



The Australian Alps are an ancient landscape – some parts are more than 600 million years old. Ice, wind and water continually change the landscape. Humans too, mould the mountains ... more and more as the years go by.

The Australian Alps national parks are for all Australians to enjoy and cherish for the future.



“ they are space,
they are
independence,
places to prove
yourself and
places to be
yourself,
they are places
to cherish. „

Mark O'Connor, poet, 1999

people working together



The Australian Alps straddle the borders of the ACT, New South Wales and Victoria. National parks and nature reserves within the Alps are managed by each state or territory government. In the past, each had its own way of dealing with the challenges of park management. In order to better protect Australia's unique alpine and subalpine environments, the park agencies agreed to work together, in partnership with the Australian Government. The reserves now form a conservation zone of international significance known as the Australian Alps national parks.

alps partners

To find out more visit our website
www.australialps.environment.gov.au

NSW

www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

ph 1300 36 1967

VICTORIA

www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

ph 13 1963

ACT

www.tams.act.gov.au

ph 13 2281

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

www.environment.gov.au

ph (02) 6274 1111

People working together to care for the Alps



australian alps national parks



people working together

enjoying the alps

Thousands of people visit the Australian Alps. They come all year round to enjoy the feeling of freedom, the breathtaking views, and the harmony of nature.



A visit to the Alps in summer can include exploring the remains of an old gold mining town; an invigorating walk along a summit track among the wildflowers; fishing in an icy mountain creek; camping under a big sky or the thrill of white-water rafting.



In winter many people discover the quiet beauty of the mountains on cross-country skis. Others enjoy the action of down hill skiing and snow-boarding. Many visitors just drive to the mountains for the joy of seeing and playing in the crisp white snow.



Living conditions in the Alps are very changeable but in spite of this around 700 species of plants cope with life at the top of Australia.

As you go up the mountains you see dramatic changes: different types of plants, variable spaces between them and variations in their heights and shapes. Carpets of fragile, brightly-coloured wildflowers grow high above the tree line with gnarled and twisted snow gums just below. Stately forests of alpine ash grow on lower sheltered slopes. Watery fens, moss-beds and creeks occur throughout.



nature's variety in the alps



These different environments are the habitats for some of Australia's rarest and most interesting animals. The tiny mountain pygmy possum, the striking black and yellow corroboree frog and the Kosciuszko wingless grasshopper are a few of the animals found only in the Alps. Many birds also stopover during their global travels.



delicate, beautiful but threatened

Despite their rugged appearance, the environments of the Australian Alps are delicate. Much has already been changed by grazing, mining and the construction of hydro-electric schemes. The introduction of weeds such as blackberries and broom as well as feral animals such as foxes, pigs and horses continue to impact on the landscape.

Growing numbers of visitors to ski fields, popular bushwalking spots and Aboriginal or historic sites can easily threaten those environments. Activities such as horse riding, four-wheel drive touring, bushwalking and camping have also caused trampling, pollution and erosion in some areas particularly above the tree line.



Peoples of mountains and plains

For many millennia Aboriginal people lived in and nurtured the mountains and valleys of the Australian Alps. Every summer for thousands of years Aboriginal people crossed tribal boundaries and travelled hundreds of kilometres to meet on the highest peaks of the alpine region. They came from as far away as the coast and the south-west slopes of the mountains to meet with the peoples of the mountains for inter-tribal ceremonies.

Tools, caves and rock shelters give clues as to how they lived in their environment.

Aboriginal people continue their connections with the Australian Alps; many live in the towns surrounding the mountains and their custodianship endures.



Riches of stock, gold and timber

As early as the 1820s graziers were exploring the Snowy Mountains in search of land for their stock. Fortune seekers flocked to the Alps in the 1850s when gold was discovered, and with them came explorers and then settlers. Timber-getters set up sawmills and opened roads to harvest the timbers of the Alps.

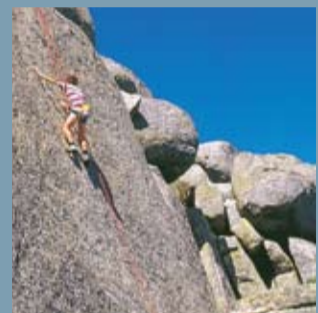
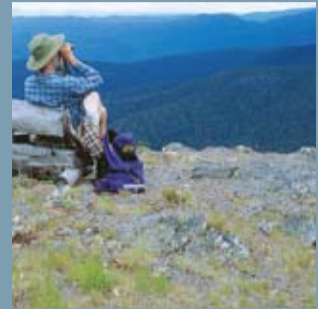
When the hydro-electric schemes were built there were dramatic changes: rivers were diverted, roads, tracks, dams and power stations were built and the Alps were opened up for visitors.

Relics of these times such as huts and yards, mining machinery and timber trails, are scattered across the Alps. They remain an important part of Australia's heritage.

Communities share in the benefits of tourism, crystal clear water and clean air that the mountains and forests provide.



australian alps



PLAN AHEAD

Think about weather, clothing, equipment & safety.



USE A FUEL STOVE

Quicker and cleaner, better for the bush.



CARRY IT IN, CARRY IT OUT

Whatever it is, don't burn, bury or leave anything including cigarette butts and tissues. Most rubbish doesn't decompose – and it may wash into nearby creeks and lakes and pollute them.



GOT TO GO?

Use toilets where provided or take a walk – at least 100 paces from water, campsites or the walking track. Dig 15 cm deep and cover well.



STAY ON TRACK

Even if it's muddy or dusty, don't widen tracks or take shortcuts.



RESPECT HERITAGE

Heritage places are a link to memories of people and the past. Huts were also often located in areas used as camp sites by Aboriginal people, so leave all artefacts and the hut environs undisturbed.



LEAVE NO TRACE

Walk, drive, camp, ski, climb, paddle – whatever you do, respect the traditional Aboriginal owners and their country as well as other visitors by aiming to leave the area as you found it.

find out more

WEBSITE

www.australionalps.environment.gov.au

BOOKS

WILDGUIDE plants and animals of the Australian Alps

MAP

Australian Alps Touring Map and Guide

