



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 6 August 2019

First Yorta Yorta Draft Joint Management Plan for Barmah National Park

A Draft Joint Management Plan for Barmah National Park has been released for public comment. The Plan has been developed by the Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board and sets out management directions for the park for the next 10 years.

The Board was appointed under agreement between the Victorian Government and the Yorta Yorta Nation in 2014 to jointly manage the park. It comprises Yorta Yorta representatives as well as members of the broader community. Parks Victoria provides day-to-day management of the National Park.

The strategies in the Draft Joint Management Plan are aimed at protecting and restoring the health of the park's environmental heritage, protecting and promoting the cultural heritage of the park, and providing for sustainable recreation and tourism. The Plan also contains strategies for increasing the role and capacity of Yorta Yorta People in joint management.

Chair of the Board, Uncle Des Morgan, said the release of the Draft Joint Management Plan marked an important milestone in the history of the Yorta Yorta people. 'We have been excluded for generations from having any say on the management our Country. Now, once again we can take up our ancestral rights and responsibilities to look after it. We extend our hand to everyone to come together and walk with us to nurture this important part of Country back to health.'

The Draft Joint Management Plan proposes that many aspects of the management and use of Barmah National Park will continue and also proposes some key changes including:

- Reaffirm Yorta Yorta as the First Nation People of Barmah and enabling them to undertake their rights and responsibilities to restore the health of Country
- endorsing Parks Victoria's proposals released earlier this year to remove feral horses from the park and control pigs, goats and weeds

- revitalising the Dharnya Centre and its surrounds to provide a gateway to the park, and a vibrant hub for the development of Yorta Yorta culture, visitor and schools education and for tourism services and events
- maintaining the popular dispersed camping opportunities along Dhungalla, the Murray River, and providing additional boat ramps and toilets at key locations to reduce environmental impacts and improve amenity for visitors
- improving the use of Yorta Yorta cultural burning in the park to achieve greater environmental and cultural benefits
- improving the facilities at designated camping areas and introducing bookings and fees for sites in these designated areas
- expanding the mapping of cultural heritage in the park and taking protective action to re-align roads or relocate campsites where cultural sites are at risk
- establishing a cultural and historic trail through the park suitable for vehicles, walkers and bicycling to promote and interpret Yorta Yorta cultural heritage and the post-colonial shared history of the park
- no longer allowing horseriding in the park except along Sand Ridge Track from Rice's Bridge to access the Dharnya Community Use Area for permitted events
- providing an area on Top Island for Yorta Yorta gatherings and cultural practices
- developing the tourism attractiveness of the park in partnership with the Murray Regional Tourism through improved and new services and visitor experiences
- working with Moira Shire to improve waste disposal facilities for campers.

The Draft Plan will be open for public comment until 6 October 2019. All submissions will then be taken into account in finalising the Joint Management Plan by the end of 2019 for approval by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

The draft Plan can be viewed or downloaded at the Board's website: www.ytolmb.com.au. The website provides details on how to make submissions.

Open House information and consultation sessions will be held as follows:

- Shepparton on Monday 26 August (4.30pm to 7.30pm),
- Barmah on Friday 30 August (2.30pm to 5.30pm)
- Echuca on Tuesday 3 September (4.30pm to 7.30pm).

Details of the Open House venues will be provided on the Board's website shortly.
