Strategic Plan
2012–2015
For the Australian Alps national parks
Co-operative Management Program
For the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program.

This plan has been updated by the Alps Program Manager, Anthony Evans, from the 2008–2011 Strategic Plan which was prepared by Lorraine Cairnes, Fathom Consulting, Sydney, in conjunction with the Australian Alps Liaison Committee. Personnel from the four agencies provided comments, advice and assistance during the Plan’s preparation, and these inputs are acknowledged with appreciation.

For information about this plan, please contact the AALC through the Program Manager
Telephone 02 6450 5507.

Contacts can also be found on the website www.australianalps.environment.gov.au or through the participating agencies’ telephones at:

Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Telephone 02 6274 1111

ACT Parks and Conservation Service
Telephone 132 281

NSW NPWS
Telephone 1300 361 967

Parks Victoria
Telephone 131 963

PHOTOS: Front and Back cover AANP Collection inc K. McCallum
Contents

About this Plan 5

1 Background 6

A Fresh Approach 7

2 A Vision for the Australian Alps 8

3 Mission/Objectives 8

4 Priority Issues for 2012-2015 9

5 Structure to Implement the Alps Co-operative Program 11

6 Key Result Areas (KRAs) 12

Program KRAs 12

Management KRAs 12

7 KRA Reference Groups and Special Task Groups for this Plan 13

8 KRA Objectives and Outcomes 14

KRA objectives 14

APPENDICES 19

APPENDIX 1 Achievements of the Alps Co-operative Management Program 19

APPENDIX 2 Strategic Plan Review 20

Implementation Review of the Strategic Plan 20

Evaluation of Key Result Areas 20

Project Performance Evaluation 20

Annual Report 20

APPENDIX 3 Terms of Reference 21

Terms of Reference for all KRA Reference Groups 21

Terms of Reference for the Alps Operational Group (AOG) 22
About this Plan

This Strategic Plan 2012–2015 for the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program has been prepared by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee in accordance with the requirements of section 6.1 of the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the co-operative management of the Australian Alps national parks. It essentially follows on from the 2008–2011 Plan which was significantly modified.

The Plan will run until the end of June 2015 or until it is replaced by a subsequent plan.

Enquiries about the Plan and the Co-operative Management Program can be made to the Program Manager, Anthony Evans, at anthony.evans@environment.nsw.gov.au by phone 02 6450 5507 or through the website at www.australianalps.environment.gov.au.

Steve Horsley
Convenor
Australian Alps Liaison Committee
September 2011
1 Background

The co-ordinated management, protection and conservation of the Australian Alps national parks for all Australians, present and future, is the subject of an agreement (a Memorandum of Understanding) between the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Victorian Governments.


The Australian Alps, a mountainous biogeographical region in a predominantly dry and flat continent, contain Australia’s highest peaks and unique alpine and subalpine ecosystems; they stretch southwards from Canberra through the Brindabella Range in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), the Snowy Mountains of New South Wales (NSW) and along the Great Dividing Range through Victoria.

The Australian Alps contain plants and animals found nowhere else in the world, significant landscapes, and Aboriginal and historic places. They are a highly-valued recreational and tourism resource for many Australians, and are the headwaters of some of Australia’s most important rivers and streams, supplying snowmelt waters for the maintenance of ecological processes and communities, domestic use, industry, irrigation and hydro-electric production in NSW, Victoria, ACT and South Australia.

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) co-ordinates projects that encourage the consistent and co-operative management of the Australian Alps national parks. The Program enhances the ability of member agencies to meet their roles and responsibilities in managing the parks and reserves in alpine and sub-alpine regions of mainland Australia.
**A Fresh Approach**

This strategic plan is based on priority issues (Section 4), which give rise to a number of Key Result Areas (KRAs) (Section 6). The outcomes and strategies for the KRAs provide the framework for a program that will contribute to agency goals in relation to the co-operative management of the Australian Alps national parks and their individual elements. The agencies have developed this Strategic Plan together, and have agreed to implement it, co-ordinated by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, as individual agency resources and priorities permit.

A number of changes were made to the last Strategic Plan (2008–2011), based on increased knowledge and certainty about climate change and the impacts that it will have on Alps ecosystems; a more coherent approach desirable for the Alps landscapes as a whole; the need to expand awareness of the Alps landscapes and the Alps Co-operative Program to a wider audience; increasing risks to ecosystems posed by invasion by pest plant and animal species; recognition that recovery from the 2003, 2008 and 2009 bushfires is now well under way and no longer needs the high level of co-ordination provided previously and a diminishing capacity of working group members to devote the amount of time they have in the past to Program projects.

The aim of the 2012–2015 Plan is to build on the previous Plan. The 2008–2011 plan has been successful in addressing each of the priorities listed in Section 4, however the lack of reference to biodiversity and threatened communities will be addressed in this plan. This recent priority issue will see a new Key Result Area (KRA) established. It is also the intention through this Strategic Plan to further the Alps Program which will be evident through minor changes.
2 A Vision for the Australian Alps

The Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program Vision Statement, as described in the MoU is:

Agencies working in partnership to achieve excellence in conservation management of the Australian Alps national parks’ natural and cultural values and sustainable use through an active program of cross border co-operation.

