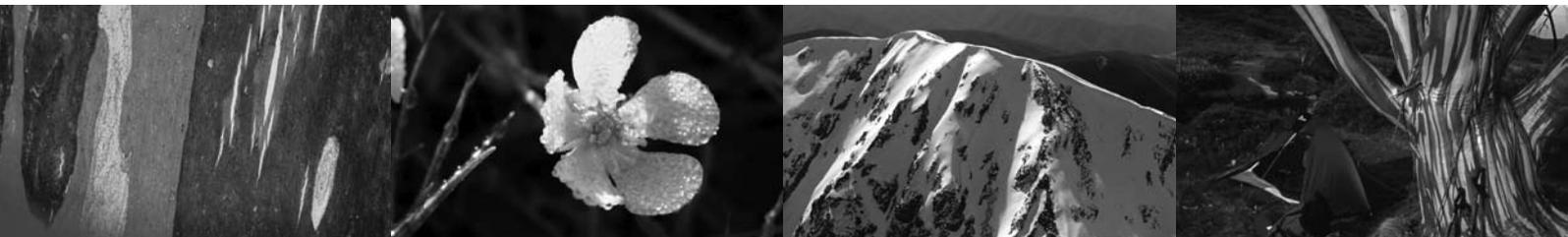


Annual Report 2007-2008

Australian Alps Liaison Committee



AUSTRALIAN ALPS
NATIONAL PARKS

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Mr Simon Corbell, MLA

Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water

The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, MP

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment (New South Wales)

The Hon. Gavin Jennings, MLC

Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Victoria)

The Hon. Peter Garrett, AM MP

Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts (Australian Government)

Dear Ministers

We have pleasure in presenting the report of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee for the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 in accordance with the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the Co-operative Management of the Australian Alps national parks.

Yours sincerely



Russell Watkinson

Director

Parks, Conservation and Lands

Department of Territory and Municipal Services, ACT



Sally Barnes

Deputy Director General

Parks and Wildlife Group

Department of Environment and Climate Change

New South Wales



Chris Rose

Regional Manager

East Region

Parks Victoria



Peter Cochrane

Director of National Parks

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Australian Government

Foreword

The Australian Alps national parks co-operative management program had another effective and productive year with over 20 different projects, workshops and products produced or continued to be developed throughout the reporting period. This report outlines those achievements and highlights the ongoing success of the Program.

The most notable matters dealt with during this reporting period were the development of a new Strategic Plan for the Program for the period 2008 to 2011 and the development of the bid to have the Australian Alps Region recognised under the National Landscapes Program.

The development of the 2008-11 Strategic Plan was driven largely by the outcomes of the Alps futures workshop held at Thredbo in June 2007 and recognition that there have been a number of changes affecting the Alps and the management of the Program. They include increased knowledge and certainty on climate change and its impacts on the Alps; a more coherent approach desirable for the Alps landscapes as a whole; the need to expand awareness of the Alps landscapes and the Alps Co-operative Program to a wider audience; increasing risks to ecosystems posed by invasion by pest plant and animal species; recognition that recovery from the 2003 bushfires is now well under way and no longer needs the high level of co-ordination provided by the

previous plan; and a diminishing capacity of working group members to devote the amount of time they have in the past to Program projects.

This has resulted in the development of ten key result areas (KRAs) for the Program that will be the focus for six new Reference Groups and the Program Manager.

A significant achievement was the announcement on 15 June 2008 that the Australian Alps Region had been accepted as one of the first eight National Landscapes recognised under the innovative program managed by Tourism Australia and Parks Australia. The Australian Alps national parks Program has provided the executive support for the bid and associated meetings and the Australian Alps Liaison Committee Convenor has been the chair of the bid Steering Committee.

The Australian Alps Program continued to show international leadership this year with the AALC Convenor and the former Program Manager attending the Parks, Peace and Partnerships conference at Waterton Lakes, Canada in September 2007. The conference provided the opportunity for International Peace Park and transboundary academics and management professionals from every continent to meet to discuss trends, experiences and best practices in transboundary protected areas management. The Australian Alps presentation focused on

11 lessons learned during the previous 21 years.

