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Dear Ministers

We have pleasure in presenting the report of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 and 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 in accordance with the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the Co-operative Management of the Australian Alps national parks.

Yours sincerely

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Foreword

This reporting period has seen the achievement of some very significant outcomes for the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program, some of which have been developing over many years. The two most notable achievements would have to be the National Heritage listing of the Australian Alps national parks on 7 November 2008 and the establishment, and the first meetings of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners’ Reference Group. In addition, the First Peoples’ Gathering – a gathering of Traditional Owners from across the Alps occurred in May 2010, which followed on from the inaugural First Peoples’ Gathering held in 2005. All of these events have been achieved by the hard work of many people over many years.

However, these are only three of over thirty different activities and projects that were completed or were underway in 2008–09 and 2009–10. This report outlines those achievements and highlights the ongoing success of the Program.

The 2008–11 Strategic Plan, developed in 2007–08, commenced implementation in July 2008 and has seen some fundamental changes to the way the Program is administered. Key changes were the move from agency staff working groups to reference groups. This was done in recognition of the diminishing capacity of working group members to devote the amount of time they have in the past to Program projects and the refocusing of the Program key result areas to highlight contemporary management issues in the Australian Alps. I’m pleased to report that this has resulted in a much greater level of commitment from agency staff in contributing to the work of reference groups. There are now ten key result areas (KRAs) for the Program that have been the focus for six new reference groups and for the Program Manager.

The Australian Alps Program continued to support the establishment and implementation of the Australian Alps National Landscape initiative and, with a relatively small investment from the Program, a key outcome was the leveraging of over $200,000 from other partners for the production of a DVD and map of the Australian Alps produced by Australian Geographic. The Alps was featured in a 2009 edition of the Australian Geographic magazine and the DVD content was aired on the Nine Network as part of the “Best of Australia” documentary series.

Invasive species continued to be a priority focus for the Program with a workshop in December 2008 to develop best practice guidelines for the eradication of hawkweed from the Alps. Dr Peter Espie from New Zealand, an internationally renowned expert on hawkweed, was the main presenter. Funding was provided by the Alps Program to support NSW, Victoria and the ACT in carrying out additional surveying for hawkweed. A report on the tracking of wild dogs in the Alps was completed and an aerial survey of the feral horse population in the Alps was conducted. The aerial survey found that there had been a marked increase in the feral horse population since the previous survey which was undertaken in 2003, immediately after the widespread fires that summer.

The Alps program hosted an IUCN / WCPA Science Management forum in June 2010. The aim of these regular forums is to bring researchers and managers closer together. The keynote speaker for the forum was Dr Harry Biggs, from Kruger National Park in South Africa who spoke to a wide audience of Alps staff on the benefits of adaptive management.

Cultural heritage activities were a focus during the reporting period. In addition to the establishment of the Traditional Owners’ Reference Group and the First Peoples’ Gathering a training program was developed for Indigenous staff from the Program co-operating agencies to assist in interpreting Indigenous use of the Alps landscape. This Program can be used in the future as a model for the broader Alps Indigenous community to participate in similar training.
A report was commissioned by the Program to assess the state of catchments across the Australian Alps and to provide some management recommendations based on the catchment assessment. The report was funded by the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, and was submitted as a Technical Report to the AALC in June 2010. An implementation plan will be developed based on these recommendations.

Overall it has been a very successful period for the Program as it continues to provide practical outcomes for the conservation of the Australian Alps.

Peter Jacobs
Convenor
Australian Alps Liaison Committee
Glossary and Abbreviations

AALC the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, established by the MOU
AATORG the Australian Alps Traditional Owners’ Reference Group
AAWT the Australian Alps Walking Track
AOG the Alps Operational Group, composed of Rangers-in-charge, Area, District and Operational Program Managers, and other key operational staff
Alps program The Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program, established by the MOU, and the subject of this report
Annual co-operative works program the group of activities and projects undertaken each year under AALC funding and co-operative arrangements
Australian Alps national parks those protected areas included in Schedule 1 of the MOU
Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program the ongoing activities, projects, works and administration undertaken to implement the MOU.
Australian Alps national parks Heads of Agencies the Heads of participating agencies
CCRG the Climate Change Reference Group
CHRG the Cultural Heritage Reference Group
Co-operative management fostering a culture of goodwill, involving activities, projects, and complementary and supportive relationships and adding value to those relationships through associated economies of scale, going beyond line management and individual agency constraints to ensure consistency and best practice across borders
EPHC Environment Protection and Heritage Council
IUCN WCPA International Union for Conservation and Nature, World Commission on Protected Areas (Mountain Biome)
MOU the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to Co-operative Management of the Australian Alps national parks (as amended from time to time)
NRMRG the Natural Resource Management Reference Group
participating agencies parties to the MOU.
protected area means an area of land managed for protection and maintenance of biodiversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources
SECRG the Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Reference Group
Strategic Plan the three-year plan prepared by the AALC (for this reporting period the ‘Strategic Plan 2008–2011’) to guide the annual co-operative works program
VEMRG the Visitor Experiences and Marketing Reference Group
WCRG the Water and Catchments Reference Group
Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program

Stretching from Canberra through the Brindabella Range in the ACT, the Snowy Mountains of NSW and the Victorian Alps to West Gippsland, Australia’s alpine and subalpine environment is a unique part of our nation, a mountainous biogeographical region in a predominantly dry and flat continent.

The Australian Alps contain plants and animals found nowhere else in the world. They contain significant examples of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage and offer outstanding recreational opportunities. They also contain the headwaters of some of Australia’s most important rivers and streams.

