Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing

Heritage Impact Assessment

Prepared for Parks Victoria
September 2025

GML HERITAGE

Acknowledgement of Country

We respect and acknowledge the First Peoples of the lands and waterways on which we live and work, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with First Peoples to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social, cultural and political justice and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Cultural warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this report may contain images or names of First Nations people who have passed away.

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Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with the GML Heritage Pty Ltd (GML) Quality Management System.

Job No.	Issue No.	Notes/description	Issue date
3771	1	Draft Report (Sections 1–4)	27 August 2025
3771	2	Second Draft Report	6 September 2025
3771	3	Final Draft report	16 September 2025
3771	4	Final Draft Report (Editorial Review)	17 September 2025
3771	5	Final Report	30 September 2025

Quality management

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality management policy and procedures.

It aligns with best-practice heritage conservation and management, *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* and heritage and environmental legislation and guidelines relevant to the subject place.

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property

We acknowledge and respect the inherent rights and interests of First Peoples in Indigenous cultural and intellectual property. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to be acknowledged and attributed for their contribution to knowledge but also respect their rights to confidentiality. We recognise our ongoing obligations to respect, protect and uphold the continuation of First Peoples rights in the materials contributed as part of this project.

Cover image

View in Alpine National Park, May 2024. (Source: Parks Victoria; reproduced with permission)

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Executive summary

Parks Victoria has engaged GML Heritage Victoria Pty Ltd (GML) to prepare a heritage impact assessment for the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing project, to assess the impacts of the proposed action on the National Heritage values of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage place.

This National Heritage place is protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (the EPBC Act). Before taking an action that is likely to impact the National Heritage values of the place, Parks Victoria is required to assess whether there are likely to be significant impacts and whether a referral to the Minister for the Environment and Water is required. This report is intended to assist Parks Victoria with that self-assessment. Impacts on other aspects of the Victorian Alpine National Park's significance, such as state and local heritage values, are not assessed in this report.

The Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage place extends across Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. It is on the National Heritage List for its outstanding value to the nation. The place displays a variety of significant natural and cultural environments. It is significant for its demonstration of glacial and periglacial features, fossils, karst systems, its biological heritage, and historic association with moth feasting, transhumant grazing, scientific research, water harvesting and recreation in Australia's cultural history. It expresses rare environmental features through its landscape and topography, geodiversity, alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems, and eucalypt flora communities. The place has representative pastoral landscapes, and aesthetic significance for its powerful, spectacular and distinctive landscapes, vistas and environments. The Alps have social value to Australians and to many community groups, and are associated with significant people in Australian history including explorers, artists and writers.

The proposed Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing project involves the creation of a new hiking route through the Victorian Alpine National Park from Falls Creek to Mount Hotham. The route will be established along existing tracks and trails, and the project involves trail works and development of three new overnight node camping areas for hikers. Conservation works to historic huts near the proposed trail route will also occur.

Parks Victoria has undertaken an extended design and planning process to develop the current proposal. Several options have been considered to avoid and mitigate impacts and incorporated into the design. This heritage impact assessment (HIA) assesses the residual impacts from the scope of proposed works, as outlined in this report.

Following assessment of the proposed action with reference to the National Heritage values, the context and intensity of the proposed works, and the guidance of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1. – Matters of National Environmental Significance,* the proposed action has been assessed as having an overall **moderate** impact on the National Heritage values.

More specifically in relation to the different aspects of the National Heritage values, the following heritage impacts have been identified.

- To National Heritage values identified under criterion A:
  - minor impacts to the natural heritage values;
  - minor impacts to the Indigenous heritage values;
  - minor to moderate impacts to the historic heritage values associated with transhumant grazing; and
  - negligible impacts to the historic heritage values associated with scientific research, water harvesting and recreation.
- To National Heritage values identified under criterion B, minor impacts on the natural heritage values.
- To National Heritage values identified under criterion D, no impacts have been identified.
- To National Heritage values identified under criterion E, minor to moderate impacts have been identified.
- To National Heritage values identified under criterion G, moderate impacts have been identified.
- To National Heritage values identified under criterion H, negligible impacts have been identified.

Based on this assessment, the impact on National Heritage values does not meet the threshold to trigger a referral to the Minister under the EPBC Act—noting that other matters protected by the EPBC Act may be impacted and require the proposed action to be referred.

To optimise heritage outcomes, it is recommended that Parks Victoria implement measures to further minimise heritage impacts as much as possible. This HIA recommends the following measures, addressed in more detail within the report:

- To mitigate impacts on the natural heritage values, implement the recommendations set out in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Environmental Assessment report, prepared by Parks Victoria (2025)
- To mitigate impacts on the Indigenous heritage values, implement the condition and contingency actions in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan prepared by Latitude Heritage for Parks Victoria (2025)

- To minimise impacts on the historic heritage values, implement the following measures:
  - Take opportunities to refine the design further for the Overnight Nodes to minimise impacts on historic (criterion A), aesthetic (criterion E) and social (criterion G) heritage values.
  - Prepare a photographic archival record of all overnight nodes, the historic huts and a representative sample of trail works areas, showing the works areas before and after works are undertaken.
  - Keep alterations to the historic huts as minimal as possible. Repair fabric with traditional materials and techniques as a priority over replacing materials.
  - Ensure all workers and volunteers (including those working on historic huts) have a heritage induction before commencing work.
  - In communications, signage and/or interpretation materials for the FHAC, include information on the importance of the National Heritage values in accessible locations, asking visitors to respect these values.
  - Ensure signage is placed in locations that will not obstruct or obscure views. Minimise the number of signs as much as possible and avoid duplication.

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Parks Victoria has engaged GML Heritage Victoria Pty Ltd (GML) to prepare a heritage impact assessment (HIA) for the proposed Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (FHAC) project (the proposed action).

The Falls to Hotham area is in the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage place, which is included in the National Heritage List (NHL) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act).

The purpose of this report is to articulate the National Heritage values of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage place and assess the likely impacts of the proposed action on these values.

The proposed action is the establishment of an extended, multi-day, 52km walk through the Victorian Alpine region from Falls Creek to Mount Hotham. The project will include track works to improve and connect existing trails, new overnight nodes for camping and shelters for walkers, improved signage, and maintenance and repair works to historic huts.

Actions likely to have a significant impact on the National Heritage values of a place under the EPBC Act must be referred to the Minister for the Environment and Water for approval. This report has been prepared to inform Parks Victoria's self-assessment of likely impacts on the National Heritage values, as required under the EPBC Act, and will support a potential referral under the EPBC Act.

1.2 Identification of the project area

The proposed action is in Alpine National Park in the northeast of Victoria, with a small section in the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort. Alpine National Park is in the Alpine Shire and East Gippsland Shire; Mount Hotham and Falls Creek are unincorporated areas situated within the borders of the Alpine Shire. The project works are associated with a 52km stretch of trail travelling from Falls Creek to Mount Hotham, across alpine and sub-alpine landscapes.

The project area assessed for this report encompasses the works area along the trail, the historic huts that are being worked on as part of the project, and the nearby heritage context within Alpine National Park, Victoria. Alpine National Park is part of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves (AANP) National Heritage place, which extends across Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