In July 2007 the program administration was "handed over" from Victoria to the ACT as the continuance of the process where every three years the Program Manager's position is hosted in turn by each of the State and Territory participating agencies. The AALC takes this opportunity to acknowledge the considerable contribution that Gill Anderson made to the Program as Program Manager for the years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07.



Peter Jacobs
Convenor
Australian Alps Liaison
Committee

Glossary and Abbreviations

AALC	the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, established by the MOU
AAWT	the Australian Alps Walking Track
AOG	the Alps Operational Group, composed of Rangers-in-charge, Area, District and Operational Program Managers, and other key operational staff
Alps program	The Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program, established by the MOU, and the subject of this report
Annual co-operative works program	the group of activities and projects undertaken each year under AALC funding and co-operative arrangements
Australian Alps national parks	those protected areas included in Schedule 1 of the MOU
Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program	the ongoing activities, projects, works and administration undertaken to implement the MOU.
Australian Alps national parks Heads of Agencies	the Heads of participating agencies
CHWG	the Cultural Heritage Working Group
CRWG	the Community Relations Working Group
Co-operative management	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
IUCN WCPA	International Union for Conservation and Nature, World Commission on Protected Areas (Mountain Biome)
MOU	the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to Co-operative Management of the Australian Alps national parks (as amended from time to time)
NHWG	the Natural Heritage Working Group
participating agencies	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	the three-year plan prepared by the AALC (for this reporting period the 'Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007') to guide the annual co-operative works program.

Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program

Stretching from Canberra through the Brindabella Range in the ACT, the Snowy Mountains of NSW and the Victorian Alps to West Gippsland, Australia's alpine and subalpine environment is a unique part of our nation, a mountainous biogeographical region in a predominantly dry and flat continent.

The Australian Alps contain plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. They contain significant examples of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage and offer outstanding recreational opportunities. They 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 manage this important national asset co-operatively. Through this spirit of co-operation the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) was formed to ensure that the parks and reserves in the Alps are managed as one biogeographical entity to protect them for generations to come.

The eleven national parks and reserves in the Australian Alps cross State and Territory borders. Together they comprise over 1.6 million hectares of protected areas. These parks and reserves are collectively referred to as the 'Australian Alps national parks', a conservation zone of international significance. Responsibility for strategic policy setting, planning and day-to-day management of the Australian Alps national parks listed in the MOU remains vested in the relevant participating agency.

Vision

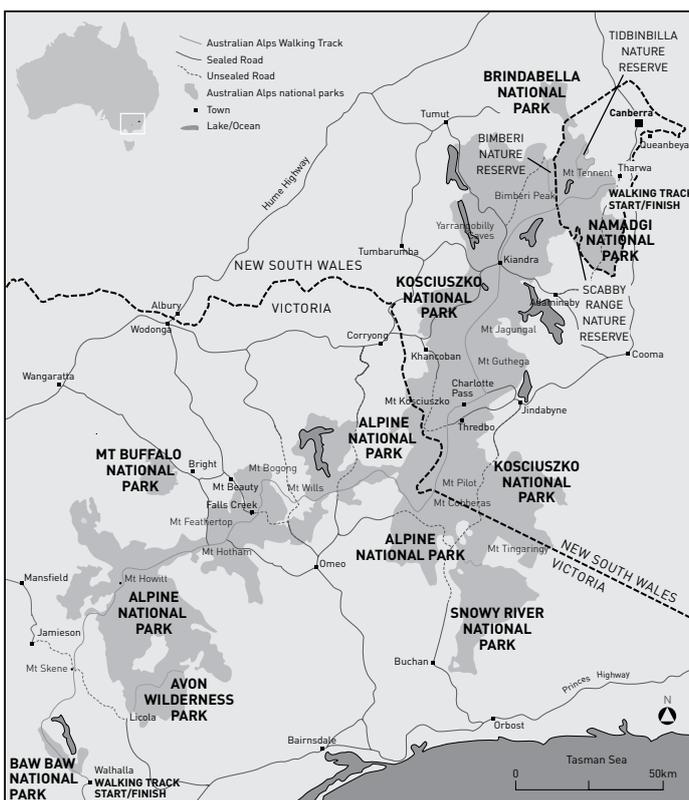
To achieve best practice in co-operative management of the Australian Alps national parks.

