

Invest Outdoors

16 high-value, high-return investments to capitalise on Victoria's outdoor and natural areas, businesses and community

Background

In February 2015, 50 leaders from across Victoria's outdoor community gathered in Geelong to discuss issues of common concern. One of the top issues arising out of this conversation was a unanimous agreement on the need for improved public and private investment in the natural and built assets, and programs, that help Victorians access and enjoy our state's wonderful natural environments.

"Invest Outdoors" is a project to follow-up on that conversation by identifying and mobilising support for key investments in the outdoors.

The following page sets out a list of 16 high priority investments, which Outdoors Victoria has compiled through discussion with a wide range of stakeholders. We believe each of these investments has the potential for a substantial economic, social and environmental return. Together, these investments would help nurture a vibrant regional economy based on outdoors activity, as well as a thriving community of participants.

In short, we can think of no better way to increase the wellbeing and economic vitality of our state, and regional Victoria in particular, than following through on these investments.

Consultation

We are now seeking feedback on the broad direction of Invest Outdoors. In particular, we want to hear from anybody with an interest in the outdoors about the priorities contained in this list. In particular, you may wish to consider the following key questions:

- Are these high-value, ambitious investment ideas missing from our list?
- Are there significant difficulties or differences of views about any of the items on the list?
- Would you be prepared to support efforts to encourage these projects and programs to be funded through the Victorian government?

Outdoors Victoria would welcome your views throughout the month of September 2015. In October 2015, we will finalise this list and commence actively encouraging our community and our political leaders to support these projects.

Any submissions should be directed to Chuck Berger, CEO, at Charles.berger@outdoorsvictoria.org.au by 28 September 2015.

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Strategic programs

1. Universal outdoor education ca. \$30m / year
Ensure all schools in Victoria are supported in providing outdoor experiential learning to all students, with an initial focus on development and funding of programs in schools with particular needs
2. Parks emergency maintenance fund ca. \$20m/year boost
Increase in core funding for Parks Victoria to address a critical current maintenance backlog for visitor facilities and key facility improvements
3. Ecological connections ca. \$15m/ 3 years
Support for landscape-scale conservation initiatives like Habitat 141 and the Great Eastern Ranges connectivity projects
4. The visitor economy integrate with Visit Victoria budget
Marketing of Victoria's nature-based tourism experiences
5. Kids in nature \$6m / 3 years
Support for initiatives to get our children active outdoors, such as Nature Play, Project Wild Thing, and the Victorian Kids in Nature Network

Key tracks and trails

6. Murray Adventure Trail establishment \$24m
7. Murray to Mountains Rail Trail extensions & enhancements \$20m
8. Falls Creek to Hotham – Alpine Crossing trail upgrade \$6-10m
9. Coastal Wilderness Walk upgrade \$5m
10. G21 Adventure Trails package (Geelong/Barwon area) \$20m
11. 12 Apostles Walk extension & upgrade \$13m
12. Great Southern Rail Trail Extension \$10m
13. Completion of Emerald – Gembrook rail trail \$3-4m

New national park

14. Great Forests National Park establishment ca. \$40m / 6 years
(note: support conditional on ability to continue & expand current outdoor educational programming in the new national park.)

Community facilities

15. Community recreation facilities fund \$30m / 3 years
(includes Westerfolds Paddling Centre, scouts & guides hall upgrades, and other recreational club facilities)
16. Boating access facilities fund \$9.75m per annum over 4 years