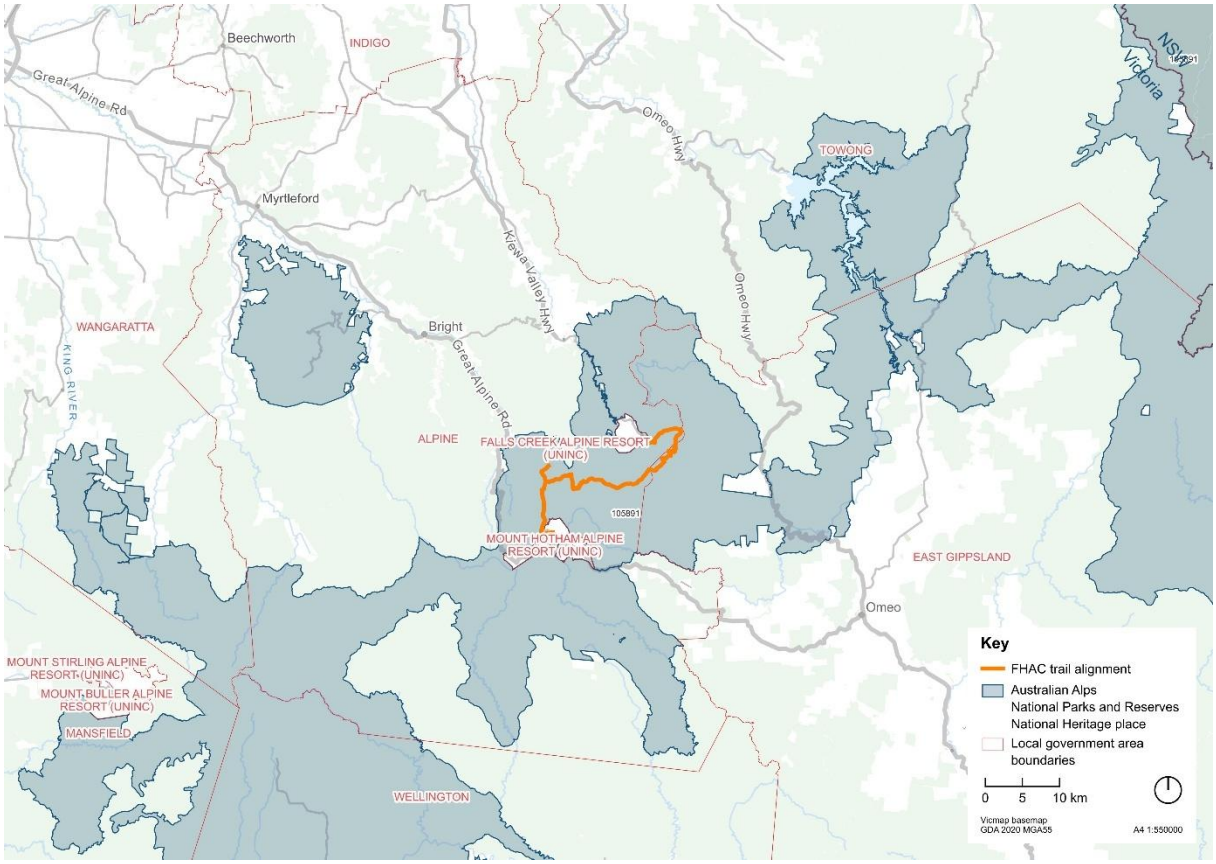


Figure 1.1 FHAC trail alignment in the Victorian context of the AANP National Heritage place (part). (Source: Vicmap with GML overlay)

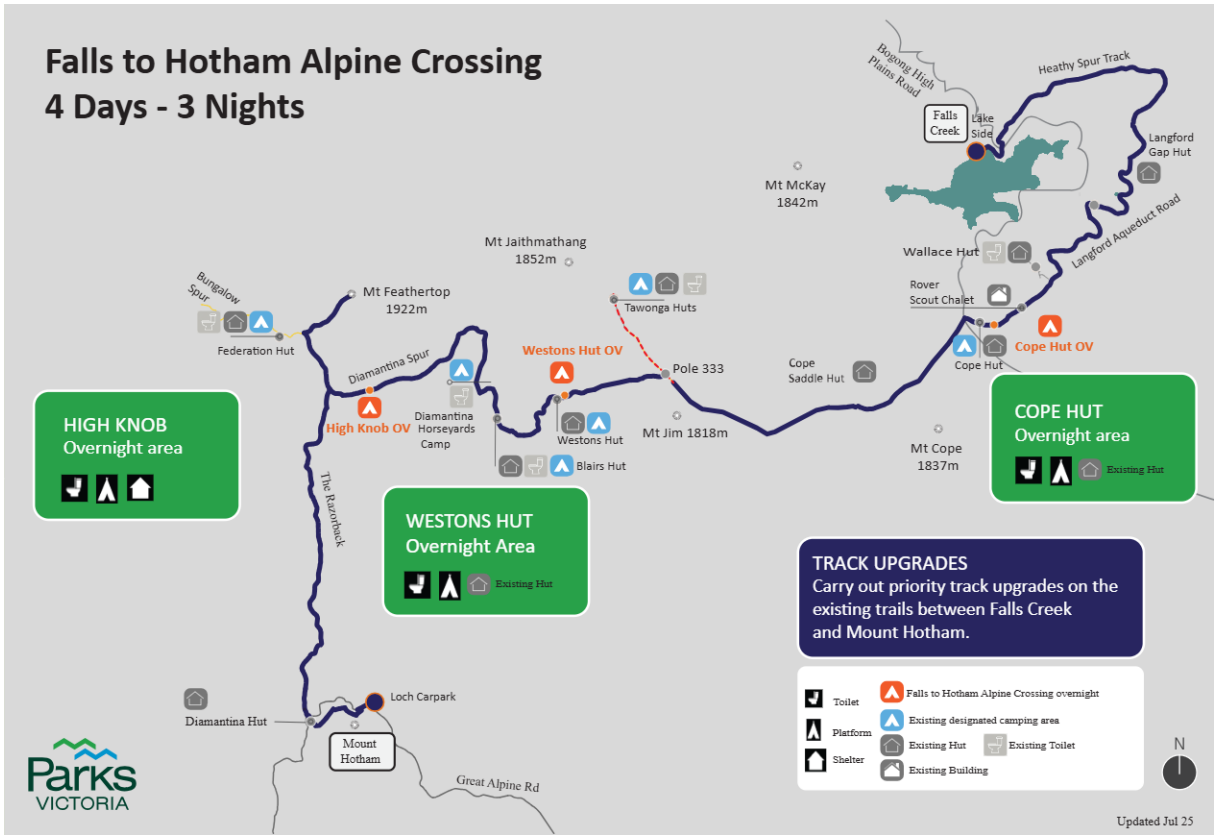


Figure 1.2 Map of the proposed Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing and its key features. (Source: Parks Victoria)

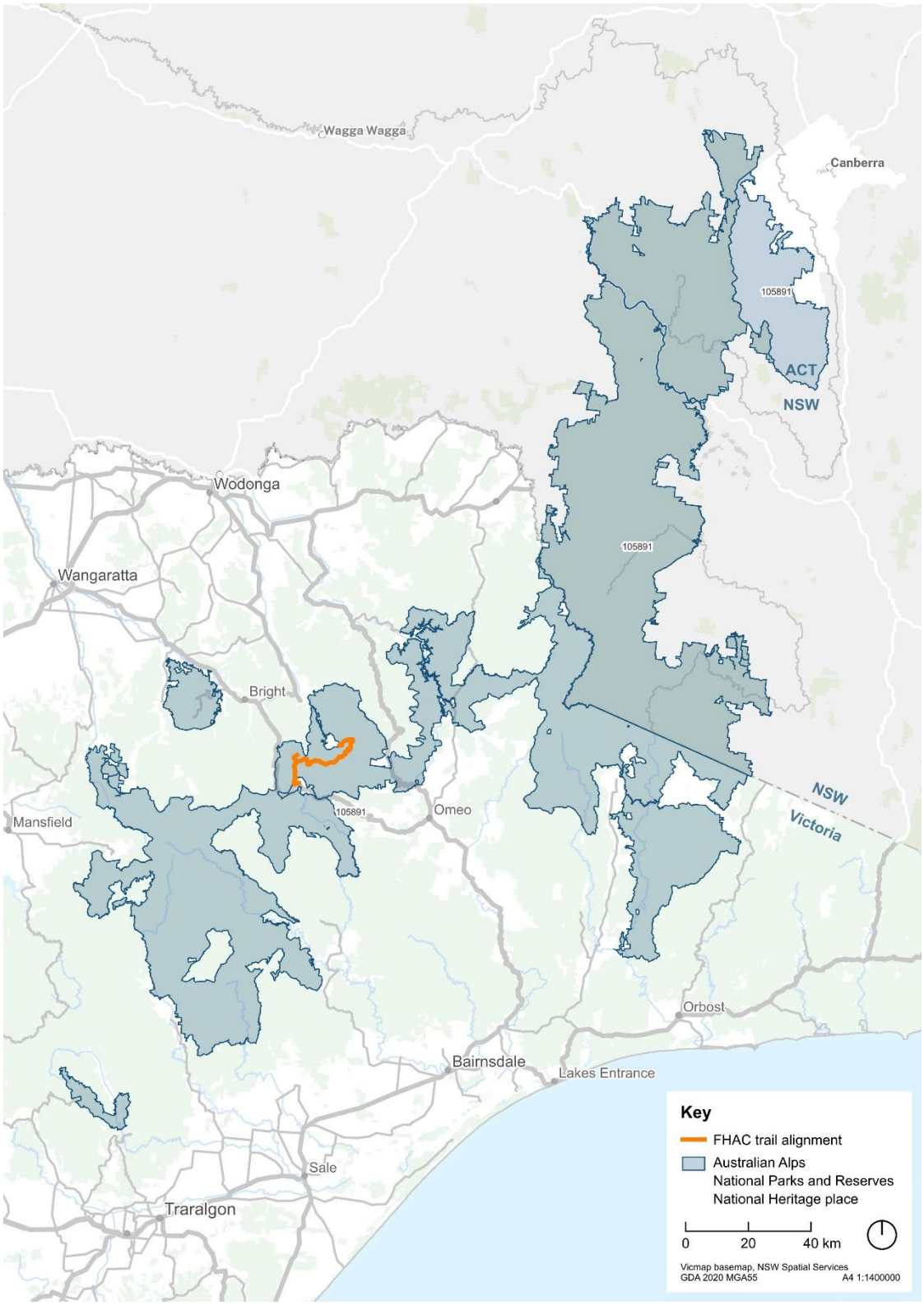


Figure 1.3 FHAC trail alignment and AANP National Heritage place. (Source: Vicmap with GML overlay)

1.3 Statutory context

1.3.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)

The AANP is a National Heritage place protected under the EPBC Act.

