

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing this submission on behalf of the Victorian Climbing Club who, as the peak climbing body, represent not only their members but also climbers across Victoria and indeed visiting interstate and overseas climbers. It is a major goal of ours to ensure that whilst rock-climbers as a group minimise their impact on the state park they are still able to enjoy the unique experience that the park provides.

It is encouraging to see that Parks Victoria are doing their best to work with all the park users to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. We believe that rock-climbers as a group consider that Parks Victoria play a vital role in the continued health and viability of the natural environment, and hence, also the health of the general population ("healthy parks, healthy people").

With regards to the recent Draft Management Plan for Kooyoora State Park, our suggestions relate to section 6.11, (p34), Rock Climbing and Abseiling. One of the strategies listed is:

** Prohibit the use of wire brushing while climbing and the development of new climbing routes. Remove bolts, lower off points and other climbing aids unless approved by Parks Victoria.*

While Mt Kooyoora has a known 'no bolting' policy, there are a small number of fixed protection currently in place. Climbers have noted this policy and there is no evidence presently to suggest that any further bolting is likely to occur.

We believe this should be modified so as to fit the spirit of existing Parks Victoria policy of the Rock Climbing Code; (http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1process_details.cfm?note=20) which states:

"Climbing and abseiling will continue to be allowed and accepted as a valid recreation in most of Victoria's parks if climbers are responsible, observe the basic principles of conservation and respect local climbing values, ethics and traditions."

Climbers at Kooyoora have demonstrated respect of the Parks Victoria Rock Climbing Code in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. It allows us to enjoy a recreational activity which we have a deep passion for, while minimising the impact that we have on the areas where we climb. We feel removal of any of the current safety bolts, lower off points should not be occur without consultation with the climbing community and bodies such as the Victorian Climbing Club. Some of these were originally placed not only for safety reasons but to prevent possible deleterious effects on the environment such as erosion.

Therefore, we would like to suggest the following wording for this strategy:

*** Prohibit the use of wire brushing, while climbing new or existing routes. Current climbing aids, such as safety bolts and lower off points, shall remain in place. Should removal of these be considered, liasons between Parks Victoria, the Victorian Climbing Club and local climbing groups will occur.**

We strongly believe that the incorporation of the above mentioned change to the current strategies will not only serve to address Parks Victorias concerns but allow rockclimbers to continue to enjoy climbing in the park in a responsible and safe manner

We look forward to being included in the processes which will result from this management plan, these include track marking, production of interpretive signage, community and commercial enterprise education. Through our involvement and help with grant funding we hope to also be able to address some of the issues that occur through our use.

The Victorian Climbing Club would like to thank Parks Victoria for the hard work involved in preparing the draft plan, and for giving the rock climbing and abseiling community the opportunity to have their voice heard in the management of the State Park.

We look forward to continuing our excellent working relationship with Parks Victoria to help preserve the State Park and ensure sustainable recreation is included in its future.

Yours sincerely,

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