and where they did, generally engaging in a form of free climbing with ropes. Over recent years, the number of climbers has increased and the nature of climbing activities has expanded to include activities that may have higher impacts on flora, fauna and Aboriginal cultural heritage values such as sports climbing and bouldering. Parks Victoria has therefore decided to implement additional measures including: -

- Implementing the special protection areas set out in the current management plan in place, which means that climbing will no longer be permitted in special protection areas.
- Closing some areas adjacent to the special protection areas to climbing. These are areas where there is evidence of conflict with Aboriginal cultural sites, significant flora and fauna or other park values as provided by the current management plan.
- Prohibiting any new route development in sensitive areas in the Gariwerd landscape, inclusive of the Grampians National Park and surrounding protected areas, until further notice.

We are scoping the work required to signpost all special protection areas and will start with installing signs for eight areas where our assessments have identified concerns in regards to park values including Aboriginal cultural sites. We expect signs will begin to be installed in coming weeks, enabling us to enforce compliance, if park visitors are found climbing in these areas.

Parks Victoria has previously provided Aboriginal Victoria with information about seven of these places that are all now within special protection areas. Details of our assessment of the Gallery Shelter, which is the eighth of these areas, are provided below.





## Released under Freedom of Information Act 1982 by Parks Victoria

Our investigations have confirmed that significant numbers of climbers using fixed protection (sports climbers) have been visiting the Gallery shelter. The Gallery shelter is recorded as a quarry site and we have identified at least 100 bolts have been placed in the rock face, with carabiners attached to some bolts. We have also found climbers chalk covering some of the quarry marks, graffiti, evidence of illegal fire as well as damage to and removal of vegetation.

The main vehicular access to the Gallery shelter is via the Buandik Campground visitor experience site. This site is a picnic and designated free base level camping area. Interpretation and identification signage is installed at the campground that provided the advice noted below.

*Rock climbing and Bouldering - Rock climbing and bouldering are popular activities in the national park. While here please help protect this environment.*

- 1. Only climb in open areas, stick to established tracks and avoid damaging vegetation*
- 2. Significant Aboriginal cultural sites are in this area, please respect this cultural landscape by only climbing in established areas. Report any new discoveries to Parks Victoria.*
- 3. Avoid excessive chalk, clean off chalk when finished and consider using a coloured chalk that blends with the rock colour.*
- 4. Do not place new bolts, chip paint or alter the rock.*

In line with the decisions detailed above, Parks Victoria is currently in the process of producing and installing new signs advising climbing is prohibited at the Gallery shelter as it is within a special protection area. We have also notified representatives of the climbing community that climbing is no longer permitted at the Gallery shelter and the other seven focus areas. We have explained that enforcement activities including installation of new signage will occur in coming weeks.

Pedestrian access to the Gallery shelter is via a walking track that has been in place since sometime in the 1990s. It appears the track was originally created for visitors to access the Billimina Aboriginal Shelter and then an informal bushwalkers track was developed that continued beyond the Shelter. It appears climbers used these tracks and then created another track branching off the original tracks to get closer to the Gallery shelter. Parks Victoria reinstated the access tracks as part of the flood and bushfire recovery works completed between approximately 2011 and 2013.

We have attached photographs of the Gallery shelter confirming the impact of visitor activity on this place, for your reference. We are also happy to meet with staff from Aboriginal Victoria on site and to provide any further assistance you may require.

Should you require further advice on this matter please contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Maria Pizzi  
Director, Managing Country Together