Mission

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

- To pursue the growth and enhancement of inter-governmental co-operative management to protect the important natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks.
- To co-operate in the determination and implementation of best-practice management of the Australian Alps national parks to achieve:
 - 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;
 - protection of mountain catchments.

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



Organisational Structure

The following entities have functional roles in the Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program under the MOU.

Australian 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 (or their representatives) of participating agencies meet at least annually to consider strategic issues and direct the AALC on policy, and priority and emerging issues.

Australian Alps Liaison Committee

The AALC facilitates the development, co-ordination and implementation of the Co-operative Management Program. Its members include a senior officer from each of the participating agencies in NSW, Victoria, ACT and the Australian Government.

Secretariat

Under the terms of the MOU the Australian Government provides part-time secretariat support to the AALC and Heads of Agencies.

Alps Program Manager

The Alps Program Manager is the only full-time employee of the Program and is responsible for co-ordinating the day to day work of the program and ensuring the annual

works program, as agreed by the AALC, is carried out. The Program Manager position is hosted by each of the State/Territory park agencies for two to four years at a time. During this reporting period the position was hosted by the ACT.

Working Groups

A number of working groups are established to advise the AALC on specific matters, and to assist with the implementation of the Co-operative Management Program by:

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

During the reporting period, four working groups operated under the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program. They were the:

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

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

In addition to the working groups, the Alps Operational Group (AOG), the Australian Alps Walking Track subgroup and the Wild Dog (Specialist) Group also met and advised the AALC on a number of operational matters.

Refer to Program structure at Attachment 1.

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 generally vested with the agency providing the Alps Program Manager position. In the current reporting period, the ACT provided financial management support for the Program.

An annual budget of \$280,000 was provided from participating agencies, Victoria and NSW each contributing \$120,000 and the ACT \$40,000.

During 2007-2008 the Australian government contributed \$30,000 plus

secretariat support and website maintenance. In addition to this, a grant of \$40,000 from the Australian Government Department of Climate Change was made specifically to the Natural Heritage Program.

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

The 2007 – 2008 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 Co-operative Management Program;
- detail the outputs of the program's projects and their benefits to Australian Alps national parks;
- 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 actions and behaviour needed to protect these values, and the objectives and achievements of the Co-operative 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.

Website

The Australian Alps national parks website is hosted by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. The site carries information about reference material, reports and

publications, News Updates, and links to related organisations and interest groups. Work commenced, as part of a student Masters project, on a review and redesign of the website. It is expected that the revised site will be launched in 2008-09. A meeting of the Australian Alps Walking Track Stakeholders Group in May 2007 recommended that elements of the site pertaining to the walking track also be reviewed and this will be undertaken as part of the wider project. The Australian Alps national parks home page is www.australianalps.environment.gov.au

Alps brochures

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

Style Guide and Fact Sheets

In 2006-07 a style guide was developed for Australian Alps publications providing consistency in logo placement, brochure design and Fact Sheet layout. This was finalised in 2007-08 and the new style, including revised logos, has been incorporated into Alps publications. The first of a series of fact sheets was finalised on the topic of wild dogs and distributed.

Australian Alps Walking Track trailhead promotional signs

In close collaboration with the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) Group the Community Relations Working Group finalised signs that have been located at key visitor points that coincide with the route of the AAWT to promote the Track's existence to visitors. At a number of points the signs invite visitors to go on short local walks that are part of the AAWT.

Australian Alps Walking Track message stick journey

A project to create message sticks to travel along the AAWT as part of the 21st anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Alps MOU did not go ahead as result of long parts of the AAWT being closed at the time as a result of the fires in the Alps in 2007.



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 on the natural values of the Alps.
2. Fire Recovery Work collaboratively on the recovery of 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.

National Heritage Listing

See Program Management

Wild Dog Research

The "Dogs in Space" project has provided valuable information about the spatial movements of wild dogs in remote areas of national park. A draft report was completed in June 2008 and a final report on the project is expected in 2008-09.