The EPBC Act is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. The objects of the EPBC Act are 'to provide for the protection of the environment, especially those aspects of the environment that are matters of national environmental significance'.[1] The Act provides a legal framework for the protection and management of nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and natural and cultural heritage places. Under the EPBC Act, environmental assessment and approvals processes for actions affecting protected matters are streamlined. The Act is administered by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

Protected matters under the EPBC Act are matters of national environmental significance; the environment on Commonwealth land; and the environment in general, when it is being impacted by an action of a Commonwealth agency.[2]

The matters of national environmental significance are:

- World Heritage properties;
- National Heritage places;
- wetlands of national importance;
- listed threatened species and ecological communities;
- migratory species;
- Commonwealth marine areas;
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park;
- nuclear actions (including uranium mines); and
- water resources, in relation to coal seam gas development and large coal mining development.

The definition of 'environment' in the EPBC Act includes the heritage values of places. Section 528 of the EPBC Act further defines 'heritage values' as including a place's 'natural and cultural environment having aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance, or other significance, for current and future generations of Australians'. This definition of heritage values covers Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage values, as well as natural heritage values.

Under the EPBC Act, anyone taking an action that is likely to have a 'significant impact' on a protected matter (which includes National Heritage values) must refer the action to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Water for approval.[3]

The person or organisation undertaking the action (the proponent) must self-assess whether the action is likely to have a significant impact and therefore needs to be referred. For this project, Parks Victoria is responsible for determining whether the action is likely to have a significant impact and needs referral. This report assists Parks Victoria in identifying the degree of likely impacts.

In making their decision at this stage, the proponent can only consider the effect of adverse impacts, not beneficial impacts, on the heritage values.[4] Social and economic benefits of proposed actions that are likely to have a significant impact are only considered at the final, approval step and are not part of a HIA.

There are three possible outcomes of a referral:

- The Minister decides that the action is not likely to have a significant impact on a protected matter and can go ahead without approval under the EPBC Act (a **not controlled action**).
- The Minister decides that an action is not likely to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, and does not require approval under the EPBC Act, because it will be taken in a 'particular manner' (a **not controlled action: particular manner**). This outcome is only applicable in a specific set of circumstances.
- The Minister decides that an action is likely to have a significant impact on a protected matter and requires approval under the EPBC Act (a **controlled action**).

If an action is determined to be a controlled action, an environmental assessment of the action must be carried out under the EPBC Act. The Minister will decide the assessment approach for the action from the range of assessment methods provided for under the EPBC Act.

The Minister considers the information provided through the selected assessment approach and determines whether the action can go ahead and, if so, under what circumstances. At this stage, the Minister can consider detrimental environmental impacts as well as the social and economic impact of the project. At the end of this process the Minister can:

- approve the action;
- approve the action with conditions; or
- not approve the action, if the environmental impacts cannot be appropriately managed.

When making an approval decision about a National Heritage place, the Minister for the Environment and Water cannot act inconsistently with the EPBC Act's National Heritage management principles or any heritage management plan that has been prepared for the place in accordance with the EPBC Act.[5]

1.4 Victorian legislation

The project area is subject to several other pieces of Victorian legislation, including:

- *Heritage Act 2017*;
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*;
- *Environmental Effects Act 1978*;
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act);
- *National Parks Act 1975* (amended 1989 to create Alpine National Park) and *National Parks (Wilderness) Act 1992*;
- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*;
- *Water Act 1989*; and
- *Wildlife Act 1975.*

These pieces of legislation protect the natural and cultural heritage, flora and fauna, significant uses, landscapes and waterways of the project area.

The objectives of the *National Parks Act 1975* support the conservation of heritage, and include:

> To make provision, in respect of national parks, State parks, marine national parks and marine sanctuaries:
>
> - For the preservation and protection of the natural environment including wilderness areas and remote and nature areas in those parks;
> - For the protection and preservation of indigenous flora and fauna and features of scenic or archaeological, ecological, geological, historic or other scientific interest in those parks; and
> - For the study of ecology, geology, botany, zoology, and other sciences relating to the conservation of the natural environment in those parks; and
> - For the responsible management of the land in those parks.[6]

This report only assesses impacts on the National Heritage values under the EPBC Act. Compliance of the FHAC project with Victorian legislation is addressed through several other documents prepared by Parks Victoria, which will support state and federal approvals.

1.5 Methodology

The assessment methodology in this report has been prepared in accordance with the Australian Government's *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance* (Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1) and *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.2 Actions on, or impacting upon, Commonwealth land and Actions by Commonwealth Agencies*, *EPBC Act Self-Assessment Guidelines – World Heritage*

Properties and National and Commonwealth Heritage Places, the National Heritage management principles, and the requirements of the EPBC Act.

The report is also in accordance with the relevant principles and guidelines of *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013* (the Burra Charter).[7]

1.5.1 Relevant documents

This report has considered documentation relevant to the proposed action, including:

- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Business Case, prepared by GHD for Parks Victoria, May 2022;
- Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan, Parks Victoria, August 2016;
- Assessment of the Cultural Heritage Values of the Australian Alps National Parks, prepared by Truscott, Grinbergs, Buckley and Pearson, for the Department of the Environment and Heritage, June 2006;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, Parks Victoria, March 2018;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Consultation Summary Report, Parks Victoria, January 2023;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Historical Archaeology Survey Report, prepared by Extent Heritage for Parks Victoria, October 2023;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing – Stage 1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by Hansen Partnership for Parks Victoria, March 2025;
- Australian Brumby Alliance Inc v Parks Victoria Inc [2020] FCA 605;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan #18890, prepared by Latitude Heritage for Parks Victoria, August 2025;
- Proposed Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Alpine National Park Geomorphological Assessment of Proposed Camping Nodes and Walking Tracks, prepared by Environmental GeoSurveys Pty Ltd for Parks Victoria, April 2023;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Geotechnical Assessment of Trail, prepared by WSP for K2LD Architects, June 2025;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Environmental Assessment, prepared by Abzeco for Parks Victoria, January 2025;
- Parks Victoria Signage Manual V2.3, 2023;
- Hut Maintenance Manual: Greater Alpine National Parks, Parks Victoria, October 2022;
- Victorian Alpine Huts Heritage Survey 2004-5, prepared by Graeme Butler and Associates for Parks Victoria, 2005; and
- 'High Country Huts' [3D scans of High Country huts in the National Heritage place], Australian Alps National Parks Co-operative Management Program <https://www.highcountryhuts.org.au/>.

Information on the scope of works has been provided by Parks Victoria. Key design documents prepared by Parks Victoria considered when preparing this HIA include:

- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Accommodation Design Services Final Tender Documentation, Issues 117–118;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Step C – Detailed Design report, prepared for Parks Victoria, September 2024, Rev B by K2LD and JAWS Architects;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing: Trail Works Kit of Parks, prepared by Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd, August 2025 L.81.000 Rev. T4;
- Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Hiker Accommodation Trail Works Technical Specification, prepared by Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd, 08/07/2025 Revision T4;
- 'Overview of High Country Huts (August 2025): Conservation and repairs proposed for huts along the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing, Alpine National Park (Bogong High Plains to Mount Hotham)', Parks Victoria; and
- 'Scope of works (August 2025): Conservation and repairs to huts along the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing, Alpine National Park (Bogong High Plains to Mount Hotham)', Parks Victoria.

