



Parks Victoria March 2020 Board Meeting Report

The Parks Victoria Board met for a virtual meeting on Tuesday 31 March to discuss a range of important issues and opportunities. The highlights of the meeting are outlined below.

Welcome to Mike Clarke, Parks Victoria's new Board Member

The Board welcomed Professor Mike Clarke as its newest Member. Professor Clarke was appointed by the Governor in Council on 11 February 2020 and will serve on the Parks Victoria Board until 31 July 2020. Professor Clarke has studied the ecology and conservation biology of birds, reptiles, mammals, fish and plants for the past 38 years. He leads research at La Trobe University into the impacts of fire on fauna, with his colleague Prof Andrew Bennett. He also maintains an ongoing research interest in threatened species and threatening processes. He was the Convener of the Scientific Advisory Committee on the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* to the Victorian Minister for the Environment for five years. In 2007 he was awarded the DL Serventy Medal by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union for his outstanding contribution to the scientific literature in ornithology. In 2010 he was an expert witness in fire ecology at the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. In 2014 his research on fire ecology with Prof Bennett was one of three finalists for a Eureka Prize in Environmental Research. He has recently served as an expert advisor to the Victorian Auditor General's Office examination of Reducing Bushfire Risk. He served as the Head of the School of Life Sciences from 2011-2019. His passion is to see government conservation policy based on the best available evidence.

COVID-19

The Board received an update from the Chief Executive Officer on the evolving COVID-19 situation. Parks Victoria has complied with all government directions, including closing popular visitor sites and making arrangements for staff to work from home. The Board acknowledged the rapidly changing circumstances and expressed its deep appreciation of all staff work at this difficult time.

You Yangs and Tower Hill Master Plans

The Board approved the draft Master Plans for the You Yangs Regional Park and the Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve. The draft Master Plans will be released for community feedback for a 4 week period.

Health, Safety and Environment Framework

The Board approved the revised Health, Safety and Environment Management System Framework (HSEMS). The HSEMS builds on Parks Victoria's existing Health, Safety and Environment Roadmap and will support staff, contractors and volunteers to undertake activities in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

Firewood enforcement

The Board noted the recent success of an enforcement operation targeting illegal firewood collection in Shepparton. On Saturday 28 March 2020, officers apprehended two people in the Lower Goulburn National Park for illegal commercial scale tree harvesting. Officers seized a large amount of equipment and wood, and will seek to prosecute the matter in court.