Deer Management Workshop

As part of the pest plant and animal best practice workshop series a cross-border, three day workshop was conducted in August 2007 on the management of deer across the Australian Alps. The workshop brought together key scientists, Alps agency staff and key stakeholders to compare and contrast the management of deer in the different jurisdictions across the Alps. The workshop raised considerable awareness of the spread of deer into new areas and has resulted in agencies renewing efforts, or in some cases starting efforts, to manage deer numbers. A report of the workshop is expected to be finalised in 2008-09.

Report on feral horse impacts

A report was commissioned that will bring together research and other evidence of feral horse impacts across the Alps. The report will be important in guiding further work on the issue. The report is expected to be completed in 2008-09.

Alps Fire Research Group

A proposal to scope the need for a dedicated Alps group to look at fire research needs was deferred as the new Strategic Plan developed creating the Natural Resource Management Reference Group which will be responsible for, amongst other things, fire management and research issues. The new reference Group is expected to consider these matters when it is formed in 2008-09.



Alps State of the Catchments report

This project is an outcome of the Science Management Forum in April 2007 on the subject of climate change. The report will attempt to quantify the current state of the Alps catchments so that comparisons can be made between their current state and how they may change under climate change scenarios and what the impact will be on their capacity to deliver sustained flows of water for ecological and other process within the Alps and downstream. A proposal to fund the project was out to the Australian Government Department of Climate Change and a grant was provided in June 2008. The project will be implemented during 2008-09.

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 co-ordinated 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.



Australian Alps Walking Track signs and Message Stick

See Community Awareness.

Visitor Experiences and Use Science Management Forum

In collaboration with the IUCN WCPA, the AALC ran the third in a series of annual forums to close the gap between operational management and applied science. In May 2008 around 60 staff, researchers and other stakeholders from a range of organisations attended a three-day forum at Thredbo, NSW. The theme for this workshop was to provide an overview of global and local trends in the provision of visitor experiences in mountain protected areas and examine best practice techniques for avoiding and managing visitor impacts. Key addresses were made by Associate Professor Catherine Pickering of Griffith University and Ms Frances Gertsch of Parks Canada and nine other presenters from around Australia.

Feedback from participants about the learning outcomes was extremely positive. A report of the workshop will be finalised in 2008-09.

Australian Alps 'Welcome to Country' entry signs

See Program Management

Australian Alps 10 Great Walks 10 Great Drives

This scoping project has been looking at what are the walks and drives that the visitor "must do" when they come to the Australian Alps national parks. The project is designed to fit in with the visitor experiences to be listed for the broader Australian Alps National Landscape. The Australian Geographic "Best of Australia" series on the Australian Alps in 2009 is expected to be an opportunity to include best drives, walk and rides. The Australian Alps National Landscapes Tourism Master Plan will provide further context.

Australian Alps Walking Track Stakeholder Meeting

In May 2008 17 agency staff and AAWT stakeholders came together to discuss the management plan and strategy for the AAWT over two days at Currango Homestead in northern Kosciuszko National Park. The main outcome of the meeting was the development of a revised strategy and operational plan for the period 2008-12. The groups will next meet again formally in 2010.

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 the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural 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 the 2003 fires.
6. Project tools
Develop and provide tools and processes that will assist agencies and relevant community groups to undertake cultural heritage projects in the Australian Alps national parks.

Indigenous Interpretation Training and Employment

For the second year running this interpretation training program has been run for a number of Indigenous rangers and trainees from across the agencies and community members. Training camps were run in the Bogong High Plains and Currango Homestead areas of the Alps. Some of the participants were involved in running interpretive activities for visitors and school groups including during Easter 2008.

Interim Australian Alps Indigenous Reference Group

The membership of this Group was established during 2007-08 with the first meeting proposed for September 2008.