Healthy Parks  
Healthy People







Red dots above indicating fixed drilled fix bolted climbing support apparatus







Released under Freedom of Information Act 1982 by Parks Victoria

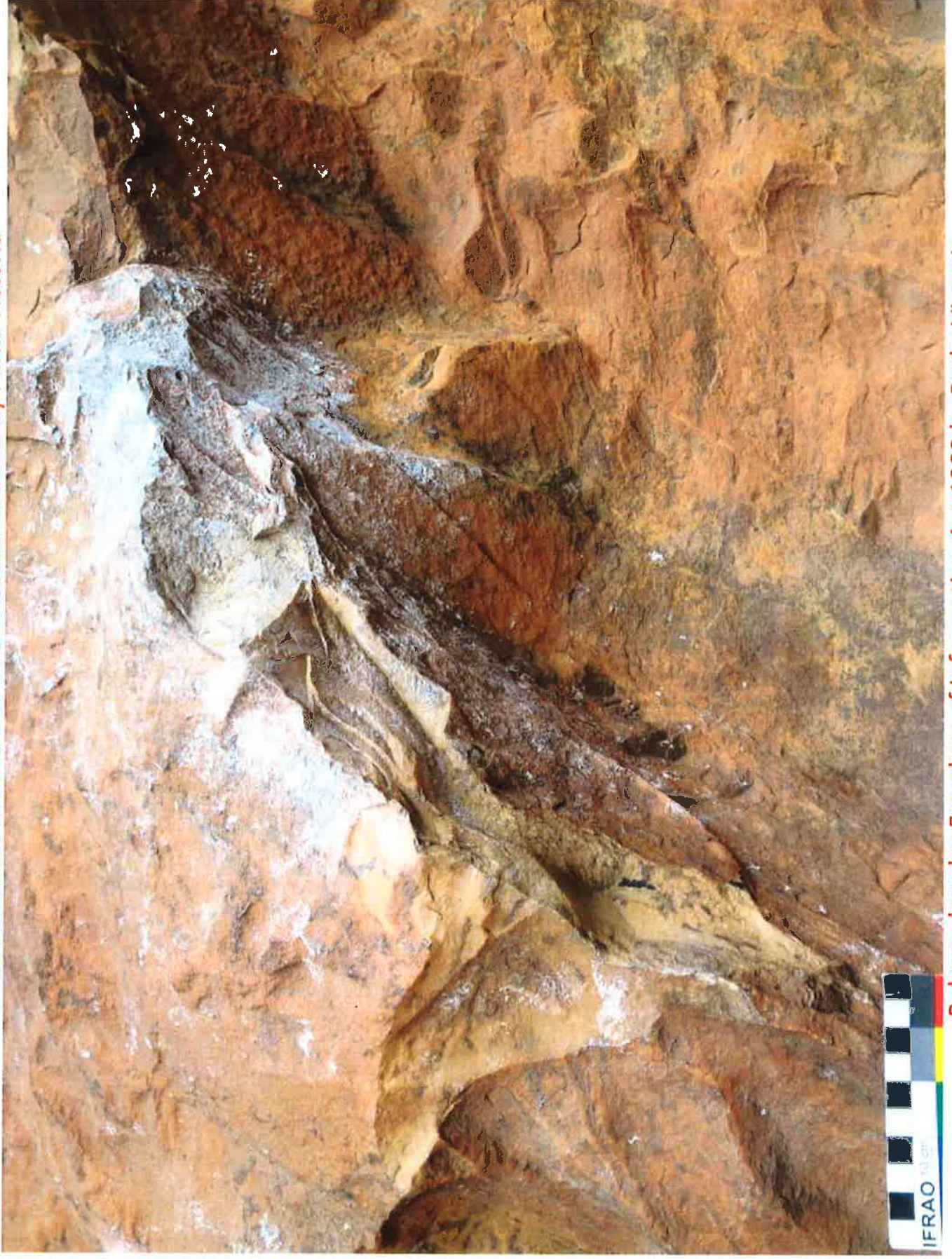


Released under Freedom of Information Act 1982 by Parks Victoria











**From:** Communications Mailbox  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 27 February 2019 1:22 PM  
**To:** Communications Mailbox; 'cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au'; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Grampians National Park rock climbing update February 2019  
**Attachments:** Grampians National Park rock climbing update February 2019.pdf

Good afternoon,

Please find attached the full series of maps that show the protected areas in the Grampians National Parks, and where rock climbing can and can't take place, as well as an update explaining the change. Information will be available on our website shortly. As discussed, enforcement activities in the eight focus areas will start following the installation of signage in March 2019.

We're really keen to work alongside you to build understanding in the climbing community around permitted climbing areas and the need for clean climbing practices. Once information is live on our website, we'd really appreciate if you could let your networks know of the updated information, to help climbers be aware of the change and the part they can play in helping to protect the area.

Parks Victoria is committed to ensuring climbing continues to be enjoyed in the Grampians National Park. We're looking forward to working with you through the stakeholder reference group as we continue to assess, monitor and review rock climbing activity in sensitive areas of the Grampians National Park. We'll share more information on possible dates and discussion topics shortly.

Thank you for your patience while we have finalised the maps and update. Please don't hesitate to reach out should you have any further questions at this stage.

