



Aboriginal cultural heritage protections: Grampians National Park

Taipan Wall and Spurt Wall, Bundaleer

Background

To protect recently rediscovered Aboriginal cultural heritage, immediate protection zones have been put in place at two locations in the Grampians National Park.

The rock climbing areas known as Taipan Wall and Spurt Wall, and Bundaleer, are within these locations that are covered by the protection zones. Bushwalking is also undertaken at the Bundaleer area.

Known as 'Gariwerd' to Traditional Owners, the Grampians is home to precious native plants, animals and ancient cultural heritage, including the richest concentration of rock art in Victoria.

These values are protected by legislation, including the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* under which significant financial penalties apply for harm caused to Aboriginal cultural heritage by individuals or corporate bodies.

What cultural heritage has been rediscovered?

The recent rediscoveries include ancient cultural material, including multiple quarry sites – places where Aboriginal people took stone from rocky outcrops to make tools for different purposes. Concentrations of stone tools, archaeological deposits within rock shelters and, unusually, an ochre deposit are also present. Ochre is used for painting and decorative purposes, and along with other materials confirm the connections that Traditional Owners have to land they have cared for tens of thousands of years.

When were the rediscoveries made?

These cultural values were identified through park assessments being undertaken as part of a process to create a new management plan for the Grampians landscape.

While there has been awareness of tangible Aboriginal cultural heritage at Bundaleer it has only been through these recent assessments that the full picture has emerged.

Was there any consultation on this change?

In June, Traditional Owner organisations invited Parks Victoria and the Gariwerd Wimmera Reconciliation Network on Country to discuss the environmental and cultural values present and recreation that is undertaken there. Soil compaction and vegetation damage was evident in the area.

In August, Parks Victoria hosted a meeting with rock climbing representatives to discuss the need for immediate protections at these locations.

Later this year there will be another opportunity for people to provide their views on the future management of the Grampians through formal consultation on a new landscape management plan.

Where can I walk or climb at these locations?

Signs and temporary fencing will be put in place so that people don't inadvertently enter these areas and cause harm.

Bundaleer

For climbers, the area from 30 metres to the north of the route called "Manic Depressive" (and northwards of this point) are unaffected. Climbing routes south of this point are covered by the protection zone so are unavailable for climbing or bushwalking.

The walking track can no longer be accessed south of the area where signage and barriers are currently in place.

> See below pages for maps

Taipan Wall and Spurt Wall

For climbers, access to Taipan Wall and Spurt Wall is currently restricted by the protection zone. The surrounding areas referred to as Trackside Boulders, Grey and Green Walls, and Afterglow remain open, however they cannot be accessed by passing through the protection zone.

> See below pages for maps

How did you determine the size of the protection zones?

The protection zones were determined as the areas needed to ensure that people don't inadvertently cause harm to the known Aboriginal cultural heritage.

What happens next?

A longer-term management response for the protection of natural and cultural values at these locations will be worked through with Traditional Owners as part of a new Greater Gariwerd (Grampians) Landscape Management Plan.

A draft plan is expected to be released for further public comment in late 2020. For further information visit: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/grampians-management-plan>

Will there be further changes to climbing in the park?

Among many other aspects of park management, the new management plan will guide the future direction of where recreation can and cannot take place. That includes rock climbing.

What if other Aboriginal cultural heritage is found?

As with most parks and reserves in Victoria, the Grampians National Park contains Aboriginal cultural places, the full extent of which is still being understood.

In the broader Gariwerd landscape, in addition to rock art, Aboriginal places include burials, mounds, stone arrangements, freshwater middens, rock quarries, artefact scatters, archaeological layers and scar trees, and larger areas that also include intangible values such as creation stories.

Over time, as more details of Victoria's Aboriginal cultural history is revealed we will look at whether new park management strategies are required to protect and preserve them.

Cultural heritage and environmental values are not incompatible with recreation – people can enjoy a range of activities in almost all of Victoria's parks and reserves.

Why did you not wait for the management plan to be completed before implementing these protections?

Parks Victoria has a legislated responsibility to ensure natural and cultural values are protected from harm.

These places have been identified as being impacted by visitation.

