Annual Report
2015-2016

Australian Alps Liaison Committee

AUSTRALIAN ALPS
NATIONAL PARKS

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Mick Gentleman, MLA
Minister for Environment and Heritage (ACT)

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP
Minister for the Environment (New South Wales)
Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage

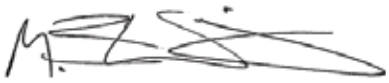
The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change (Victoria)
Minister for Suburban Development

The Hon. Josh Frydenburg, MP
Minister for the Environment and Energy (Australian Government)

Dear Ministers

We have pleasure in presenting the report of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 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,



Michael Wright
Acting Chief Executive
Office of Environment and Heritage

Margaret Gillespie
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Parks Victoria

Annie Lane
Executive Director
Environment ACT

Sally Barnes
Director of National Parks
Parks Australia

Foreword

The Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2016 with a new Strategic Plan, a new MoU and a renewed sense of enthusiasm for the future of the Program. For thirty years, the Program has been delivering innovative research and land management projects across the Australian Alps. The program officially came into existence in 1986, when relevant ministers from the ACT, Victoria, NSW and the Commonwealth signed the first MoU. The MoU has since been amended and re-signed on five occasions to reflect structural changes within each jurisdiction and to include new alpine areas in the agreement. The Heads of Agency signed the latest iteration of the MoU in 2016, thereby adding Lake Mountain in to the Australian Alps national parks and recommitting to the program.

The 2016-2018 Strategic Plan was finalised and approved by the Liaison Committee. The Plan's central theme is 'Connectivity through Catchment Health'. Underlying this theme are eight priority issues including invasive species, climate change adaptation, Aboriginal aspirations and communications. There will be three reference groups for the duration of this strategic plan: environment, cultural heritage and connecting people. All projects sponsored by the Program under this plan will need to demonstrate tangible links to the Plan's priority issues and outcomes.

In addition to funding a number of research projects this year, the Program facilitated several highly successful forums and workshops culminating in the Science Management Forum at the Australian National University. This forum brought together leading climate scientists and land managers to look at the future of the Alps in a warming world. One of the key messages to emerge from this gathering was the need for adaptive cooperative management, a notion that dovetails perfectly with the spirit of the Alps program.

The Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program is a highly regarded example of cross border collaboration with a significant global profile. It will always face challenges and it will always overcome them because of the people who put their heart and soul into making it work. As the Convenor of the AALC, I wish to acknowledge and thank everyone who has contributed time, expertise and enthusiasm to the Alps Program in the past year.

Roger Fenwick,
Convenor Australian Alps Liaison Committee
2015 - 2016

Glossary and Abbreviations

AALC	the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, established by the MoU
AATORG	the Australian Alps Traditional Owners' Reference Group
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
CCRG	the Climate Change Reference Group
CHRG	the Cultural Heritage Reference 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 and best practice 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)
NRMRG	the Natural Resource Management Reference 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
SECRG	the Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Reference Group
Strategic Plan	the three-year plan prepared by the AALC (for this reporting period the 'Strategic Plan 2012–2015') to guide the annual co-operative works program.
VEMRG	the Visitor Experiences and Marketing Reference Group
WCRG	the Water and Catchments Reference Group

Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program

Program Mission and Purpose

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

The Australian Alps is a rich landscape. It contains: plants and animals found nowhere else in the world; significant examples of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage; outstanding recreational opportunities. The Alps are also home to 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 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. In practical terms this involves: fostering a culture of goodwill, involving activities, projects, and supportive relationships; adding value to those relationships through associated economies of scale; going beyond line management and individual agency constraints; all to ensure consistency and best practice across borders.

This year saw a new land inclusion, the addition of the Lake Mountain Management Unit of the Yarra Ranges National Park. Lake Mountain is part of the same bio-geographical region as the rest of the Alps. The Lake Mountain massif contains Lake Mountain Alpine Resort and together with small outlying hilltops, are the western most examples of sub alpine bogs and vegetation. Many notable species occur such as the Leadbeaters Possum, Alpine Tree Frog, Alpine Bog Skink, Broad Toothed Rat and Mountain and Barred Galaxias.

The now 12 national parks and reserves in the Australian Alps link across 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

Agencies working in partnership to achieve excellence in conservation management of the Australian Alps national parks' natural and cultural values and sustainable use through an active program of cross-border cooperation

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.

