

From: Wombat Forestcare <info@wombatforestcare.org.au>
Sent: Sunday, 17 June 2018 11:46 AM
To: projects dhelkunyadja
Subject: Draft Joint Management Plan for the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks

Dear Dhelkunya Dja Management Board

Please find attached submission to the Draft Joint Management Plan for the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks

Kind regards

Gayle Osborne

Wombat Forestcare
<http://www.wombatforestcare.org.au>

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www.wombatforestcare.org.au

Wombat Forestcare is a community group dedicated to protecting and enhancing the natural ecosystems of the Wombat Forest and surrounding areas.....

Wombat Forestcare Inc.
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Dhelkunya Dja Management Board

17 June 2018

Submission to Draft Joint Management Plan for the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks

General Comments

Wombat Forestcare would like to congratulate the Dja Dja Wurrung People on achieving joint management of the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks. We welcome this opportunity to comment on the draft plan.

The comments made in this submission mainly relate to the Hepburn Regional Park.

It is extremely important that larger areas of public land are managed to sustain the ecological processes that have largely been lost in a mostly cleared landscape. To ensure that this occurs, processes that threaten biodiversity and resilient ecosystems in these parks, such as, altered fire regimes, invasive species and inappropriate recreation need to be addressed as a priority.

Research and monitoring should also be undertaken to ensure an ongoing net gain in the condition of native vegetation and habitat on public land.

Specific Comments

Table One

In this section, Wombat Forestcare considers that greater emphasis should be placed on protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the Parks. This includes protection and enhancement of threatened species (which are not mentioned in the section) and vegetation communities. Greater emphasis should also be placed on addressing threats to biodiversity and ecosystems in each Park.

4.3.1 and 4.5.1 Wi (Cultural fires in the landscape)

Altered fire regimes are listed a potentially threatening process for many native species and ecological vegetation classes in the area. Hepburn Park is largely comprised of forest vegetation types and is wetter than most of the other parks covered by the draft plan (mostly woodland ecosystems).

Wombat Forestcare considers that too frequent fire (such as fuel reduction burning) is detrimental to forest ecosystems and results in loss of habitat, death and injury to animals, can reduce species diversity over time and may result in a more flammable forest.

Further, a range of scientific research questions the effectiveness of broad scale fuel reduction burning in reducing bushfire risk, especially in the life-threatening conditions of extreme wind and temperature.

This should be considered in relation to any fuel reduction burning or Wi undertaken in the Hepburn Regional Park.

Where Wi or fuel reduction burning is undertaken, long term research and monitoring should be undertaken to determine the impacts of this burning on biodiversity, especially native fauna. Specific prescriptions outlining temporal and spatial burning mosaics should be developed for each EVC in the Park based on expertise from Dja Dja Wurrung cultural knowledge and all other relevant ecological, biological and zoological disciplines.

4.5.4 Invasive Fauna

Control of invasive fauna should be a priority under the joint management plan. Priority species for control in the Hepburn Regional Park include foxes, feral pigs, cats and deer.

4.5.5 Invasive Plants

Weed control is a cost effective way to improve habitat and should also be a priority under a joint management plan. Blackberry, gorse and various broom species should be included as priority species for control in the Hepburn Regional Park.

8.1 Ensure Healthy Plants, Healthy Harvesting: Strategy

Harvesting of useful species should be demonstrated to be sustainable, small scale and detailed guidelines for harvesting developed.

8.2 Support Threatened Species Recovery: Strategy

The value of ecological thinning has been established for woodlands but based on experience from the Wombat State Forest, thinning in forests provides dubious value. Coppice regrowth following thinning has also been a problem when undertaken in similar vegetation types to that found in Hepburn Regional Park (Heathy Forest).

12 Enterprises: Goals and Strategies

'Undertake commercial activities in these Parks without license fees' requires further details.

Yours faithfully

Murray Ralph and Gayle Osborne
Wombat Forestcare