In 1986, with the signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), State, ACT and Australian government national park authorities formally agreed to manage this important national asset co-operatively. Through this spirit of co-operation the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) was formed to ensure that the parks and reserves in the Alps are managed as one biogeographical entity to protect them for generations to come.

The eleven national parks and reserves in the Australian Alps link across State and Territory borders. Together they comprise over 1.6 million hectares of protected areas. These parks and reserves are collectively referred to as the ‘Australian Alps national parks’, a conservation zone of international significance. Responsibility for strategic policy setting, planning and day-to-day management of the Australian Alps national parks listed in the MOU remains vested in the relevant participating agency.

Vision
To achieve best practice in co-operative management of the Australian Alps national parks.

Mission
Through the MOU, participating agencies agree to the following objectives:

- To pursue the growth and enhancement of inter-governmental co-operative management to protect the important natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks.
- To co-operate in the determination and implementation of best-practice management of the Australian Alps national parks to achieve:
  - protection of the unique mountain landscapes;
  - protection of the natural and cultural values specific to the Australian Alps;
  - provision of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities that encourage the enjoyment and understanding of alpine and sub-alpine environments;
  - protection of mountain catchments.

Refer to the MOU for the Terms of Agreement that describe in detail the working arrangements agreed to by participating agencies.
Organisational Structure

The following entities have functional roles in the Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program under the MOU.

**Australian Alps Ministerial Council**
The Ministers responsible for participating agencies, which are in turn responsible for high-level inter-government relationships and the MOU.

**Australian Alps national parks Heads of Agencies Group**
The Heads (or their representatives) of participating agencies meet at least annually to consider strategic issues and direct the AALC on policy, and priority and emerging issues.

**Australian Alps Liaison Committee**
The AALC facilitates the development, co-ordination and implementation of the Co-operative Management Program. Its members include a senior officer from each of the participating agencies in NSW, Victoria, ACT and the Australian Government.

**Secretariat**
Under the terms of the MOU the Australian Government provides part-time secretariat support to the AALC and Heads of Agencies.

**Alps Program Manager**
The Alps Program Manager is the only full-time employee of the Program and is responsible for co-ordinating the day to day work of the Program and ensuring the annual works program, as agreed by the AALC, is carried out. The Program Manager position is hosted by each of the State/Territory park agencies for two to four years at a time. During this reporting period the position was hosted by the ACT.

**Australian Alps Traditional Owners’ Reference Group**
The Australian Alps Traditional Owners Reference Group first met during the 2008–09 reporting period. The reference group was established to advise the AALC on a range of issues relating to the co-operative management of Indigenous cultural values and issues across the Australian Alps national parks.

**Reference Groups**
A number of reference groups are established to advise the AALC on specific matters, and to assist with the implementation of the Co-operative Management Program. These groups usually have up to two staff from each of the co-operating agencies as members.

During the reporting period, six reference groups operated under the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program. They were the:

- Natural Resource Management Reference Group;
- Cultural Heritage Reference Group;
- Visitor Experiences and Marketing Reference Group;
- Climate Change Reference Group;
- Water and Catchments Reference Group;
- Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Reference Group.

The terms of reference for each Reference Group are set out in the Strategic Plan, and are aligned to the Key Result Areas in that Plan.

In addition to the reference groups, the Alps Operational Group (AOG), the Australian Alps Walking Track sub-group, the Wild Dog sub-group, the Feral Horse sub-group and the Fire Science sub-group also met and advised the AALC on a number of operational matters.

Refer to Program structure at Attachments 1a and 1b.
Program Budget

To assist in achieving the objectives of the MOU, a financial contribution is made by participating agencies. The responsibility for financial management is generally vested with the agency providing the Alps Program Manager position. In this reporting period, the ACT Government provided financial management support for the Program.

An annual budget of $310,000 was provided from participating agencies, Victoria and NSW each contributing $120,000, the ACT $40,000 and the Australian Government contributed $30,000 plus secretariat support and website maintenance.

The AALC allocates funding to the Australian Alps annual co-operative works program, which is developed through the submission of project proposals addressing the Key Result Areas of the Strategic Plan. The 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 annual works program budgets are presented in Attachments 3 and 4.

Annual Reporting of performance

The Strategic Plan requires the Annual Report to:

- evaluate the success of the MOU and the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program;
- detail the outputs of the program’s projects and their benefits to Australian Alps national parks;
- communicate this information to the Australian Alps national parks Heads of Agencies group, relevant Ministers, and other interested parties.
Key Result Area: Climate Change and Adaptation

Objective
Implementation of contemporary approaches to planning, responding and adapting to climate change in the mountain protected areas and determining needs and mechanisms for further research, particularly related to the impact of climate change on natural heritage conservation.

Outcome
The level of knowledge amongst agency staff and other stakeholders is increased regarding climate change impacts on the natural values of the Alps and the measures required to address them, with a number of activities implemented that are designed to adapt management to those changes.

Alps’ State of the Catchments report
See the KRA for Water and Catchments.

Developing best practice guidelines for Hawkweed control/eradication in the Australian Alps
See the KRA for Invasive Species Management.

Hawkweed Surveys
See the KRA for Invasive Species Management.

Fire ecology monitoring plots – data preparation and analysis
See the KRA for Fire Management.

