



ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005

Australian Alps Liaison Committee



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Mr Jon Stanhope, MLA
Minister for the Environment and Heritage (ACT)

The Hon. Bob Debus, MP
Minister for the Environment (New South Wales)

The Hon. John Thwaites, MP
Minister for the Environment (Victoria)

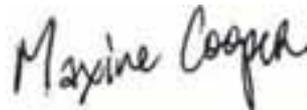
Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, MP
Minister for the Environment and Heritage (Australian Government)

Dear Ministers,

We have pleasure in presenting the report of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee for the periods 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 in accordance with the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the Cooperative Management of the Australian Alps national parks.

Yours sincerely

Dr Maxine Cooper
Executive Director
Environment ACT



environment ACT 

Dr Tony Fleming
Head, National Parks and Wildlife
Deputy Director General
Department of Environment and Conservation
New South Wales



Geoff Vincent
General Manager National Parks
Deputy Chief Executive
Parks Victoria




Parks
VICTORIA

Bruce Leaver
First Assistant Secretary
Parks Australia
Department of the Environment and Heritage
Australian Government



Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Heritage

Foreword

2004-2005 was a year of improved communication and networking among community members, stakeholders and agency staff throughout the Australian Alps program

As the bushfire restoration and rehabilitation works draw to completion for many park work centres, staff found time to turn their thoughts to other areas of park management not entirely related to fire recovery.

Agency staff, many from organisations outside the MOU, and the broader Alps community came together for a wide range of workshops and forums to discuss matters as diverse as feral pig control and an Australian Alps Walking Track web site.

To my mind though the highlight for the year was the Australian Alps First Peoples Gathering held at Dinner Plain in the heart of the Victorian Alps.

Representatives from most of the various Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups came together for the first time in many, many years. The forebears of these people gathered annually in the Australian Alps for thousands of years and this was a very significant occasion and one which was greatly appreciated by all present. The family connections spread across the Alps were very evident and there were also strong and constant reminders about what the Alps meant to those present at the gathering.

This report includes information about the various projects and achievements across the Alps program, all with application to improved park management. The program reflects the considerable success of Australian Alps cooperative management, and indicates its ongoing relevance to land managers, neighbours and the wider community.

Once again, the success of the Alps program lies in the commitment of the people associated with the program, predominantly from partner agencies. I would like to thank Meg Switzer (who left the AALC during the year) and those staff, in particular the Program Manager, for their outstanding efforts in 2004/2005. With their ongoing support, the Alps program will continue to grow.



Chris Rose
Convener 2004 - 2005
Australian Alps Liaison Committee

Glossary and Abbreviations

- AALC** is the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, established by the *MOU*.
- AAWT** is the Australian Alps Walking Track
- AOG** is the Alps Operational Group, composed of Rangers In Charge, Area, District and Operational Program Managers, and other key operational staff
- Alps program or annual cooperative works program**
is the group of activities and projects undertaken each year under *AALC* funding and cooperative arrangements.
- Australia ICOMOS**
is the Australian national committee of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), a non-government professional organisation that promotes expertise in the conservation of cultural heritage
- Australian Alps national parks**
means those protected areas included in Schedule 1 of the *MOU*
- Australian Alps national parks cooperative program**
is the ongoing activities, projects, works and administration undertaken to implement the *MOU*.
- Australian Alps national parks Heads of Agencies**
means the Heads of *participating agencies*
- CHWG** means the Cultural Heritage Working Group
- CRWG** means the Community Relations Working Group
- cooperative management**
means fostering a culture of goodwill, involving activities, projects, and complementary and supportive relationships, and adding value to those relationships through associated economies of scale, going beyond line management and individual agency constraints to ensure consistency across borders.
- CRC** means Cooperative Research Centre
- CRES** means the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, Australian National University, Canberra
- IYM2002** means the International Year of Mountains (2002) declared by the United Nations
- MOU** is the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to Cooperative Management of the Australian Alps national parks (as amended from time to time)
- NHWG** means the Natural Heritage Working Group
- participating agencies**
means parties to the *MOU*.
- protected area** means an area of land managed for protection and maintenance of biodiversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources
- RFWG** means the Visitor Recreation and Facilities Working Group
- Strategic Plan** means the three-year plan prepared by the *AALC* (for this reporting period the 'Strategic Plan 2000-2003') to guide the *annual cooperative works program*.

Australian Alps cooperative management program

Stretching from Canberra through the Brindabella Range in the ACT, the Snowy Mountains of NSW and along the Great Dividing Range through Victoria, the alpine and subalpine environment is a unique part of Australia, a mountainous biogeographical region in a predominantly dry and flat continent.

