

SAVE OUR PARKS

THE GREENS' PLAN TO RESTORE AND EXPAND OUR NATIONAL PARKS



Victoria's National Parks have suffered from underfunding at the hands of successive Labor and Liberal governments. It's time to restore funding, and add new National Parks, to safeguard Victoria's special places for nature, and for all Victorians.

Victoria's National Parks play a vital role in protecting our precious natural environment, for people and for nature. But our Parks are under greater threat than ever: from invasive species, climate change and inappropriate development.

Our National Parks are suffering a funding crisis. The Liberals cut funding in 2014, with devastating effects for the management and protection of these precious places.

The Andrews Labor Government has failed to properly restore funding, or create the new parks our native species need. Labor has also allowed recreational deer hunting in national parks, despite research showing that only professional, large-scale programs are effective at controlling feral deer.

New park creation in Victoria is at the lowest level in 50 years, while species across the state are pushed to the brink of extinction.

OUR PLAN

The Greens have a plan to safeguard special places in our state, by properly funding and adding to National Parks across Victoria.

The Greens' Plan to Save Our Parks will:

- Fix the Parks Victoria funding crisis with an immediate and ongoing increase of \$50 million per year

- Create new National Parks, starting with the Great Forest National Park and Emerald Link, and end native forest logging
- Reopen visitor centers to improve access to nature for all Victorians
- Appoint a new board to Parks Victoria, including a majority of members with environmental, conservation and Indigenous knowledge and expertise
- End corporate development in our National Parks
- Invest much more in research and control of invasive species, and stop recreational hunting in national parks
- Allocate \$40 million to buy, restore and protect rare and important habitat on private land.

The Greens will make further announcements about our plans to protect nature ahead of the November state election, including our plans to manage invasive species, protect our coasts and oceans and safeguard waterways and wildlife.

RESTORE NATIONAL PARKS FUNDING

Victoria's National Parks have suffered from underfunding at the hands of successive Labor and Liberal governments.

The Greens' will give Parks Victoria the resources they need to manage our Parks, with a funding increase of \$50 million every year from 2018-19 onwards.

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This increase will allow Parks Victoria to restore vital environmental programs across the state, restore facilities, employ more conservation staff and rangers, and deliver better environmental management and conservation.

Our parks need ongoing care from dedicated people. It's time to recognise and fund this important work, to ensure we have enough experienced rangers to manage threats like pests and fire, and protect our native animals and plants.

Our plan will connect the natural environment across our state, building greater resilience against threats like climate change, and will deliver greater collaboration and joint management with traditional owner groups.

Re-open visitor centres

Our National Parks are wonderful places where Victorians and visitors can connect with nature. With restored funding, Parks Victoria will be able to re-open and staff National Park visitor centres, to ensure Parks are accessible to all of us, while enabling conservation of habitat and species.

Protect National Parks from climate change

Our National Parks are a critical refuge for native animals and plants as they move in response to climate change. They are also under increased threat from fire, extreme weather events and pests and disease. We need adequate and ongoing funding to protect our parks and ensure they remain vital habitat into the future.

END THE NATIONAL PARKS STANDSTILL

Some of Victoria's most precious places and species remain vulnerable and unprotected, yet new park creation in Victoria is at the lowest level in 60 years.

The Greens' plan to Save Our Parks will end the National Parks standstill by bringing more special places into the Parks system. The Greens will immediately allocate \$100 million to create new National Parks.

The Great Forest National Park and Emerald Link

We need these new parks now, to protect our Central Highlands and East Gippsland forests and deliver tourism jobs and investment throughout the region.

The Greens have committed \$46 million to establish the Great Forest National Park and East Gippsland's Emerald link.

Labor is logging high conservation forests on Melbourne's fringe and in regional Victoria, threatening our water supplies and pushing endangered species to the brink of extinction.

The Greens would end logging in native forests, create the Great Forest National Park and Emerald Link and transition Victoria's timber supply to sustainable plantation timber to save jobs.

New Parks across Victoria

The Greens will work with the Victorian Environment Assessment Council (VEAC) on where to create new national parks. Key priorities will be new parks in central west Victoria, as recommended by VEAC, including a Strathbogie Ranges National Park and a Murray River Park.

STOP CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT IN OUR PARKS AND RESERVES

Our Parks are no place for greedy private profit. They are special places, to safeguard our environment and for all Victorians to enjoy.

The Greens will stand up to developers, enforcing existing rules that ban inappropriate development in National Parks.

We will also reverse Labor's appalling decision to allow commercial horse training in coastal reserves. This decision is the sell-out of public land to the destructive racing industry, and threatens precious habitat for threatened species, including hooded plovers.

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A NEW PARKS VICTORIA BOARD

The current Parks Victoria board is stacked towards tourism and business. Very few of the current members have specialist expertise in environmental management or conservation.

The Greens' plan would appoint a new board to Parks Victoria, including a majority of members with environmental, conservation and Indigenous knowledge and expertise, to ensure our parks have a strong focus on conservation of our biodiversity and habitat, as well as providing good experiences for visitors. The new board will also include strong Traditional Owner representation.

FULLY FUND THE TRUST FOR NATURE

Some of the rarest and most important habitat in Victoria is on private land. This habitat, home to threatened plants, animals and birds, needs urgent protection, before it is lost.

The Greens will provide \$40 million in new funding to support the excellent work of Victoria's existing Trust for Nature program.

This program buys, restores and provides strong legal protection for rare and important habitat.

Protection of strategic private land plays an important role in connecting habitat across our state to create nature corridors for threatened animals and birds.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

The Greens plans to Save Our Parks will cost \$340 million over the forward estimates, made up of:

- \$50 million additional ongoing funding per year for Parks Victoria
- \$100 million to begin adding critical habitat to Victoria's National Parks estate
- \$40 million – once of funding to the Trust for Nature revolving fund, to purchase, restore, protect and sell critical habitat on private land to conservation minded individuals and organisations.