

Joint Management Plan for the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks

Summary of Public Comment on Draft Plan and our Responses



The Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board (DDLMB) has developed the Joint Management Plan (Plan) for six parks and reserves:

- Greater Bendigo National Park
- Hepburn Regional Park
- Paddys Ranges State Park
- Kara Kara National Park (except a small part along the western border)
- Kooyoora State Park
- Wehla Nature Conservation Reserve

This Plan begins a partnership for Joint Management of Country whose foundation is the *Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013 (RSA 2013)* between the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) and the State of Victoria, under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Victoria)*. The *RSA 2013* established a Traditional Owner Land Management Board, later renamed the Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board (DDLMB), with a majority of Dja Dja Wurrung members. The DDLMB was appointed by the Victoria Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate change to prepare this Plan.

The Parks are held as Aboriginal Title by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) to be jointly managed with the State of Victoria. The DDLMB contracted a consortium including CSIRO (leader), DDWCAC, DDWCAC Enterprises and Conservation Management to support development of the Plan. This group worked closely with Parks Victoria (PV) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

This leaflet provides a Summary of what the DDLMB heard from Dja Dja Wurrung (DDW) People and a broad range of stakeholders during consultation about the Draft Joint Management Plan for two months between April and June 2018. Information is also included about changes made to the Draft Plan, resulting in the Final Plan, agreed between the DDLMB and the Secretary of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and approved by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. The Summary is grouped into sections that are consistent with the structure of the Plan.

WHO DID WE LISTEN TO?

During the public consultation period of two months, the DDLMB listened to many different voices through face-to-face meetings, emails, Community Information Sessions and through an online survey. We listened to Dja Dja Wurrung People through meetings with the DDW Champions Focus Group and the DDWCAC Board.

Five Community Information Sessions in:

- Melbourne 18 May 2018 (3¹)
- Bendigo 19 May (13)
- Inglewood 19 May (7)
- Daylesford 20 May (1)
- Castlemaine 20 May (36)

Two face-to-face meetings were held at the invitation of the Prospectors and Mining Association of Victoria (PMAV). Emails with relevant information were sent in response to twenty-four queries. Individuals and groups were invited to complete feedback forms at the Community Information Sessions, send submissions in any format by email, and/or to respond to an online survey.

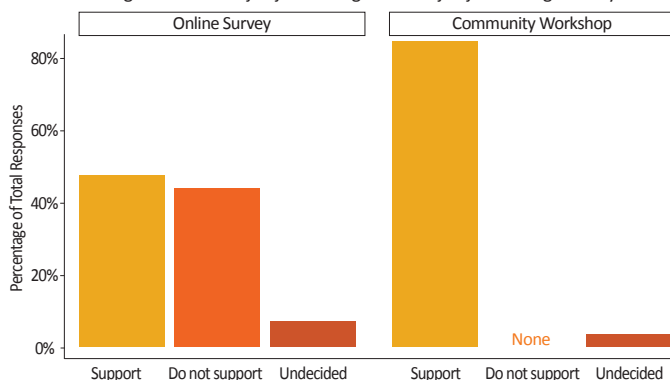
WHAT DID WE HEAR?

The response to the public consultation was very good. DDLMB received one hundred and sixty separate submissions by email, of which ninety-five were identical form letters raising concerns about prospecting exclusions and protection of mining heritage. A further twenty-six feedback forms were completed at the Community Information Sessions. Eighty-three individuals undertook the online survey, thirty-five fully completed and forty-eight completed partially. The submissions, and the online responses, identified many different issues, and many of these issues occurred in multiple submissions, together with many positive comments reinforcing the draft Plan. In total, two hundred and twenty-nine separate issues were identified and responded to. The submissions received were invaluable, and have resulted in significant changes between the draft and final Plan.