3 Mission/Objectives

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to set out the framework for achieving the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding, which are:

1. 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.

2. To co-operate in the determination and implementation of best-practice management of the areas listed in Schedule 1 of the MoU to achieve the:
   a. protection of the unique mountain landscapes;
   b. protection of the natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps;
   c. provision of an appropriate range of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities that encourage the enjoyment, education, understanding and conservation of the natural and cultural values; and
   d. protection of mountain catchments.
In the triennium 2012–2015, the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program will address the following issues as priorities, listed here in alphabetical order. These priorities were developed by the AALC, and its staff and stakeholders, through a variety of consultative processes.

1 **Aboriginal Peoples’ Involvement.** Acknowledge the contribution of, and encourage further leadership by, Indigenous people in the co-operative management of the Alps.

2 **Climate Change and Adaptation.** The managers will support increased scientific research on the effects of climate change on the natural values of the Alps, enabling effective adaptive management, and leading to the development of appropriate programs – particularly in regard to impacts on biodiversity, fire management, catchment protection and tourism.

3 **Community Awareness.** Enhanced community awareness of the Alps’ significant values and the advantages of co-operative management, with expanded communication to a wider external audience.

4 **Fire.** Developing improved approaches to understanding fire regimes and their management and particularly under the influence of climate change.

5 **Invasive Species.** Diminishing the impact of invasive species on natural systems, including consideration of climate change effects.

6 **National Tourism Issues and National Landscapes.** The tourism values of the mountain landscapes will be managed to recognise it as the unique national and international destination it is, that is of great importance to the regional economy. The Commonwealth’s initiative recognising and defining National Landscapes will be incorporated into the program. This program adopts a partnership approach and is driven at a Regional level.

7 **One Alps Landscape: one park in name, not law.** This recognises that the three States will manage the conservation reserves of the Australian Alps as though they were a single national park with complementary legislation, complementary management plans, seamless promotion and marketing and respect for the cultural heritage of the Alps.

8 **Recreational Patterns.** Develop a better understanding of trends in recreational patterns and use including how climate change will affect this.

9 **Science / Management Linkage.** Promulgation of the results of scientific research to assist managers to make evidence-based decisions. The Program will form a key alliance with the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) over the next 3 years, particularly with one of the research hubs (the Landscape and Policy hub) using the Australia Alps as a case study area.
Management effectiveness will also be a key focal point, particularly relating to reporting of stated management objectives.

10 **Stakeholder and Community Engagement and Partnerships.** Partnerships with neighbouring and local communities will be formalised to enhance the conservation of natural and cultural values recognising that the mountain landscapes exist at a regional scale and extend beyond the park.

11 **Water and Catchments.** Damaged mountain catchments will be restored, and managed to maximise the potential for natural mountain systems to store and release water from the vitally important Alps catchments, with consideration of the effects of climate change.

12 **Ecological Systems and Processes.** Develop landscape wide approaches to dealing with Ecological Systems and Processes.
5 Structure to Implement the Alps Co-operative Program

The administrative structure will aim to operate with low overheads and effective integration with agency structures and the Alps planning framework (MoU, strategic plan and annual works plans). The agencies will share the administrative support and program management tasks on a rotational basis.

Australian Alps National Parks
Co-operative Program Functional Relationships
There are two groups of key result areas (KRAs) for this plan:

**Program KRAs**
Strategic advice provided by Reference Groups and the Alps operational Group.

**Management KRAs**
Facilitated directly by AALC or its appointees (generally, the Program Manager).

The Key Result Areas for the 2012–2015 Strategic Plan are:

**Program KRAs**
1. Climate Change and Adaptation
2. Ecological Systems and Processes
3. Water and Catchments
4. Invasive Species Management
5. Fire Management
6. Visitor Experiences
7. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication
8. Indigenous People’s Engagement
9. Cultural Heritage

**Management KRAs**
10. Program Management
11. Program Promotion and Information
For the life of this plan the following groups will be formed:

### KRA Reference Group and KRA Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KRA Reference Group</th>
<th>KRA Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>Climate Change and Adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecological Systems and Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>Cultural Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous People’s Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Management</td>
<td>Fire Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Invasive Species Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Engagement and Communication</td>
<td>Stakeholder Engagement and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Experiences</td>
<td>Visitor Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Catchments</td>
<td>Water and Catchments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Roles for Implementing the KRAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Roles</th>
<th>KRA Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alps Operational Group (AOG)</td>
<td>As per its terms of reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Owners Reference Group</td>
<td>As per its terms of reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td>Program Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program Promotion and Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 KRA Objectives and Outcomes

KRA objectives
The following objectives and outcomes have been developed for the key result areas. The Annual Works Program for each KRA will be closely tied to its outcomes.

KRA 1 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 and park management.

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.

KRA 2 Ecological Systems and Processes
Objective: Increase the level of knowledge of staff and stakeholders into the processes both leading to populations becoming vulnerable and to restoring them. Assist in the development of landscape-wide approaches to dealing with Ecological Systems and Processes.