Warm regards,

**Simon Talbot** | Parks Victoria  
Chief Operating Officer  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

**From:** Communications Mailbox  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 February 2019 5:17 PM  
**To:** cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au; [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Eight focus areas - map  
**Importance:** High

Good afternoon,

Please find attached, as discussed, the map detailing the eight focus areas.

Please do not hesitate to reach out should you require any further information.

Regards,



Simon

**Simon Talbot** | Parks Victoria  
Chief Operating Officer  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)

**From:** Communications Mailbox  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 February 2019 11:33 AM  
**To:** 'cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au' <[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)>;

**Subject:** Parks Victoria media statement  
**Importance:** High

Good morning,

Thank you very much for your time on Tuesday in Halls Gap to discuss rock climbing in the Grampians.

Our media statement is now available at: <https://parkweb.vic.gov.au/about-us/news/parks-victoria-takes-steps-to-protect-environmental-and-cultural-heritage-from-climbing-impacts>

We are currently finalising the maps and fact sheet and will distribute them as soon as these are ready. Our intent was to have these detailed maps ready yesterday at the latest. However, naming of the eight specific sites is complex as they are referenced differently by different groups and are not adjacent to easily identified landmarks being in a natural environment. We want to ensure the maps are accurate, clear and easy to understand before we issue them to ensure they are useful to you.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss anything further.

Regards,





## Rock climbing in the Grampians National Park

February 2019 update

### Background

Nationally heritage listed for its biodiversity and significant cultural heritage, the Grampians National Park Victoria was established in 1984 to protect environmental and cultural values of national importance.

The park has more than 800 indigenous plant species and is home to one third of the Victoria's flora. It also supports a wide range of wildlife.

The Grampians National Park, which is part of the Gariwerd landscape, contains the majority of surviving Aboriginal rock art places in south-east Australia.

### Key Issues

In recent years, rock climbing in the Grampians National Park has increased. Contemporary rock climbing activities such as bouldering and the use of fixed protection (bolts and chain anchors) has emerged, creating risk to irreplaceable cultural assets and environmental values.

### A phased approach to compliance

From March 2019, Parks Victoria will be installing signs in eight initial locations within one of the Special Protection Areas. These eight locations are in the western part of the park and most at risk due to increased climbing activity ([see map overleaf](#)). Enforcement activity will begin following the installation of signs.

There are still hundreds of known climbing locations in the Grampians National Park, which are not in protected areas, for visitors to enjoy. These include the Bundaleer, Mount Stapylton Amphitheatre, The Watch Tower, Wonderland Area and Halls Gap Valley.

### Special Protection Areas

A Special Protection Area protects specific natural or cultural values.

Special Protection Areas are identified in the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan and are for the protection of cultural heritage and environmental values. Climbing is prohibited in all Special Protection Areas and a few other identified locations. Maps showing these no climb locations are available on Parks Victoria's website.

### Reviewing the Grampians National Park Management Plan

In the coming months, Parks Victoria will review the Grampians National Park Management Plan's Special Protection Areas. Through this process, Parks Victoria will work with partners and key stakeholders, including licenced tour operators and the rock climbing community. The review may result in further changes.



For further information, please contact:  
[communications@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:communications@parks.vic.gov.au)