Agency benefits of the MOU

While responsibility for policy, strategic planning and day-to-day management of each of the Australian Alps national parks remains vested with each participating agency, it is via the Program's cross-border relationships that knowledge and resources are shared. As well as the many networking opportunities significant cooperative actions are achieved. In this reporting year this has included: feral deer impacts on ecological and social values across the Australian alps; new Phytophthora occurrences in high alpine zones; feral horse management issues; rehabilitation of ecologically impacted sites; water health in visitor zones with a presence of invasive animals; and networking to enhance Traditional Owner relationships.

There were a reduced number of workshops and forums during the year. This was principally due to the restructure of the Program

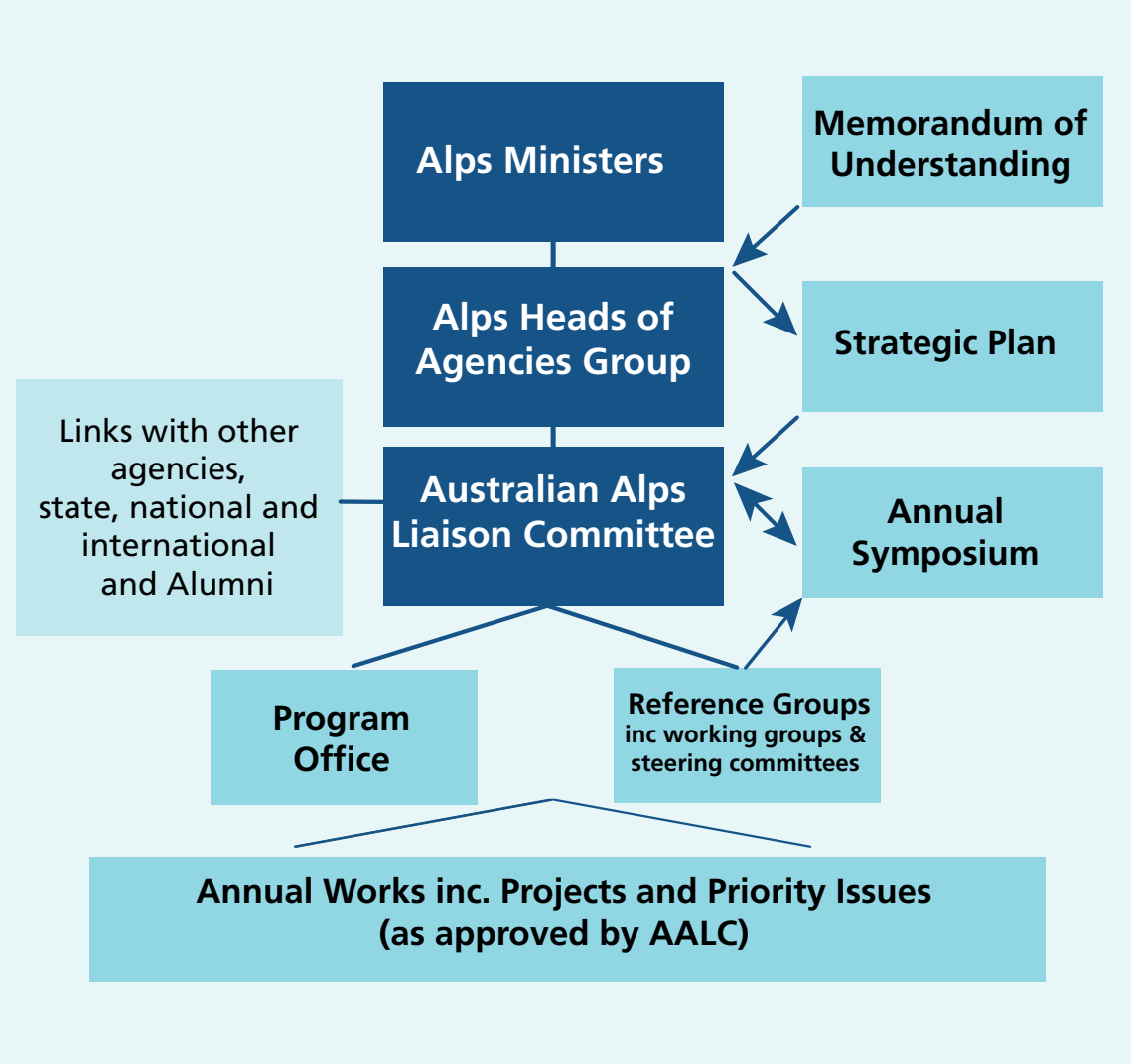
Workshop/ Forum	For	Attendance
Australian Alps Symposium	Networking for the AALC, new reference group and current project leads	53
Green Book workshops x 3	Targeted at stakeholder and partner agencies; agency staff	58
Reference Group workshops x 2	Ref group discussion. Review of current and new project proposals	18
Science - Management Forum* *Held July 2016	Alpine ecologists; agency scientists and agency managers	62