Outcome: Awareness of processes leading to the restoration of endangered flora and fauna. Improvements in approaches to the management of Ecological Systems and Processes particularly relating to cross-landscape management.

KRA 3 Water and Catchments
Objective: Protected mountain catchments continue to generate sustained yields of high quality water, providing flow regimes to support water-dependent ecosystems and high-value uses such as tourism, hydroelectricity, irrigation and domestic consumption both within the Alps and downstream. Contemporary threat abatement and rehabilitation practices are applied to those catchment areas subject to significant disturbance to reduce erosion, improve hydrologic processes and enhance the health of aquatic and riparian environments.

Outcome: Water and catchment management initiatives are delivered through increased collaboration between park managers, technical specialists, researchers and other stakeholders. The knowledge of agency staff relating to water and catchment functions is enhanced to improve practical management outcomes and assist in assessing catchment condition.

KRA 4 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.
KRA 5 Fire Ecology

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 fire ecology research and planning and its application to fire management.

KRA 6 Visitor Experiences

Objective: To offer an enhanced visitor experiences and promote sustainable visitor management across the alps, and improve marketability through supporting and implementing Australia’s National Landscapes program.

Outcome: The Alps are promoted as, and provide, a national and international destination for world class nature and culture based tourism. Managers are aware of contemporary approaches to sustainable visitor experience in protected areas.

KRA 7 Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

Objective: Stakeholders from all relevant groups and interests, including private sector and local government, are aware of, and have access to information about, the unique mountain landscapes and catchments, natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks, the actions and behaviour needed to protect these values, 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 and support Alps programs and activities.

KRA 8 Indigenous People’s Engagement

Objective: Identification and promotion of opportunities for the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of the Australian Alps national parks. That Traditional owners across the Australian Alps engage in the Alps Program as an opportunity to celebrate the Alps as a single, borderless landscape which is culturally significant.

Outcome: The Australian Alps Traditional Owners Reference Group is an effective group which meets regularly, and contributes both to the management of the Australian Alps national parks and to the respect and recognition of Traditional Owners groups across the Alps.

KRA 9 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: Contribute to the cultural heritage of the Alps, so that it is better understood, valued and protected by the community.
Requirements for Management KRAs

The two Management KRAs are the primary responsibility of the Program Manager.

KRA 10 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.

**Generic Strategies for Achieving the Objective**

**Projects.** The AALC will sponsor individual projects agreed by the agencies to contribute to achieving the desired outcomes of this KRA.

**Strategic Advice.** The Program Manager will review the strategies for this KRA and recommend to the AALC any additional strategies which, in the view of the PM, will be needed to achieve the desired outcome of the KRA.

**Data Sharing.** The Agencies will share and promulgate data relating to this KRA, which will assist the achievement of the desired outcome.

**Additional strategies for achieving the objective for this KRA**

**Co-operative Management Program.** Sustain and develop the Australian Alps co-operative management program as a centre of excellence in mountain protected area management.

**Annual Plan.** Develop an Annual Plan that includes an Annual Works Program of projects and activities to address the priority issues for the triennium and achieve the outcomes for the Key Result Areas.

**Strategic Partnership Alliances.** Develop and take opportunities for strategic alliances with national and international organisations including protected area management agencies and other relevant government and non-government stakeholders.

**Monitor Results.** Monitor, evaluate and report the performance of the Australian Alps national parks co-operative program through the achievements for each of the Key Result Areas annually through the annual report and through the triennial Alps Report.

**Special Task Groups.** Establish and support Special Task groups (Reference Groups and other groups) to direct or advise on individual projects, activities or program areas on behalf of the AALC.

**National Heritage Listing.** Foster the contribution of knowledge about the significant natural and cultural heritage, inspirational landscapes and settings of the Australian Alps in the context of the Australian Alps national parks as a National Heritage Place, with the listing as a possible precursor to nomination for World Heritage listing.

**Outcome**

The Program is managed efficiently and effectively and the Heads of Agencies and other stakeholders are satisfied with the Program’s performance.
## KRA 11 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.

**Generic strategies for achieving the objective**

**Projects.** The AALC will sponsor individual projects agreed by the agencies to contribute to achieving the desired outcomes of this KRA.

**Operational co–operation.** The Program will encourage operational staff to meet regularly so operational issues can be compared and developed to ensure constant improvement.

**Data Sharing.** The Agencies will share and promulgate data relating to this KRA, which will assist the achievement of the desired outcome.

**Best Practice Skills and Management.** Foster common goals for targeted areas requiring training, and encourage staff to share and develop expertise and specialist skills in best-practice management of the natural and cultural values of the Australian Alps national parks;

**Additional strategies for achieving the objective for this KRA**

**Communication.** Encourage communication between agency staff and externally to stakeholders concerning the Australian Alps co-operative management program;

**Promotion.** Actively promote the Program to internal and external stakeholders through the Alps branded displays and publications such as brochures, newsletters and the website and through attending meetings and public speaking opportunities and through the media.