1.5.2 Limitations

- This report does not identify or assess the impacts of the proposed action on heritage or environmental values of the project area apart from the National Heritage values; that is, local or state heritage listings, and Aboriginal cultural values under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, are not addressed. The impacts on these heritage values are assessed in other reports for the FHAC project.
- No site inspections have been undertaken to prepare this report. It relies on information on site conditions provided by Parks Victoria, and desktop assessment, including documents, photos, 3D scans and other background documents.
- No consultation with Traditional Owners or other stakeholders has been undertaken, or specific assessment of social/community-held heritage values. This report relies on existing consultation undertaken by Parks Victoria.
- The natural heritage impact assessment is a desktop exercise based upon existing data, in particular the site surveys recently commissioned by Parks Victoria. These data are site-specific and, though they identify threatened flora, fauna and geodiversity sites along the FHAC alignment, do not extend to neighbouring landscapes and therefore limit an assessment of the extent of the attributes and any comparative analysis.
  - This is not considered to be a significant limitation because the existence value of any natural heritage attributes in the works area is taken as a stand-alone value, and the essential comparative analysis inherent in this assessment is the differentiation of the AANP alpine environments represented by the National Heritage values from all other Australian mainland ecosystems.

1.6 Endnotes

[1] *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act), Section 3.

[2] Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 'Glossary', viewed 13 August 2025 <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/about/glossary#significant>.

[3] EPBC Act, sections 12, 15B.

[4] Australian Government Department of the Environment, 2013, S*ignificant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance*, p 2.

[5] EPBC Act, section 146H.

[6] *National Parks Act 1975* (Vic), section 4(a).

[7] Australia ICOMOS Inc, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013* (the Burra Charter), Australia ICOMOS Inc, Burwood, VIC, 2000.

2 Place history and description

2.1 Introduction

To assess the potential impacts from any action, it is important to understand the historical and physical context, which contributes to its significance. This section outlines the historical and current context of the project area.

2.2 Place history

Alpine National Park was created in 1989, initially extending across 626,700ha, and encompassing within it earlier declared national park areas.[1] It has been expanded further since 1989. In 2008 the project area was included in the NHL as part of the AANP National Heritage place.

A detailed history of Alpine National Park is accessible in the Australian Heritage Database, in the 2006 Assessment of Cultural Heritage Values (Truscott, Grinbergs, Buckley and Pearson), and in a variety of other sources. A condensed extract of the Australian Heritage Database history of the AANP National Heritage place is provided below, with a particular focus on Alpine National Park:

> ***Landform History***
>
> Between 132 and 95 million years ago, pyroclastic volcanism may have been related to the onset of continental extension in eastern Australia. Uplift of the Eastern Highlands themselves is associated with the separation from Australia of the Lord Howe Rise and the opening of the Tasman Sea, beginning about 95 million years ago in the Late Mesozoic Era. Sea floor spreading terminated in the Tasman Sea at about 54 million years ago during the early Cenozoic Era, but continued in the Southern Ocean as Australia continued to drift northward relative to Antarctica. Episodes of upwelling of the mantle intruded granite into the crust. This metamorphosed the marine and alluvial sedimentary rocks of the High Plains into schist and gneiss. Uplift and erosion eventually produced granite massifs like Kosciuszko, Baw Baw and Mount Buffalo.
>
> Uplift along the eastern and south-eastern margin of Australia continued into the Cenozoic. Volcanism between 70 million and about 5,000 years ago formed chains of volcanoes and volcaniclastic sediment along the length of the highlands. In much of south-eastern Australia, regional tilting and the development of disconformities within the Bass Strait basins, fault reactivation and localised uplift in the Strzelecki Ranges, Mount Lofty Ranges and Flinders Ranges, as well as the later 'Kosciuszko Uplift' of the reactivated Eastern Highlands, continues to the present day […].
>
> During the Quaternary Period (the last 2.6 million years), global environments were subject to up to twenty severe glacial episodes.

The highest parts of the AANP experienced two glacial periods during the latest Quaternary (in the last 100,000 years). The earlier sequence, before about 60,000 years ago, is known as the Snowy River Advance or the Early Kosciuszko Glaciation. The glacier sequence of the later Headley Tarn Advance, between 35,000 and 15,000 years ago, became progressively less extensive and is termed the Late Kosciuszko Glaciation […]. During the Late Kosciuszko Glaciation, glaciers probably formed in a small area of 30-40 square kilometres around Mount Kosciuszko and more extensively in the Tasmanian highlands […]. These advances correlate with glacier advances in South America and New Zealand and are recorded in landscapes, sediments and features of the Kosciuszko Plateau.

Early Indigenous Occupation

The more recent biophysical character of the Alps has been determined by its long geological and climatic histories. Geological uplift, volcanism and glacial and fluvial erosion of the region have led to an open peneplain landscape in the north and central regions, glacial features in the higher altitudes, with an increasingly rugged and dissected environment to the south. The shape, orientation and altitude of the natural landscape of the Alps have strongly influenced the movement of people across the region.

[…] During the latest Quaternary at the height of the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM), approximately 20,000 years ago, small areas within the Snowy Mountains were glaciated, and periglacial conditions extended down to at least 1,000 metres above sea level along the Great Dividing Range. Evidence from the New Guinea II rock shelter in the Snowy River National Park shows the earliest scientific evidence for Aboriginal occupation on the fringes of the AANP during this time. Excavations of three rock shelters - New Guinea II (Snowy River) and Cloggs Cave (Buchan River) in Victoria, and at Birrigai rock shelter (Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve) in the Australian Capital Territory – show a consistent pattern of small numbers of stone artefacts in occupation levels dated to the late Pleistocene and early Holocene, approximately 15,000 years ago […]. Beginning around 12,000 years ago the present alpine plant communities most likely colonised the higher altitudes in response to increasing temperature and precipitation following the LGM.

About 5,000 years ago an increase in human occupation and use of the Alps began […] The archaeological evidence shows that at this time Aboriginal people moved throughout the region, from lower plains and valleys through to the alpine highlands.

Larger open occupation sites are generally located at lower altitudes within sub-alpine or montane environments, in sheltered areas associated with more diverse resources. In Victoria major open sites containing 4,000 artefacts and 18,000 artefacts have been located at Horsehair Plains (1,570m - 1,300 metres) (Freslov 2004) and at Dinner Plain (1,250 metres) at least two artefact scatters estimated to contain more than 100,000 artefacts have been identified […]

Open sites in higher altitude areas such as the Mount Buffalo plateau, Bogong High Plains and Perisher Gap (1830 metres) are generally sparse of artefacts, consisting of small isolated finds or low density artefact scatters, as well as some edge ground axes […].

Sites in these alpine and sub-alpine areas generally occur on summit ridges, broad highland plains or spur ridges, often associated with gneiss outcrops, snow gums and water. In some cases multiple small sites have been found clustered around rocky outcrops which might have supported Bogong moth populations […].

The most intense occupation appears to be associated with major lines of movement through the highlands, for example along major river valleys and ridge lines, with large, denser sites occurring along relatively easy routes through the mountains; and small, sparse sites located on harder, less used routes […]. It is likely that resource exploitation and settlement patterns were complex and wide ranging in response to a risky, less predictable environment […].

Ethnohistorical records describe the annual movement of Aboriginal people into the high country prior to or during the summer months for large inter-tribal gatherings associated with the collection of Bogong moths […]. Historical references specifically refer to moth collecting in the high country of Kosciuszko National Park, in particular Bogong Mountain and the Townsend-Abbott Range; in the Brindabella Range; and the Victorian high plains, with specific reference to a mountain at Omeo […]. The different locations mentioned in the various ethnohistorical records suggest that the moths would probably have been exploited wherever they aestivated in the Alps […].

Local groups such as the Jaimathang of Omeo, Djilamatang of the Upper Murray, and the Minjambuta of Mount Buffalo were joined by clans travelling long distances to attend these gatherings, which appear to have been highly organised […]. Coastal tribes might also have travelled into the mountains to join these gatherings […]. People met at the foot of the Alps in early summer for ceremonies before moving into the mountains to collect Bogong moths and use other seasonally abundant resources. The daisy yam, for example, was an important resource in alpine and sub-alpine zones, and Aboriginal people with yam digging sticks were frequently observed in the uplands in the nineteenth century […] maintaining social and political links between tribal groups as people came together for ceremonies, corroborees and intertribal battles […].

Alpine plants were an important resource to Aboriginal people for food, medicine, tools, clothing, decoration, and ceremonial use […].

Pastoralism and Mining

In the early 1820s early explorers and settlers moved into the Snowy Mountains well before the colonial administration took steps to promote the spread of the colony […]. Many accounts of Aboriginal people, their cultural practices, movements and daily lives in the Alps were recorded during the 1800s, and surveyors working in the district recorded many Aboriginal place names […].