The Australian Alps contains plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. They contain significant examples of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage and provide outstanding recreational opportunities. The Australian Alps also contain the headwaters of some of Australia's most important rivers and streams.

In 1986, with the signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), State, ACT and Australian government national park authorities formally agreed to cooperatively manage this important national asset. Through this spirit of cooperation the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) was formed to ensure the national parks and reserves in the Alps are managed as one biogeographical entity to protect them for generations to come.

The national parks and reserves in the Australian Alps cross State and Territory borders; comprising over 1.6 million-hectares of protected areas. These eleven parks and reserves are collectively referred to as the '*Australian Alps national parks*', a conservation zone of international significance.

Responsibility for day to day management of the Australian Alps national parks listed in the MOU remains vested with the respective participating agency.

Lands listed as Australian Alps national parks (Schedule 1 - MOU)

Area	Size (ha)	Responsible Agency
<i>Victoria</i>		
Alpine National Park	647 700	Parks Victoria
Snowy River National Park	98 100	
Avon Wilderness	39 650	
Mount Buffalo National Park	31 000	
Baw Baw National Park	13 300	
<i>New South Wales</i>		
Kosciuszko National Park	690 425	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
Brindabella National Park	18 472	
Scabby Range Nature Reserve	4 982	
Bimberi Nature Reserve	10 886	
<i>Australian Capital Territory</i>		
Namadgi National Park	105 900	Environment ACT
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve	5 450	

Australian Alps cooperative management program

Vision

To achieve best practice in cooperative management of the Australian Alps national parks.

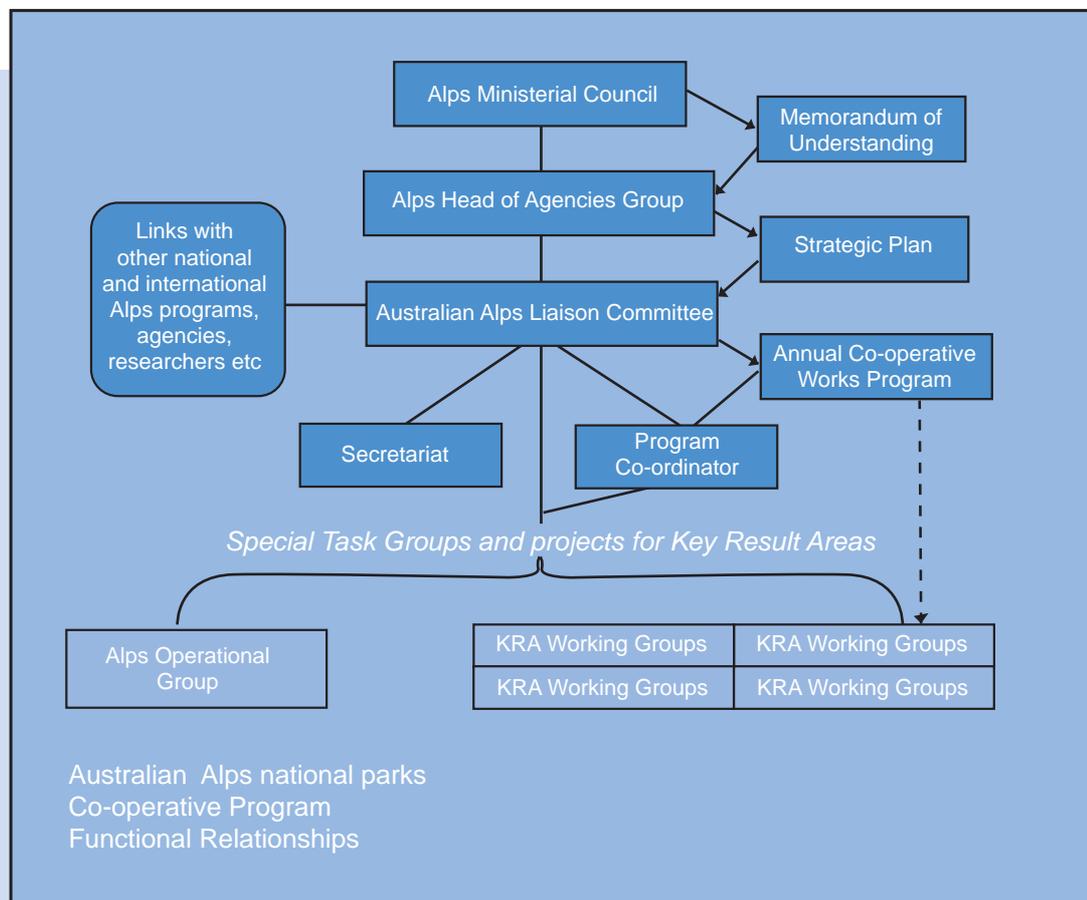
Mission

Through the MOU, participating agencies agree to the following objectives:

- To pursue the growth and enhancement of inter-governmental cooperative management to protect the important natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks.
- To cooperate in the determination and implementation of best-practice management of the Australian Alps national parks to achieve the:
 - protection of the unique mountain landscapes
 - protection of the natural and cultural values specific to the Australian Alps
 - provision of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities that encourage the enjoyment and understanding of alpine and sub-alpine environments; and
 - protection of mountain catchments.