Dendrochronology study
Dendrochronology – the science that employs tree rings to study past tree growth – is of immense value worldwide for providing information on climate variability and detecting plant responses to climate change and disturbance regimes. The project is using 2003-fire killed Podocarpus lawrencei (Mountain Plum Pine) to investigate whether the current period of above average temperatures and low snow cover has set a precedent in the last 300 years. It will also determine the frequency of past fire events and explore the dynamics (growth and regeneration capacity) of fire-affected communities in the Australian Alps. The project is ongoing with samples having been collected but the analysis is yet to be completed.
Key Result Area: Water and Catchments

Objective
Implementation of contemporary approaches to management and restoration of catchments in mountain protected areas, through supporting good practice philosophy and principles for sustainable use and minimal catchment impact, to yield sustained supplies of high quality water for uses external to the protected areas such as irrigation and domestic consumption, and flow regimes to sustain ecosystems dependent on the natural water regime both within the Alps and downstream.

Outcome
Management and rehabilitation activities are implemented according to best practice guidelines with demonstrated improved water quality and water retention reflecting a natural state.

Alps’ State of the Catchments report
This project is an outcome of the Science Management Forum in April 2007 on the subject of climate change. The report provides a qualitative assessment on the current state of the Alps catchments and investigates a range of management options for dealing with catchments which are in a sub-optimal condition. It examines the Alps catchments from an environmental perspective as well as placing an economic value of the water for downstream populations and industry. A proposal to fund the project was put to the Australian Greenhouse Office (now the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) and a grant was provided in June 2008. A contract to prepare the report was established and a steering group formed in 2008–09 with the Technical Report being submitted to the AALC in 2009–10.

Management of Alpine and Sub-alpine Wetlands in the Australian Alps Science Management Forum
This fourth annual forum was designed to provide managers with an improved and updated understanding of the past, present and potential future of alpine and sub-alpine wetlands in the Australian Alps national parks; provide an overview of recent and current research in alpine and sub-alpine wetland ecology, function and management, and; identify priority research needs to assist managers to better manage alpine and sub-alpine wetlands. The forum was originally proposed for April 2009 but due to a number of logistical issues and unavailability of key presenters it was deferred to October 2009. The forum was held at Falls Creek in Victoria and provided scientists and managers the opportunity to debate best practice management for these ecologically endangered communities.

Developing best practice guidelines for Hawkweed control/eradication in the Australian Alps and Hawkweed Surveys
See the KRA for Invasive Species Management.

Fire ecology monitoring plots – data preparation and analysis
See the KRA for Fire Management.
Key Result Area: Invasive Species Management

Objective
Implementation of contemporary approaches to management of pest plant and animal species in mountain protected areas, through supporting best practice principles for research, identification and control and, where possible, eradication, of new outbreaks and species, and appropriate responses to pest species problems exacerbated by climate change.

Outcome
Support co-operation and collaboration on identifying and managing emerging and known invasive species to reduce their impact on the natural and cultural values of the Alps.

Wild Dog Research
The “Dogs in Space” project has provided valuable information about the spatial movements of wild dogs in remote areas of national park. The project was completed and a final report on the project is on the Australian Alps website.

Report on Feral Horse Impacts
A report was commissioned that brings together research and other evidence of feral horse impacts across the Alps. The report is important in guiding further work on the issue. The report was completed and published on the Australian Alps website in 2009–10.

Developing best practice guidelines for Hawkweed control/eradication in the Australian Alps
An Alps wide workshop was held to inform managers of the potential of Hawkweed and to produce an agreed approach to Hawkweed eradication in the Alps. The intention was also to develop an eradication plan which would enable a coordinated approach to this problem and increase chances of adequate and well targeted funding. Current modelling of Orange Hawkweed under climate change scenarios indicates that the Alps will be the prime area of impact. The workshop brought together a number of international weed experts and Australian stakeholders.

Hawkweed Surveys
Hawkweed (predominantly the Orange and King Devil species) are found across the Alps currently in relatively small quantities. Following on from the workshop it was agreed that a limited opportunity still existed to locate and eradicate Hawkweed prior to it becoming fully entrenched in the Alps. All state and territory agencies have invested significantly into this, but due to Hawkweed being a true Alps-wide problem the Alps program provided additional funding to increase the survey effort in NSW, Vic and the ACT.

Australian Alps Feral Horse Monitoring
This project repeated the Alps-wide feral horse surveys conducted in 2001 and 2003 and was implemented in April 2009, using the same survey technique as the previous surveys. The survey provided information on the level of recovery of feral horse populations since the 2003 fires. Undertaking this survey implemented one of the recommendations resulting from the AALC 2004 Wild Horse workshop. The survey was completed and report published in 2009. A fact sheet on feral horses was released in early 2010 which can be found on the Alps website.
Key Result Area: Fire Management

Objective
Implementation of contemporary approaches to management of fire compatible with the conservation of mountain protected areas, through supporting best-practice principles for research, planning and control, and appropriate responses to fire problems exacerbated by climate change.

Outcome:
Increased co-operation in research, planning and control of fire in the Alps.

The Alps fire ecology vegetation monitoring system is a long running key program in the Alps. Since 1997 and more intensively since the 2003 bushfires, data on species response after fire, vegetation composition and structure have been collected at approximately 40 sites across the Alps. The survey of 2008 completed 5 years of post-fire monitoring and is an opportune time to assess the data and prioritise actions for the future. Few areas in this region have such a comprehensive post-fire vegetation dataset with the potential to inform managers on the results of post-fire vegetation change.

This project aimed to capitalise on this significant investment by the Alps agencies, to systematically prepare all of the data collected over the last 10 years into an accurate and consistent dataset for analysis. The preparation work was completed in 2008–2009 and in 2009–2010 phase 2 of the project commenced which involved analyzing and interpreting the data. This task was not completed by the end of the reporting period, but it is anticipated that the project would be completed in 2010–2011 with the finalization of the report.
Key Result Area: Visitor Experiences and Marketing

**Objective**
Presentation of the superlative and unique Australian Alps visitor experiences identified through the Brand Australia National Landscapes Initiative, and implementation of contemporary approaches to sustainable visitor management in mountain protected areas.