**Improved Access to Alps Information & Research Resources.** Facilitate improved access by Alps park personnel and others to all Alps reports, proceedings, information databases and research findings. This may be achieved by the development of an Alps intranet site or through other information technology solutions as appropriate;

**Research, Management and Monitoring.** Encourage and support park-based personnel and others involved in research, management and monitoring in the Australian Alps national parks;

**Staff Placements.** Encourage and facilitate park personnel to enhance their expertise through appropriate short-term exchange, secondments or placement with other agencies, either within or outside the Australian Alps national parks co-operative program.

**Professional Development.** Enhance professional development for Alps national parks staff by encouraging and facilitating participation in special task groups such as Reference Groups, the Alps Operational Group, and taskforces.

**Outcome**

Agency staff and other stakeholders are aware of the benefits of the Program and support its objectives.
9 Timeframe for Plan

This plan will commence in 2012 upon approval by the Alps Heads of Agencies group, and will run until the end of June 2015 or until it is replaced by the subsequent plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Timetable</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commencement of Plan</td>
<td>Jan 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report Year 1 of triennium</td>
<td>After June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report Year 2 of triennium</td>
<td>After June 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of new plan and implementation</td>
<td>End 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report Year 3 of triennium</td>
<td>After June 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 Achievements of the Alps Co-operative Management Program

The Alps Co-operative Program has achieved the following:

1. The Australian Alps are now widely perceived and understood as a single biogeographical unit of national significance.

2. A culture of co-operation and goodwill amongst the participating agencies and their staff has been established and maintained.

3. World’s best practice in cross-border management of protected areas has been established.

4. Co-ordination of the International Year of the Mountains 2002 celebrations for Australia, including a significant gathering of Aboriginal people.

5. Uniform and co-ordinated planning approaches, management policies, visitor advice, and compliance activities across borders is continually pursued and has been achieved in many areas.

6. The significant natural values of the Australian Alps national parks, have been defined by the Alps program, and are now being widely used as a basis for planning and management.

7. A research strategy for the cultural heritage of the Alps has been developed, based on principal Australian historic themes, to help to identify the national heritage significance of the Alps national parks.

8. Respect for the Alps’ Aboriginal values and heritage, and improved engagement and involvement with Aboriginal people with connections to the Alps. An Indigenous Reference group was established in 2008.

9. Co-ordination of many areas of training and research, resulting in enhancement of management expertise and performance and avoidance of duplication of training across agencies.

10. Recognition of the customer services needed by visitors and the production of a suite of visitor resources that promotes enjoyment, appreciation and sustainable use.

11. The co-operative program, originally committed to in 1986, still has the unanimous support for the four governments (Commonwealth, ACT, NSW & Vic) that are signatories to the MoU.

12. Over the life of the Program, there has been a progressive move away from it being an internal program of co-operation between national park agencies, to include a wide range of community groups including Indigenous people, tourism operators, recreation interests, conservation organisations, and local government.

13. Staff are connected to a wide network of similar knowledge and experience from other agencies which allows for sharing of ideas and benchmarking.

14. The Australian Alps are nationally and internationally recognised through their listing on the National Heritage Register and being named a National Landscape.

15. A large number of operational projects have improved the knowledge and management practices of Alps staff.
Implementation Review of the Strategic Plan

Section 6 of the MoU requires that the AALC will ensure:

- That a Strategic Plan is submitted to the Australian Alps national parks heads of agencies group (Alps Heads of Agencies) for approval on a three-year cycle; and
- Is accompanied by a review of the implementation of the previous Strategic Plan.

This review (the triennial Alps Report) will incorporate information from the three Annual Reports in the triennium and such other advice on the performance of the plan as the AALC’s analysis has revealed.

Evaluation of Key Result Areas

The performance of the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program will be evaluated annually by the AALC focus on the outcomes in this Strategic Plan for each of the Key Result Areas and reported in the annual report.

For each KRA the group responsible for facilitating it (AALC, KRA Reference Groups, Alps Operational Group, and Indigenous Reference Group) will evaluate the following aspects annually, focussing on the objectives and outcomes outlined in section 7 of this plan, and report these to the AALC.

1. The KRA is supported by and relevant to all of the Agencies.
2. The outcome for the KRA remains valid and relevant in its scope and applicability to the Australian Alps national parks.
3. There is evidence that the outcome for the KRA is being achieved.
4. The strategies for the KRA remain appropriate (useful and relevant) to achieve the outcome for the KRA and the MoU.

To facilitate this evaluation process, the Program Manager will develop a pro-forma and seek responses annually in time for incorporation into the annual report.

Project Performance Evaluation

Each project in the Annual Works Plans will be evaluated by its project manager, who will report on its performance to the AALC through the Reference Group for the KRA, using appropriate performance measures or performance indicators. The following evaluation aspects are required for all projects, and additional performance indicators or measures may also be reported. This information should be in a form suitable for inclusion in the Annual Report.

Performance evaluation for all projects will evaluate the following:

1. The completed project’s direct or indirect contribution to the conservation of significant values of the Australian Alps national parks.
2. The target users’ access to and awareness of the project’s results.
3. The extent to which target users found the project relevant and useful.
4. Completion of the project on time and within budget, acknowledging approved variations.
5. Ability to implement the proposed knowledge transfer strategy.