Refer to the MOU for **Terms of Agreement** which describe in detail the working arrangements agreed to by participating agencies.

Organisational Structure



Organisational Structure

The following entities have functional roles in the Australian Alps cooperative management program under the MOU:

Alps Ministerial Council

The Ministers responsible for participating agencies which are in turn responsible for high-level inter-government relationships and the MOU.

Australian Alps national parks Heads of Agencies Group

The Heads of participating agencies meet annually to consider strategic issues and advise AALC on policy, priority areas and emerging issues.

Australian Alps Liaison Committee

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) facilitates the development, coordination and implementation of the cooperative management program. Its members include a senior officer from each of the participating agencies in NSW, Victoria and the ACT, and from the relevant Australian government department.

Working Groups

A number of working groups are established to advise the AALC on specific matters, and to assist with the implementation of the cooperative management program by:

- developing new projects in key result areas outlined in the Strategic Plan
- recommending priority projects for AALC funding; and
- coordinating or project managing the projects.

During the reporting period, four working groups operated under the Australian Alps national parks cooperative program. They include:

- Natural Heritage Working Group
- Cultural Heritage Working Group
- Visitor Recreation and Facilities Working Group; and
- Community Relations Working Group.

The terms of reference for each Working Group are set out in the Strategic Plan, and are closely aligned to the Key Result Areas in that Plan.

In addition to the Working groups the Alps Operational Group (AOG) also met and advised the AALC on a number of operational matters.

Refer to program structure, **Attachment 1**

Australian Alps cooperative management program

Program Budget

To assist in achieving the objectives of the MOU, a financial contribution is made by participating agencies. The responsibility for financial management is rotated around the agencies on a three-year basis and is generally vested with the agency which is providing the Alps Program Manager position. During the current reporting period, Parks Victoria provided financial management support for the program.

An annual budget of \$280,000 was provided from participating agencies, with Victoria and NSW each contributing \$120,000, and the ACT providing \$40,000. The Australian government provides secretariat support and Web site maintenance.

The AALC allocate funding to the Australian Alps annual cooperative works program, which is developed through submission of project proposals addressing the Key Result Areas of the Strategic Plan.

The 2004 - 2005 annual works program budget is presented in **Attachment 2**.

Annual Reporting of performance

The Strategic Plan requires the Annual Report to:

- evaluate the success of the MOU, and the Australian Alps national parks cooperative program
- detail the outputs of the program's projects and their benefits to Australian Alps national parks; and
- communicate this information to the Australian Alps national parks Heads of Agencies group, relevant Ministers, and other interested parties.

Key Result Area: Community Awareness

Outcome

The public is aware of, and has access to, information about the unique mountain landscapes and catchments, and natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks, the action and behaviour needed to protect these values, and the objectives and achievements of the cooperative management program.

Strategies

1. **Awareness programs** Increase promotion of the values, programs and opportunities of the Australian Alps national parks to target audiences.
2. **Fire in the Alps** Increase public understanding of the role of fire in the Alps ecosystems.
3. **Customer Service** Develop training programs and information networks.
4. **Community audiences** Identify community audiences and evaluate their knowledge of and involvement with Australian Alps national parks.
5. **Provision of products** Develop information materials that enhance visitors' enjoyment and understanding of the Australian Alps national parks.

Australian Alps Education Kit review

The review and updating of the Australian Alps Education Kit is an ongoing project. The evaluation undertaken by previous consultants (GTAV) clearly established the worthiness of reproducing the kit in electronic format (CD Rom) and incorporating several new information sheets covering Aboriginal connections to country, contemporary management issues (particularly feral animal control) and Living with Bushfires.

During the reporting period new consultants were employed. They developed a revised and edited draft of the Education Kit including new chapters on Fire and Aboriginal people of the Alps. The Community Relations Working group is now in the final stages of editing. The chapter covering Aboriginal Heritage will not be included in the Kit until the Aboriginal community has had the opportunity to provide feedback and approve content.

World Wide Web site

The Australian Alps national parks Web site is hosted by the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage. The Web site includes information about reference material, publications, updated media releases and reports, and links to related organisations and interest groups.