Table 1.0

Past and present Alps Program Managers at the Science Management Forum

The Alps Program's Functional Relationships

The administrative structure aims to operate with low overheads and effective integration with agency structures and the Alps planning framework (MoU, strategic plan, and annual works program)



Refer to the organisational structure of the Program at Attachment 1 (page 11)

Performance Results

The 2015-2016 year saw significant change to the governance and operation of the AAnp Program. This included:

- The Alps Program 'Ministerial Council' being rescinded as an operational part of the Program's structure
- Authority for approval and agreement to the Memorandum of Understanding being vested in Heads of Agencies
- A transition from the old strategic plan 2012-2015 to a new three-year plan, 2016-2018
- The new strategic plan establishing performance results in recognition of Core Values, Priority Issues & Objectives*, and (annual) Outcomes (deleting the use of Key Result Areas)
- The amalgamation of Reference Groups, reducing from seven to three. The number of agency representatives to the RG's being increased
- The Traditional Owner RG communications and relationship activities being devolved to the Agency (regions) TO specialists. (N.B. A number of agency indigenous staff are members of the Cultural Heritage Ref. Group)

*Due to the commencement of the new Strategic Plan during the reporting period, this annual report provides a review of the year based on the new Values, Priority Issues and Objectives

Core Value: Resilient Natural Landscapes
Environment RG

Priority Issue 1 - Invasive Species	
Objective	Diminishing the impact of invasive species on natural systems, including consideration on the impacts of climate change. The ungulates – deer and wild horse shall have particular emphasis
Measures of Success (Outcomes)	A three-year study into the feral deer impacts on ecological and social values in the Australian Alps concluded its fourth and final year. Results were presented at the AAnp November (Thredbo) symposium. A field guide book was developed and provided to agency staff. Report papers from the study have been catalogued in the AAnp Library (inc website). Agencies will use the information to assist in their continuing feral deer management projects Yr 2 of the project Quantitative Assessment of Feral Horse Abundance has continued in partnership with the University of Tasmania. Accurate and cost-effective methods for measuring local feral horse density are necessary in order to interpret data on feral horse impacts, monitor success of local horse management operations, and for planning future control operations. The field season this year focused on a sole landscape in northern Kosciuszko NP. The project outcome will provide operational staff with a new field tool for practical, cost-effective assessments of horse densities at a local level.
Priority Issue 2 - Landscape-wide Catchment and Ecological Issues	
Objective	Contribute to the development of landscape-wide initiatives that deal with new approaches to ecological systems and processes providing benefit for mountain catchments
Measures of Success (Outcomes)	Yr 1 of a 3-year project How much salt is too much for Australian alpine streams? commenced. Proposed outcomes of the project: 1) Determine the effect of road de-icing on salinity in selected Australian alpine streams and assess the ecological effect of these increases. 2) Develop provisional salinity targets for assessing the environmental risk of salt pollution from roads and car parks to streams in Australian Alpine areas. This initial year funded planning for the project and purchase of in-stream data recorders. Two seasons of monitoring will now occur in the 2016 and 2017 winters. The very successful 'Green Guides -' A rehabilitation field guide to impacted landscapes was again promoted this year. 3 workshops were run with the target audience principally alpine partner agencies inc. ski resort, state road authorities, hydro-power authorities, land and catchment businesses, state forest managers, and private industry rehabilitation businesses. Agency staff who had not been able to participate in earlier workshops were also present.