This Summary of Public Comment on the Draft Plan and Our Responses highlights the most important changes made. Every individual or group who made a submission, and provided contact details, has received an individual letter from the DDLMB acknowledging their input, with a copy of this Summary. Submissions can be accessed online at <http://www.dhelkunyadja.org.au/community-engagement>

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT THE VISION FOR THE PARKS AND HOW WE RESPONDED²

Do you support the vision of the Draft Plan for the knowledge and culture of the Dja Dja Wurrung People to be recognised and incorporated into the Joint Management of the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks in Dja Dja Wurrung Country?



Benefits³

- Clear vision for future Joint Management of the Dja Dja Wurrung (DDW) Parks
- Valuable information on Traditional Owner connection to Country

- Welcome opportunities for greater understanding of cultural burning to manage bush fire risk and natural environment
- Support the recognition of the importance of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage
- Plan is easy to navigate, visual presentation particularly welcomed by Dja Dja Wurrung People
- Welcome the public consultation that occurred to put together the Draft Plan

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Plan excludes and/or discriminates against non-Aboriginal interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan is underpinned by the Australia-wide policy of Reconciliation through the practice of jointly managing protected areas with Indigenous Peoples • The <i>Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013 (RSA 2013)</i> establishes the validity of Dja Dja Wurrung connection to and knowledge about their traditional lands • All people and their interests are included through a wide range of opportunities for example bushwalking, four wheel drive touring, prospecting, orienteering, bird-watching, camping and enjoying time with the bush
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal basis of the Plan to focus on conservation and joint management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information has been added from the <i>Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987, National Parks Act 1975, Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> and <i>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</i> to explain its legal basis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question the validity of DDW knowledge and cultural practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan is based on scientific, local and Dja Dja Wurrung knowledge and continues many existing land management practices • Scientific information is critical to the prioritisation of challenges, pest control, threatened species management, and many other aspects of the Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultation, transparency and accountability in the preparation of the Draft Plan, and the need for an independent review before finalisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Draft Plan was made available for public consultation in full compliance with the <i>Conservation, Forest, and Lands Act s82PA</i> • A new section on public consultation details the engagement before as well as after the Draft Plan was released • The Secretary of DELWP reviewed and approved the release of the draft Plan for public consultation • The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change reviewed the final Plan before approval

"I am grateful that traditional custodians of this land are present and able to take care of country. I am pleased that the broad community is now ready to listen to what First Australians offer to all of us." Survey Respondee

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT OUR DRAFT STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS AND HOW WE RESPONDED

1. People of the Parks and Surrounding Landscapes

Benefits

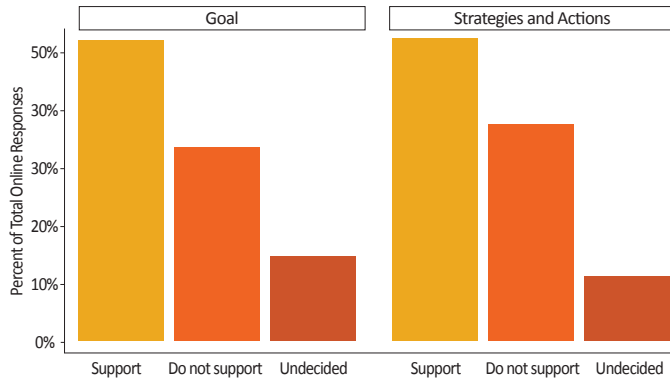
- Education, including cultural education, has a key contribution to make and is strongly supported
- Many stakeholders look forward to ongoing advisory roles with DDW for management of the Parks
- Opportunities for walks and talks in the Park by DDW People are welcomed

¹ The number of attendees at each meeting is shown in brackets

² All graphs except the first one come from the Online Survey; the first includes data from feedback forms distributed at the Community Information Sessions.