Some traditional routes and pathways through the high country were used by Aboriginal people guiding early settlers and explorers into the high country […]. For example, it is believed that the cattlemen Brown and Wells found the Bogong high plains and the route up the ridge north of the Bundarah River with the assistance of local Aborigines […].

The pathways of human movement through the Alps, namely the tracks, roads and routes used by the early explorers and cattlemen were influenced by the existing Aboriginal pathways, the climate, access to water and the topography of the Great Dividing Range itself. These pathways helped navigate the scientists, gold prospectors and recreation seekers through the Alps as well.

The arrival of Europeans in the broader region led to many changes in Aboriginal people's lives, restricting access to resources and movement across the landscape, and disturbing traditional social and cultural practices. […]

Most early settlers that came to Australia were from the United Kingdom and this applies to the first pastoralists into the Alps. The rapid uptake of land in the 1830s meant settlers and stockmen in eastern Australia were expanding into the Snowy Mountains looking for grazing country. Pastoral settlement of the Victorian high country started with the early journeys of exploration by George MacKillop who travelled along the Snowy River and through to Omeo in 1835. […] In recent years four-wheel drive vehicles have taken the role of the pack horse but for many years horses carried horse feed, tucker, saddles, shoeing gear, tools, camp ovens, dog food, dogs and candles. Stock yards, often portable post structures, were used in the musters.

Drought at the end of the 1830s created significant interest in the well-watered mountain environment with the high pastures offering landholders good grazing during the summer months when feed was scarce on their home stations. This led to transhumant grazing, a practice unique in mainland Australia – that of bringing cattle and sheep up to graze on the high country pastures during the summer months ameliorating the ever-present threat of drought in the low lands and allowing home pastures time to recover […] Most of the stock routes across [the] region are associated with transhumant grazing. An important stock route was the Monaro route through to East Gippsland following the Snowy River. […] After the parks became established many stock routes were renamed and in some cases modified and developed as fire trails but still used for moving stock.

By the mid 1800s, Aboriginal people had become an important part of the region’s pastoral industry, working as stockmen, station hands, house servants, and 'black trackers'. […]

The early explorers, pastoralists, scientists and artists, who experienced the landscape for its agricultural uses, scientific information and scenic topography, were predominantly immigrants from Europe, who brought with them their traditional use practices, scientific and mountain landscape experience and appreciation. […] The two significant waves of European migration into Australia that impacted on the cultural diversity and the cultural life in the Alps were the Gold Rush of the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century and after World War II during the development of the two major hydro-electric schemes: the [Kiewa Hydro-Electric Scheme] KHES in Victoria and the [Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme] SMHES in New South Wales. From about the mid 1850s, gold miners entered the region and followed the established tracks set by earlier travellers to explore the valleys, foothills and rivers surrounding the Alps. […] The gold rushes in the Alps brought miners from all over Australia and the world, including many European countries, Britain, America and China.

The influx of hopeful miners from around the world changed the demography of the region and many miners stayed. […] Many mining fields within the region had relatively low yields […] By the 1920s mining had mostly ceased in the region and the population soon declined, reflecting the broader economic situation impacted by a shortage of labour and materials after World War I. There was sporadic activity later when the gold price rose, and in 1941 there was a rush at the Red Robin mine near Mount Hotham in Victoria, which is still being mined […].

Mountain Ash and Alpine Ash were harvested for use in the mining, hydro-electricity and recreation industries. […] With the establishment of forest commissions, forest management measures were introduced along with arboreta and plantations. The timber harvesting industry in the current AANP area was small compared to that undertaken at lower elevations. *Eucalyptus* oil distilling was also undertaken in the montane zone […].

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Victorian Board for the Protection of Aborigines and the New South Wales Aborigines Protection Board gradually moved many Aboriginal people from the Alps onto missions and reserves outside the AANP […].

Recreation and Water Harvesting

The earliest tourism activity developed in the mid-1850s, with touring groups visiting the Mount Buffalo plateau from 1856. […] Governments began to recognise the tourism potential for the Alps and funded improved access and infrastructure […] After World War I, many recreational activities were fostered as part of the healthy body movement, including bushwalking, skiing, horse riding, cycling, tennis, golf and ice skating on the Kosciusko Hotel's artificial lake […]. The emergence of skiing as a significant recreational activity started in the 1920s in the Alps. […]

The demand for clean water to supply Australia's growing urban and regional centres was the key driving force behind the protection of many of the catchments in the Alps. […] Protection of mountainous country in both Victoria and New South Wales came about as a result of concerns about the catchment of the Hume Reservoir in the 1930s, while some began to express concern at the potential damage to the environment by sheep and cattle grazing practices as well as burning, which was thought to be causing large-scale erosion. In 1938, the New South Wales Government declared the Upper Snowy River and its tributaries an area of erosion hazard.

During the early twentieth century attention was also increasingly focussed on the opportunity to harvest water sourced from the Alps for power generation. The Victorian State Electricity Commission proposed a major hydro-electric scheme for the Kiewa River and construction commenced in the late 1930s. The idea for a hydro-electric scheme in the Snowy Mountains formed part of postwar reconstruction planning during World War II. […] The SMHES began construction in 1949 […] Similarly the KHES employed around 3500 workers in 1951, many of whom were migrants. Both schemes took longer to complete than anticipated: the KHES was finished in 1961 and the SMHES in 1974 […].

These large projects in sparsely settled areas required their own infrastructure and, as a result, new towns were built to service the schemes and their employees […] The alpine resort villages commenced development in the 1950s and by 1957 there were a number of ski clubs operating. […] Resort villages also developed within the parks; Perisher, Smiggen Holes, Guthega, Selwyn and Mount Franklin. […]

Scientific Research

Scientific research in the AANP encompasses three key stages […], each of which reflects the wider scientific interests of the relevant period. The first stage commenced in the early 1800s and comprises early exploratory research undertaken by several pioneering individuals, who significantly contributed to the documentation of the region's geography, geology and botany. The second stage from the end of the 1800s and early 1900s shows a general branching out of scientific endeavour into more specific disciplines such as meteorology, geomorphology, ecology and astronomy. The final stage of research builds on previous efforts, with an increasing focus on conservation sciences from the 1970s.

[…] Results from grazing exclosures after several decades of vegetation monitoring confirmed the need to return environments to their pre-grazing state. Tighter controls over grazing occurred over the following decades from the 1940s in all alpine and sub-alpine areas to manage soil erosion and flora damage in all the alpine areas, eventually leading to the exclusion of grazing by 1961 in Namadgi and by 1972 in Kosciuszko. Grazing was removed from additional areas in Victoria in the 1990s (Macdonald and Haiblen 2001) and more recently from the Alpine National Park from 2005. […]

Many of the early explorers, surveyors and scientists have their names remembered in features in the alpine landscape […].

Conservation

Myles Dunphy was an intrepid bushwalker and important figure in the early conservation movement, with close association with the Blue Mountains surrounding Sydney. In 1933 Dunphy called for volunteers to establish a National Parks and Primitive Areas Council in New South Wales, and in 1935 one of the areas identified was the Snowy-Indi Primitive Area. The proposed reserve of 400,000 hectares included land on both sides of the New South Wales/Victorian border.

In the 1970s there was heightened public consciousness about the impacts of human activity on the natural environment. This concern contributed to the declaration of a number of national parks across the AANP. These reserves were declared after much historical research and conservation efforts; many were set aside to conserve water catchments. The declaration dates of these national parks and reserves span almost a century. […] in 1989 the Cobberas, Tingaringy, Wonanngatta-Moroka and Bogong national parks were extended and combined to create the Alpine National Park […].

In 1986 the Federal, Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victorian governments agreed to a cooperative management program for the AANP.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed to protect the landscape, water catchments, plants, animals and cultural heritage of the Australian Alps as a whole ecosystem while providing opportunities for public appreciation and sustainable enjoyment. This MoU spans more than 20 years and is acknowledged internationally as an example of best practice cross-jurisdictional and trans-border protected area management.

Aesthetic Appreciation

The first written works on the scenic beauty of the Alps were written by many of the explorers and early settlers in the early nineteenth century. […] It is possible that popular verse, as well as the writings of the explorers, allowed these 'invented landscapes' to be possessed […], at least regarded as 'icons' whether known and experienced or not […].