Annual Report

An annual assessment of the success of the MoU, the Australian Alps national parks co-operative program and the Annual Works Program will be communicated to Alps Heads of Agencies group, Ministers and other interested parties through the AALC’s Annual Report. The Annual Report will detail the outputs of the Australian Alps national parks co-operative program and the Annual Works Program and their benefits to Australian Alps national parks, and will include the evaluation required by this Strategic Plan.
Terms of Reference for all KRA Reference Groups
KRA Reference Groups (or other special task groups facilitating the KRAs) have the following responsibilities:

1. To consider the objectives of the MoU in achieving the outcome for the Reference Group’s KRA;
2. To provide the AALC with advice on new and emerging issues related to the Reference Group’s KRA;
3. To advise on achieving the outcome of the Reference Group’s KRA through the strategies identified in this plan, and advise on relevant projects and activities;
4. To advise on work plans for activities and projects in the triennium in the light of the priority issues listed in this plan, and the resources realistically available;
5. To consider linkages with the groups advising on other KRAs under this plan;
6. To consider the perspectives of Aboriginal people in contributing to the outcome for the Reference Group’s KRA;
7. To encourage the involvement of agency personnel with an interest or role in the Reference Group’s KRA;
8. To focus on the knowledge needs of the AAnp agencies and their staff, as well as those of the community;
9. To advise on knowledge transfer, but not necessarily undertake this process directly;
10. To advise the AALC on evaluation of the Reference Group’s KRA and its related projects towards achieving the outcomes;
11. To advise on actions needed to achieve the KRA;
12. To be involved, where relevant, in project management and delivery related to the Reference Group’s KRA;
13. **Generic strategies for achieving the KRA’s objective:** Each KRA Reference Group will implement the following strategies:

- **DATA SHARING.** The Agencies will share and promulgate data relating to its KRA, which will assist the achievement of the desired outcome.
- **REFERENCE GROUPS’ CROSS COMMUNICATION.** The KRA Reference Groups will provide advice and comment to any other KRA Reference Group if they consider that their advice will assist in understanding of aspects of each others’ KRA.
- **ENHANCING SKILLS AND MANAGEMENT.** Encourage staff to share and develop expertise and specialist skills in management of the Australian Alps national parks;

14. **Additional strategies for achieving the objective for the KRAs:** The KRA Reference Groups will consider and recommend to the AALC appropriate additional strategies to achieve the objectives of their KRA(s);

15. **Project Performance Evaluation:** Each KRA Reference Group will evaluate the performance of the projects it is responsible for in delivering the objectives of the KRA(s) and report on this annually to the AALC (See Section 8 and Appendix 2 of this Plan).
Terms of Reference for the Alps Operational Group (AOG)

The AOG is a Special Task Group which was established by the AALC under the Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007. It will continue to operate under the terms of reference established by that plan.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the AOG is to facilitate co-operative operational management across the Alps.

**Membership:** Membership is at least one field-based manager from each agency with an “on-ground” role, chaired by an AALC member (not the AALC Chair) from one of these agencies. A representative of the Tasmanian Alps national parks will be invited to participate in the AOG.

**Meetings and Agenda:** The AOG will meet at least annually, and also, if possible, meet with the AALC and the Reference Groups; its standard agenda will include evaluation and reporting on implementation of completed Alps projects.
APPENDIX 4 Implementing the Alps Co-operative Management Program

The administrative structure will aim to operate with low overheads and effective integration with agency structures and the Alps planning framework (MoU, strategic plan and annual works plans). The agencies will share the administrative support and program management tasks on a three year rotational basis.

Functional Roles
The following entities have functional roles in the Australian Alps co-operative management program under the Memorandum of Understanding.

1 Alps Ministerial Council
   Responsible for high-level inter-government relationships and the Memorandum of Understanding.

2 Alps Heads of Agencies Group
   Meets at least annually as needed; considers strategic issues; approves Strategic Plan; advises AALC on policy, priority areas for program development and emerging issues with respect to the scope of the MoU; reviews progress; receives annual report; negotiates funds or in-kind support contributed by the Agencies.

3 Australian Alps Liaison Committee
   Develops, implements and reviews the strategic plan; co-ordinates management of the co-operative program; develops and reviews progress of the Annual Works Program; identifies and supports opportunities for inter-agency liaison; enters cost sharing arrangements with agencies; engages with third parties with interests in other Alps parks; prepares annual report; reports to the HoA and Ministerial Council annually on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

4 Program Manager
   Implements the KRAs for Program Management and Program Promotion and Information through; facilitating and supervising the Annual Works Program and Annual Plan; maintaining effective liaison with all stakeholders; assisting and supporting the Reference Groups and special task groups; managing the budget including contract management; preparing newsletters and annual report; specific project management; recruitment and supervision of short term project officers to undertake special projects; oversees production supply and distribution of all Alps products; promotes Alps program and provides administrative support to the AALC; prepares the Annual Plan; and supports the Alps operational Group. Secretariat support to the AALC & alps HOA group; administrative support and program management tasks as requested by AALC including all arrangements for meetings; arranges agendas, minute taking and circulation; other related tasks directed by AALC.
5 Special Task Groups
The AALC may form special task groups from time to time such as Task Forces, Steering Committees and Reference Groups to direct or advise on strategies, individual projects or program areas on behalf of the AALC.