³ Benefits listed in this Summary are the most important ones that stakeholders highlighted

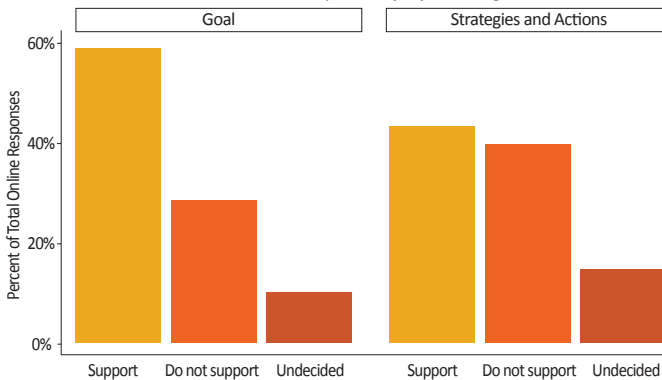
How strongly do you support the People of the Parks and Surrounding Landscapes goal or Strategies and Actions?



Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of recognition of the contributions of some groups 	<p>The Plan has been updated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise the contributions of many groups to protecting assets through removing rubbish, finding and removing toxic metals (e.g. lead), reporting of illegal dumping and reporting the presence of pest animals and weeds; and recognise their economic contributions include some additional stakeholder groups in the list in the Resources document
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders seek ongoing consultation, and to partner and collaborate, not just advise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions in the Plan were amended to recognise the role of partners in collaborating with Park managers, and to commit to ongoing consultation

2. Recreation, Cultural Practices and Customs

How strongly do you support the Recreation, Cultural and Customs goal or Strategies and Actions?
 Dja Dja Wurrung People and the wider community enjoy recreation and cultural activities in the Parks, and show respect for Dja Dja Wurrung Culture



Benefits

- Exciting opportunities for education and improved management
- Support for increased usage of DDW language and cultural practices e.g. basket weaving
- Some user groups strongly support new restricted areas

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived general exclusion of non-Aboriginal interests and bush users Confusion around which areas and Parks will allow bush camping and prospecting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan sets out many ongoing opportunities for access to the Parks A new Table 11 in the Strategy document details where bush camping and prospecting is allowed in the Parks

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opposition to the exclusion of prospectors from some areas as the impacts of prospecting are very low Concern that prospecting is incompatible with Park management and should not be allowed anywhere in the Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More information has been included about impacts of prospecting The source for this information has been added to the References section Information has been added about the provisions under the NPA s32D that allows for prospecting in some national and state parks, while generally protecting such parks from prospecting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest from stakeholder groups to be involved in the development of joint Codes of Practice for prospecting, and to build on previous Victorian government enquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant Action has been updated to include stakeholder groups and previous Victorian government enquiries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State government provided incorrect information that the transfer of the Parks to Dja Dja Wurrung People would not affect access 	<p>The Plan has been updated to explain that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in accordance with the commitments of the State of Victoria, the transfer of Parks did not affect any existing use and access, recreational activities, or leases, licences and other rights and interests, and everyone continues to have access for a wide range of activities zones and overlays are used in the Plan, and all park plans in Victoria, to separate potentially incompatible public uses—such as cultural heritage protection and prospecting— while ensuring ongoing public access to the Parks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about adding rubbish bins rather than encouraging users to remove their own rubbish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal for placing rubbish bins has been removed and replaced with a goal for visitors to take their rubbish away with them

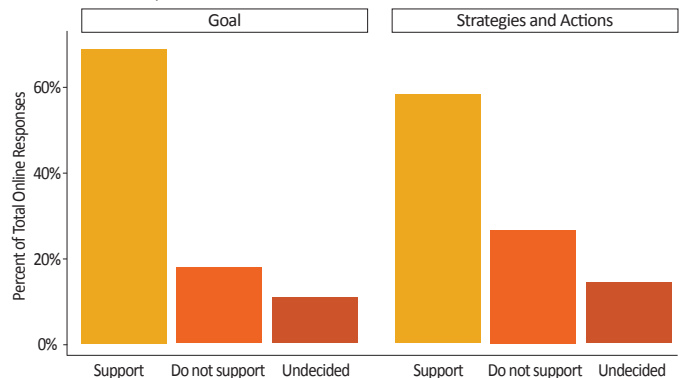
“Not impose unreasonable and unfounded restrictions on prospecting and allow it in all areas of the Parks.” Submission from member of the public

“Prospecting is not consistent with Victoria’s National Parks Act, in that activities can have a serious impact on fauna (especially in waterways), flora and cultural sites.” Submission from a community group

3. Cultural Heritage

How strongly do you support the Cultural Heritage goal or Strategies and Actions?