Although a valuable resource for enquiries about recreation and tourism in the Australian Alps national parks and about the Australian Alps cooperative management program, it has been recognised that the Web site is not operating to full potential.

During the reporting period a consultant redesigned the Home and Secondary pages with the primary goal of presenting a simple, clear, and easily navigatable structure. The new site has been acclaimed by staff as being an immense improvement. Maintenance of the site content remains an ongoing project.

The Australian Alps national parks home page is: www.australialps.deh.gov.au

Key Result Area: Community Awareness

Australian Alps Touring Map

Revisions of the popular Australian Alps touring map included updating and corrections to all map details, inclusion of the new additions to the *Australian Alps national parks* (Baw Baw National Park & Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve) and the new *Leave No Trace* messages. 5,000 copies of the map were printed in the 2004/2005 reporting period. Distribution is being undertaken by a private distributor that specialises in publications about the Australian Alps. To date sales are going well.

Frontline

A training workshop for key visitor services staff and tour operators (agency and external) was held at Mount Buffalo National Park in May to increase awareness of the products and information available within the Alps program, promote a greater understanding of the Australian Alps national parks and provide opportunities for face to face networking between agency staff and people in the tourism/visitor services industry. This workshop was the first of two to be offered over a 12 months period. In response to a stakeholder survey another of these successful workshops will be delivered in November 2006. There is an ongoing high level of demand for this type of workshop.

Travelling Displays

Four sets of lightweight well designed banners highlighting the Alps program and natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks have been produced and distributed to each state and ACT. The banners are to be used by staff attending shows, meetings, and conferences.

Alps Brochures

The Australian Alps program produces four brochures which are distributed to visitor information centres and national park and other strategic agency offices as a package of information. During this reporting period all four brochures; Alps icon brochure, Leave No Trace, Hut Code and the Australian Alps Walking Track, were reviewed, updated and distributed.



Frontline Workshop Mt Buffalo National Park May 2005



Key Result Area: Natural Heritage Conservation

Outcome

Improved understanding and enhanced management of the flora and fauna, ecological processes and communities of the Australian Alps national parks.

Strategies

1. **National Heritage Listing** Contribute knowledge to a nomination about the natural values of the Alps
2. **Fire Recovery** Work collaboratively on the recovery of the Alps ecosystems
3. **Database management** Update, maintain and encourage use of all Alps natural heritage databases
4. **Threat abatement** Undertake a series of best practice pest control workshops
5. **Improved understanding** Facilitate and support research into the natural values of the Australian Alps

Fire History

A draft fire history of the Alps has been collated with further input from agency staff and key stakeholders. The report includes pre-European fire histories, historic photographs and mapped fire summaries.

Alps Rehabilitation Manual

The production of the Rehabilitation Manual is an ongoing project. Selected proceedings from the *Ecological Restoration of Mountain Environments* workshop, held in conjunction with the Australian Network for Plant Conservation will be incorporated into the Manual.

Feral Pig Control Best Practice Workshop

Over 40 agency staff involved in the management of feral pigs in the Alps attended a workshop in Khancoban. The workshop provided an opportunity to exchange information on current programs and latest research and discuss options and challenges for future management of feral pigs. Proceedings will be printed and distributed later in 2005.

Coordination of Post Fire Alpine Bog Recovery

A steering group was formed to coordinate the significant on ground efforts underway for bog restoration in each jurisdiction. The group developed best practice guidelines for bog restoration to be included in the Alps Rehabilitation Manual after visiting several sites in Namadgi and Kosciuszko national parks.

Analysis of Alps Fire Ecology Plots

The Fire Ecology Plots were established in 1996/97. The study aimed to gather data on the fire response of vegetation species that occur in the Alps environment of South East Australia. The information from this program was gathered so that it could be used in formulating management actions for flora conservation and fire management.

When this program was established it was not envisaged that such a significant number of the plots would burn at the same time (36 of the 40 plots).

This project involved updating the Alps Fire Response Database for all Alps jurisdictions and producing a report on the data collected after the 2003 wildfires for the ACT and Victoria.

Key Result Area: Natural Heritage Conservation

Feral Horse Management Summary

The study on Population Ecology of Feral Horses in the Australian Alps was the first of its kind in the Australian Alps, and therefore has a broad focus. It stemmed from a need to improve our understanding of this controversial species and aims to provide interested parties with information to determine the best approach to management. It also contributes to broader knowledge on survey techniques for large mammals and horse population dynamics in general and examines brumby-running for the first time. A management summary has been prepared and will be uploaded on the Alps web site.

