



Rock climbing in the Grampians National Park

Frequently Asked Questions

This page will be updated as more information becomes available. Page last updated: 20 March 2019

1. What is happening?

The Grampians National Park Management Plan outlines the Special Protected Areas that have been in place since 2003 where rock climbing is prohibited. [The recent maps released](#) also include an additional 29 protected areas making up 1.2 per cent of the National Park. Protected Areas are assigned due to their cultural significance or flora and fauna values.

The increase in activity and changes in climbing techniques have impacted irreplaceable cultural and environmental assets to a level where enforcement is necessary to preserve these special areas. Parks Victoria is currently undertaking enforcement activities to prevent rock climbing at eight key locations marked with blue squares on the maps linked above and signage is installed on access tracks to those eight key locations.

The eight focus areas where enforcement activity is taking place are:

- Gondwanaland
- The Gallery
- Millenium
- Billimina Area
- Billywing Buttress
- Little Hands Cave
- Manja Area
- Cave of Man Hands

In broader Special Protected Areas, Authorised Officers are educating park users by sharing the information materials on rock climbing and advising climbers if they are in a Special Protected Area where climbing is prohibited. They are also undertaking enforcement activity relating to other activities not permitted in any National Park including cutting or damaging vegetation (for instance to make or enhance tracks), lighting fires outside of designated fireplaces, depositing litter, interfering with Aboriginal cultural heritage such as rock art or any damage to rock faces such as drilling holes.

2. Why are these eight areas off limits for climbing?

The increase in visitation and changes in climbing technique have impacted irreplaceable cultural places of significance, areas of unique environmental value and rare and endangered flora and fauna.

3. Where can't you climb?

Climbing is prohibited in all Special Protection Areas and designated no climb areas in the Grampians National Park. These areas are indicated on maps which can be found on the Parks Victoria website. Special Protection Areas are also listed in the Grampians National Park Management Plan.

4. Where can I climb?

You can climb outside of the Special Protection Areas. There are still hundreds of known climbing locations in the Grampians National Park including the Bundaleer, Mount Stapylton Amphitheatre, Taipan Wall, The Watch Tower, Wonderland Area and Halls Gap Valley.

There are no changes to all main visitor sites and they will continue to remain open.

5. Will I be penalised or fined for climbing in a Special Protection Area or no climb area?

Signage is installed and officers are patrolling eight key locations. Climbing in any of the eight key locations could result in penalties being issued. Officers will also be providing advice on the Park Regulations and promoting voluntary compliance.

Across the park, whether within or outside Special Protection Areas, action will be taken against any person engaging in littering, destroying vegetation, driving off defined tracks, damaging park infrastructure including signs and barriers, damaging rock faces, illegally camping and lighting fires and disobeying or obstructing Authorised Officers.

6. What is a Special Protection Area?

A Special Protection Area protects specific natural or cultural values where a special management focus is required. Page 11 of the [Grampians National Park Management Plan](#) outlines activities that can take place in Special Protection Areas and states bush walking and picnicking are permitted.

7. Can I continue to climb in other parts of the Victoria Range and Red Rock Special Protection Areas?

Under the existing Grampians National Park Management Plan, rock climbing in Special Protection Areas is a prohibited activity. The Grampians National Park Management Plan will be reviewed with key stakeholders and Special Protection Area boundaries may change. There are still hundreds of known climbing locations in the Grampians National Park which are not located in the protected areas.

8. Will Parks Victoria make any changes to the Special Protection Areas outlined in the Grampians National Park Management Plan?

Parks Victoria will be reviewing the Grampians National Park Management Plan. A Stakeholder Reference Group will be established where Parks Victoria will meet with affected partners, Licensed Tourism Operators, stakeholder groups and local businesses – including the rock climbing community. Special Protection Area boundaries may change.

9. What damage has been caused?

Our Rangers in the Grampians National Park observed instances of impact to cultural and environmental values which prompted these changes. This included instances of damage to rock faces through use of bolts, chalk and graffiti, damaging plants by pulling them from cracks in the rock, drop mats damaging vegetation and cutting new access tracks through forested areas and leaving rubbish including toilet paper as well as establishing campfire rings.

10. What are the impacts of climbing on environmental values?

Vegetation, including rare and endangered species, can be impacted as a result of people creating bush camps, cutting new access tracks and campfires in forested areas, damaging plants by pulling them from cracks in the rock and using drop mats which disturb fragile ecosystems. Additionally, rubbish and human waste, including toilet paper, negatively impacts natural areas.

11. How long will it take to review the Grampians National Park Management Plan's Special Protection Areas?

We will be working with key stakeholders and partners throughout the review process and will be providing more information about the review as soon as it becomes available.

12. Why hasn't Parks Victoria restricted access to these sites previously?

Previously, these sites did not experience the high level of visitation and impact as they have in recent years. The increase in activity and changes in technique have impacted irreplaceable cultural and environmental assets to a level where enforcement is necessary in eight key locations in order to preserve these special places.

13. What if we climb carefully on these eight areas and refrain from using bolts and mattresses?

The eight locations have been closed to climbing indefinitely due to their significant cultural and environmental values. Parks Victoria is committed to ensuring they are preserved and protected and has identified climbing to have a detrimental impact on these special places hence implementing enforcement measures. There are still hundreds of known climbing areas available for visitors to enjoy.

14. What do climbers need to be aware of when climbing in the Grampians National Park?

All parks visitors should be aware of **National Parks Regulations (2013)**. Under these regulations it is an offence to

- Interfere with vegetation. A person must not cut, fell, pick, remove, take, damage or destroy any vegetation
- Damage, remove or otherwise interfere with any rock or similar natural object in a park 53(1)

Therefore, it is an offence to:

- Remove vegetation to gain better access to a climbing site or bouldering problem
- Install or replace fixed rock-anchor protection (i.e. bolting). Any 'bolting' is illegal
- Trample vegetation by placing bouldering mats around the base of cliffs
- Construct informal walking paths to access climbing or bouldering site

15. What is special about the Grampians National Park?

The Grampians National Park is one of the most important areas for floristic richness and endemism in eastern inland Australia, with more than 800 indigenous plant species; it is home to one third of the Victoria's flora. It also supports a wide range of wildlife with more than 40 mammals and an abundance of bird species.

The Grampians National Park and other protected areas such as Black Range, Mount Arapiles-Tooan, Red Rock and Mount Talbot, contain the majority of surviving Aboriginal rock art sites in south-east Australia. In the last seven years, about 40 rock-art sites have been rediscovered in the Grampians taking the tally of rock-art sites in the area to about 140 – or 90 per cent of all the known such sites in Victoria.

The Grampians National Park is assigned the World Conservation Union (IUCN) category II of the United Nation's list of National Parks and Protected Areas. Category II areas are managed primarily for ecosystem conservation and appropriate recreation. It is the fourth largest parks in Victoria and it is a core area for biodiversity and is recognised as the single most important botanical reserve in Victoria.