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage are recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community, and have the same value in the wider community



Benefits

- Strong support for cultural heritage protection
- Appreciation of recognition of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage

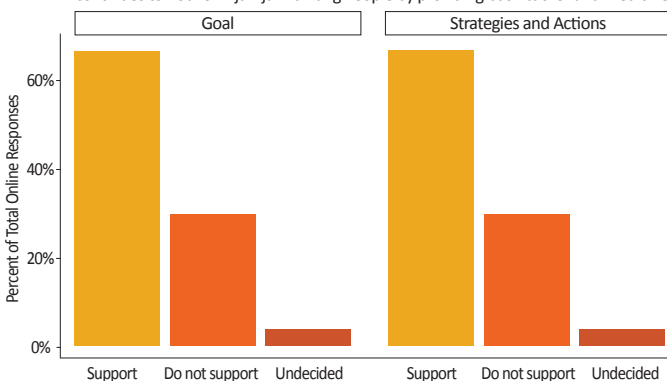
- Provides valuable information on Traditional Owners fundamental connection to Country

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining history not adequately acknowledged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan notes the mining history and Section 7 provides a strategy to promote and protect cultural landscape and historic heritage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dja Dja Wurrung heritage should be included in tourism presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Action in the Strategy document has been updated to recognise inclusion of DDW heritage in tourism presentations

"This Plan has to be applauded for its inclusiveness and compassion, given that non-Aboriginal heritage is only 250 years old." Submission from member of the public

4. Plants and Animals

How strongly do you support the Plants and Animals goal or Strategies and Actions?
Dja Dja Wurrung Country, with its important species and ecosystems, is healthy and continues to nourish Dja Dja Wurrung People by providing bush tucker and medicine



Benefits

- Control of invasive weeds and pest animals has multiple benefits
- Support for landscape-wide approach to conservation and restoration, including of DDW priority food and fibre plants
- Several expressed interest in knowing more about Wi (*cultural fires in the landscape*)
- Some see benefits in reintroduction of apex predators, e.g. Gal Gal (dingo)

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caution, monitoring and explanation of Wi in practice, and attention to health and safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan has been updated to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise the ongoing provision of information from monitoring, and to highlight health and safety training and implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about hunting of overabundant native species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include conditions that such hunting must be based on scientific assessment and public consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern of impacts of re-introducing Gal Gal on farming community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include the assessment of environmental, cultural, social and economic impacts of Gal Gal re-introductions in the investigations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of ecological thinning for forests is questioned • Dja Dja Wurrung People identify a key role for a native plant nursery to support restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that only thinning that is demonstrated to be ecologically effective is used • include native plant nurseries, forest gardening, targeted Wi, and other means as part of DDW restoration roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the need for landscape-wide approaches to restoration and the impacts of logging adjacent to the Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support a landscape-wide approach to ensuring healthy plants and animals, and managing threats, including from vegetation disturbance in areas adjacent to the Parks

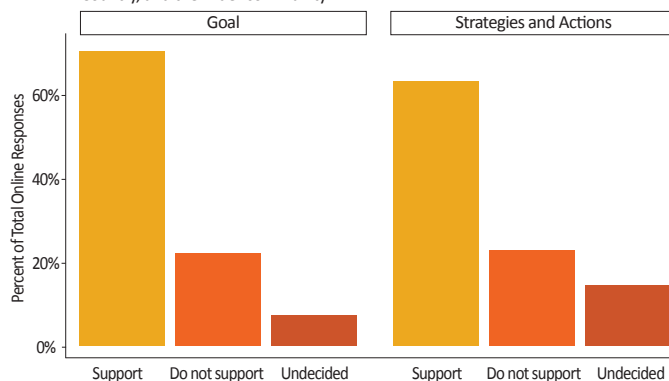
Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities from conservation detection dogs have not been recognised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include relevant innovations, e.g. conservation detection dogs, in the actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to understand whether any of these actions are helping threatened species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthen the role of monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes from these actions