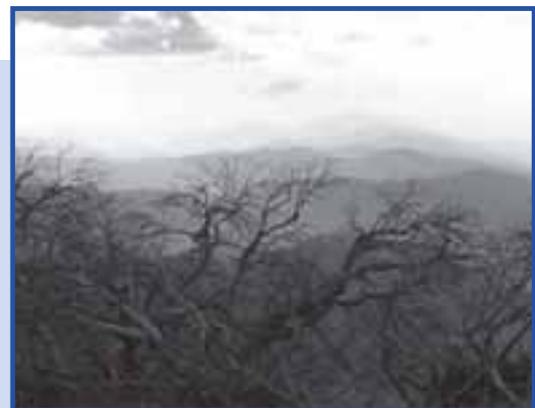
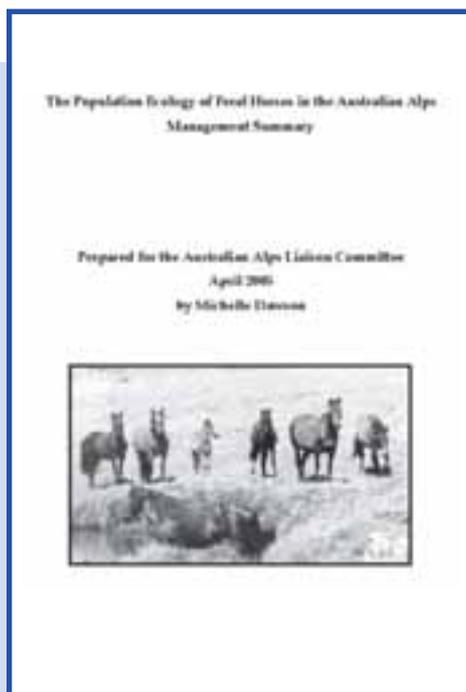
Alps Invaders – revision

The Alps Invaders booklet is a field guide to weeds of the Alps. The booklet is out of print and requires updating and digitizing to allow cost effective editing and updating in the future. Updating has included deletion of species no longer deemed relevant and addition of new and emerging species.

Post Fire Biodiversity Workshop

The Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program along with Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment hosted a two-day workshop for researchers in Fire Recovery Biodiversity.

The workshop brought together key people that are planning and implementing on-ground flora and fauna research, monitoring and restoration and provided an opportunity to share results and techniques. Actions that need addressing and further opportunities for working collaboratively across the Alps were also identified. At the same time a small representative group of land managers were informed about results that may affect public land management.



Key Result Area: Visitor Recreation and Facilities

Outcome

Implementation of contemporary approaches to management of visitor resources and use in mountain protected areas, through supporting best-practice philosophy and principles for sustainable use and minimal impact.

Strategies

1. **Workshops** Foster and facilitate contemporary visitor management techniques through the provision of best practice workshops to agency staff and interested stakeholders
2. **Australian Alps Walking Track** Facilitate a coordinated approach to the repair, management and promotion of the Australian Alps Walking Track
3. **Visitor Impact Monitoring Strategies** Develop strategies to monitor visitor impacts within identified and acceptable ecological and social limits, using methodologies which identify and monitor visitor needs, satisfaction and expectations
4. **Plans of management** Consider emerging needs and issues for visitor recreation and facilities, and their relationship to management plans
5. **Past work review** Review and summarise the past work of the Alps program on visitor recreation and facilities and provide advice to the Alps Operational Group for consideration

Minimal Impact Messages – Respect Heritage

To enhance delivery of the key 'Leave No Trace' messages, an additional Respect heritage icon was developed to acknowledge the importance of protecting both historic and Indigenous cultural heritage. The new icon and message has been incorporated into all four Alps brochures.

Australian Alps Walking Track Strategy Group

The Alps program plays a pivotal coordinating role in the strategic approach to the management of the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT).

Although the respective agencies are responsible for the maintenance of the AAWT the Alps program, the AAWT Strategy Group, facilitates stakeholder and staff liaison and the development of new initiatives such as the web site and interpretive signage.

The AAWT Strategy, initially developed by agency and stakeholders in 1997, was updated and revised by the Strategy Group during this reporting period. The Group includes national park associations, bushwalking clubs and individuals, authors of bushwalking books and agency staff.



Australian Alps Walking Track Bogong High Plains



Key Result Area: Cultural Heritage Conservation

Outcome

Improved understanding of and respect for the Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage of the Australian Alps national parks, including sites, places and landscapes, and incorporation of these values into effective conservation and management programs.