The painters Eugene von Guérard and Nicholas Chevalier accompanied Howitt to the Alps in 1858. Guérard's paintings View of the snowy bluff on the Wonnangatta River 1864, *North East View from the Northern Top of Mount Kosciuszko*, 1864 and *Mount Kosciuszko seen from the Victorian border (Mount Hope Ranges)* are regarded as classic Australian masterpieces. Chevalier's 1864 painting *The Buffalo Ranges, Victoria* won the Trustees prize that year on the opening of the National Gallery of Victoria (Truscott et al. 2006). […] Later era artists continued to paint the Alps landscape such as the post-modern artist Imant Tillers who painted *Mount Analogue* in 1985.

[…] A popular and potent image of the Alps is evoked by *The Man from Snowy River*, which has entered Australian consciousness as an image of national identity reinforcing the notion of the larrikin bushman. […] Noted poets and writers […] have referred to the mountain landscapes. […] Nicholas Caire photographed in the high country from the 1870s and photographs of the Alps were increasingly seen in magazines. These magazines brought remote Australia into everyday homes and were more widely accessible than paintings in galleries. After World War I, poster images of the Alps became prevalent. […]. Many books were written recounting adventurous experiences in the Alps […]

Community Associations

[…] Community heritage studies considering the social values of the Alps were conducted as part of the comprehensive regional assessments for the Regional Forest Agreements in North East Victoria, Gippsland, East Gippsland and the Central Highlands (Johnston and Lewis 1993a; Johnston and Lewis 1993b). The results show a high degree of correlation between social and aesthetic values, and between social and historic values.

Aboriginal and other groups express an important attachment to the Alps giving the region significant social value. […] Many Aboriginal people from the Alps now live throughout most of Victoria, the New South Wales south coast, Canberra and the Snowy Mountains region and beyond. The spiritual attachments, surviving traditional knowledge, and family stories and memories demonstrate the ongoing cultural connection that these people have with the Alps. Places associated with the pastoral and mining history are of historic and social significance to local Aboriginal people because of their involvement within these industries (DECC 2006).

The Australian Polish community (the Cultural Foundation of Puls Polonii) have a strong association with Mount Kosciuszko, named after the Polish hero General Tadeusz Kosciuszko (Lang et al 2008). […] Other communities holding associations with the Alps include groups based on historical economic activity (such as the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria) to caretaker and friends' groups for individual huts, homesteads and mining fields. Two major hut caretaker groups are the Kosciuszko Huts Association formed in 1970 and the Victorian High Country Huts Association formed in 2003. The heritage significance of huts has been the subject of several detailed studies in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory (GBA 1996; 2005). […]

Others [sic.] groups such as field naturalist clubs focus on caring for the natural environment. Recreational user groups and clubs such as bushwalking, skiing, horse riding, fishing, hunting, 4-wheel driving and mountain biking, are permitted to enjoy these activities in the Alps according to zoning and permit arrangements.

Each of the major parks comprising the Australian Alps has a history of community esteem, and often community-based campaigns to protect these areas from perceived threats or changes in land use. The actions of the National Parks Association of New South Wales, the Victorian National Parks Association, the National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory and the Colong Foundation for Wilderness have driven the formation of the parks themselves, and the progressive withdrawal of grazing.

The associated community debate about the loss of important traditions provides a strong indicator of social values and connections to the AANP, as demonstrated by the intense sense of loss following the 1939 and 2003 bushfires.

2.3 Description

The proposed action covers a large area. Its physical features can be grouped into categories, described below.

2.3.1 Natural environment

The AANP is a large mosaic of national parks and reserves covering the alpine areas of Victoria and New South Wales and extending into the sub-alpine protected areas of the Australian Capital Territory.

This area has been added to the NHL primarily for its extensive natural heritage values. The large area of the listed place (1,653,180ha) means that it holds the entire complement of alpine ecosystems existing on the Australian mainland, and many of the sub-alpine environments.

These special ecosystems support a rich and unique assemblage of cold-climate specialist species that have evolved unique physiological characteristics, enabling them to survive in an environment subject to extreme climate variation.

The National Heritage listing concludes that the AANP is a vital refuge for alpine and sub-alpine flora and fauna species, with a high level of richness and endemism across a wide range of taxa, and that it therefore has outstanding value to the nation for encompassing a significant and unique component of Australia's biological heritage.

The other major component of the natural heritage of the place is its geodiversity, including features and remnants of the geological and geomorphological processes that formed it. This includes glacial and periglacial features that are the material expression of the cold-climate, high-altitude setting of the AANP, unique in the Australian continent.

It also includes important fossil records, karstic environments and uncommon rock formations.

The project area has peaks in excess of 1700m and contains at least 17 ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) and EVC mosaics with their arrays of adapted and endemic flora and fauna inventories.

More detail on the flora and fauna of the project area is available in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Environmental Assessment, prepared by Abzeco for Parks Victoria (2025).

Landforms

The landforms of the project area are part of the Great Dividing Range, which runs from northern Queensland to western Victoria.[2] The ranges of the Alps are characterised by high plateaus and gently rolling slopes. The underlying geology of the area has shaped the landscape. On the high plains, harder granite has created plateaus, ridges and stone tors. Softer stone has weathered to create valleys and slopes. Mount Feathertop, a peak on the trail with a feather-like ridge, is the second highest point in Victoria after Mount Bogong.

More detail on the landforms and geomorphology of the project area is available in the Proposed Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Alpine National Park Geomorphological Assessment of Proposed Camping Nodes and Walking Tracks report, prepared by Environmental GeoSurveys Pty Ltd for Parks Victoria (2023).

Figure 2.1 Mount Feathertop, 2007. (Source: Peter Campbell, Wikimedia Commons <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mount_Feathertop_and_Razorback.jpg>)

Natural landscape

The FHAC passes through a natural landscape divided into noticeable zones due to changes in elevation. At the lowest level are riparian environments and the lower elevations, rising to montane, subalpine and alpine zones.[3]

The riparian environments and lower elevations are characterised by grassy woodlands, open forest and riparian corridors. In the montane zones on the mountain slopes, there are wetter, denser forests, with more open Alpine Ash (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*) predominant at higher elevations.[4] Sub-alpine areas include lower-growing Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) woodlands. Frost hollows—treeless valleys where cold air pools—occur in the sub-alpine zones.[5] Alpine zones are above the tree line, with grasslands, heathlands and peatland communities as well as areas of bare rock and bogs.

Figure 2.2 Bogong High Plains. (Source: Wikimedia Commons, DR101au <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:5._Bogong_High_Plans_-_Hells_Gap.JPG>)

2.3.2 Aboriginal cultural landscape

The project area in the Victorian Alps forms part of a rich Aboriginal cultural landscape that has been used and occupied by the Bangerang, Gunaikurnai, Maneroo and other Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. The Aboriginal cultural landscape embodies the human story of use and change in the content of the physical landscape, including landforms, granite outcrops, waterways and springs, which have cultural meanings and associations, together with recorded tangible heritage places, such as artefact scatters, and intangible heritage places that are associated with the history, stories and traditions of the broader area. The Aboriginal cultural landscape can also include elements of the landscape that have a high likelihood of Indigenous association (historical or contemporary)—for example, ridge lines, tracks that appropriate traditional Aboriginal pathways, and granite platforms with cultural associations with food preparation. It can include cultural uses and modification of the landscape, such as the use of fire for harvesting and cooking food.

Plants and animals are part of this landscape, in terms of their cultural importance culturally to Aboriginal people in providing food and other resources, and as totems, messengers, and part of the spirit world.

Further detail on the Aboriginal cultural landscape is available in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan prepared by Latitude Heritage for Parks Victoria (2025).

2.3.3 Modified landscapes

Trails

The walk between Falls Creek and Mount Hotham follows existing trails, tracks and vehicle tracks within the project area, including 32km of existing trails that are currently part of the larger Australian Alps Walking Track.

The trails comprise a variety of surfaces, materials, widths, and levels of infrastructure. They include fire trails and unsealed four-wheel driving tracks, simple dirt or grass trails, benched trail sections, geotextile with rock/gravel infill, steel boardwalks and bridge crossings, stepping stones, gravel and rock surfaces, rubber matting and stone steps. Some sections of trail have drains, cross waterways, or are marked by a series of posts.

The walking trail sections are usually less than 40cm wide, whereas vehicle tracks are usually up to 3m wide. The condition of the trails varies. In some places poor drainage and off-track walking have created track braiding, and surrounding vegetation has been damaged and soil compacted by foot traffic, which can exacerbate erosion from water runoff.

Along the trails are a variety of infrastructure including picnic areas, public toilets, huts, and camping areas (including camping platforms).