**Outcome**
The National Landscapes Australian Alps Brand is implemented and supported by stakeholders and progress is made towards sustainability of use by visitors.

**Australian Alps National Landscapes Program**
Following the announcement of the Australian Alps as one of the first eight National Landscapes it was important to ensure that action was taken to support the establishment of various initiatives to consolidate the Australian Alps in this important program. Support was provided to employ a part-time project officer to provide secretariat support to the Australian Alps National Landscape Committee and to implement a number of projects. As a result the National Landscape was able to attract significant Commonwealth and stakeholder funding for key projects.

One of the first projects was the development of the Australian Alps National Landscape Tourism Strategy, which was released in April 2010. In time, all National Landscapes will require such a strategy, however this was the first of its type to be developed. The Australian Alps program was instrumental in the development of the strategy, in particular through the Visitor Experience and Marketing Reference Group.

**Australian Alps/Australian Geographic television program, DVD and article**
In collaboration with Australian Geographic and Australian Alps National Landscape stakeholders the Program contributed funds toward the development of various products including a one hour television documentary in the “Best of Australia” series. The DVD and map were produced, marketed and distributed to a wide variety of retail outlets around the Alps region and beyond.

**Australian Alps 10 Great Walks 10 Great Drives**
This scoping project has identified the walks and drives that the visitor “must do” when they come to the Australian Alps national parks. The project is designed to fit in with the visitor experiences to be listed for the broader Australian Alps National Landscape. However, it was decided to defer it until it could be integrated into the package of initiatives arising from the Australian Alps National Landscape Tourism Strategy published in April 2010.

**Australian Alps Walking Track Stakeholder Meeting**
This biennial meeting was held in March 2010 at Falls Creek in Victoria. The purpose of the meeting was to bring stakeholders up to date on management issues relating to the AAWT but also to seek feedback from the community on better ways to manage the track. As an outcome of the meeting the AAWT Strategy and Operations Plan (including the 2010–2012 Works Plan) was updated.

**Frontline Workshop**
See the KRA for Stakeholder Engagement and Communication.
Key Result Area: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

Objective
Stakeholders from all relevant groups and interests are aware of, and have access to, information about, the unique mountain landscapes and catchments, and natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks, the actions and behaviour needed to protect these values, and the objectives and achievements of the co-operative management program, and are appropriately involved in achieving the objectives of the program.

Outcome
Stakeholders are more actively engaged in, and are aware of, Alps programs and activities.

Website
The Australian Alps national parks website is hosted by the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. The site carries information about reference material, reports and publications, news updates, and links to related organisations and interest groups. Work on a significant upgrading and updating the site was completed in 2008–09 and included a considerable increase in material being available about the Australian Alps Walking Track. The Australian Alps national parks home page is www.australianalps.environment.gov.au. The site continued to be improved and upgraded in 2009-2010.

Alps brochures
The Australian Alps Program produces four brochures which are distributed to visitor information centres and other agency offices as a package of information. During this reporting period all four brochures (Alps icon brochure, Camping in the Alps – Leave No Trace, Hut Code and the Australian Alps Walking Track) were reviewed, updated and distributed.

Scanning and digitising Alps publications/reports
This project attempts to identify publications produced by the Alps Program over the years that, for one reason or another, are not currently available on the Alps website or otherwise available in an electronic format. The Program Manager receives many requests for documents from the Alps library that are not available elsewhere and the completion of this project will save time and, more importantly, will ensure the outcomes of many Alps projects and workshops are more widely available. Work to identify and scan documents progressed on this at no cost to the budget allocated with some documents already being made available on the website. It is expected that the project will continue in 2010–11.

Australian Alps ‘One Park/Welcome to Country’ signs
This project has been under review due to various factors, including the changing of sign standards in each of the states and territory which has led to the incorporation of Indigenous welcome messages and the Australian Alps national parks logo on key signage. The project has been modified following a new proposal for 2010–2011 and funds for this project have been carried forward to the 2010–2011 financial year.

Australian Alps Frontline Workshops
People working at the frontline of visitor contact in the Australian Alps play a pivotal role in awareness raising and information provision. These workshops are designed to give attendees, primarily people working in visitor services roles, the knowledge and skills to better inform visitors about the opportunities, natural and cultural values and issues across the Alps. Two successful workshops were held in the reporting period; one in the ACT at Birrigai / Tidbinbilla in May 2009, and another at Rawson / Baw Baw National Park in May 2010, with both attracting over 30 people.
**Key Result Area:**
**Indigenous People’s Engagement**

**Management of Alpine and Sub-alpine Wetlands in the Australian Alps Science Management Forum**
See the KRA for Water and Catchments.

**Cultural Heritage workshops**
See the KRA for Cultural Heritage.

**AAWT Stakeholder Meeting**
See the KRA for Visitor Experience and Marketing.

**First Peoples’ Gathering**
See the KRA for Cultural Heritage.

**Alps’ Green Guidelines**
A set of ‘green’ guidelines for event planning has been developed and is available on the Alps website.

**Objective**
Identification and promotion of opportunities for the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of the Australian Alps national parks.

**Outcome**
The Australian Alps Indigenous Reference Group is established, meets regularly, and contributes effectively to a range of Alps projects and initiatives.