Strategies

1. **Respect for cultural heritage** Continue to develop and interpret a strategy that will engender a sense of value, respect and ownership within the agencies and communities for Aboriginal and non Aboriginal heritage of the Australian Alps national parks
2. **National Heritage Listing** Contribute knowledge about the significant cultural heritage, inspirational landscapes and cultural settings of the Australian Alps
3. **Involvement of Indigenous people** Identify and promote opportunities for the involvement of indigenous people in all aspects of the management of the Australian Alps national parks.
4. **Threat abatement** Identify threats to the nationally significant cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks and develop appropriate threat abatement strategies
5. **Fire Recovery** Work collaboratively on the restoration of significant cultural heritage values affected by 2003 fires
6. **Project tools** Provide tools and processes that will assist agencies and relevant community groups to undertake cultural heritage projects within the Australian Alps national parks; and

Australian Alps *First Peoples* Gathering

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee hosted a gathering of Australian Alps First Peoples as part of their ongoing commitment to fostering good relationships with Traditional Owners with connections to the Australian Alps.

The main purpose of the gathering was to bring together Traditional Owners within the Australian Alps to share information and experiences, build relationships, and discuss future involvement in the management of the Australian Alps.

It also provided a forum for Traditional Owners and agency staff from Victoria, NSW and the ACT to discuss management issues face to face.

Over 70 Traditional Owners and 30 agency staff took the opportunity to discuss Indigenous involvement in the future management of the Australian Alps.

A number of recommendations were agreed, including the drafting of an agreement between the First Peoples of the Australian Alps establishing ways for Traditional Owners to work together with government agencies. Other recommendations included recognizing that Traditional Owners with connection to country are legitimate speakers to 'Country', government support for Indigenous participation in decision-making and improved job opportunities.

Agency staff from all jurisdictions agreed to work more closely with Traditional Owners to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are integrated into future management decisions, and that Indigenous community cultural needs are respected and accommodated.

Key Result Area: Cultural Heritage Conservation

Sharing the Knowledge

This ongoing project presented the results of two previous reports – *Scientific Sites and Mining Heritage of the Australian Alps* – to staff within each park management agency.

Scientific Sites developed a thematic interpretation strategy for the scientific sites of cultural significance in the Australian Alps national parks.

Mining Heritage of the Australian Alps provides guidance in management for heritage mining sites of the Australian Alps, identifies links with existing and proposed tourism programs and recommends a staged program for developing a representative group of sites for visitor use.

The *Mining Heritage of the Australian Alps* report was printed and distributed to all agency work centres and offices.

Remembering Lost Places

A working draft of an illustrated publication depicting stories of those historic places lost in the 2003 fires has been developed. This is a collaborative project funded externally by NSW and Victorian fire recovery programs. It is expected to be published later in 2005.



Australian Alps First Peoples Gathering April 2005

Key Result Area: Program Management

(Capacity Building, Integrated Landscape Management and Operational Implementation)

Outcome

The Australian Alps national parks cooperative program will be well managed, maintain its effectiveness to achieve vision and objectives of the MOU 2003, and operates within the relevant policy context of each participating agency.

Australian Alps national parks Cooperative Management Program Strategic Plan 2004 ñ 2007

The new Alps Strategic Plan 2004 - 2007 was printed and distributed to staff across the agencies.

Australian Alps Expert Scientific Panel

A combined scientific review examined the responses of participating agencies to management of impacts of the fires. The review was undertaken by an expert scientific panel made up of leading ecologists, scientists and heritage experts. The final report, including recommendations, was presented to the Heads of Agencies and to the participants of the Post Fire Biodiversity Workshop.

National Heritage Listing

The National Heritage List is a list of places with outstanding heritage value, nationally and internationally. These places have special meaning for Australia as a whole. The Alps Program has prepared a draft National Heritage List nomination covering a number of criteria. The draft nomination is now with the individual jurisdictions to obtain approval to proceed with the joint Australian Alps nomination.

Australian Alps Newsletter

The newsletter, *News from the Australian Alps*, is one way of keeping staff and other interested stakeholders in touch with projects and activities of other Australian Alps national parks agencies. It is also a valuable method of raising and maintaining community awareness of the Australian Alps national parks, and the benefits arising from the cooperative management program.

During the reporting period the summer/autumn edition was produced. It was distributed widely to Australian Alps national parks staff, the recreation and tourism industry, tour operators, external organisations, educational institutions, and user groups, with a circulation of over 500 copies.

In addition to the printed newsletter agency staff and selected interested stakeholders received four electronic 'News Update'. These are emailed on a seasonal basis.

Training and development

Staff in participating agencies benefited from a number of training and development opportunities during the reporting period. Highlights were Frontline, Feral Pig Control Best Practice Workshop, Bog (Mossbed) Restoration Workshop, Post Fire Biodiversity Research Forum, and the Aboriginal Traditional Owners Gathering.