Figure 2.3 Example of trail section, May 2024. (Source: Parks Victoria)

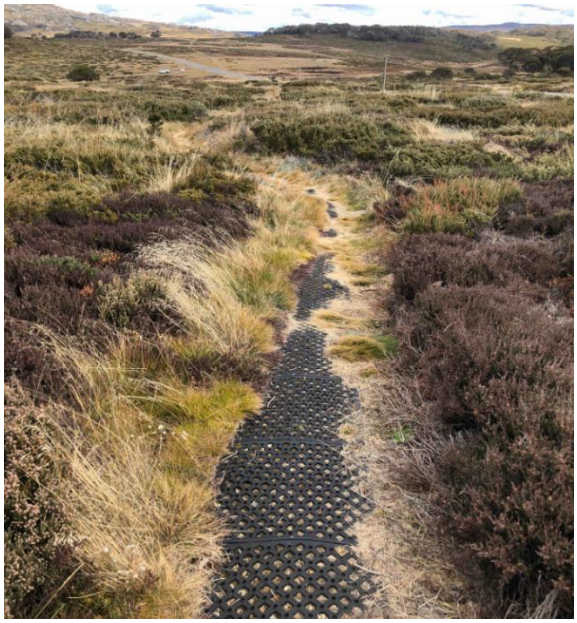


Figure 2.4 Example of trail section, May 2024. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.5 View of trail of Razorback Track. (Source: WSP, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Geotechnical Assessment of Trail, June 2025)

Camping areas and other infrastructure

Within Alpine National Park there are various designated camping areas. There are two campsites on the existing Falls to Hotham route, at Cope Hut Camping Area and Dibbins Hut. Each of these campsites has five tent platforms and toilets.

Dispersed camping (camping away from formal, designated campgrounds) is also allowed through much of Alpine National Park. Throughout the park there is various visitor infrastructure, such as toilets, picnic tables and fireplaces.

Overnight nodes

There are three overnight nodes in the proposed works, which will serve as campgrounds. The current condition of the node areas is described below.

Overnight Node 1: Cope Hut

The historic Cope Hut is just south of the Cope Hut Track, on the sloping side of a valley. Cope Hut itself is described in 'Huts', below. The overnight node location is about 100m east of Cope Hut, at the site of the existing Cope Hut Camping Area.

The Cope Hut overnight node location is characterised by grassy plains and patches of Snow Gums. There are five existing camping platforms dispersed around the trees, informal communal areas around an open grassed section, with fire pit, wooden picnic table, and a small, metal-clad public toilet closer to the main trail.[6] There is also a water tank. Parts of the area are enclosed and sheltered by vegetation whereas other parts have expansive views out over the surrounding valleys.

Figure 2.6 Camping platform at the Cope Hut Camping Area. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.7 Informal communal area with picnic table and tree branches creating seating around a fire pit. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.8 Open communal area at Cope Hut Camping Area. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.9 Cope Hut Camping Area viewed from a distance. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.10 Existing signage at Cope Hut Camping Area showing locations of camping platforms and directions to nearby Cope Hut to the west. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Overnight Node 2: Westons Hut

Westons Hut is about 50m south of the Westons Spur Track. The location is nominated as a designated camping area in the Greater Alpine National Park Management Plan (2016). A grassed section leads from the trail downhill to a sloped, cleared area around the hut, with an outer ring of Snow Gums. The approach from the Westons Spur Track towards Westons Hut provides views of the small-scale vernacular building set within a clearing in subalpine woodland, and against a backdrop of Snow Gums with the vast Alpine National Park landscape beyond. An interpretive sign on the slope provides historical information on the hut. Behind the hut to the south the slope falls away to a valley, with the mountains beyond.

In front of Westons Hut is a grassed area used as an informal communal picnic area/firepit. A tap provides fresh water but there are no toilets or camping platforms.

Figure 2.11 Westons Hut with picnic area in foreground. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.12 Picnic and camping area in front of Westons Hut, looking north from the verandah/picnic area uphill towards the trail. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.13 Looking south downhill towards Westons Hut. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.14 Example of grassed area around Westons Hut proposed for future camping platforms. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Overnight Node 3: High Knob

The area for this overnight node is south of the Diamantina Spur Track, close to where it joins with the Razorback Track. Around 2km directly north is Mount Feathertop.

The site is characterised by sections of open grassy areas among the trees. Currently there are no amenities or services in the area. It is on the south-facing slope, below the ridgeline.

Figure 2.15 View of the area at High Knob proposed as an overnight node. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.16 View of the area at High Knob proposed as an overnight node. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.17 View of the area at High Knob proposed as an overnight node. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.18 View of the area at High Knob proposed as an overnight node. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Huts

Within and nearby the project area are numerous huts. Huts in the AANP National Heritage place were constructed for pastoral, mining, recreation and other purposes. The huts date from different historical periods and are built in a variety of forms and materials. The huts are not provided by Parks Victoria as accommodation for campers, but are popular destinations for hikers and used as emergency refuges. Licensed huts that meet modern building standards may be used as accommodation.

According to the Hut Maintenance Manual: Greater Alpine National Parks, most huts:

> were constructed in their current position because the site and nearby environs offered a number of basic features (eg. available water, shelter) or features that suited the original purpose for the hut (e.g. mustering route, well-used recreation track, survey area).[7]

They are therefore closely linked to their setting.

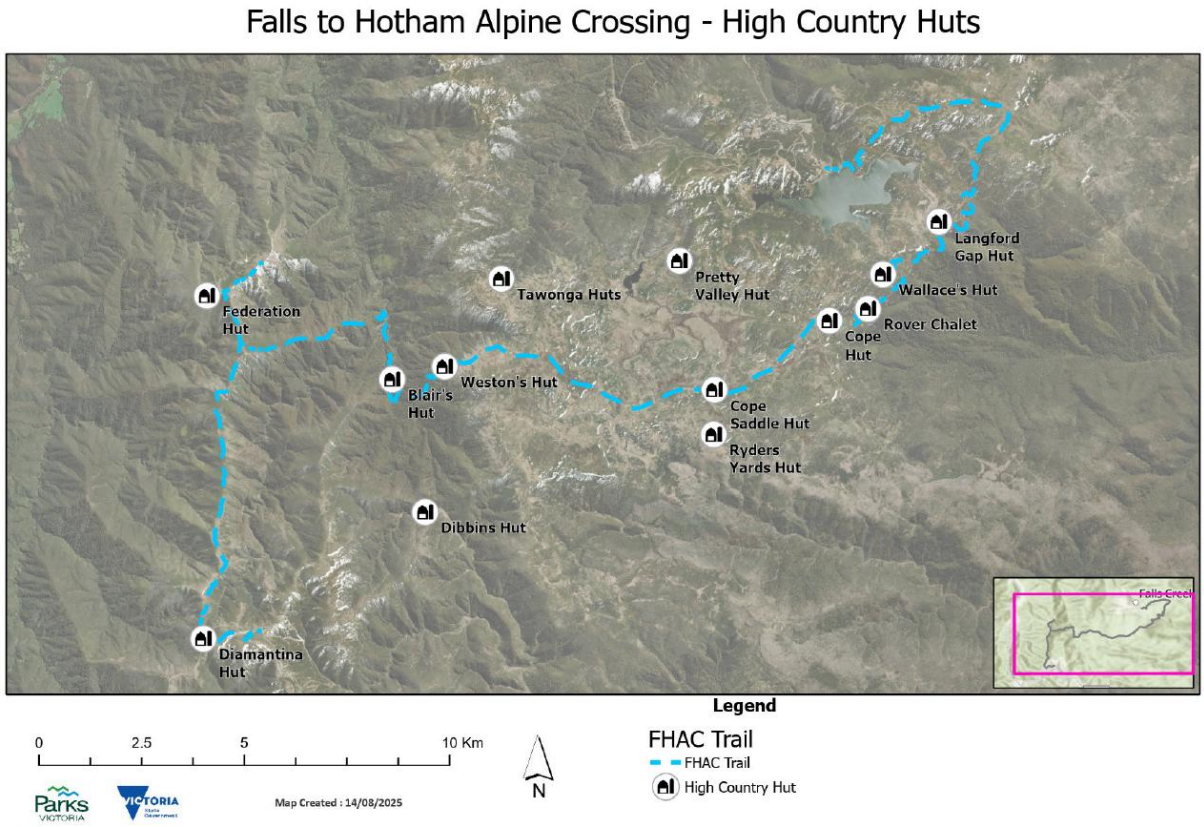


Figure 2.19 High Country huts near the project area. (Source: Parks Victoria)

The following huts are within the project scope:

