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Wednesday 13 June, 2018

Mr Graham Atkinson
Chairperson
Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board
Level 3, 8 Nicholson Street,
Melbourne East, Victoria 3002

Dear Mr Atkinson

Re: DRAFT JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE DJA DJA WURRUNG PARKS

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Joint Management Plan. Please note our comments are in consideration of the Greater Bendigo National Park, however where you feel appropriate, aspects of this submission may be relevant to some or all of the Parks covered under the Draft Joint Management Plan.

Please also note that this is an organisational (City of Greater Bendigo) submission, it has not been considered or endorsed by the Council.

The City of Greater Bendigo welcomes and is very supportive of the new joint management arrangements for the Greater Bendigo National Park. The City believes this is a significant development providing Traditional Owners a prominent role in the management of Country.

The Draft Joint Management Plan and the associated documents provide a clear vision for future management of the Parks and Traditional Owners aspirations. They are easy to navigate and provide a valuable insight into the Traditional Owners fundamental connection to Country.

In reviewing the Draft Joint Management Plan the City offers the following observations and comments for consideration when finalising the Plan.

Biodiversity

The City makes the observation that the creation of national parks is principally about the protection of flora, fauna, ecosystems and land forms. While national parks provide for a range of other activities, management planning should always maintain primarily a conservation focus.

Fire

Understandably, the risk of bushfire is of a major concern to residents. Management responses to this issue have sometimes met with differing views as to effectiveness or impacts to the natural environment. The City is very supportive of further exploration of the concept of Traditional Ecological Knowledge as outlined in the draft plan.

"This is where Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and modern-day science can bridge ecological knowledge systems to reinvent a methodology to manage Country in a way that is inclusive, evolutionary, sustainable and holistic".

8. Plants and animals

The City believes it has an important role in supporting many of the actions in this section, whether that is via appropriate planning decisions, complimentary management of Council land or encouraging sustainable management of freehold land, the City believes collaboration to achieve these objectives is necessary. A landscape scale approach is fundamental and the notion of Biolinks in both urban and rural areas underpins the City's longer term planning. The City is pleased to note the inclusion of the North Central Biolink Alliance as a key stakeholder, their landscape scale and science based planning approach will make an important contribution.

5.1 Engaging People in the Parks

P2 - The establishment of stakeholder advisory committees for each of the parks is strongly supported. The City would be very keen to have a representative on the advisory committee for the Greater Bendigo National Park.

P3 - The objective of community engagement and education about nature is also a strong theme in the City's Environment Strategy. The City believes there is potential to collaborate more in this area to achieve shared goals and maximise limited resources.

The Greater Bendigo Environment Strategy 2016 – 2021 is available at:

<http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/media/582>

Resources Document

Resources Part C, 5.1.1 Stakeholder Groups in the Parks

The City suggests the following additional groups be included as key stakeholders for the Greater Bendigo National Park.

- Friends of Crusoe Reservoir and Number 7 Park (direct interest in Big Hill section)
- Bendigo District Environment Council
- Bendigo Native Plant Group
- BirdLife Echuca District (largely a Bendigo based sub-group of Birdlife Australia)
- City of Greater Bendigo Sustainability and Environment Advisory Committee
- Bendigo Family Nature Club
- Greater Bendigo Heritage Advisory Committee

Additionally:

- In the table of 'Museums and Heritage Groups' (p.11) that have an interest in Greater Bendigo National Park, please include Bendigo Historical Society and Eaglehawk Heritage Society.
- The Planning and Environment Act should also be listed in Resources Part C 7.2 Historic and Cultural Landscape Heritage (p.40), as another form of legislative protection for local historic heritage.
- the Victorian Heritage Act (which regulates the Victorian Heritage Register) should be listed in the State Legislation Resources Part C Appendix 1. on p.74

14. Strategic Initiatives

The City endorses the strategic initiatives, objectives and actions and where appropriate offers its support to help realise these goals.

Operational Plans

The City understands that many of the very site specific management planning decisions are planned and documented in operational plans. The City has a continued interest in this level of planning and welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this process as appropriate.

Section 4.3 Opportunities and 7 Cultural Heritage

The importance and significance of both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage in the strategy is a position that the City of Greater Bendigo strongly supports. It is important that these shared values are understood and celebrated by the wider Greater Bendigo community.

The opportunities and actions relating to access, education, interpretation, the sharing of Dja Dja Wurrung knowledge and adequately resourcing these opportunities is critical to the health and well-being of Aboriginal people, but it will also provide a richer understanding and experience of these parks for non-Aboriginal people in our municipality.

In addition, please note the following minor corrections:

The eucalyptus distillery in Greater Bendigo National Park is Hartland's Distillery (p.52, not Hamilton's) and 7.2 C8 Places of historic non Aboriginal cultural significance are also managed under the Planning and Environment Act and the Victorian Heritage Act (p.54).

Resourcing

While outside the scope of this process, the City would like to take this opportunity to advocate for increased resourcing, both human and material, to the operational management of both the Greater Bendigo National Park and Bendigo Regional Park. The Draft Joint Management Plan highlights many of the practical challenges facing the parks. The Greater Bendigo National Park is experiencing increasing pressure from a growing urban population. The City believes that unless the Parks receive higher levels of operational resourcing achieving management targets will be extremely difficult.

I trust these comments are helpful in finalising the draft plan and look forward to receiving a final version. The City of Greater Bendigo looks forward to this exciting new future in National Park Management and looks forward to working closely with the Traditional Owners and Parks Victoria to help achieve the stated objectives of the management plan.

Yours sincerely



Trevor Budge
Manager
Regional Sustainable Development