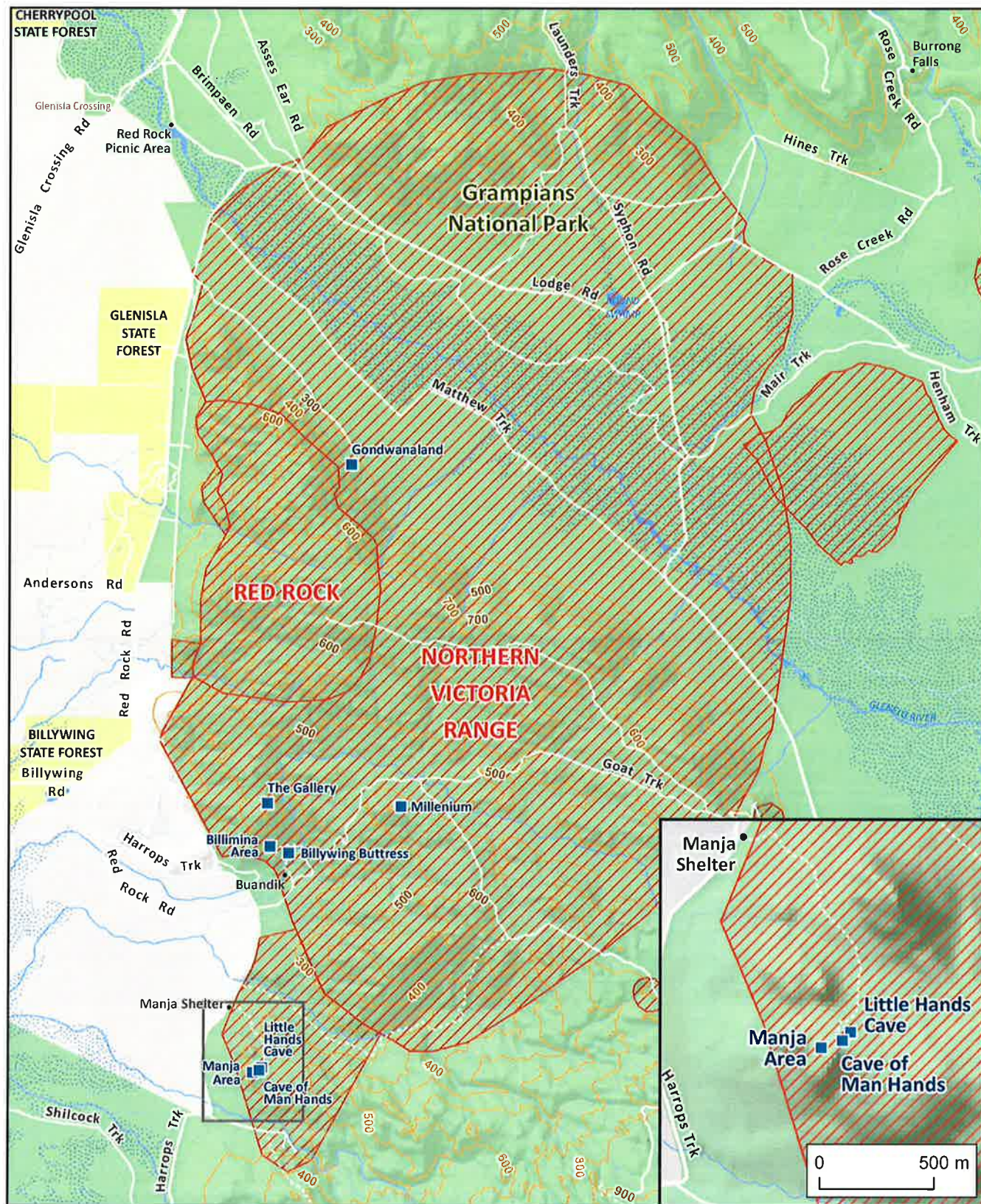
Parks Victoria  
Phone 13 1963  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)