6 KRA Reference Groups
The KRA Reference Groups are responsible for implementing a number of the KRAs. They will comprise of up to two officers from each agency, and they may co-opt specialist experts external to the agencies. The reference groups will provide expert advice to the AALC and may develop projects for Key Result Areas in the Annual Works Plan; report on KRA outcomes; integrate work programs and outcomes with those of other KRAs; liaise with specialist stakeholders within agencies; provide advice to the AALC on specific result areas; and, as resources permit, manage approved projects. Terms of reference for KRA reference groups are included in this plan.

The AALC will invite nominations for membership of the KRA Reference Groups

7 Alps Operational Group (AOG)
The AOG, a special task group reporting to the AALC, was formed for the duration of the 2003 – 2007 plan to facilitate co-operative operational implementation of completed and on-going Alps projects. Its focus has been to ensure that the Alps program is consistent with and incorporated into the management programs of each of the individual agencies.

It has been chaired by an AALC member from one of the three agencies with “on-ground” management roles, with membership being operational managers from each of these agencies. The secretariat function for the AOG has been carried out by the AOG Chair’s organisation.

The AOG will continue to function with the same arrangements and Terms of Reference under this Plan.

8 Alps Agencies
Agencies will incorporate relevant aspects of the Alps program into their business plans as directed by their Head of Agency, and as far as their resources and policies permit. This will be facilitated through the AALC. Agencies may agree to manage projects on behalf of the AALC. Agency personnel may participate in and provide advice to the Alps Co-operative Program through their day to day work, and through membership of Special Task and KRA Reference Groups, by attendance at workshops, and submission of project proposals. With the agreement of agencies, officers may act as project officers for Alps projects.

9 Indigenous Reference Group
The first meeting was convened in 2008. The terms of reference for this are as follows:

**Australian Alps Traditional Owners Reference Group (AATORG)**

Preamble
In accordance with the desire of the Australian Alps First Peoples as expressed at the gathering at Dinner Plain in April 2005, the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) wishes to establish the AATORG. In doing so it commits to supporting the AATORG morally and financially so far as Alps partner agencies policies and resources permit in accordance with these terms of reference.

The AATORG will operate under the following parameters.
Area
The AAToRG will advise the AALC on matters relating to the area referred to as “the Australian Alps national parks” (AAnp) in the MoU between The Commonwealth, Victoria, NSW and the ACT which currently includes the Alpine National Park, Avon Wilderness, Mount Buffalo National Park, Baw Baw National Park and Snowy River National Park (in Victoria), Kosciuszko National Park, Brindabella National Park, Scabby Range Nature Reserve and Bimberi Nature Reserve in NSW and Namadgi National Park and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve in the ACT.

Authority
This group will provide advice to the AALC, (and through the AALC to the Australian Alps Program Manager and relevant Australian Alps Reference Groups), with the AALC Convenor as Co-chair and a member of the AAToRG as the other Co-chair and the Alps Program Manager as the Executive Officer.

Purpose
To advise the AALC on a range of issues relating to the co-operative management of Indigenous cultural values and issues across the AAnp that may include;

• How to engage Indigenous people in relevant key co-operative management activities, projects and decision making;
• Guidance on who speaks for country as required for particular issues;
• The development of Australian Alps wide capacity building programs; for example, cross cultural skills training including the identification, survey and monitoring of cultural heritage and interpretation;
• Engagement in the review and/or development of the AAnp Strategic Plan;
• Traditional Owner and other Aboriginal community needs and aspirations in relation to the Australian Alps and how these may be met;
• Accurate interpretation (and protocols for interpretation) of Indigenous cultural heritage to park visitors and the wider community;
• How histories can be accurately recorded and opportunities to promote awareness of Australian Alps Indigenous culture can be provided;
• Mechanisms to improve communications and understanding between AAnp park managers and the broader Indigenous Community;
• Ways to progress the outcomes and recommendations of the First People’s Gathering at Dinner Plain, April 2005. (see Attachment 1 to these terms of reference)
• Agency and park specific issues remain the domain of the individual State committees.
Membership
Up to two people (with a substitute member identified in case one of the regular members cannot make it to a meeting) being representatives of each of the existing agency/government advisory groups for national parks in the Alps, or other groups as identified by each jurisdiction, for example:

1. Victorian Alps Indigenous Reference Group
2. Kosciuszko National Park Working Groups (North and South)
3. United Ngunnawal Elders Council or other mechanism identified by the ACT Government.

A gender balance amongst the membership will be sought where appropriate.

Term
Members will be appointed for three years and will remain members for that period so long as they remain a member of one of the State/Territory groups as discussed above and while they remain the preferred nominees of that group.