Alps Operational Group

The Alps Operational group met twice during the reporting period as a forum of field based managers to help facilitate integration of the Alps program into agency programs and provide advice to the AALC on how the program can assist operational managers.

Key Result Area: Program Management

(Capacity Building, Integrated Landscape Management and Operational Implementation)

Agency Implementation of the MOU

Responsibility for day to day management of the Australian Alps national parks remains vested with each participating agency.

The AALC seeks to provide land managers with appropriate technical tools and sound scientific advice in management reports and strategies, to assist in achieving the objectives of the MOU in delivering best practice land management across the region. All participating agencies have been active contributors to the AALC and working groups.

The benefits of coordination and sharing of knowledge during this reporting period include:

- **Fire Recovery**

After the fires, agency staff worked on joint responses to a number of issues, benefiting from work undertaken within the program on fire monitoring reference plots, rehabilitation techniques and monitoring and pest plant and animal control.

- **Best Practice Workshops**

Agency staff attended a number of Alps workshops during 2004/2005 with the objective of learning from one another's experiences and exchanging information, ideas and/or management practices. Workshops such as the Feral Pig Control, Post Fire Biodiversity Research, Frontline and Bog Rehabilitation all provided these opportunities.

For example as a result of the Bog Rehabilitation Workshop Parks Victoria will implement some of the techniques being employed by NSW and ACT staff in alpine bog restoration.

- **Australian Alps Walking Track Strategy and Stakeholder Liaison**

The Alps program continues to play a pivotal coordinating role in the strategic approach to the management of the Australian Alps Walking Track.

Although the respective agencies are responsible for the day to day maintenance of the AAWT the Alps program, via the AAWT Strategy Group, facilitates important stakeholder and staff networking and the development of new initiatives such as the web site and interpretive signage. Agency staff took the opportunity to discuss walking track development and maintenance work being undertaken in the individual jurisdictions at the AAWT Strategy Group meeting.

- **Australian Alps *First Peoples* Gathering**

The gathering of Aboriginal people from across the Alps provided a unique opportunity for Traditional Owners and agency staff from Victoria, NSW and the ACT to meet, establish ongoing connections and discuss park management on a face to face basis.

To assist in the facilitation of an Alps wide Traditional Owner group, Parks Victoria intends to pursue the formation of a Victorian Alps Indigenous Reference group.





Ministerial Council

The Alps Ministerial Council met for the first time in six years, in Melbourne in May 2003, where the State and Territory Ministers, along with the Commonwealth Minister, discussed post-fire responses and cooperative initiatives such as the continued pursuit of National Heritage Listing for the Australian Alps national parks.

The Ministerial Council did not meet during the 2004 - 2005 reporting period.

Heads of Agencies Meeting

This annual meeting provides an important opportunity for Directors and Heads of Agencies to come together, review progress and discuss future directions and projects for the cooperative management of the Australian Alps national parks.

During the reporting period the Heads of Agencies met twice, in Melbourne face to face and by teleconference. The key focus of both meetings was to discuss the status of the Alps draft nomination for National Heritage Listing.

Integrated Management

Key senior managers and planning staff continue to explore practical ways to integrate planning across the Australian Alps national parks, in the context of revised management plans being developed for Namadji, Kosciuszko and Baw Baw national parks. The Alpine National Park management plan is also due for review in the near future.

These plans will continue to reflect the diversity of management approaches but will strive to complement one another in a broader biogeographical context. This underlines the significance of the MOU, under which participating agencies have agreed to work closely together to ensure, where possible, common approaches in planning and resource management issues, with particular emphasis on border areas.

This will be an evolving process as the plans are developed.



External Agency Liaison

The Australian Alps has a collaborative partnership with a range of external organisations.

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Mountains Biome

The IUCN WCPA Mountains Biome has an active membership of 450 mountain protected area experts in 60 countries. It develops best practice mountain protected area management texts for capacity building, organises mountain management workshops, and issues a quarterly Update newsletter on mountain protected area management matters. The Australian Alps circulates Update to each of the States and the ACT.

Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)

Australian Alps Aboriginal Traditional Owner and Legislative Groups

Australia ICOMOS is the Australian national committee of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), a non-government professional organisation that promotes expertise in the conservation of cultural heritage.

TransGrid is a statutory government owned corporation responsible for the management and development of the NSW high voltage electricity network.

RSPCA NSW and Bureau Animal Welfare Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI)

Contributed to the Feral Pig Control Workshop hosted by Alps program (Natural Heritage Working Group)

The **Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Sustainable Tourism** is an Australian government-funded organisation which promotes research in environmental, social and economic sustainability in Australia. CRC members include government tourism organisations such as the Tourism Council of Australia, Tourism New South Wales and Tourism Victoria, and universities including La Trobe, Griffith and Canberra.