Healthy Parks  
Healthy People®







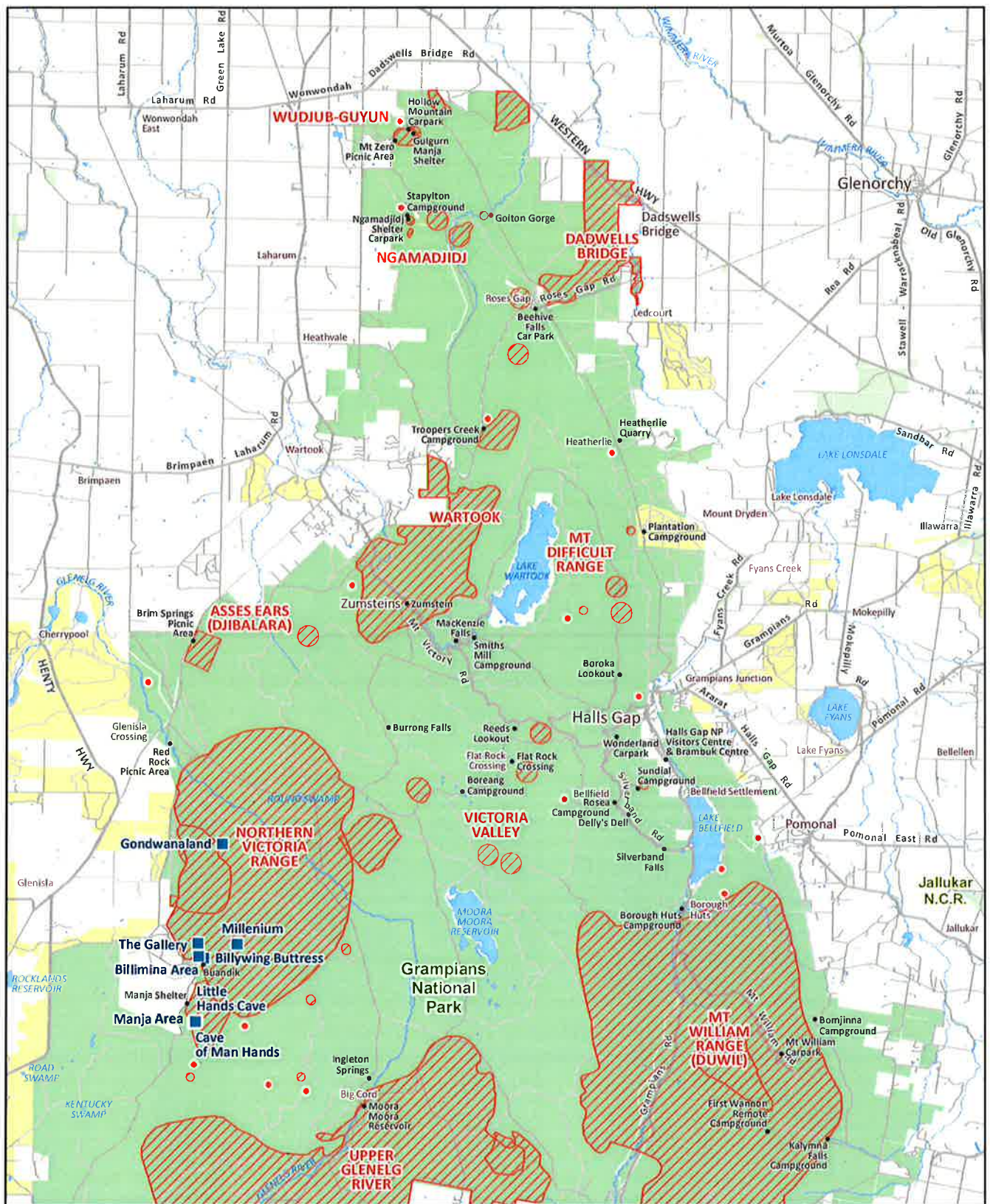
## Eight Focus Areas

- Eight focus sites where signage will be installed and compliance activities occurring
- ▨ Protected areas - restrictions apply
- Parks Victoria Visitor Sites
- Grampians National Park
- State Forest