"I love the plan and environmental philosophies that foster education and protection". Submission from a Dja Dja Wurrung person

"Coppice regrowth following thinning has also been a problem when undertaken in similar vegetation types to that found in Hepburn Regional Park (Heathy Forest)." Submission from a member of the public

5. Rivers and Waterways

How strongly do you support the Rivers and Waterways goal or Strategies and Actions?
Healthy rivers and waterways meet the needs of Dja Dja Wurrung People, their Country, and the wider community



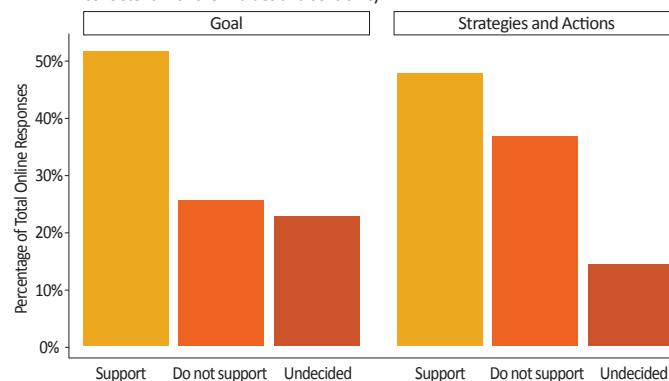
Benefits

- Strong support for Rivers and Waterways Strategies among some stakeholders

Issues	Existing information or amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need research and training opportunities for replenishing native animals into streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration of native species has been included in the relevant action

6. Landscape and Open Spaces

How strongly do you support the Landscape and Open Spaces goal or Strategies and Actions?
The upside-down Country in the Parks is healthy again, and all lands used in ways consistent with their values and sensitivity



Benefits

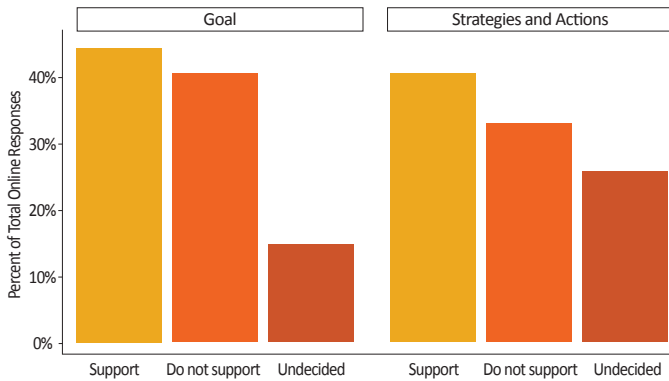
- The goal of healing the upside-down country is welcomed by some
- Support for the lead shown by DDW on carbon positive action

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims are beyond time frame of the Plan, health cannot be returned in fifteen years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan encourages actions to achieve this aim to the greatest extent possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opposition to bulldozing of diggings and concern that this will damage mining heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Draft Plan did not mention bulldozing of diggings The Plan has been updated to ensure engagement with park users, stakeholders and the public in developing the strategy to heal country
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about lack of enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisions related to compliance have been strengthened

"The good health and spirit of the country and us is something which we value and wish to be involved in, very excited about the concept." Submission from a Dja Dja Wurrung Elder

7. Self-determination of the Dja Dja Wurrung People

How strongly do you support the Self-determination of the Dja Dja Wurrung People goal or Strategies and Actions?
Dja Dja Wurrung People are empowered to manage these Park in their Country, with the support of the wider community