The **Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (CRES)** at the Australian National University jointly funded with the AALC the report by Dr Peter Crabb on the history of the Australian Alps national parks cooperative management program.

Alpine Management Boards of Victoria and resort lessees of NSW

Leave No Trace Australia is a not for profit organisation promoting a national 'Leave No Trace' environmental skills and ethics program. The program, supported by the Australian government and other interested parties, is developing a program specifically designed for the Australian Alps environment.

National Parks Associations of Victoria, NSW and ACT

VicWalk, Canberra, and NSW Bushwalking Clubs

Contributions and ongoing support for cross border cooperative management of the Australian Alps Walking Track.

Australian Network for Plant Conservation

The contributions of these organisations provide further evidence of the growing profile, strength, and relevance of the Australian Alps national parks cooperative program.

Attachment 1: Program Structure as of 30 June 2005

Conservation Agencies Involved	Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage	New South Wales NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	Australian Capital Territory Environment ACT	Victoria Parks Victoria
Responsible Minister	The Hon. Ian Campbell, MP Minister for the Environment and Heritage (Australian Government)	The Hon. Bob Debus, MP Minister for the Environment (New South Wales)	Mr Jon Stanhope, MLA Minister for the Environment & Heritage (ACT)	The Hon. John Thwaites, MP Minister for Environment (Victoria)
Head of Agency	Bruce Leaver First Assistant Secretary Parks Division Department of the Environment and Heritage	Dr Tony Fleming Head-National Parks and Wildlife Deputy Director General Department of Environment and Conservation	Dr Maxine Cooper Executive Director Environment ACT	Geoff Vincent Deputy Chief Executive National Parks Parks Victoria
AALC	Bruce Leaver First Assistant Secretary Parks Division	Dave Darlington Regional Manager Snowy Mountains Region	Brett McNamara District Manager Parks and Conservation	Chris Rose (Convener) Regional Manager East Region
AALC Secretariat	Tracie Brauer Department of the Environment and Heritage			
Program Manager	Gill Anderson			
Community Relations Working Group	Rodney Atkins (Convener)	Stuart Cohen Mary Green Penny McLennan	Monica Muranyi Lois Padgham	Bart Smith
Natural Heritage Working Group	Ross Scott Greg Plummer	Genevieve Wright Josh Bean	Murray Evans (Convener) Amanda Carey	Craig Hore Charlie Pascoe
Recreation and Tourism Working Group	Gillian Lee	Simon Allender	Stephen Alegria Marg Wade	
Cultural Heritage Working Group		Dean Freeman Steve Cathcart	Jennifer Dunn Adrian Brown	Ray Supple (Convener) Peter Lawrence

Attachment 2: Financial Report

Year Ending 30th June 2005

PROJECTS UNDER KEY RESULT AREAS	BUDGET ALLOCATION	EXPENDITURE TO 30th JUNE 2005	COMMITTED DOLLARS CARRIED OVER TO 05/06
Program Management			
Program Coordinator	70,000	92,479	
Program Administration	30,000	27,628	
Annual Report & Strategic Plan	15,000	15,000	
Capacity Building			
Newsletter	10,000	7,438	2,500
Communication	25,000	21,368	
Alps Web Site	4,000	4,000	
Operational Implementation			
Alps Operational Group	10,000	4,207	5,500
Wild Dog Special Group	2,000	0	2,000
Integrated Landscape Management			
ESP & NHL	64,000	50,772	
Post Fire Biodiversity Workshop (ESP)	5,000	0	5,000
Fire History	6,000	0	2,000
Natural Heritage Conservation			
Feral Pig Workshop	6,000	5,632	
Fire Ecology Plots	14,000	0	14,000
Bog Workshop	5,000	3,286	
Feral Horse Summary	1,500	1,500	
Rehabilitation Manual	16,000	0	16,000
Alps Invaders	10,000	0	10,000
Cultural Heritage Conservation			
Aboriginal Gathering	45,000	37,480	5,000
Sharing the Knowledge	2,000	2,391	
Remembering Lost Places	15,000	5,000	10,000
Community Awareness			
Alps Touring Map	18,000	18,000	
Education Kit - development new sheets & review	22,000	6,894	15,000
Ed Kit Promotion	5,000	150	4,000
Travelling Displays	15,000	7,172	
Frontline	20,000	10,761	9,000
Newspaper Articles	3,000	0	3,000
Recreation and Tourism			
AAWT Strategy	5,500	3,593	
AAWT Signs	20,000	2,000	18,000
TOTAL FUNDED 04/05	PROJECTS 464,000	EXPENDITURE 326,751	COMMITTED 05/06 118,000