Australian Alps Walking Track signs and Message Stick

See Community Awareness

Australian Alps 'Welcome to Country' entry signs

See Program Management

Indigenous Landscape Assessment Skills Training

Work commenced on the first stage of a two stage project to develop, and then implement, training for Alps agencies Indigenous staff in landscape assessment skills which will allow participants to proactively identify areas of Indigenous cultural significance prior to major works or other potentially disruptive activities being carried out. The program is also designed to complement the successful interpretation training for Indigenous staff, providing them with an opportunity to interpret another aspect of Indigenous culture. The training program will be implemented during Summer/Autumn 2008-09.



Key Result Area: Program Management

(Capacity Building, Integrated Landscape Management and Operational Implementation)

Outcome

The Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program will be well managed, maintain its effectiveness to achieve the vision and objectives of the MOU 2003, and operate within the relevant policy context of each participating agency.

Strategic Plan 2008-11

In December 2007 a process commenced to develop a new Strategic Plan for the program as required under the MOU. This plan was driven primarily by the outcomes of the workshop held in June 2007 to mark the 21st anniversary of the signing of the MOU. However, there were many other forums and activities that provided input to the process including the annual Science Management forum in April 2007 on Climate Change in the Alps. The new plan was published in June 2008 with implementation to start in early 2008-09.

National Heritage Listing

The National Heritage List is developed under the provisions of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The Australian Heritage Council continued its assessment of the Australian Alps national parks throughout 2007-08. As part of this, staff of the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts conducted workshops with the community and with Alps agency staff. The Australian Heritage Council

concluded its assessment and, from its meeting on 3 and 4 June, made recommendations to Minister Garrett about whether or not the Alps should be placed on the National Heritage List.

Australia's World Heritage Tentative List

In June 2007 the EPHC agreed to support the development of a new Australian World Heritage Tentative List and that the Australian Alps should be considered for inclusion. Consequently, in November 2007, the Australian Government commenced a process to develop that list and the Alps program has co-ordinated the preparation of a case to identify the potential World Heritage values of the Alps. The process will continue in 2008-09 with an important step being the anticipated National Heritage listing.

National Landscapes Program

On 15 June 2008 the Australian Alps Region, together with seven other places around Australia, was announced as a National Landscape under the innovative program managed by Tourism Australia and Parks Australia. This was the culmination of over 12 months work on the part of the steering committee comprising stakeholders from throughout the Australian Alps Region. The National Landscapes Program identifies sites offering superlative natural/cultural experiences distinctive to Australia

and sought after by a global audience known as Experience Seekers.

The Australian Alps Program has taken a lead role in helping to focus tourism and community efforts towards achieving this recognition by providing financial and executive support for the steering committee and chairing of the committee by the Convenor of the AALC.

Australian Alps 'Welcome to Country' entry signs

This has been a multi-stage project that has resulted in the decision to produce signs to promote the Australian Alps as 'one park' through smaller signs inside park boundaries and/or key visitor sites and respect and recognise ongoing Aboriginal connections and custodianship.



Draft designs have been considered and finalisation and trialing of these can commence once the new Australian Alps Indigenous Reference Group considers these when it meets in 2008-09. Consideration will also need to be given to integrating with state agency welcome to country signage and the possible implications of National Heritage listing, should it occur, and branding that may be associated with that achievement.

Keep Winter Cool campaign

The program continued its membership of this climate-change awareness initiative that was launched in June 2006. It continues to be developed by the Australian Alps, Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council and Australian Ski Areas Association and there have been a number of positive outcomes with the launch of a very successful program over the winters of 2007 and 2008.

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 Co-operative Management Program.

During the reporting period editions 35 and 36 were produced. The newsletter is 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 nearly 1000 copies and being available on the website.

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. The highlights have been the Indigenous Interpretation Training which a number of Indigenous staff undertook for both mentoring and capacity building purposes, the Science Management Forum on Visitor Experiences and Use and the workshop on Deer Management.

Two staff from the participating agencies attended an international conference in Canada looking at the management of transboundary protected areas. The AALC funded the attendance of the AALC Convenor who jointly prepared a paper titled "Enhancing Connectivity Through Co-operative Management – Lessons Learned from 21 Years of Cross-border Programs in the Australian Alps".

Alps Operational Group

The Alps Operational Group met once during the reporting period. This forum of field-based managers helps facilitate the integration of the Alps Program into agency programs and advises the AALC on how the program can best assist operational managers.