Measures of Success cont. (Outcomes)	Snapshot of faecal coliform contamination in the Australian Alps. The quality of water in the Australian Alps, with respect to waterborne diseases, is largely unmonitored and assumed to be of relatively high quality being top of catchment and within protected areas. However, the increase in feral animals, in particular horses and deer, over recent years has reportedly raised concern amongst agency staff and visitors/bushwalkers that freshwater sources may be increasingly unsafe for use – e.g. drinking. This year saw the final sampling required of a few sites. Analysis of the results has shown that while most sites are within acceptable levels for human access and use, there are a minor number of sites that will require further monitoring to be undertaken. The Guthega skink, *Liopholis guthega*, is a nationally endangered alpine endemic that is restricted to two geographically isolated locations above 1600m: Kosciuszko National Park in south-eastern New South Wales, and the Bogong High Plains in north-eastern Victoria. This project is investigating the genetic divergence and habitat connectivity in the conservation of L.guthega at the known populations in the Australian Alps. It will form part of a larger study investigating the ecology, life history and thermal biology of the species at its two known localities. This research will significantly improve the current management of this species. An interim report will be provided in 2016-17 via peer-reviewed journals, staff briefing and agency fact sheets. The overall study is part of a PhD by the investigating scientist.
Priority Issue 3 - Climate Change and Adaptation	
Objective	Align projects to research that compliments expanding knowledge of climate change impacts on the natural values of the Alps. Projects that identify adaptive management opportunities for current and emerging issues will be encouraged
Measures of Success (Outcomes)	Year 3 (of 3) of the CSIRO/ Australian National Botanic Gardens research into seed persistence in soil-seed banks of (sub) alpine bogs and fens was completed. The project investigated seed characteristics (persistence, germination, etc.) of sub-alpine Bogs and Fens. Specific outcomes include:1) Improving the management and restoration of an EEC through an understanding of seed persistence and germination patterns in soil seed banks; 2) Identifying priority species for in situ management and conservation by understanding limits to their persistence in the soil and how this affects species resilience; 3) Reducing the risk of erosion, and colonisation by invasive species, by understanding whether soil seed banks are sufficient to generate good cover after disturbance events; and 4) Continuing collection and ex situ storage of bog/fen species. The project report is available via the AAnp library/website. A presentation was provided at the 2015 AAnp symposium and a workshop is planned for the new year. With conclusion of the project, an increase in knowledge of germination ecology will assist in appropriate ex situ conservation and adaptive management Phytophthora dieback in the Australian Alps, Yr 2 of 3. Extensive dieback in the shrub species Nematolepis *Phebalium ovatifolia* appeared for the first time in the alpine zone of Kosciuszko National Park in the 2012/13 summer with thousands of dead and dying shrubs. Its reappearance in 2013/14 suggested this was not a one-off event. This same Phytophthora species has now also been confirmed from another sample collected in Thredbo. Further study of the extent of dieback in this species is critical in identifying the extent of Phytophthora cambivora. However, this Nematolepis species only occurs in NSW. This project will examine the extent of infection within NSW. The project will also complete targeted surveys of symptomatic vegetation in Victoria, the ACT and other areas of NSW to ascertain if dieback observed is linked to Phytophthora species. An interim project report is available via the AAnp library/website. A presentation was provided at the 2015 AAnp Symposium. Australian Alps Science-Management Forum – Australian Alps Climate Futures: Taking Action Now to Strengthen Resilience. Whilst held middle of July 2016 this major biennial project was funded and planned within the reporting year. The Australian Alps Climate Futures Forum was run as part of the Science Management Series under the auspices of the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program. The science management forums are supported and partnered with the IUCN/WCPA through the Mountains Specialist Group which has a focus on conservation, management and protection of mountain protected areas globally. Over 60 people attended from a wide range of backgrounds including protected area managers, researchers, agency experts and alpine ecologists. The future relationship and institutional partnerships between scientists, researchers and management agencies is critical and there are multiple pathways to develop this. A proposal for an Australian Research Centre for High Mountain Futures may consolidate the science and research network.

Core Value: Living Cultural Landscapes
Cultural Heritage RG

Priority Issue 4 - Aboriginal Peoples Involvement

Objective	The Program acknowledges the contributions made by Traditional Owner groups to a variety of the Program's actions. Participation by agency indigenous staff and the TO groups to projects will be encouraged. Where appropriate projects will integrate the Alps indigenous people's interests and aspirations
Measures of Success (Outcomes)	The Alps Cultural Heritage Reference Group undertook planning for the second stage of the Aboriginal Cultural and Spiritual values of the Australian Alps report recommendations. On advice from the Commonwealth further work is required and hence funding was approved by AALC for a three-year project to develop further evidence for incorporating these values in the (Australian Alps) National Heritage List. Unfortunately, Yr 1 of the project did not commence principally due to the Program restructure and loss of a large number of Cultural Heritage RG members. Funding for the project will be maintained with work re-commencing on the project in 2017 No other projects or activities were directly undertaken pertaining to this objective by the AAnp Program this year. Each agency continued to provide opportunities and processes for Traditional Owner engagement in local agency regions. Affirmative action was taken to repopulate the membership of the Cultural Heritage RG particularly with agency indigenous staff representation.