**Establishment of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners’ Reference Group**
This historic initiative had been in the preparation phases in 2007–08 with the Group meeting for the first time in September 2008. The Group met six times during this reporting period at Namadgi National Park ACT (Sept 2008), Tumut NSW (Dec 2008), Bright Vic (March 2009), Beechworth Vic (August 2009), Jindabyne NSW (November 2009) and again in Jindabyne in conjunction with the First Peoples’ Gathering (April 2010). During these initial meetings the Group reviewed the outcomes of the Australian Alps First Peoples’ Gathering in 2005, developed a priority list of issues to be dealt with and commenced work on their implementation. The Group consists of representatives from each of the state and territory based Indigenous advisory groups.

**Indigenous Interpretation Training**
See the KRA for Cultural Heritage.

**Indigenous Landscape Assessment Skills Training**
See the KRA for Cultural Heritage.

**First Peoples’ Gathering**
The second ever First Peoples’ Gathering (FPG) was held in Jindabyne (NSW) in May 2010 and followed on from the first Gathering in Dinner Plan (Victoria) in 2005. The FPG is one of the landmark events of the Alps Program as it brings together Traditional Owners from across the Alps to celebrate the Alps as Indigenous Country but also to meet in men’s and women’s groups as well as a whole to provide advice to managers of the Alps. The gathering requires considerable resources and expense to organize but is worth the effort as it provides opportunities for Indigenous people to return to their Country and be actively involved in management. A full report on the FPG, including the outcomes has been prepared and is available in the Alps website.

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Key Result Area: Cultural Heritage

Objective
Improved understanding of and respect for the Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values of the Australian Alps national parks, including sites, places and landscapes, and incorporation of these values into effective conservation and management programs.

Outcome
The cultural heritage of the Alps is better understood, valued and protected by the community.

Indigenous Landscape Assessment Skills Training
Work commenced in 2007–08, but was completed in 2008–09, on the first stage of a two stage project to develop, and then implement, training for Alps’ agencies Indigenous staff in landscape assessment skills which will allow participants to proactively identify areas of Indigenous cultural significance prior to major works or other potentially disruptive activities being carried out. The program was also designed to complement the successful interpretation training for Indigenous staff, providing them with an opportunity to interpret another aspect of Indigenous culture. The training program was implemented during autumn 2009 on the Bogong High Plains in Victoria.

Australian Alps ‘One Park/Welcome to Country’ signs
See the KRA for Stakeholder Engagement and Communication.

Australian Alps Oral History Workshop
The workshop, which is run every couple of years develops skills for agency staff and volunteers in interviewing and recording oral history before it is gone. With the growing concern across volunteer groups and agencies that much history is disappearing without being recorded there are a number of Indigenous and other volunteer groups and agency staff interested in recording this history across the Alps. The workshop was organised and delivered by agency staff with support from other key presenters and was held over a weekend at Cabramurra NSW with support from Snowy Hydro.

Timber Skills and Historic Heritage Skills Workshops
A Timber Skills Workshop was held in Khancoban (New South Wales) in April 2009 and a Historic Heritage Skills Workshop was held at Falls Creek (Victoria) in March 2010. The Timber Skills Workshop was focused primarily on historic construction and maintenance techniques whereas the purpose of the Historic Heritage Skills Workshop was to bring staff and interested stakeholders together to discuss the operational issues with managing historic huts and other cultural assets as well as improve understanding of the Burra Charter.
Key Result Area: Program Management

Objective
The Australian Alps national parks co-operative program will be well managed, maintain its effectiveness to achieve the vision and objectives of the MOU and operate within the relevant policy context of each participating agency.

Outcome
The Program is managed efficiently and effectively and the Heads of Agencies and other stakeholders are satisfied with the Program’s performance.

National Heritage Listing
The culmination of intensive work over many years and decades of lobbying resulted in the Australian Alps national parks being placed on Australia’s National Heritage List on the 7th of November 2008. This is undoubtedly one of the great highlights for the Alps in recent years. The National Heritage List is developed under the provisions of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The Australian Alps national parks were listed for their diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural values, their natural values, recreational and scientific values and their inspirational values.

Australia’s World Heritage Tentative List Submission
In June 2007 the Environment Protection and Heritage Ministerial Council (EPHC) agreed to support the development of a new Australian World Heritage Tentative List and that the Australian Alps should be considered for inclusion. Consequently, in November 2007, the Australian Government commenced a process to develop that list and the Alps program has co-ordinated the preparation of a case to identify the potential World Heritage values of the Alps. This process continued in 2008–09 and 2009–10 with an important step in that process being the National Heritage listing.

National Landscapes Program
On 15 June 2008 the Australian Alps region, together with seven other places around Australia, was announced as a National Landscape under the innovative program managed by Tourism Australia and Parks Australia. This was the culmination of over 12 months work by the steering committee comprising stakeholders from throughout the Australian Alps region. The National Landscapes Program identifies sites offering superlative natural/cultural experiences distinctive to Australia and sought after by a global audience known as Experience Seekers.

The Australian Alps Program has continued to take a lead role in helping to focus tourism and community efforts towards achieving this recognition by providing financial and executive support for the steering committee and chairing of the committee by the Convenor of the AALC.

See also the KRA for Visitor Experiences and Marketing.

Strategic Plan 2008–11
In December 2007 a process commenced to develop a new Strategic Plan for the program as required under the MOU. This plan was driven primarily by the outcomes of the workshop held in June 2007 to mark the 21st anniversary of the signing of the MOU. However, there were many other forums and activities that provided input to the process including the annual Science Management forum in April 2007 on Climate Change in the Alps. The new plan was published in June 2008 and implementation commenced in July 2008 with the establishment of new governance arrangements including the establishment of the six KRA Reference Groups. This process has led to each group having a full complement of representatives from each of the co-operating agencies including the Commonwealth. Implementation of the plan continued during 2008–09 and 2009–10.
Training and Development

Staff in participating agencies benefited from a number of training and development opportunities during the reporting period. The highlights have been the Indigenous Heritage Assessment Skills Training which a number of Indigenous staff undertook for both mentoring and capacity building purposes, the Oral History workshop, the Frontline workshop and the Hawkweed Management workshop.

