



# Crag Stewards Victoria -

**Submission in response to the Proposed Metropolitan and Regional  
Parks regulations**

22 August 2022

Issued by

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## **Acknowledgement of Country Statement**

**Crag Stewards Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waterways. Crag Stewards Victoria recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging.**



## Introduction

The Proposed Metropolitan and Regional Parks regulations seek to prohibit Rock Climbing by default. Rock Climbing in Victoria is carried out predominantly on Crown Land , Regional Parks and National Parks. Rock climbing is participated in happily and freely around the world by millions of people.

### Mount Macedon Regional Park.

Camels Hump is one of the most popular and significant of the few rock climbing areas close to Melbourne. The first climbs were recorded here in the early 1960's although this does not mean that rock climbing did not occur earlier. Gariwerd National Park has recordings going back to the early 1900's this could be the same for Mount Macedon. Through groups such as the Victorian Climbing Club, CliffCare and now Crag Stewards Victoria, climbers have maintained the health of Camels Hump since 1999. The climbing area itself is distinct and remote from public or tourist access tracks. It is discreet and well-managed.

Camels Hump is currently managed by Parks Victoria under the Macedon Regional Park Strategic Management Statement 2009. In this document, climbing is listed in the summary of activities permitted in management zones and Camels Hump is located in a recreation and conservation zone.

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/-/media/project/pv/main/parks/documents/management-plans/macedon-regional-park-strategic-management-statement-2009.pdf>

We question the need for MRP regulations to apply to the Mount Macedon Regional Park. If this is necessary we ask that provision be made to allow climbing to continue as a permitted activity.

### Plenty Gorge

Plenty Gorge has the potential to provide a rare and valuable climbing resource within the Melbourne Metropolitan area. It has not been used for many years due to private ownership, but Parks Victoria has recognised the potential to include climbing in this area in their Plenty Gorge Master Plan 2018:

#### 3.5 Key Objectives:

**Objective 3.** Investigate use of land north of Gorge Road for trail access and activities such as rock climbing , upon completion of land acquisition.



The climbing community in Melbourne is able to provide advice and resources to support the implementation and maintenance of climbing at this location. Kangaroo Point in Brisbane is a good example of how this can work.

### [Kangaroo Point, Rock climbing | theCrag](https://www.thecrag.com/en/climbing/australia/kangaroo-point)

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We ask that provisions are made in the regulations for climbing to be permitted in this park.

### **Merri Creek**

Merri Creek has several areas that have been used for bouldering for many years. Again this is a rare and valued resource for a small number of climbers within Metropolitan Melbourne. We ask that provision is made in the regulations for climbing to continue at these locations.

## **Climbing is a Valid, Healthy Recreation**

DELWP has an obligation to consider how climbing can continue substantively with adequate controls to protect cultural and environmental values.

*Healthy Parks Healthy People is a global movement which is helping communities around the world realise the health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in parks and nature. Our aim is to unlock the power of nature and parks for their preventative and restorative health and wellbeing benefits, while conserving biodiversity.*

### **Healthy Parks Healthy People Framework**

*Healthy Parks Healthy People describes the fundamental connection between the health of our environment and the health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature. Parks Victoria has developed a new Healthy Parks Healthy People Framework to guide how we maximise the benefits of parks for community health and wellbeing. The framework is driven by Victorian Government policy and outlines the critical role that Victoria's parks can play in encouraging healthier, more liveable, and more connected communities. We believe DELWP should follow this same framework.*

*The framework describes key priorities that will benefit Victorians across all life stages:*

- *Healthy places and settings for all*
- *Mutually beneficial program partnerships*
- *Quality information and evidence*

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- *Leadership and advocacy*
  - *Workplaces that promote wellbeing*

Under this framework, climbing should be permitted to continue as a healthy recreation in the small number of locations where it is possible within the list of areas proposed to be governed by the MRP regulations. To ensure that this activity is managed appropriately, CSV proposes a mutually beneficial partnership program whereby the climbing community provides knowledge, resources and influence to support Traditional Owners and DELWP in implementing a genuine management plan that:

- Monitors and maintains the condition of climbing areas and their access
- Promotes and protects cultural heritage in or near climbing areas
- Sustains meaningful and effective communication
- Adapts to changes in the park environment, cultural understanding and climbing practices

We would also encourage DELWP to engage with the Victorian Climbing Advisory Council CVAC. This group is made up of several Victorian climbing clubs/organisations in which CSV are a part of.

## **Input on Permit System**

CSV believes that a collaborative approach to cultural training and self-regulation of climber actions and behaviour will provide more effective outcomes with significantly less Land Manager resources than a mandatory permit system.

We understand that the permit system provides the Land Managers with the reassurance that climbers have been exposed to an induction that could include cultural information as well as rules and expectations around climbing in Victoria. However, there is a high risk of low-engagement with a mandatory system and it threatens to become a tick-box exercise, particularly when completed annually. Land Managers do not have the resources to effectively police individual climber behaviour and so the use of the permit as a control mechanism for inappropriate actions is not realistic.

Via its extended network of stewards, volunteers and supporters, CSV is in a much better position than the Land Managers to monitor the actions of climbers, or non-climbers, in Managed Climbing Areas and to address them, if required. The climbing community understands that it is ultimately accountable for the treatment and condition of each climbing area and the Land managers have the ability to prohibit



climbing in any area if they are not satisfied. Self- regulation of our community's activities will be much more effective than the threat of losing a permit or the risk of being fined.

Rock Climbing Management Guidelines released by Australian Climbing Association Victoria and the Victorian Climbing Club:

[Victorian Climbing Management Guidelines](#)

<https://vicclimb.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/20200430-victorian-climbing-management-guidelines-v03-3.pdf>