

May 2021 Issue 2

It's official – Crag Stewards Victoria set to launch in Natimuk

Save the date: 12th June @5pm

----- THE BOARD

Queen's Birthday Weekend

5 pm Saturday 12th June (60-90mins)

Natimuk Soldiers Memorial Hall

101 Main St, Natimuk

All welcome for an update on where CSV has got to and where it is heading in the roll-out of its program to make climbing sites culturally and environmentally sustainable.

Followed by a roll-out plan for Dyurrite/Arapiles and questions.



Fundraiser



The Nati Café along with Genovese Coffee (who have kindly donated the beans) will be hosting a coffee morning on Saturday from 0830am.

Your chance to say hi to your CSV team and to help spread the word.

Crag Stewards Coming soon!

Thankyou for visiting.

Our website is currently under construction (Feb 2021).

Please check in again soon...



We are working hard to get online, so watch this space.

Maintenance Work

Progress on Arranging Crag Maintenance Work

----- MARTIN JACKSON

A key objective for CSV is to establish a way of getting crag and access maintenance approved by land managers and then executed by Crag Stewards and Volunteers. This sounds so easy but it is actually proving to be very difficult.

Last year, Parks Victoria agreed to a pilot program with CSV at Camels Hump to test how this can be achieved. The first step was to establish contact with Traditional Owners of the area, who are represented by the Taungurung Land and Waters Council. As joint land managers and clearly the custodians of cultural heritage, it is important that Taungurung are included in the process of formulating and approving any works in the area. More importantly, it is essential that CSV and Taungurung can communicate openly and respectfully about any issues that arise as a result of climbing at Camels Hump. Parks Victoria offered to facilitate an introduction to Taungurung and, when this did not eventuate, we tried to make contact ourselves directly. To date we have not been successful, so we are currently in the process of reaffirming PV's commitment to the Pilot and helping with the introduction. Above all, we understand that establishing this relationship is critical to our future in this area and is likely to impact other areas, so we are prepared to take as much time as is required to get it right.

In the meantime, we have tried a couple of avenues to get some minor vegetation work done on the access track.

Given that this is classified as an emergency access track, we figured

that PV would have the ability to authorise the work.

Unfortunately, not; the initial response has been that any work requires a cultural and environmental assessment process that has not been defined in the current Park Management Plan. Again, we are pushing this back to PV to see what support we can get under the banner of the agreed Pilot Program as opposed to the automatic response.

This story is likely to be replicated across Victoria as Parks Victoria and Traditional Owners establish how they are going to work together in joint management, interact with park users' groups like ourselves and update management plans. So, it is likely that it will be quite a long time before we are able to do any physical works in most areas. For Crag Stewards, this will mean our focus will be on assessing the current condition of our crags. We can build a list of recommendations for maintenance or improvement that will just have to wait until we have a process for getting them done. We can also care for crags by promoting good crag behaviours and providing information on erosion and access issues so that climber impact is minimised. In the end, CSV is all about ensuring that climbing is culturally and environmentally sustainable and we can only use the best tools at our disposal to achieve this.

In the meantime, we will continue to work hard and constructively on the Camels Hump pilot Program to establish the best relationships and methods of work as a foundation for the rest of Victoria. We will keep you updated.

Saving Grampians Climbing T-Shirts

Your Board Chair

----- MARTIN JACKSON



I started climbing on MUMC trip to Arapiles in 1983. It was an odd scene of woolen army pants, punks in tights, fixed-stem cams, regular explosions in campfires. Dunlop Volleys and seat belt harnesses. The scene was funny to watch, but I just loved the climbing and it has been part of my life ever since. It moved into the background for a while as I went regaining, mountaineering, bushwalking and adventure racing while raising a family and working, but I always kept my hand in. I was around 40 when I got back into it in a regular way with a weekly visit to a climbing gym and connecting with a new group of friends that is still the basis for my climbing adventures today. A lot of these have been based in Gariwerd since my parents have owned a holiday house in Halls Gap since it was called the Grampians State Forest. Despite going there my whole life, I'm always surprised at finding new little niches and have a long list of places I mean to get to, when I get the time. It is a wonderful place and it is engrained in me, although not at expense of all the other wonderful climbing places in Victoria, most of which I have visited. I'm happy to be able to spend some time and energy making climbing sustainable in these places at the same time as invigorating them with a better understanding of their heritage and cultural significance to Traditional Owners.

Steward Coordinator

Email:

coordinator@cragstewards.org.au



Save Grampians Climbing asked climbers what climbing areas that are now on the banned list (either permanently or temporarily) are most important to them.

We organised the hundreds of responses into a 'Word Cloud', and the resulting image is especially powerful. Locations are all in the Grampians (Gariwerd) / and Arapiles (Dyurrite).