In November 2008 the Program Manager attended an international conference in Nepal, in co-operation with the IUCN WCPA, looking at the management of transboundary protected areas and continental scale connectivity conservation. The Program Manager assisted in the planning and implementation of the conference program and consequently the Alps program was featured as a major supporter of the workshop. The outcomes of the conference resulted in an international book on connectivity conservation in which the Australian Alps features. This key event and book will strengthen the international recognition of the Alps Program as a world leader in transboundary conservation.

Alps Operational Group

The Alps Operational Group met once during 2008–09 and again during 2009–10 the reporting period. This forum of field-based managers helps facilitate the integration of the Alps Program into agency programs and advises the AALC on how the program can best assist operational managers.

Science Management Forum

Adaptive Management

June 2010 saw the Alps program in cooperation with the IUCN/WCPA host Dr Harry Biggs from Kruger National Park in South Africa run a series of presentations across the Alps, culminating in a Science Management Forum for a wide audience of Alps staff in Beechworth Victoria. The theme of the presentations and the forum was Adaptive Management – decision making in a changing environment. Harry used interesting case studies such as the contentious issue of managing the overpopulation of elephants in Kruger National Park to explain the model they used for decision making. One of the methods used was to integrate science and management as much as possible as well as accept that decisions may not always be final, rather they can be altered as new information and science become available.
Key Result Area: Program Promotion and Information

Objective
Program agency personnel and other stakeholders will increase and share their knowledge and understanding of the values of the Australian Alps national parks and co-operative program benefits, and acquire best practice skills for managing and communicating these values, and improved cross-agency links.

Outcome
Agency staff and other stakeholders are aware of the benefits of the Program and support its objectives.

Australian Alps Newsletter
The newsletter *News from the Australian Alps* is one way of keeping staff and other interested stakeholders in touch with projects and activities of the Australian Alps national parks agencies. It is also a valuable method of raising and maintaining community awareness of the Australian Alps national parks and the benefits arising from the Co-operative Management Program.

During the reporting period editions 37, 38 and 39 were produced. The newsletter is distributed widely to Australian Alps national parks staff, the recreation and tourism industry, tour operators, external organisations, educational institutions, and user groups, with a circulation of nearly 1000 copies and being available on the website.

In addition to the printed newsletter, agency staff and selected interested stakeholders received four electronic ‘News Update’. These are emailed on a seasonal basis.

Website
See the KRA for Stakeholder Engagement and Communication.

Alps Brochures
See the KRA for Stakeholder Engagement and Communication.

Media Releases
Numerous media releases were produced throughout the period promoting key Alps Program projects and events including the National Heritage Listing, Australian Alps Traditional Owner Reference Group meetings, the First Peoples’ Gathering and various workshops. Media releases are prepared and distributed primarily with the assistance of the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water and input from other co-operating agencies.

Scanning and digitising Alps publications/reports
See the KRA for Stakeholder Engagement and Communication.
The AALC seeks to give land managers appropriate technical tools and sound scientific advice in management reports and strategies, to assist in achieving the objectives of the MOU in delivering best-practice land management across the region. All participating agencies have been active contributors to the AALC and reference groups.

The benefits of co-ordination and sharing of knowledge during the year were achieved through:

**Promoting community and inter-agency partnerships**

The Alps Program continued to foster strategic partnerships through the following:

- the establishment of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners’ Reference Group and the First Peoples’ Gathering;
- the Australian Alps National Landscapes program by taking a lead role in bringing together local, regional and State tourism organisations, tourism operators and park agencies;
- involving the community and other agencies in the Historic Heritage Skills workshop, the Huts workshop, Oral History workshop, Frontline training and the Hawkweed Eradication workshop.

**Fire control and fire recovery**

At the practical level, cross border co-operation on fire-fighting was most evident with parks crews from NSW and the ACT assisting Victoria in and around the Australian Alps region following the tragic events of the 7th and 8th of February 2009.

The collation and preparation of data and analysis from the Alps-wide fire ecology plots that had been collected over many years will provide important information for researchers and managers to help them better understand the impact on and response of vegetation to fire.

**Best practice management**

Information and ideas were exchanged through the running of a number of workshops on topics including:

- Hawkweed eradication and survey;
- Bog and Alpine Wetland workshop;
- Science Management forum on Adaptive Management (hosted by Dr Harry Biggs)
- Oral History workshop;
- Frontline workshop; and,
- Timber Working Skills workshop;

as well as reports being finalised on wild dog tracking and feral horse management.

**Australian Alps Walking Track liaison**

The ongoing co-ordination of a strategic approach to managing the Australian Alps Walking Track included a greatly expanded information section on the track on the Australian Alps website and the biennial stakeholder meeting. Signs developed in the preceding year to promote the AAWT at key visitor points along the track were installed in twelve locations along the length of the track.

**State of the Catchments report**

Inter-Agency Liaison

Ministerial Council
The Alps Program predominantly facilitates resolution of common issues and the sharing of knowledge and advice with direct benefits for operational staff in their various park management roles. The Alps Ministerial Council supports the Alps Program by providing high-level intergovernmental endorsement.

The Ministerial Council did not meet during the 2008–2009 or 2009–10 reporting period.

