



CANBERRA CLIMBERS' ASSOCIATION

Manager Park Planning
Parks Victoria
Level 10, 535 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
parkplan@parks.vic.gov.au

**SUBMISSION BY THE CANBERRA CLIMBERS' ASSOCIATION (CCA) ON
THE DRAFT GREATER GARIWERD LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN
2021**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan. The Canberra Climbers' Association (CCA) has a membership of 268 climbers. As the Peak body for climbing in the ACT and southern NSW over the last 18 years we have maintained an open and collaborative relationship with Park Managers in the ACT. This has led to many positive outcomes for both climbers in maintaining access but not at the expense of environmental and cultural values.

The CCA is committed to promoting good rock-climbing practices, and towards the maintenance and management of rock-climbing areas within all parks and reserves. In our view, climbing and preserving environmental and cultural values are synonymous. All climbers share a deep love of the environment and are considerate in their impact.

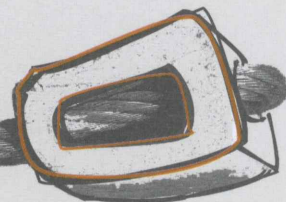
However, it is extremely disappointing to see that the bans on climbing in the Grampians and surrounding regions have destroyed a once world renowned, world class climbing area. Designated Climbing areas now account for 20 percent of the rock-climbing areas across the Greater Gariwerd. Sports climbing has been disproportionately affected with only three of the top 50 most popular sports routes currently open. Bouldering, a climbing sport that has had phenomenal growth in the last few years, has been decimated. Of the most popular world-famous bouldering problems none remain open to climbers.

Although it is a long and tiring 10-12 hour drive to the Greater Gariwerd, the quality of the climbing encouraged many Canberra Climbers to make regular trips and in doing so formed life-long friendships with local climbers and developed an affinity for the region. It is also evident that many towns in the region have thrived because of the economic benefits brought by the resident climbing population and visiting interstate and international climbers. The Draft Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan will have a severe impact on the economic sustainability of these towns and the essential services climbers bring to these communities.

Apart from the loss of access to world class climbing, we are particular disappointed that Parks Victoria have created an unnecessary conflict with climbers and as a result have created significant reputational risk for Park Managers, not just in Victoria but across other jurisdictions. While we as a Club maintain a positive relationship with ACT Parks that is based on mutual respect and trust, we are noticing a significant shift in sentiment across the climbing community in Australia and growing antagonism towards National Parks management in general.

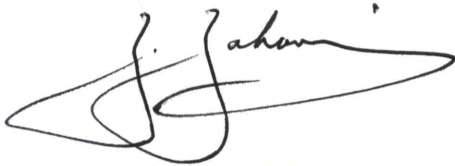
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PO BOX 978 DICKSON ACT 2602 • (02) 62572208 • WWW.CANBERRACLIMBING.COM
TO EDUCATE AND PROMOTE THE IMAGE OF CLIMBING IN AND AROUND THE CANBERRA REGION.



The CCA urges Parks Victoria to adopt a more considered and appropriate strategy for rock climbers at the Greater Gariwerd.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zac Zaharias', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Zac Zaharias, CSM
President
Canberra Climbers' Association
zaharias@iinet.net.au
www.canberraclimbing.org.au

0402-286257

24th January 2021

Enclosure:

1. Draft Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan 2021. Submission by the Canberra Climbers' Association

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS ABOUT
THE DRAFT GREATER GARIWERD LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN
(GGLDMP)
FROM THE CANBERRA CLIMBERS' ASSOCIATION**

Draft GGLDMP be withdrawn and referred to [Planning Panels Victoria](#) for review.

The draft plan will cause serious social and economic impacts on the local communities and safety issues for the rock climbing community. To restore public confidence that the plan is informed, rigorous, transparent and unbiased our view is that it should be withdrawn and referred to Planning Panels Victoria.

Adopt the established climbing management strategies presented within the [Victorian Climbing Management Guidelines](#).

The draft plan adopts a clumsy approach to management of rock climbing in the Park. There is ample precedent for a more nuanced approach, and we support the adoption of the Victorian Climbing Management Guidelines in the Parks Management Plan.

Access restrictions to be workshopped through consultation with climbing groups: ACAV, VCC/Cliffcare and Crag Stewards Victoria.

The draft plan will have a severe impact on rock climbing yet there is no evidence to support a "precautionary approach" when archeological surveys of 125 climbing area could not find one single occurrence of rock art. Furthermore, there is no credible evidence rock climbers have damaged rock art in the Park.

Take a climb-by-climb approach to managing climbing in environmentally and culturally sensitive areas.

World-wide it is standard practice to assess the impact of cultural heritage and environmental sensitivity on a climb-by-climb basis and this approach should be adopted in the Parks Management Plan. All areas without cultural heritage values should remain open.

A ten metre exclusion zone to be introduced as a default clearance to protect significant cultural locations, such as rock art sites.

Exclusion zones exist at other climbing areas elsewhere in the world and a preliminary measure comprising a ten metre zone is considered appropriate until each site is fully assessed.

Legal set-asides to be sought and legally compliant signage to be installed at each restricted location.

All park users need to be properly and fully informed about the presence, reasons and significance of restricted sites.

The presence of stone quarrying must not be used as a blanket justification for excluding public access.

Stone quarry sites are hard rock sites and by their very nature resistant to accidental damage. This draft proposal is completely unworkable as it would close most tourist walking tracks in the Park. Stone quarry sites could be easily managed by appropriate signage.

Designated rock climbing areas and permit plans to be abandoned.

We support the adoption of the Victorian Climbing Management Guidelines as the basis for managing rock climbing areas. We do not support the red/orange/blue/green cliff designations as there has been no expert climbing input or peer review. We do support a voluntary online cultural heritage induction process.

Safety bolts to be managed and maintained by climbing groups.

Climbers are the only ones with expertise in the management of safety bolts at cliffs. It is a mistake for Parks to take over this role, and that includes giving permission to place or replace a bolt, as there are serious safety and litigation issues involved. We also reject the group punishment mentality where Parks threaten to close the entire cliff if a bolt is placed or replaced without their permission.

Bouldering mats must not be prohibited as they are essential to reduce the risk of injury and death.

This is a simple safety issue.

Chalk use to be accepted, subject to guidelines.

Another safety issue. We note there have been instances where park staff have confused bird droppings as chalk. We support chalk clean-up where rain has failed to wash chalk away.

Proposed ban on new climbing locations to be removed from the GGLDMP.

All persons have a right to access the Park and reasonably engage in recreational activities.

Off-track walking restrictions to be cancelled to allow off-track walking and the use of game trails.

All persons have a right to access the Park and reasonably engage in recreational activities.

Parks Victoria to work with Crag Stewards Victoria and Cliffcare to maintain walking tracks and cliff bases.

Australian climbers have a vested interest and history of managing and maintaining infrastructure to and at the crag in collaboration with Park staff. This has included, track construction and maintenance, slope stabilization, removal of rubbish and graffiti from climbing areas.

Bush camping to remain permissible subject to existing conditions.

Parks Victoria to instigate peer reviews of all archaeological surveys conducted in the Greater Gariwerd region over the last two years.

We have serious concerns about the impartiality and professionalism of the current author of recent archaeological surveys.

Wherever graffiti occurs in the Grampians/Gariwerd, Parks Victoria must prosecute the perpetrators to the full extent of the law to protect the park.

It is not reasonable justification to close a climbing area when there does not appear to be a single proven case of graffiti by rock climbers in the Park. We support prosecution of perpetrators.