Benefits

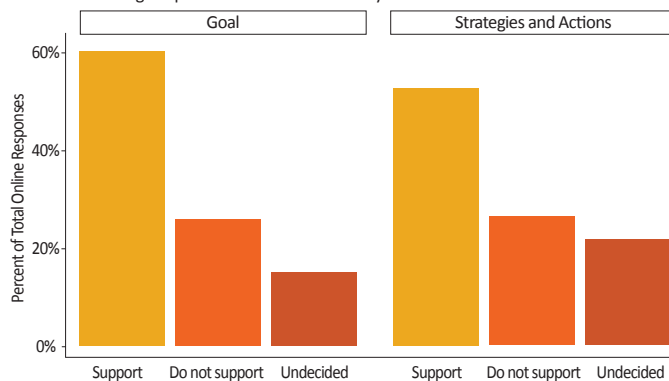
- Self-determination is recognised as a key priority to enable all the other goals in the Plan to be realised

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern with the use of the term "ownership", should recognise traditional ownership and Aboriginal Title 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions have been updated to ensure support is available to help people understand DDW traditional ownership and Aboriginal Title over the Parks

"No one manages the land better than the Aboriginal cultural owners. Their affinity with the land and what they could teach us about the land cannot be disputed." Survey responder

8. Enterprises

How strongly do you support the Enterprises goal or Strategies and Actions?
The Parks provide a strong and diverse economic base to strengthen Dja Dja Wurrung living culture, and contribute to the health and wellbeing of Dja Dja Wurrung People and the wider community



Benefits

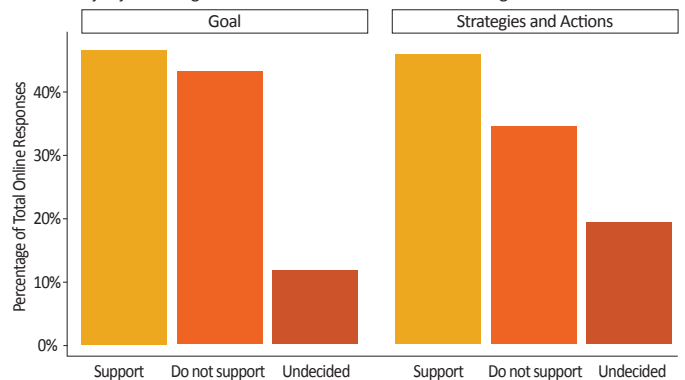
- Support for establishment of a keeping place
- Recognition of the positive contributions that can be made by more rangers and through education and training pathways
- The opportunity for Dja Dja Wurrung People to be involved in collaborative design and construction of the proposed gateway facility is important

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about preferential contracts for DDW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferential contracting is consistent with the <i>Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013</i>, and also with the Victorian Government's overall policy setting to increase opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal businesses to participate in the economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More Aboriginal businesses are needed and more fire rangers Concerns that Parks are not suitable venues for large-scale commercial developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roles of specialist fire rangers have been recognised A new action to support DDW enterprises has been included Large-scale commercial developments are planned to be adjacent to, not within, these Parks

"We strongly approve of increased ranger and other staff opportunities for Traditional Owners. And we strongly approve of programs to increase the expertise of all parks staff, whether Indigenous or from the broader community." Submission from a community group

9. Joint Management

How strongly do you support the Joint Management goal or Strategies and Actions?
Dja Dja Wurrung are accountable for all levels of Park Management



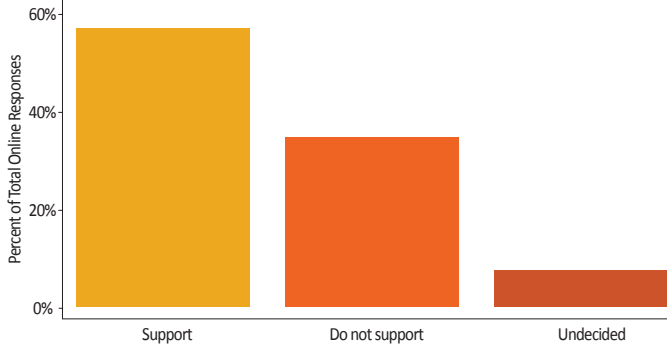
Benefits

- User groups and other seek to work in collaboration with the Joint Managers of the Parks
- Actions to support training and education pathways are welcomed by many