Core Value: Connecting People to the Australian Alps NP's
Cultural Heritage RG
Connecting People RG

Priority Issue 5 - Communications

Objective	Improve relationships with key partner agency staff; improve communication tools accessibility (website, newsletter, and social media) and; ensure park agency staff are a focus for the Programs activities
Measures of Success (Outcomes)	Interactive visitor centre displays - The Alps smart-phone Tour Guide has received an upgrade as also some repositioning of the iPad host at visitor centres. The new NPWS interpretive office at Khancoban has received one of the totems. AAnp Program contributed to the revision and reprint of the 'Australian Alps National Parks' textbook. Authored by Deirdre Slattery, a result of the two-year project was a presentation/launch of the book at the Thredbo symposium. The book is available though a number of the Alps visitor centres as also via the CSIRO on-line bookshop AAnp Information Displays upgrade. Profiling of the Australian Alps has continued with this year's focus on visitor nodes in Canberra. To this end, a large panel has been installed at Dairy Farmers Hill in the Australian National Arboretum. Similar signage for the Telstra Tower 3600 visitor gallery is under consideration. 3 x News from the Alps newsletters were published including a bumper 30 year anniversary edition. This on-line publication continues as an important medium for sharing the Programs activities with agency staff and key stakeholders.

Core Value: Skilled and well-connected agency staff
Measures of Success
Connecting People RG

Priority Issue 5 'Communications' & associated objectives are also a contributor to this Core Value. Measures of Success are noted above.

Priority Issue 6 - Knowledge Management	
Objective	Improved access and utilisation of research outcomes, databases, reports and program information. Market these resources to assist in achieving best practice protected area management
Measures of Success (Outcomes)	The Program held a major symposium in November 2015. Around 60 staff including external research project leads gathered at the Thredbo Hotel to share news and views. The key objective was for the new Ref Group members to meet each other, to meet the AALC and for the various project leads to provide an update to the RG members on results/progress of their AAnp funded work. A very successful 2 days was accomplished, new relationships formed, and a new energy committed by the RG members. The draft plan was further workshopped by the AALC and refined during the reporting year. The plan was approved at the March Heads of Agency meeting. A review of access to all project reports since 1992 was undertaken. An Excel document is now available via the Library/website to assist agency staff, researchers and public locate and peruse these reports. Further work may be undertaken in improving the accessibility of some of the earlier reports (yet to be digitised).
Measures of Success (Outcomes)	A new strategic plan was delivered this year for the 2016-2018 (calendar) period. The plan was workshopped in May 2015 at the annual Alps Operational Group meeting. A review of old plans and the current delivery model was undertaken. It was identified that a new plan needed to be matched against the resource practicalities that have been and are currently in place. The plan would have ".....realistic intent whilst being flexible and adaptive". (Copies of the plan are available from the AAnp Program Manager) The draft plan was further workshopped by the AALC and refined during the reporting year. The plan was approved at the March Heads of Agency meeting. A review of access to all project reports since 1992 was undertaken. An Excel document is now available via the Library/website to assist agency staff, researchers and public locate and peruse these reports. Further work may be undertaken in improving the accessibility of some of the earlier reports (yet to be digitised).

Program Management

Objective	A well-managed and effective practice to achieve the vision and objectives of the MoU	The AALC met quarterly during the year, and a fifth time at the annual Heads of Agency meeting. They were also collectively present for the Thredbo symposium. A Program Support Officer position was funded for one day per week. A Parks Victoria officer continued in this position undertaking work in budget and financial management, workshop logistics, and providing secretariat support to AALC and HoA
Outcome	An efficiently managed Program to the satisfaction of key stakeholders and the Heads of Agencies	

Table 2.0

Stakeholder and Agencies relations

Much of the work of the Australian Alps Program during the reporting period has been made possible through collaboration with a collection of groups inc. associations, organisations, authorities, universities, and local, state and federal government departments. The much appreciated contributions of these organisations are further evidence of the sustained profile, strength and relevance of the Australian Alps Program.