If a regular member does not attend three consecutive meetings of the AAToRG their membership of the AAToRG will automatically expire and a new representative from their State/Territory group would be sought. This does not apply to substitute members. However, if a substitute member is asked, with sufficient notice, to substitute for a regular member on three consecutive occasions and they do not, their membership will expire and a new substitute member will be sought.

Should one of the members need to be replaced for any reason, the replacement member will only serve out the balance of the three year term of the person they are replacing.

As the end of the three year term is approached the State/Territory groups will be asked by the AALC to review their nominations and advise who the new members will be. The State/Territory groups may choose to nominate the same people again.

Meetings
- Meeting agendas should allow for a short period (approximately 30 minutes), prior to the start of the formal agenda, for AAToRG members to conduct Nations’ business.
- Meetings will be held on Country only with the agreement of a Senior Traditional Owner of that Country. A Traditional Owner of the Country upon which the meeting is held will be invited to give a Welcome to Country at the beginning of the meeting. This may be a member of the AAToRG where appropriate. The costs of having a Traditional Owner, other than an AAToRG member, attend to provide the Welcome will be met by the AALC.
- Meetings may be held at least two times per year, generally in Spring and Autumn to coincide with the development and approval of the AAnp annual budget and works program. More meetings may be held with the agreement of the AAToRG and the AALC.
- The AALC convenor will be a Co-chair of the AAToRG. A Co-chair will be selected from amongst the members at each meeting for the next meeting dependent on where that meeting is to be held. For example, if the next meeting is proposed to be held in Victoria then a Victorian representative will be asked to be the next Co-chair. The Co-chair may only be selected from the regular members and not substitute members.
• Meeting outcomes will be determined by consensus (i.e. via ‘round table’ discussion rather than voting) and recorded in the minutes. Members may abstain if they wish. Where consensus cannot be reached motions may be moved and voted upon. A simple majority will pass a motion.

• Should any of the nominated members be unable to attend, they may send their previously nominated substitute member.

• Substitute members may attend any meeting of the AATORG, if they are not otherwise filling in for a regular member, but at no cost to the Alps Program. In this case, substitute members may participate in the discussion but will not be party to reaching consensus outcomes of the AATORG.

• Members may be accompanied on their journey to meetings by family, friends or other community members at their own expense, provided they give advance notice and accommodation is available – the AALC will normally only provide financial support for the nominated members of the AATORG.

• Normally it would be expected that other members of the AALC and members of the AAnp Cultural Heritage Reference Group would attend the AATORG meetings as observers but will not be party to reaching consensus outcomes of the AATORG.

• Other observers may attend meetings but only with the advance agreement of either one of the Co-chairs. In deciding if observers may attend, Co-chairs, where practicable and with the assistance of the Australian Alps Program Manager if necessary, will consult with AATORG members. Observers will not normally receive financial assistance from the AALC to attend meetings.

• The Australian Alps Program Manager will co-ordinate meeting logistics and minutes and maintain records.

• Meetings should preferably be held in or close to the AAnp where suitable accommodation can be provided.

**Annual Co-operative Works Program**

The AALC will co-ordinate and implement an Annual Co-operative Works Program (known as the Annual Works Program) to achieve the objectives, address the issues identified for this triennium, and foster innovation and excellence in practice in the areas of policy, management planning, education, training, research and performance evaluation.

The Annual Works Program is based on financial years. The groups facilitating the KRAs (AALC, Program Manager, KRA Reference Groups and the Alps operational Group) may propose projects for the Annual Works Program.

**Principles and criteria for funding projects**

Project proposals for the Annual Works Program will be considered, funded and managed in a systematic way.

All project proposals for the Annual Works Program will be considered on their merits in terms of contribution to the objectives, outcomes and strategies of this Strategic Plan. Projects must meet the criteria below.
Criteria for projects for the Annual Works Program
Projects selected for the Annual Works Program are required to:

- Contribute to the long term conservation of significant natural and/or cultural values of the parks;
- Have outcomes that have application to improved park management in at least two of the States/Territory;
- Result (either directly or on implementation) in on-ground benefits to the management of the Australian Alps national parks; and
- Foster innovation and best practice in the areas of policy and management planning, education, training, research and performance measurement. Information required in project proposals

Project proposals must include the following information:

- The purpose of the project and the way in which it relates to one of the KRAs in this plan;
- Description of the whole life of the project, from inception to on-ground use;
- The target users and uses of the project;
- Project stakeholders, internal and external to the Alps agencies, and their role in implementing or participating in the project;
- The mechanisms proposed for knowledge transfer during or at completion of the project; and
- The means by which the project’s performance will be evaluated and the information that will be used to assess performance. on-ground works criteria

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee will consider supporting on-ground works on a cost-sharing basis with an Agency where the project:

- Involves implementation of a strategic approach consistent with the objectives of the MoU and this plan; and
- Has commitment of support to its continuance and/or maintenance by the Agency.
A Positioning Statement for the Australian Alps
From the Celebration of the 21st Anniversary of the Alps MoU
Thredbo June 2007

Introduction
The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in relation to the co-operative management of the Australian Alps national parks has reached a significant milestone, its 21st birthday.