These places are important to climbers; they offer some of the most outstanding climbing Australia has to offer, and if they are no longer available to us, at least we can wear the T-Shirt and keep the memories that these special places have given us.

To find out more about the history and significance of the bans facing climbers, please see SaveGrampiansClimbing.org

The shirts are being screen-printed at the highest quality, locally in Geelong on quality T-Shirts supplied by ascolour.com.au

Excess funds after costs are being donated to Crag Stewards Victoria.

Sourcing coloured Chalk

CSV has approached Grimpi Co.

to be able to supply Australian climbers with their range of coloured chalk products. We've done some testing on the Russet (red-brown) and Grey and they are looking pretty good. They use natural ochres for colour and don't contain any resins. We will have some available at the launch to try and/or buy.

More info to come, but you can check out their full range of products and their



background in supporting the Access Fund in the USA on their US website for the moment.



Grimpi Co. is a trendsetting Colored Rock Climbing Chalk Store, offering first-rate products, and exceptional customer service to outdoor enthusiasts.

We're a family business made up of innovators and forward-thinkers, with the drive and wherewithal to constantly update and improve our new and old products to propel your climbing experience. Proudly manufacturing our chalk in the USA.

Climbing is about community and ours includes our partnership with the French company Myleore Magnesie. We are also proud to be endorsed and recommended by the Access Fund.

----- STEVEN WILSON

I started climbing when I was 28, so this year marks 28 years of climbing for me. I was a distance runner prior to starting rock climbing and spent a lot of my training time in the bush, which helped nurture my love of our natural spaces.



When I was first introduced to climbing, I just about became addict to the activity from then on. I totally

enjoyed the complexities of climbing and the physical challenges that it brought with it. It has also brought a new perspective to how I enjoy the outdoor experience and spaces. As a rock climber I have enjoyed seeing nature from a new perspective, one of my favourite part of this, was seeing Wedge-Tailed eagles glide through the sky from above.

I try to climb most weekends and train several times a week. I have always considered myself to be a steward of sorts, by both respecting and caring for my local crags.

One of my early climbing experiences was at Summer day valley, which presented both a high and low light on the same day. Not from a bad climbing experience, but by sadly noticing the amount of damage which had been done to the environment, such as tracks going off in various directions with very little vegetation which made it resemble a dust bowl.

I experienced this on my first trip to the Omega Block, Camels Hump and Mount Macedon, with images of Omega Block devoid of much of its vegetation. Mount Macedon is now one of my local crags, and I primarily climb at the Omega Block through summer, so as one of the locals we have managed to keep wear and tear down, by educating climbers on where the access track is and other crag etiquette.



Volunteers

CSV Volunteers

----- STEVEN WILSON

With the current limitations on being able to get work done, people who have registered interest as Volunteers-only are unlikely to be called on much this year. With that in mind we would like to keep everyone who has registered as a volunteer involved. If you have registered as a volunteer, we would like you to consider becoming a General Steward or a Gym Steward or even both. These roles are very important and we feel ideal for those who can't dedicate a lot of time.

General Stewards will be our general eyes and ears at the crag, they are not required to attend any nominated crag, it is a role that can be just carried out while you're out climbing, i.e. if you see something that might need repair or at least perhaps have an eye kept on a potential problem, you will know who to contact and give a heads up. The other part of this role would be to help educate climbers in good outdoor etiquette or just perhaps let them know where the correct track is.

Gym Stewards will be required to help educate climbers in good outdoor etiquette at their local gym. This will involve using CliffCare posters and the climbers code of conduct. It would be great if we were able to have enough Gym Stewards to cover all climbing gyms across Victoria. Ideally after you have had the appropriate training these education clinics would be run on a regular basis.

I know there are many climbers out there already doing this type of thing at a personal level with great passion in the belief that they can help new climbers have a much better outdoor experience. If you are one of these people already doing this, wouldn't it be great to have the support of an organisation that will back you.

Most climbers have a favourite crag, either, because it is local to them or they have some sought of affinity with it. If you are one of these people please nominate yourself



If you are a regular person at Camels Hump Mount Macedon, you may be aware of the locals who have formed Camels Climbing Community, you don't need to be a local to join this group, you just need to have a passion for looking after Camels Hump. You can even purchase a t-shirt or hoodie. These groups are the type of group along with climbing clubs that CSV wish to support and give an overall structure to help monitor climbing sites and get volunteer work done across the state.



ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

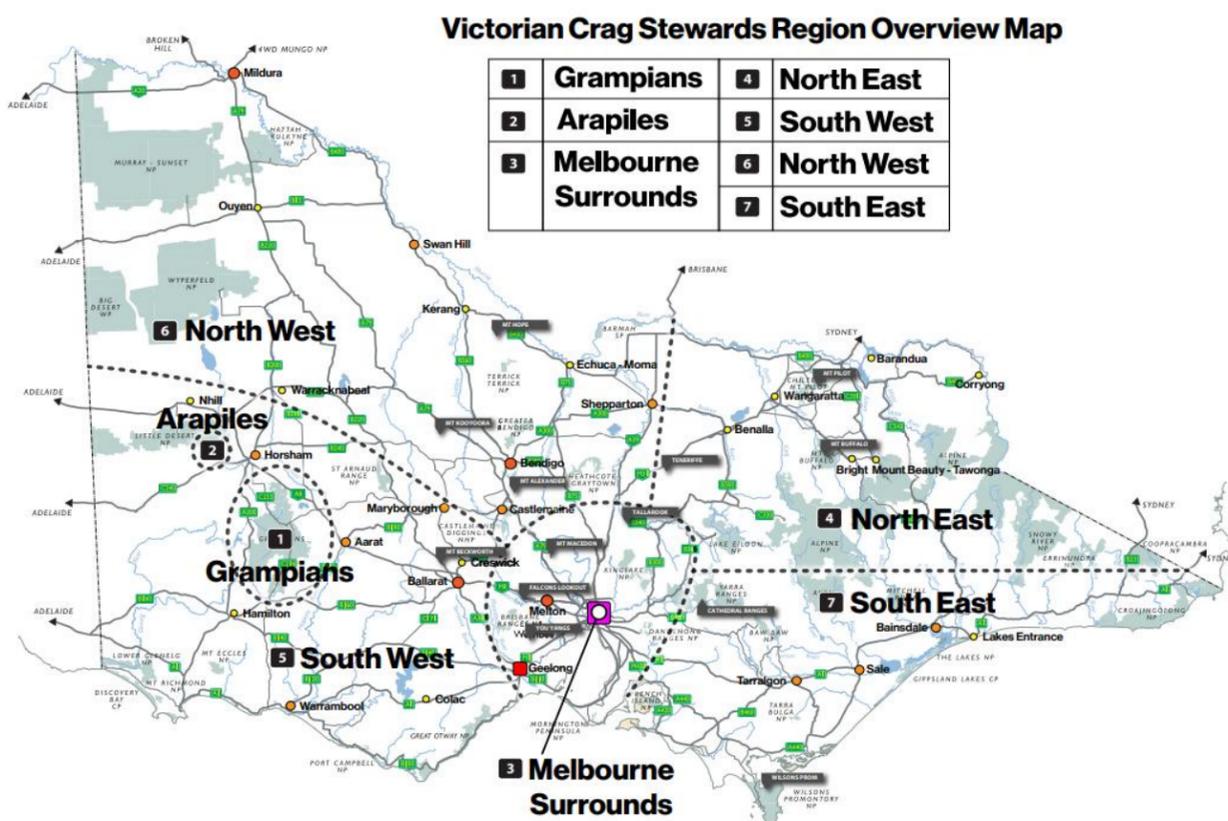
Crag Stewards Victoria proposes a **three-tiered** approach to the management of volunteer personnel caring for Victorian climbing sites.

1. The **Stewardship coordinator**, will govern the organisation and provide the primary line of communication between Land Managers, Traditional Owners, other stake-holders and the team of Stewards. This position is currently filled by Steven Wilson. The coordinator is supported by a small committee that will provide governance and direction to this organisation along with an extensive network of climbers who have already volunteered to be crag stewards.
2. **Regional Stewards**, reporting to the stewardship coordinator and liaising with Crag Stewards to manage each crag within the region. Regional stewards will have a minimum of 15 years of rock-climbing experience in the region they manage.
3. **3.1 Crag Stewards** are volunteer climbers who provide hands-on care at individual climbing sites. They are required to attend their nominated crag at least 4 times per calendar year, reporting on the immediate condition of the crag to regional stewards as required. **Annual risk assessments** will be conducted by the Crag Steward (training provided) to maintain ongoing records of crag condition. At present, over 50 individuals from the climbing community have volunteered to take these roles.

3.2 Gym Stewards will be appointed to educate climbers before they head outdoors. This will include **information sessions, mentorship** and other **education** strategies targeted to the growing number of indoor climbers who are venturing outdoors to Victorian crags.

3.3 General volunteers will also be welcomed to Crag Stewards Victoria, providing an avenue for climbers who are unable to commit to regular crag visits. General volunteers will contribute to fundraising drives and working bees.

CSV Region Overview Map



TRAINING OF STEWARDS

Crag Stewards Victoria is committed to providing appropriate training to all its volunteers. All Stewards and volunteers will participate in a half-day training program covering the following:

- Outdoor etiquette and low impact climbing practices
- Communication at crags and in gyms
- Outdoor mentorship and leadership
- Conducting crag assessments (Crag Stewards only)
- Reporting and record-keeping (Crag Stewards only)

In addition, all stewards will be required to participate in Parks Victoria volunteer induction, and cultural heritage training relevant to their appointed location.