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee appreciates and values the support of these agencies, institutions, and groups. They are valuable partners integral to the success of the program including contributions to policy, strategy, community input, research and project delivery.

Australian Alps National Landscapes inc	National Environment Research Program – Landscapes and Policy Hub
Australian National Botanic Gardens	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (Office of Environment and Heritage)
ACT Parks and Conservation Service	NSW, Vic and ACT Traditional Owner Groups
Catchment Management Authorities, Victoria	Office of Environment and Heritage NSW
Department of Environment (Australian Government)	Parks Australia (Australian Government)
Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning (formerly Department of Environment and Primary Industries - Victoria)	Parks Victoria
Forests New South Wales	Regional tourism organisations and visitor centres
International Union for Conservation and Nature (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Mountains Biome	Tourism Victoria, Tourism NSW, Australian Capital Tourism and key industry stakeholders and local government
Kosciuszko Huts Association and Victorian High Country Huts Association	University of New England
Local Land Services, NSW	University of Tasmania
Mount Buller Resort / Falls Creek Resort	Melbourne University
National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility	Walking Associations - Bushwalking Victoria, Canberra, and NSW Bushwalking Clubs
National Parks Associations of Victoria, NSW and ACT	Victorian Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council

Attachment 1 Program Structure as at 30 June 2016

	Australian Government	New South Wales	Australian Capital Territory	Victoria
Responsible Minister	The Hon. Greg Hunt MP Minister for Environment	The Hon. Mark Speakman, MP Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage	Mick Gentleman, MLA Minister for the Environment and Heritage	The Hon. Lisa Neville, MP Minister for Environment and Climate Change
Australian Alps Head of Agencies	Sally Barnes Director of National Parks, Parks Australia	Michael Wright Acting Chief Executive Office of Environment and Heritage	Annie Lane Executive Director, Environment, ACT	Bradley Fauteux Chief Executive Officer, Parks Victoria
Australian Alps Liaison Committee AALC	Ben Phillips Director, Executive Coordination, Parks Australia	Mick Pettitt Regional Manager Southern Ranges Region, NPWS Office of Environment and Heritage	Brett McNamara Regional Manager, National Parks & Catchments Region, ACT Parks and Conservation Service, Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate	Roger Fenwick (AALC Convenor) Regional Operations Manager East Victoria, Parks Victoria
Program Manager				Andrew Nixon (Parks Victoria)
Program Support Officer				Nicole Stocks (Parks Victoria)
Connecting People Reference Group	Lisa Testoni Sabrina Sonntag	Dan Nicholls Tim Greville Patricia Wilkinson	Jasmine Foxlee (Convenor) Lois Padgham Mel Barton	Gary Bellesini Kevin Cosgriff Gail Wright
Environment Reference Group	Jeremy Groves (Convenor) Zarni Bear Clare D'Arcy	Geoff Robertson Duane Shawcross Mel Schroder Ken Green	Shelley Swain Oliver Orgill Lisa Evans Ben Stevenson	Matt Holland Elaine Thomas Andy Gillham
Cultural Heritage Reference Group	Anthea Brecknell Tim Savage	Tristan Ricketson Megan Bowden	Krystal Hurst Jennifer Dunn Meaghan Russell	Bridget Grant Luke Johnson Chris Smith

Table 3.0

The functional roles of the entities listed in the Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program structure and noted under the MoU are :

Australian Alps Ministers 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 Australian Alps Liaison Committee on policy, priority and emerging issues.

Australian Alps Liaison Committee The Australian Alps Liaison Committee 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.

Australian Alps Program Manager The Australian 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 Australian Alps Liaison Committee, is carried out. The Program Manager position is hosted by each of the State/Territory park agencies for three years at a time. During this reporting period, the position was hosted by Victoria.

Program Support Officer The necessity for administrative support to the AALC and the Program has been recognised for the last 10 years. The Commonwealth provided secretariat support from 2005 to 2010. From 2011 the Program has funded a part-time administration officer to assist in administrative and financial reporting matters.

Reference Groups A number of reference groups are established to advise the Australian Alps Liaison Committee on specific matters, and to assist with the implementation of the Co-operative Management Program. These groups usually have a minimum of two staff from each of the co-operating agencies as members. Terms of Reference are provided for the reference groups and members.