Heads of Agencies meeting
This annual meeting is an important opportunity for Heads of Agencies, or their delegates, to come together, review progress and discuss future directions and projects for the co-operative management of the Australian Alps national parks.

During the reporting period the Heads of Agencies formally met on 16–17 March 2009 at Guthega in Kosciuszko National Park hosted by the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, and on 27 May 2010 at the Stromlo office in the ACT which was hosted by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. Issues covered included updating the Heads of Agencies on the Alps Program, resort operations in the park, a proposal to have the Australian Alps national parks placed on Australia’s World Heritage tentative list and the establishment of an Alps alumni.

Integrated management
Key senior managers and planning staff continue to explore practical ways to integrate planning across the Australian Alps national parks.

Key Victorian staff managing the Greater Alpine Parks management planning process have been working closely with NSW staff in particular so that they may gain a better insight to the integration of management across the Alps.

A revision of the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve plan of management in the ACT has also considered the Reserve’s context in the wider Alps landscape.
External Liaison

The Australian Alps has partnerships with a range of external organisations. During the reporting period several organisations played a major collaborative role.

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Mountains Biome

This has an active membership of 450 mountain protected area experts in 60 countries. It develops best-practice mountain protected area management texts for capacity building, and organises mountain management workshops.

The quarterly Mountain Protected Area newsletter is circulated to agency staff via the Alps program.

The IUCN WCPA has collaborated with the AALC on a number of initiatives including the annual Australian Alps Science Management Forums and a workshop on transboundary protected areas and connectivity conservation in Nepal.

Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) with financial and staff support of Australian Alps workshops and joint policy initiatives.

NSW, Victorian and ACT Aboriginal Traditional Owner and Legislative Groups particularly in relation to the establishment of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners’ Reference Group and the First Peoples’ Gathering.

The Australian Government Department of Climate Change (now the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency) in providing assistance and funds for the development of the Alps State of the Catchments project.

Various Local Government Authorities and Regional Tourism Organisations in the implementation of the National Landscapes Program.

Various University academics and scientists participated in a range of forums and workshops throughout the reporting period.

Forests NSW on feral animal issues.

National Parks Associations of Victoria, NSW and ACT

Kosciuszko Huts Association and Victorian High Country Huts Association particularly in relation to the Timber Working Skills workshop.

VicWalk, Canberra, and NSW Bushwalking Clubs

Contributions and ongoing support for cross-border co-operative management of the Australian Alps Walking Track.

Tourism Victoria, Tourism NSW and Australian Capital Tourism and key industry stakeholders and local government in the establishment and successful recognition of the Australian Alps as a National Landscape and tourism agencies through the Frontline workshops.

The much-appreciated contributions of these organisations are further evidence of the growing profile, strength and relevance of the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program.
**Attachment 1a Program Structure as at 30 June 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian Government</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>Australian Capital Territory</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsible Minister</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Peter Garrett, AM MP Minister for the Environment Heritage and the Arts</td>
<td>The Hon Carmel Tebbutt, MP Minister for Climate Change and the Environment</td>
<td>Mr Jon Stanhope, MLA Minister for Territory and Municipal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Alps Head of Agencies</strong></td>
<td>Peter Cochrane Director of National Parks Parks Australia Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts</td>
<td>Sally Barnes Deputy Director General Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water Parks and Wildlife Group</td>
<td>Russell Watkinson Director Parks, Conservation and Lands Department of Territory and Municipal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Alps Liaison Committee AALC</strong></td>
<td>Peter Taylor Assistant Secretary Parks Australia Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts</td>
<td>Dave Darlington Regional Manager Southern Ranges Region Parks and Wildlife Group Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water Parks and Wildlife Group</td>
<td>Odile Arman Manager, Programs Co-ordination ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands Department of Territory and Municipal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AALC Secretariat</strong></td>
<td>Tracie Brauer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Manager</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Group</strong></td>
<td>Rebecca Chandler Lucy Sutherland</td>
<td>Gaylene Harris</td>
<td>Lisa McIntosh Lois Padgham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Resource Management Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Toni Ward Craig Midson</td>
<td>Pam O’Brien Josh Bean Geoff Robertson</td>
<td>John McRae Margaret Kitchin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor Experiences and Marketing Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Hilary Schofield James Trezise (Convenor) Steve Redden</td>
<td>Anthony Evans</td>
<td>Jane Easthope Lea Durie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Heritage Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Wendy Geoghegan Joss Haiblen</td>
<td>Alice Williams Megan Bowden</td>
<td>Jennifer Dunn (Co-convenor) Adrian Brown (Co-convenor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climate Change Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Karen Watson Joe McAuliffe</td>
<td>Ken Green Keith McDougall (Convenor)</td>
<td>Murray Evans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water and Catchments Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Anne Withell Emma Warren Iona Flett</td>
<td>Graeme Enders Genevieve Wright</td>
<td>Darren Roso Stefanie Straub Dave Whitfield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Attachment 1b Program Structure as at 30 June 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian Government</th>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>Australian Capital Territory</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsible Minister</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Peter Garrett, AM MP Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts</td>
<td>Mr Jon Stanhope, MLA Minister for Territory and Municipal Services</td>
<td>The Hon Gavin Jennings, MLC Minister for Environment and Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Alps Head of Agencies</strong></td>
<td>Peter Cochrane Director of National Parks Parks Australia Division Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts</td>
<td>Russell Watkinson Director Parks, Conservation and Lands Department of Territory and Municipal Services</td>
<td>Chris Rose Regional Manager East Region Parks Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC)</strong></td>
<td>Ben Phillips Director Protected Area Policy and Biodiscovery Section Parks Australia Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts</td>
<td>Dave Darlington Regional Manager Southern Ranges Region Parks and Wildlife Group Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water Parks and Wildlife Group</td>
<td>Brett McNamara District Manager (Rural) ACT Parks, Conservation and Lands Department of Territory and Municipal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AALC Secretariat</strong></td>
<td>Kathryn Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Jacobs (Convenor) Chief Ranger Alps Parks Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Manager</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Andy Gillham (Convenor) Lisa Basler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Group</strong></td>
<td>Rebecca Chandler Lucy Sutherland</td>
<td>Gaylene Harris Lisa McIntosh Lois Padgham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Resource Management Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Toni Ward Craig Midson</td>
<td>Pam O’Brien Josh Bean Geoff Robertson John McRae Margaret Kitchin</td>
<td>Charlie Pascoe (Convenor) Rudi Pleschutschnig</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor Experiences and Marketing Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Hilary Schofield James Trezise</td>
<td>Anthony Evans (Convenor) Penny McLennan Jane Easthope Lea Durie</td>
<td>Gill Anderson Kevin Cosgriff Dave Foster</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Heritage Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Wendy Geoghegan Joss Haiblen</td>
<td>Alice Williams Megan Bowden Jennifer Dunn (Co-convenor) Adrian Brown (Co-convenor)</td>
<td>Chris Smith Colleen Nagle Mick Douthat</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Climate Change Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Karen Watson Joe McAuliffe</td>
<td>Ken Green Keith McDougall (Convenor)</td>
<td>Matt Beitzel Peter Lawrence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Water and Catchments Reference Group</strong></td>
<td>Andrew Warden Emma Warren</td>
<td>Graeme Enders Genevieve Wright</td>
<td>Darren Roso Stefanie Straub Dave Whitfield Tamara Boyd (Convenor) Dannica Shaw</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Attachment 2a Membership of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners’ Reference Group 2008–09**