Agency benefits of the MOU

Responsibility for policy, strategic planning and day-to-day management of each of the Australian Alps national parks remains vested with each participating agency.

The AALC seeks to give land managers 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 co-ordination and sharing of knowledge during the year were achieved through:

Fire control and fire recovery

While having a relatively quiet fire season in 2007-08 cross border co-ordination and relationships between staff continued to be evident during the period.

Since the 2003 fires, agency staff have continued to work 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.

Promoting community and inter-agency partnerships

The Alps Program continued to foster strategic partnerships through the following:

- the Keep Winter Cool global warming awareness campaign in conjunction with the Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council and Australian Ski Areas Association;
- the Australian Alps National Landscapes program by taking a lead role in bringing together local, regional and State tourism organizations and park agencies;
- involving the community in the annual Science Management Forum, Indigenous interpretation training, AAWT stakeholders workshop and Deer workshop

Best practice management

Information and ideas were exchanged through the running of a number of workshops on topics including:

- visitor experience and use; and,
- deer management.

Australian Alps Walking Track liaison

The ongoing co-ordination of a strategic approach to managing the Australian Alps Walking Track included the development of an interactive web page and interpretive signage as well as the meeting of the AAWT Stakeholder Group that revised the AAWT strategy and operational plan.

Interim Australian Alps Indigenous Reference Group

The membership of the Indigenous Reference Group was established during the reporting year with the first meeting to occur in September 2008. In the interim, every opportunity has been taken to involve and liaise with Aboriginal Traditional Owners and custodian groups around the Alps on a range of matters in an effort to strengthen understanding and co-operation. In particular there has been involvement through:

- the mentoring of a number of Aboriginal people undertaking the interpretation training and employment program;
- Indigenous staff membership of the Cultural Heritage Working Group;
- The introduction of a specific Indigenous People's Engagement key result area in the new strategic plan.

Inter-Agency Liaison

Ministerial Council

The Alps Program predominantly facilitates resolution of common issues and the sharing of knowledge and advice with direct benefits for operational staff in their various park management roles. The Alps Ministerial Council supports the Alps Program by providing high-level intergovernmental endorsement.

The Ministerial Council did not meet during the 2007-2008 reporting period.

Heads of Agencies meeting

This annual meeting is an important opportunity for Heads of Agencies, or their delegates, to come together, review progress and discuss future directions and projects for the co-operative management of the Australian Alps national parks.

During the reporting period the Heads of Agencies formally met once on 20 February 2008 in Sydney hosted by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change. Issues covered included updating the Heads of Agencies on the Alps Program, National Heritage Listing, draft terms of reference for the Indigenous Reference Group, National Landscapes and the draft Strategic Plan 2008-11.

Integrated management

Key senior managers and planning staff continue to explore practical ways to integrate planning across the Australian Alps national parks.

Key planning staff involved with the Alpine, Snowy River and Mt Buffalo National Parks management plan reviews have been involved with Alps program activities so that they may gain a better insight to the integration of management across the Alps.

Staff from other Victorian, NSW and ACT agencies have been involved in processes such as the National Heritage assessment process and the bid to have the Alps included on Australia's World Heritage Tentative List.



External Liaison

The Australian Alps has partnerships with a range of external organisations. During the reporting period several organisations played a major collaborative role.

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

Mountains Biome This 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, and organises mountain management workshops.

The quarterly Mountain Protected Area newsletter is circulated to agency staff via the Alps program.

The IUCN WCPA has collaborated with the AALC in the presentation of the third in a series of Science Management Forums.

Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)

with financial and staff support of Australian Alps workshops and joint policy initiatives.

Australian Alps Aboriginal Traditional Owner and Legislative Groups

The Australian Government

Department of Climate Change in providing assistance and funds for the development of the Alps State of the Catchments project.

Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council and the Australian Ski

Areas Association in the implementation of the Keep Winter Cool Campaign.

Various University academics and scientists participated in a range of forums and workshops throughout the reporting period.