Early in the reporting period, the six reference groups operating under the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program were reduced to three. The realignment was:

Natural Resource Management Reference Group;	**Environment**
Water and Catchments Reference Group;	
Climate Change Reference Group;	
Cultural Heritage Reference Group;	**Cultural Heritage**
Visitor Experiences Reference Group;	**Connecting People**
Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Reference Group.	

All groups met at least once face-to-face during the year plus held a number of teleconference discussions.

Currently there are two working groups (reporting to the relevant reference group) that cooperate on operational matters on behalf of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee. They are the Australian Alps Walking Track and the Feral Horse group.

Alps Operational Group. The Alps Operational Group has a flexible participation of Rangers-in-Charge, Area, District and Operational Program Managers, and other key operational staff. The group meets biennially to provide advice to the Australian Alps Liaison Committee on current issues and targeted management activities. The gathering of AOG staff can be part of one of the annual AAnp workshops e.g. this year's symposium.

Attachment 2 Financial Report Year Ending 30 June 2016

Revenue (all figures EXCLUDE GST)		
Opening Balance 1 July 2015		
Project carry-overs from 2014-15		$28,308[1]
Agency Contributions	ACT	$40,000[2]
	NSW	$120,000[2]
	Victoria	$142,000[3]
	Commonwealth	$35,000
Mt Buller Resort		$2,000
National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility		$5,000
TOTAL (cash and in kind contributions)		$372,308
Total cash revenue 2015-2016		$230,308

Expenditure & 2015-2016 Carryover (all figures EXCLUDE GST)	
Expenditure in 2015/16	
Projects (refer to table 4.1)	$202,157
Program Office	$142,000
Total	**$344,157**
Carryover (to 2016/17)	
• Project funds unspent	$7,843
• 2 x Projects not implemented/funds not required	$ 20,000
TOTAL (exc GST)	$ 27,843
TOTAL EXPENDITURE & 2015-2016 CARRYOVER	$372,000

Table 4.0

[1] This amount is project carry-over from year 2014-15. It includes funds from projects: water contamination-faecal coliform; rehabilitation field guide workshop; deer survey; Alps Operational workshop; other project underspends

[2] Both NSW NPWS and ACT Parks and Conservation Service made their 2015/16 contribution in May 2015 (NSW $120,000 ACT $40,000 = $160,000).

[3] Parks Victoria commitment is to the cash value of $120,000. Parks Victoria however chose to provide their contribution as a direct provision of the Program Managers costs (inc. salary, on-costs, office costs = $142,000)