## LOCALITY REGIONS





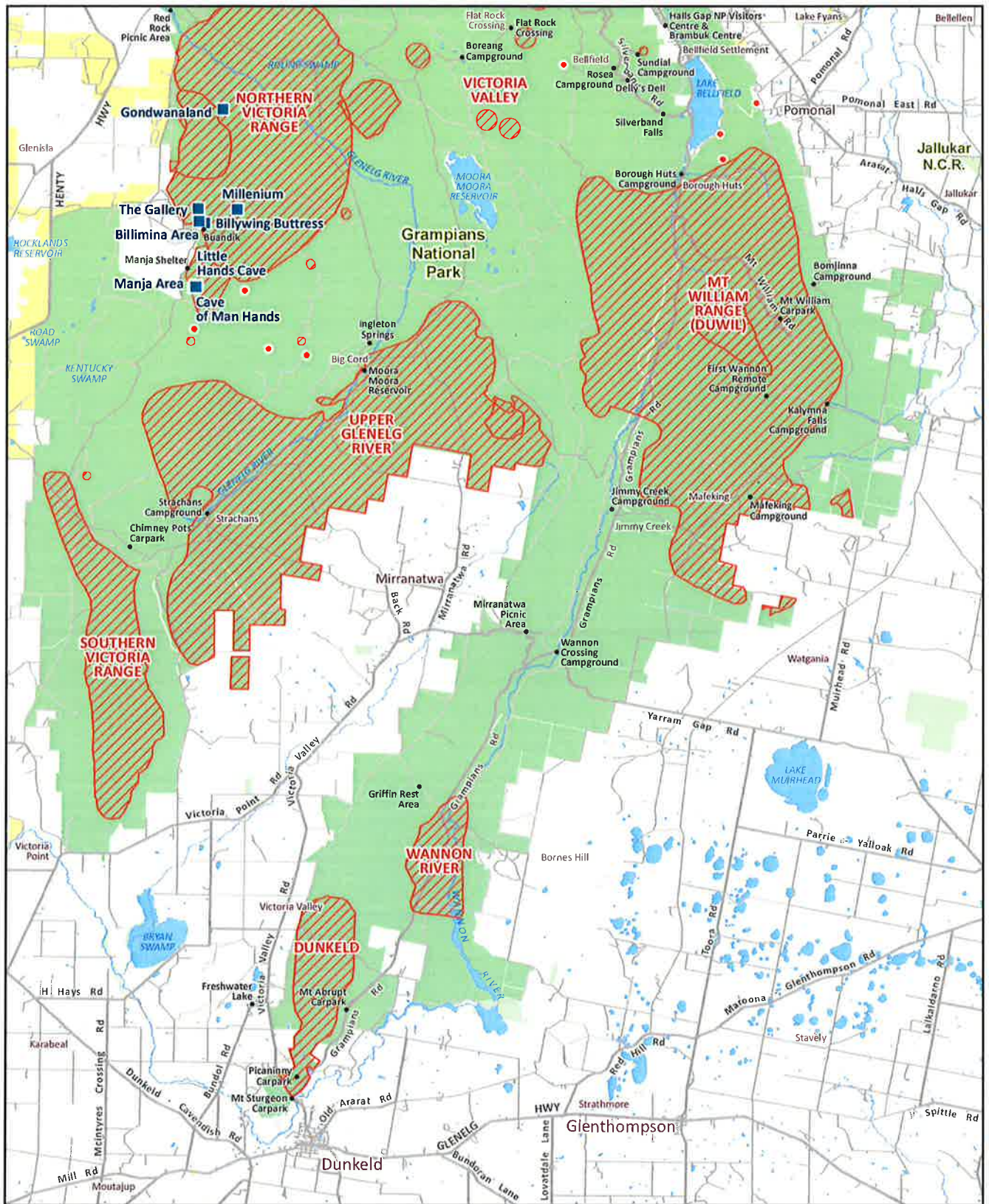


## Grampians National Park - Rock Climbing Exclusion Zones (North)

- Protected Areas - restrictions apply
- Eight focus sites where signage will be installed and compliance activities occurring
- Parks Victoria Visitor Sites
- National Parks
- Parks and Reserves
- State Forest
- LOCALITY REGIONS

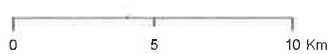






## Grampians National Park - Rock Climbing Exclusion Zones (South)

- Protected Areas - restrictions apply
- Protected Areas - restrictions apply
- Eight focus sites where signage will be installed and compliance activities occurring
- Parks Victoria Visitor Sites
- National Parks
- Parks and Reserves
- State Forest
- LOCALITY REGIONS



Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without flaw of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability which may arise from you relying on this information. Data source acknowledgements: State Digital Mapbase, The State of Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

26/02/2019



**From:** tracey skinner <cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 27 February 2019 5:24 PM  
**To:** Lucy Marshall  
**Subject:** Re: Follow up

Hi Lucy,

Can he please call me and explain? I am the one coordinating statements and releasing the information and the update I got from Paula was a little different to what is exactly on the map and faqs.

Thanks  
Tracey

On Wed, Feb 27, 2019 at 5:16 PM Lucy Marshall [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Tracey,

Thanks very much for the call. I've chatted with Simon and I understand he'll call Paula to speak further about this.

Regards,

Lucy

**Lucy Marshall** | Parks Victoria

Manager Stakeholder Relations

**Healthy Parks**  
Healthy People

🚩 "I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land I work on and pay my respects to their elders, past and present."



[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 28 February 2019 4:51 PM  
**To:** Lucy Marshall; Maria Pizzi; Brett Ince; [REDACTED] tracey skinner; [REDACTED] Rhonda McNeil; [REDACTED] Gavan Mathieson; Sally Lewis;  
**Subject:** Grampians/Gariwerd Rock Climbing Representative Meeting  
**Attachments:** Meeting notes rock climbing rep meeting 12 Feb 2019.docx

Good Afternoon All,

Distributing the meeting notes from the Grampians/Gariwerd Rock climbing representative meeting which occurred from 1.00pm to 3.00pm on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.