Uncle Ernie Innes  
Ellen Mundy  
Uncle Bobby McLeod (substitute)  
Uncle Vince Bulger  
Auntie Margaret Berg  
Mary Mudford (substitute)  
Paul McLeod  
Iris White  
Matthew Stewart (substitute)  
Glenda Hyde  
Violet Sheridan

**Attachment 2b Membership of the Australian Alps Traditional Owners’ Reference Group 2009–10**

Uncle Ernie Innes  
Ellen Mundy  
Substitute vacant*  
Uncle Vince Bulger  
Auntie Margaret Berg  
Mary Mudford (substitute)  
Paul McLeod  
Iris White  
Matthew Stewart (substitute)  
Glenda Hyde  
Adrian Brown  
Brad Bell (substitute)  

*Uncle Bobby McLeod sadly passed away in 2009
### Attachment 3 Financial Report Year Ending 30 June 2009

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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carryover (08/09)</td>
<td>$388,785</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$791,214</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* ACT contribution for 2008/09 was paid in 2007/08 and forms part of the opening balance. However, the 2009/10 contribution was made in 2008/09 and this is included in the ‘Agency Recurrent Contributions’.

** NSW and Vic paid their 2009/10 contribution in the 2008/09 Financial Year and this is included in the ‘Agency Recurrent Contributions’ along with their normal 2008/09 contributions resulting in a higher than normal figure here.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects Under Key Result Areas</th>
<th>Budget Allocation</th>
<th>Expenditure to 30 June 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Manager, Project Officer &amp; Program Administration</td>
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<td>Website Redevelopment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alps publications</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Program Promotion &amp; Information</strong></td>
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<td>Indigenous Interpretation Training</td>
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<td>Alps Frontline Workshop</td>
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<td>Australian Geographic DVD</td>
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<td>Australian Alps 10 Great Walks – 10 Great Drives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects Under Key Result Areas</td>
<td>Budget Allocation</td>
<td>Expenditure to 30 June 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visitor Experiences and Marketing</td>
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<td>Developing best practice guidelines for Hawkweed management in the Alps</td>
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<td>Australian Alps Feral Horse Monitoring</td>
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<td>Report on Feral Horse Impacts</td>
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<td>State of the Catchments Report</td>
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<td>Indigenous Peoples’ Engagement</td>
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<td>ACTUAL EXPENDITURE</td>
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<td>08/09</td>
<td>502,000</td>
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## Opening Balance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Balance</td>
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<td>Agency Recurrent Contributions*/**</td>
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<td>Revenue (Publications)</td>
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<td>Misc Revenue/Additional Project Contributions</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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## Expenditure

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<td>Expenditure</td>
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<td>Carryover (to 2010/11)</td>
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## Projects Under Key Result Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Manager, Project Officer &amp; Program Administration</th>
<th>Budget Allocation</th>
<th>Expenditure to 30 June 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALPS Operational Group</td>
<td>176,379</td>
<td>189,761</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science / Management Forum (Dr Harry Biggs)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Management</strong></td>
<td><strong>186,379</strong></td>
<td><strong>189,761</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>18,710</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning &amp; Digitising Old Alps Publications</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alps publications</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fact / Information Sheets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Promotion &amp; Information</strong></td>
<td><strong>43,710</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,622</strong></td>
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</table>

* ACT contribution for 2009/10 was paid in 2008/09 and forms part of the 'Opening Balance'. However, the 2010/11 contribution was made in 2009/10 and this is included in the 'Agency Recurrent Contributions'.

** NSW and Vic paid their 2009/10 contribution in the 2008/09 Financial Year and forms part of the 'Opening Balance'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects Under Key Result Areas</th>
<th>Budget Allocation</th>
<th>Expenditure to 30 June 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podocarpus dendrochronology Study</td>
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<tr>
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