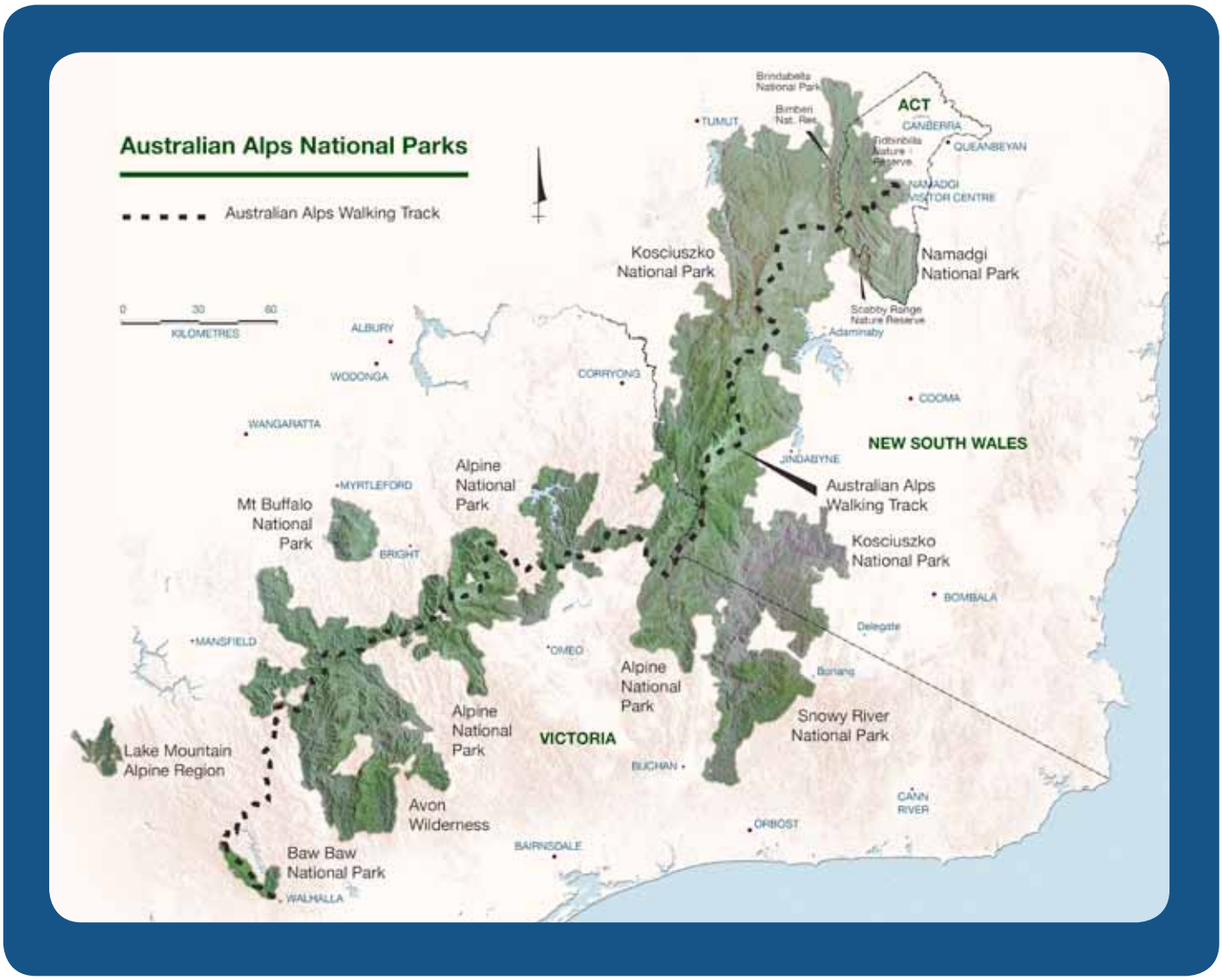
Project under Key Result Areas		Actual Expenditure to 30 June 2016
Program Management		
Program Manager, employment and office on-costs[1]		[1]$142,000
Program Operating inc. administration, AALC and Reference Group meetings		20,531
Program Administration support		18,157
AAnp Program Thredbo symposium		13,668
IUCN 'Hand Across Borders' workshop		1,293
Strategic Plan 2016 - 2018		1,807
	Program Management Total	$55,456
Program Promotion		
Annual report (2014-2015)	(Invoiced to 2015-16 budget)	1,905
AAnp / IUCN (WCPA) Science Management Forum[2]		10,850
Alps 'News from the Alps' Newsletter		9800
Collateral & promotion purchases		1,964
Communications sub-projects		3,600
AAnp website service		1,186
	Program Promotion and Information Total	$19,505
Connecting People		
Information displays upgrade		4,660
Volunteer (management) staff workshop[2]		0
Alps interactive visitor centre displays		1,080
	Connecting People Total	$5740
Environment		
Snapshot of faecal coliform contamination in waterways		1,482
Rehabilitation field guide workshops		5,372
Salting in Alpine Streams		14,590
Guthega Skink		5,500
Feral deer impacts		4,000
UTAS Quantitative assessment of feral horse abundance		38,000
Seed persistence in soil seed banks		21,000
Phytophthora - dieback		10,000
AAnp / IUCN (WCPA) Science Management Forum		21,602
	Environment Total	$121,546
Cultural Heritage		
Yr 1 / Stage 2 Aboriginal Cultural & Spiritual Values of the Alps report[3]		0
TOTAL for 2015/2016		**$202,157**

[1] Not included in expenditure total [2] Project allocation of$ 5000 unspent - rolled over to 2016-2017

[3] Project allocation of $15000 unspent - rolled over to 2016-2017$5000 unspent

Table 4.1

Attachment 3 Australian Alps National Parks Regional Map



All photos throughout: John McRae

AUSTRALIAN ALPS NATIONAL PARKS

AUSTRALIAN ALPS FIRST PEOPLES

Parks VICTORIA
Healthy Parks Healthy People

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Director of National Parks

ACT PARKS AND CONSERVATION SERVICE

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