Regards,

[REDACTED]  
Executive Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer  
**Parks Victoria**  
Level 10, 535 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)



# Meeting notes

**Meeting:** Rock climbing in the Grampians/Gariwerd – representative meeting

**Date:** Tuesday 12 February 2019

**Time:** 1.00pm – 3.00pm

**Location:** Parks Victoria Halls Gaps Office – Mural Room

**Chair:** Simon Talbot, Chief Operating Officer

**Participants:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Maria Pizzi, Director Managing Country Together                  | • Tracey Skinner, VCC Access & Environment Officer                 |
| • Brett Ince, Director Tourism and Visitor Experience              | • [REDACTED] Victorian Climbing Representative                     |
| • [REDACTED] Senior Manager Managing Country Together              | • [REDACTED] Climbing and Developer Representative                 |
| • Lucy Marshall, Manager Stakeholder Relations                     | • [REDACTED] Bouldering and Developer Representative               |
| • Gavan Mathieson, District Manager, South West Region             | • [REDACTED] Western Victorian Climbing Club and Education Advisor |
| • Sally Lewis, Director Western Region                             | • [REDACTED] Climbing Community Communications/Media Vertical Life |
| • Rhonda McNeill, Area Chief Ranger Grampians, South West District | • [REDACTED] VCC PR and Communication Advisor                      |
| • Paula Toal, VCC President  |  |

**Purpose:**

To discuss upcoming changes to rock climbing in the Grampians National park and surrounds, Parks Victoria obligations and confirm next steps and opportunities to work together

## Meeting notes

*Changes to the operating environment (update provided by Parks Victoria)*

- In recent years, risk associated with rock climbing in the Grampians have increased, leading to a range of park management challenges and issues relating to cultural heritage, conservation and safety. Factors driving the changing environment include:
  - Changes in Parks Victoria's legislation, leading to greater Board accountability around risk
  - Growth in activity in parks, including mountain biking, rock climbing and trail running, which can lead to unintended consequences and impacts to parts of the parks estate
  - The obligations on Parks Victoria to manage the park estate and deliver high quality visitor experiences
  - Recent discoveries of cultural assets and impacts on these assets
  - Safety across parks
- Recently, Parks Victoria has assessed eight locations in the Grampians National Park where rock climbing activity has resulted in impacts to environmental and cultural values. Parks Victoria has also received correspondence requesting that action be taken to address these impacts and the

increasing risk to other cultural heritage values in the area. As such, Parks Victoria is now working to implement the Special Protection Areas across the park to prohibit rock climbing activity and protect environmental and cultural heritage values, starting with eight key locations where evidence of damage has been assessed and documented.

*Implementing Special Protection Areas at the eight initial locations*

- Parks Victoria advised that signage at the eight key locations in the west of the park would be installed in the coming weeks.
- Parks Victoria confirmed that the eight sites would remain permanently closed and explained that if this was not the case, Parks Victoria would not be compliant with the organisations legal obligations.
- The rock climbing representatives were keen to review the eight locations. Parks Victoria shared that maps were currently being finalised and would be provided in the coming days.
- Rock climbing representatives highlighted that the Grampians is the most important rock climbing destination in Victoria, and that climbers are keen to work with Parks Victoria to ensure impacts are mitigated and rock climbing access is maintained at the Grampians.

*Communicating the change*

- The group discussed ways to share the changes with the wider rock climbing community. Rock climbing representatives noted that user groups would welcome clear information about where climbing can/ cannot occur.
- Parks Victoria confirmed that detailed maps would be shared once finalised, along with supporting communications.
- Rock climbing representatives advised that it is important information is disseminated to climbers in South Australia.
- VCC representatives noted that they were developing a communications strategy and the group discussed the opportunity of developing a shared communication plan in the future.
- Parks Victoria and the rock climbing representatives discussed possible shared communications activities including education campaigns, and workshops in gyms and posters.
- VCC advised they have strong relationships with gyms and climbing shops that could help communicate permitted and excluded areas.

*Review of the Grampians National Park Management Plan*

- Parks Victoria communicated that while immediate action is needed to address current impacts and issues, a review of the Grampians National Park Management Plan, including Special Protected Areas, is also needed. This review process will have opportunities for stakeholder consultation and involvement and will be discussed in further detail at the first Stakeholder Reference Group.
- Rock climbing representatives voiced keen interest in working together and contributing to the management plan review.
- Parks Victoria agreed to provide further information on the process in future meetings.

*Vegetation clearance and developing new tracks*

- Parks Victoria raised concerns around the clearing of and damage to native vegetation, associated particularly with the creation of new routes.
- Parks Victoria reiterated that in accordance with the *National Parks Act*, clearing of vegetation including for tracks, is a prohibited activity and is enforceable across the national park.
- The rock climbing representatives raised the importance of having areas assessed for conservation and cultural heritage values before a new path to a rock climbing route is made.
- Rock climbing representatives advised that there is still significant opportunity for climbing across the park.