National Parks Associations of Victoria, NSW and ACT

Kosciuszko Huts Association and Victorian High Country Huts Association

VicWalk, Canberra, and NSW

Bushwalking Clubs Contributions and ongoing support for cross-border co-operative management of the Australian Alps Walking Track. Tourism Victoria, Tourism NSW and Australian Capital Tourism and key industry stakeholders and local government in the establishment and successful recognition of the Australian Alps as a National Landscape.

The Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters

Association as well as the NSW Game Council in the Deer Workshop.

The much-appreciated contributions of these organisations are further evidence of the growing profile, strength and relevance of the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program.



Attachment 1 Program Structure as at 30 June 2008

	Australian Government	New South Wales	Australian Capital Territory	Victoria
Responsible Minister	The Hon Peter Garrett, AM MP Minister for the Environment Heritage and the Arts (Australian Government)	The Hon Verity Firth, MP Minister for the Environment and Climate Change (New South Wales)	Mr Jon Stanhope, MLA Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change (ACT)	The Hon Gavin Jennings, MLC Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Victoria)
Australian Alps Head of Agencies	Bruce Leaver First Assistant Secretary Parks Australia Division Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts	Sally Barnes Deputy Director General Head – Parks and Wildlife Group Department of Environment and Climate Change	Russell Watkinson Director Parks, Conservation and Lands Department of Territory and Municipal Services	Chris Rose Regional Manager East Region Parks Victoria
Australian Alps Liaison Committee AALC	Bruce Leaver First Assistant Secretary Parks Australia Division	Dave Darlington Regional Manager Snowy Mountains Region	Odile Arman Manager, Programs Co-ordination Parks, Conservation and Lands	Peter Jacobs (Convenor) Chief Ranger Alps Parks Victoria
AALC Secretariat	Tracie Brauer			
Program Manager			Rod Atkins	
Community Relations Working Group		Tonia Liosatos Mary Green	Lisa McIntosh Lois Padgham (Acting Convenor)	Bart Smith Gail Wright
Natural Heritage Working Group	Ross Scott	Genevieve Wright Josh Bean	Murray Evans (Convenor) Dave Whitfield	Charlie Pascoe
Visitor Recreation and Facilities Working Group		Simon Allender Andrew Miller	John Freeman Lea Durie	Kevin Cosgriff (Convenor) Trevor Hagger
Cultural Heritage Working Group		Dean Freeman (Co-convenor) Megan Bowden (Co-convenor)	Jennifer Dunn Adrian Brown	Chris Smith Colleen Nagle Mick Douthat

Projects under key result areas	Budget Allocation	Expenditure to 30 June 2008	Dollars carried over to 08/09
Program Manager & Program Administration	127,804		
Program Management	127,804	101,368	
Newsletter	11,000		
Annual Report	5,000		
Communication & Web	15,000		
Alps Operational Group	5,000		
Capacity Building/ Operational Implementation	36,000	25,448	
One Park/Welcome to Country Signs	15,000		
Development of new strategic plan	10,000		
National Landscapes Program	5,000		
Integrated Landscape Management	30,000	28,829	
Alps Catchments Rehabilitation scoping report	39,000		
Deer Management Workshop	15,000		
Wild Dog Research (Dogs in Space)	6,000		
Feral Horse Impacts Report	5,000		

Fire Research Group meeting	2,000		
Natural Heritage Conservation	67,000	16,311	
Australian Alps Indigenous Reference Group	15,000		
Indigenous Interpretation Training	25,000		
Indigenous Heritage Landscape Assessment Skills Training	18,000		
Cultural Heritage Conservation	58,000	13,000	
Australian Alps Walking Track Trail Head Signs	18,000		
Fact/information Sheet Development	4,000		
AAWT Message Stick development	2,000		
Community Awareness	24,000	18,020	
IUCN Science Management Seminar	25,000		
National Landscapes Great Walks and Drives scoping study	10,000		
Australian Alps Walking Track Stakeholders meeting	6,000		
Recreation & Tourism	41,000	36,143	
Revenue unallocated in budget	86,172		
TOTALS 07/08	Available funds 469,976	Expenditure 239,119	Carryover to 08/09 230,857