No doubt there were those people involved in the formulation of the MoU who, with great optimism and hope, could foresee this time. There were probably others that were less optimistic; for in reality there are probably very few other, if any, multi-lateral government agreements on protected area management in Australia that are as enduring. Indeed, it is unlikely that there are other agreements in Australia that have inspired so many similar models all around the World.

The Co-operative Program, originally committed to in 1986, still has the unanimous support for the four governments (Commonwealth, ACT, NSW & Vic) that are signatories to the MoU. The MoU has been re-endorsed by the Ministers responsible for the Environment of these governments on four separate occasions in the past 21 years as new directions for the Program have emerged and there has been a willingness to include additional alpine and sub-alpine parks and reserves in the Program.

Over the life of the Program, there has been a progressive move away from it being just an internal program of co-operation between national park agencies to now also including, in various ways, a wide cross-section of other stakeholders including Indigenous people, tourism operators, recreation interests, conservation organisations, and local government.

The Program had humble beginnings and is still a relatively small Program, at least in terms of the resources it requires to continue to deliver tremendous value to stakeholders. It has evolved in many ways but still retains many of the fundamental elements it originally had. These Program elements, not the least of which is an enthusiastic and dedicated group of stakeholders both within and outside the participating agencies, are the key to its success.

It is a significant endorsement of the Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program that it has also received international acclaim as a good practice example of cross-border co-operation in conservation, people and culture. International park managers have visited Australia to better understand the Program, and staff associated with the Australian Alps Program have been invited to make presentations about the Program to international meetings of people involved in managing mountain and transboundary protected areas.

Having stood the test of time, with increased relevance and involvement by many associated with the Australian Alps, it is appropriate to consider where this Program is headed.

In June 2007, agency staff and other stakeholders involved in the Australian Alps Program over the past 21 years met in Thredbo to develop positions that would help to achieve a vision to see the Australian Alps Program move from its present successful base to a program that would receive even greater acclaim and, most importantly, deliver even greater benefits to the management of Australia’s mountain environments.

The following positions arising from the Thredbo meeting will help to achieve the vision for management of the Australian Alps into the future, the essence of which is:

A healthy alpine landscape that inspires the human spirit and protects natural and cultural values.

This should drive strategic thinking about addressing the challenges of the next 21 years.
**Delivering the Vision**

1. The MoU partners will manage the conservation reserves of the Australian Alps region, as the continuous landscape it is, with complementary legislation and management plans and seamless education, promotion and marketing in order to protect, and develop respect for, the natural and cultural heritage, and facilitate visitor enjoyment of the Alps region.

2. Management arrangements will acknowledge the contribution of, and encourage further leadership by, Indigenous people in the co-operative management of the parks.

3. The Australian Alps national parks partners will seek a nomination by the Australian Government for listing of the Alps national parks as a World Heritage property, possibly in conjunction with other adjacent conservation areas and environments, both public and private.

4. The managers will support increased scientific research on the effects of climate change on the natural values of the Alps, enabling effective adaptive management, and leading to the development of appropriate programs – particularly in regard to impacts on biodiversity, fire management, catchment protection and tourism.

5. Damaged mountain catchments will be restored to ensure long-term security for biodiversity and to maximise the potential for mountain natural systems to store and release water from the vitally important Alps catchments for Eastern Australia.

6. Partnerships with neighbouring and local communities will be formalised to enhance the conservation of natural and cultural values recognising that the mountain landscapes exist at a regional scale and extend beyond the parks.

7. The Australian Alps Region will support tourism that conserves and values the natural and cultural heritage of the Alps in recognition of the unique national and international destination it is, and the great contribution tourism makes to the regional economy.
Terms in this plan are used in the same sense as in the Memorandum of Understanding 2003. For the purposes of this strategy the following definitions apply:

**Co-operative management** means fostering a culture of goodwill, involving activities, projects, and complementary and supportive relationships, and adding value to those relationships through associated economies of scales, going beyond line management and individual agency constraints to ensure consistency across borders.

**The Australian Alps national parks Co-operative Management Program** (also referred to as the Alps Co-operative Program) is the ongoing activities, projects, works and administration undertaken to implement the Memorandum of Understanding.

**The Australian Alps Annual Co-operative Works Program** (referred to in this plan as the Annual Works Program) is the group of activities and projects undertaken each year under AAmp funding and co-operative resourcing arrangements.

**KRA – Key Result Area.** These are used in this plan to define the outcomes of the Alps Co-operative Program required for the triennium.

**Special Task Groups** include Reference Groups, Task Forces and Steering Committees.

- **Reference Group:** Provides the AALC with expert comment and advice on a KRA or project, or program area.
- **Task Force:** Undertakes a specific job and then is dissolved upon completion of the task.
- **Steering Committee:** Guides and advises a person or group undertaking a special task.

The **Triennial Alps Report** will incorporate information from the three Annual Reports in the triennium and such other advice on the performance of the plan as the AALC’s analysis has revealed and will fulfil the requirement of the MoU (section 6) to review the implementation of the Strategic Plan.