*Bolting*

- Rock climbing representatives shared that currently there is ambiguity in the community around the practice of bolting, and whether it is allowed in national parks. Parks Victoria confirmed that it has had for some time a position that bolting is actively discouraged in favour of clean climbing techniques in national parks and is a particular concern to Parks Victoria.

*Management options*

- Rock climbing representatives were interested in hearing about how changes were introduced for other user groups (eg 4WD in the parks) and raised the importance of considering alternate management options in the future, such as rest periods for popular tracks, rather than blanket bans.

*Working together*

- Parks Victoria advised that they were planning to establish a stakeholder reference group (SRG) to continue to address rock climbing issues at the Grampians. Rock climbing representatives indicated strong interest in being involved in this group.
- Parks Victoria advised that the SRG would firstly address immediate issues at the Grampians. Moving forward, the SRG could then provide feedback on the Grampians National Park Management Plan review and developing statewide rock climbing strategy and reviewing procedures and guidelines.
- Opportunities for shared communications were also discussed.
- Examples were given of works done in the past by the climbing community working collaboratively with Parks Victoria and it was suggested these examples may provide a way forward for the future.

*Questions*

Questions raised by rock climbing representatives for further discussion at the SRG are below:

- If an area has been developed, can we continue to climb here?
- How do we as a responsible community, identify sites?
- Where should we develop and tell others where to climb?

*Next steps*

Agreed next steps are below:

1. Parks Victoria to distribute map indicating the eight areas where signage will be installed and climbing permanently prohibited, along with supporting communications, when finalised (in the coming days).
2. Parks Victoria to formally establish the rock climbing SRG and schedule the next meeting.
3. Parks Victoria to finalise the process and timeline for the review of the Grampians National Park Management Plan.
4. Parks Victoria to explore the process for developing a state-wide rock climbing strategy, and report back to the SRG.
5. Parks Victoria to seek information from other user groups and member bases around behaviour change and share at next SRG (example: 4WD).



**From:** Lucy Marshall  
**Sent:** Monday, 4 March 2019 10:32 AM  
**To:** tracey skinner  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Maps and questions

Hi Tracey,

Thanks for your email. I have provided your feedback onto the wider team.

I'm currently liaising with our mapping team regarding the spatial information.

To inform future conversations, it would also be most useful if you have any mapping information regarding climbing sites you are able to provide us? We can then also overlay this with the current protection area boundaries.

Thanks very much Tracey.

Lucy

**Lucy Marshall** | Parks Victoria  
Manager Stakeholder Relations  
[REDACTED]

**Healthy Parks**  
*Healthy People*

🇺🇦 "I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land I work on and pay my respects to their elders, past and present."

**From:** tracey skinner [mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 28 February 2019 3:22 PM  
**To:** Lucy Marshall [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Maps and questions

Hi Lucy,

Thanks for the brief conversation last night.

Just a couple of things. Can we please get a kml file or gpx file of the zones from your mapping department? They should have these and would be what they used to make the PDF. We need to be able to overlay and find out what climbing sites are within these SPAs. Majority of people really don't know by looking at a map and rough boundaries as to what is inside - they like cliff names. If we don't have these files it is a really clunky process to get them and make them easily readable.

Also, we talked briefly last week about time frames of us receiving information. Unfortunately by the time we received them and I had to try and further clarify some messaging it was late. We don't have people on this whereby it is what they do for a job. They are volunteers

and have other work commitments. The maps have made it out via the PV website and are now out on social media via other people asking all the questions we knew they would with no helpful answers from us. We are still trying to work on a non scare mongering statement. All people can see is that majority of all climbing in the Grampians is now prohibited. As those maps state.

A day before you plan to release would help us to gather our helpers together. This would allow us to create and to present to our community the best communications. At the moment, all it seems like is that they are losing everything. This is not a positive move forward for us and makes it more difficult for the community to continue to have faith in us.

Thanks,  
Tracey

On Mon, Feb 25, 2019 at 12:49 PM tracey skinner <[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)> wrote:

Hi Lucy,

Paula just messaged me letting me know that you had phoned her with regards to phoning Simon Talbot about the maps.

Could you also please phone me with all the necessary information and answers to questions about the maps so that I have the information directly.

Thanks,  
Tracey

--

Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer

[cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au](mailto:cliffcare@vicclimb.org.au)



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Tracey Skinner  
VCC Access & Environment Officer