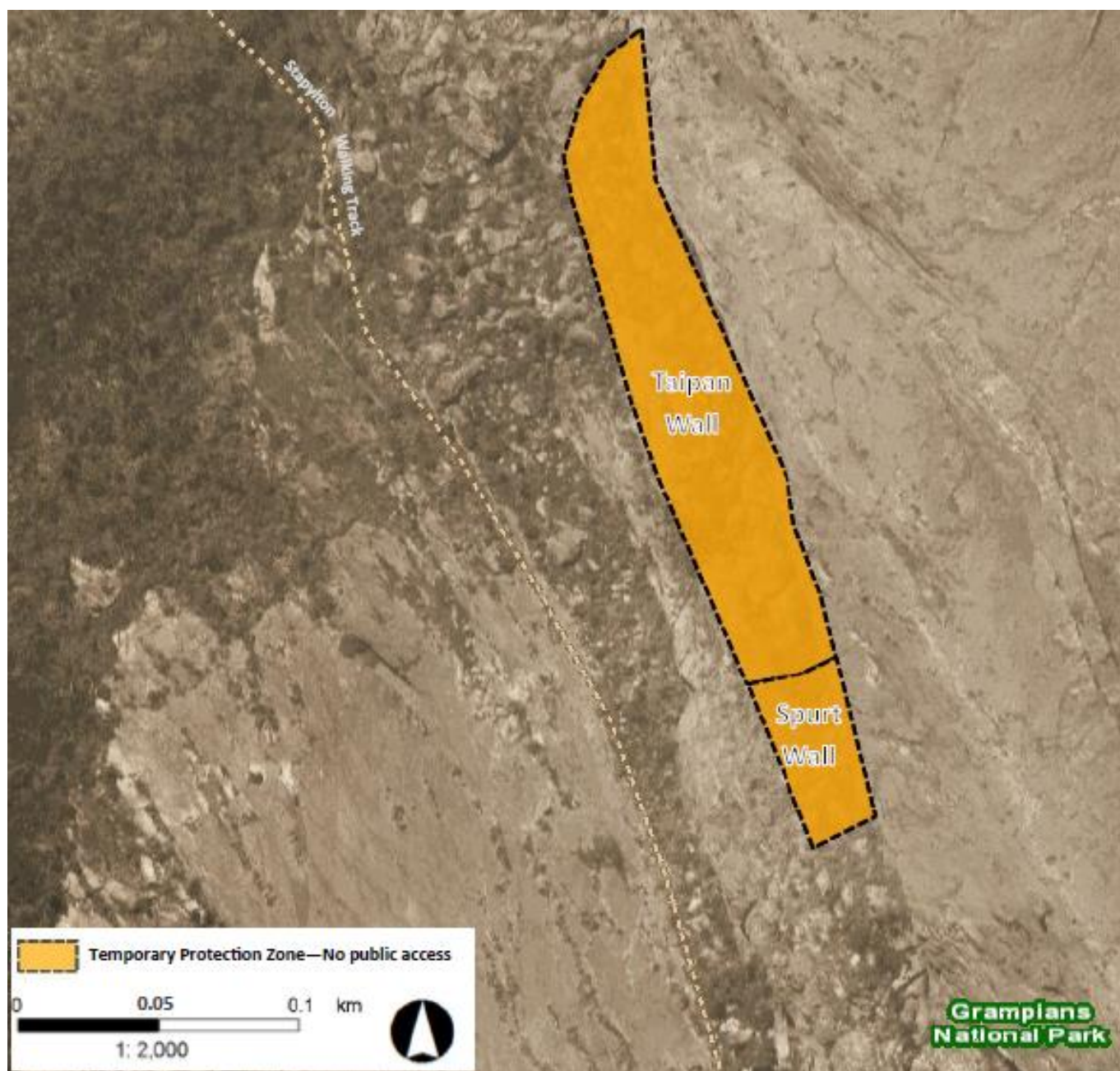
When will more information be available?

A longer-term management response for the protection of natural and cultural values at these locations will be worked through with Traditional Owners as part of a new landscape management plan.

This management plan will provide longer-term direction on how access and recreation are managed in the Grampians National Park and nearby parks and reserves.

A draft plan is expected to be released for further public comment in late 2020. For further information visit: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/grampians-management-plan>

Protection zone: Taipan Wall and Spurt Wall



Protection zone: Bundaleer