Issues	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDW People need access to housing to be able to work on the Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions now include reference to the need for housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDW People need opportunities to develop a better understanding of government policies and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions now include opportunities for DDW People to gain better understanding of these programs and policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership between DDW and PV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan now recognises the need for both a transition from PV to DDW People and the resources to underpin its delivery

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT OUR DRAFT STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND HOW WE RESPONDED

How strongly do you support the Strategic Initiatives identified as priorities for implementation?



Benefits

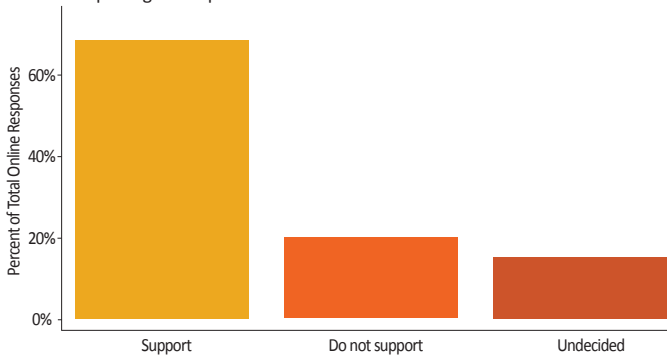
- Support for Strategic Initiatives, objectives and actions was noted in many submissions

Issues	Responses
• Concern about the adequacy of resources to achieve the Draft Plan	• The need for adequate resources is now recognised in the text

"JMP highlights practical challenges facing the parks ... increased pressure from growing population; without higher levels of operational resourcing, management targets will be extremely difficult" Submission from a community group

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT OUR DRAFT MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND IMPROVEMENT AND HOW WE RESPONDED

How strongly do you support the approach for Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement?



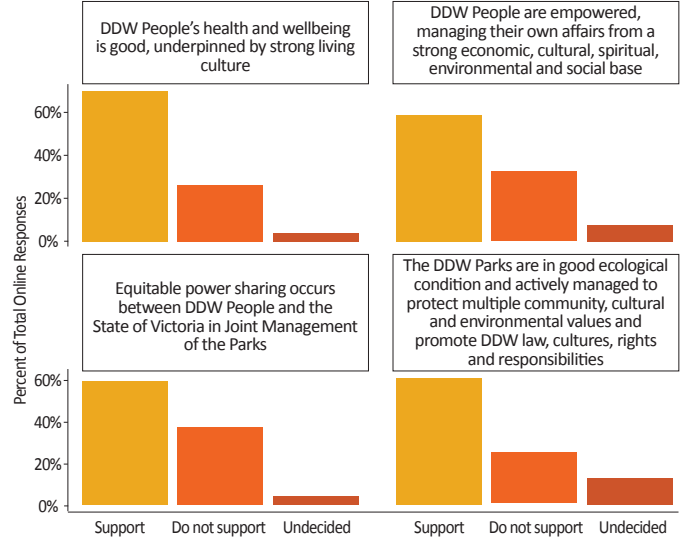
Benefits

- Inclusion of a section on monitoring and feedback welcomed
- Importance of evaluation for adaptive management noted

Issues	Responses
• Citizen science opportunities need to be recognised	• Citizen science now included as part of monitoring

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT OUR DRAFT FIFTEEN YEAR OUTCOMES

How strongly do you support the four following outcomes sought from the Draft Plan within fifteen years?



List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DDLMB	Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board
DDWCAC	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DDW	Dja Dja Wurrung
PV	Parks Victoria



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