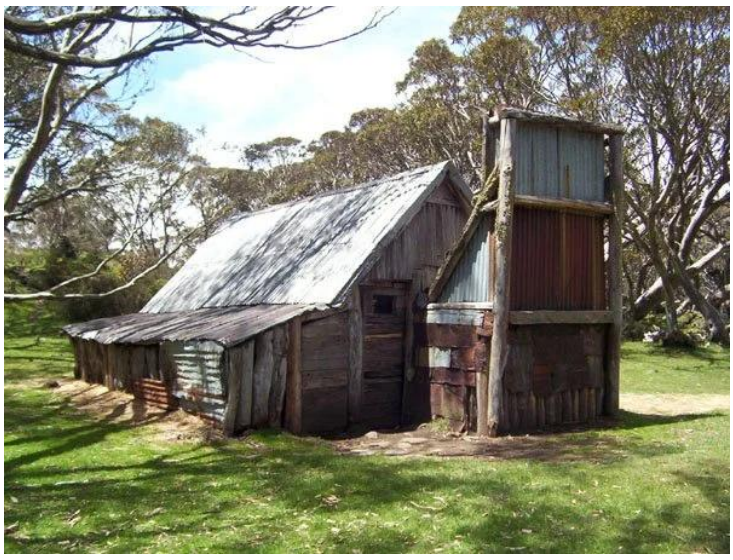


Figure 2.20 Wallace Hut, photographed by Gary Duncan, 2004. (Source: Mountain Huts Australia <https://mountainhuts.net/bogonghuts/wallaces-hut>)

Wallace Hut

- Constructed in 1889 as a shelter for cattlemen grazing livestock.
- Originally constructed with snow gum slabs and roofed in Woollybutt (*Eucalyptus longifolia*) shingles. The State Electricity Commission (SEC) later added a shed and replaced the timber cladding with corrugated iron c1946.[8]
- Roof was replaced with corrugated iron c1930s.
- Wallace Hut is not used for camping or overnight shelter.

Figure 2.21 Cope Hut viewed from Cope Hut Track. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Cope Hut

- Located south of Cope Hut Track on a slope rising from the trail, close to the Cope Hut campsite.
- Constructed in 1929 as a ski refuge.
- Timber-framed and clad in corrugated iron, with timber floor and granite fireplace.
- Used for overnight shelter and as an emergency refuge.

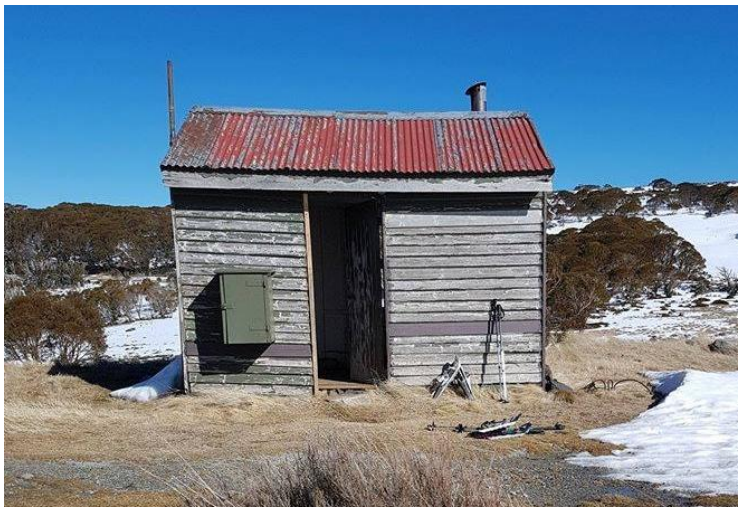


Figure 2.22 Langford Gap Hut, photographed by Dianne Ross. (Source: Victorian High Country Huts Association <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157245202671009&id=131763036008&set=a.10153237024091009>)

Langford Gap Hut

- Located approximately 180m east of the Langford Gap carpark.
- Constructed in 1960 by the SEC for workers on the Kiewa Hydro-Electric Scheme.
- Timber frame, exterior clad in weatherboard, interior clad in Masonite, wooden floor and gabled iron roof.[9]
- In poor condition.

Figure 2.23 Cope Saddle Hut, photographed by Shez Tedford, 2025. (Source: Victorian High Country Huts Association <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=999425722230877&id=100064903748087&set=a.1015488975233100 9>)

Cope Saddle Hut

- Located approximately 1.85km northwest of Mount Cope, at the intersection of the Australian Alps Walking Track, Pretty Valley Track and the Cope East Aqueduct Road.
- Built c1958 by the SEC for workers on the Kiewa Hydro-Electric Scheme.
- Timber frame, exterior clad in weatherboard, wooden floor and gabled corrugated iron roof.
- Recently rebuilt by Victorian High Country Huts Association.

Figure 2.24 Westons Hut. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Westons Hut

- Located south of Westons Spur Track.
- Originally built 1932, destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1939. Destroyed by fire again in 2007 and rebuilt in 2010.
- Originally built for cattlemen.
- Reconstructed to a traditional design, with corrugated iron roof and timber walls.

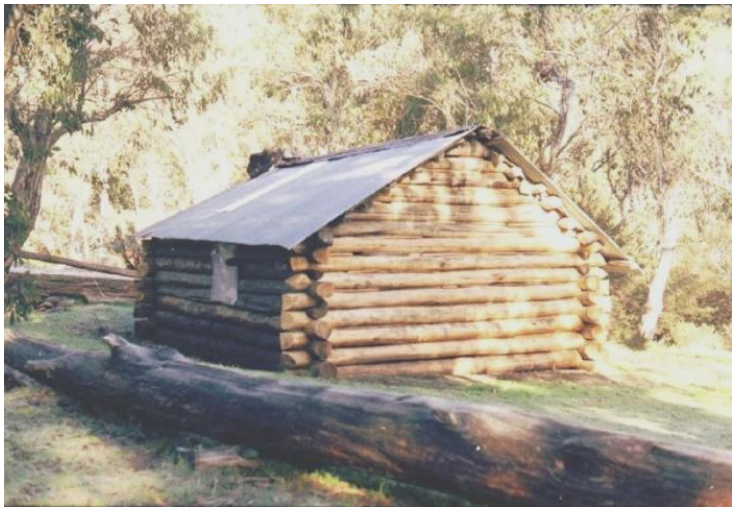


Figure 2.25 Blairs Hut, photographed by Jim Moon, 2002. (Source: Mountain Huts Australia <https://mountainhuts.net/bogonghuts/project-two-b94g9>

Blairs Hut

- Built by local graziers as a stockmen's hut, and was also used for ski-touring.[10]
- Original hut was built on the site in 1923/1924, but destroyed by fire in 1931.[11]
- Was rebuilt shortly after (1931/1932).
- Major work was undertaken to replace logs in 1993.
- Log cabin with gable iron roof, replacing an original bark roof. Internal stone lined fireplace. Has simple table/timber platforms inside.
- Hut is in basic and rustic condition.

Figure 2.26 Dibbins Hut, photographed by G Duncan, 1993. (Source: Mountain Huts Australia <https://mountainhuts.net/region-9-mt-hotham/dibbins-hut>)

Dibbins Hut

- First hut on the site dates to c1890s. Current hut is a substantially modified (c1980s) version of a hut constructed in the first half of the twentieth century.[12]
- Originally built for cattlemen.
- Log walls, gabled roof, hardwood floor.
- In poor condition.

Figure 2.27 Pretty Valley Hut. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Pretty Valley Hut

- Existing hut was built in 1984.
- Previous huts on the site include one demolished in 1928 and one built c1930s.
- Was used as a SEC hut, by cattlemen and as a ski refuge.
- Timber-framed, with exterior weatherboard cladding and corrugated iron roof.
- In poor condition.
- Used for emergency shelter.

Figure 2.28 Main hut at Ryders Huts, with feed store hut behind, photographed by Dianne Ross, 2020. (Source: Victorian High Country Huts Association <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10157959073631009&set=pcb.10157959074906009>)

Ryders Huts

- Group of four huts built c1973.[13]
- The huts were built by Wally Ryder to support nearby cattle yards.
- The main hut is timber-framed, corrugated iron-clad and has a verandah.
- Other huts are a small feed store with skillion roof, a sleeping hut, and a toilet and store hut.

Figure 2.29 Ryders Huts, photographed by Dianne Ross, 2020. (Source: Victorian High Country Huts Association <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10157959073926009&set=pcb.10157959074906009>

Figure 2.30 Tawonga Huts, photographed by John Mitchell, 2002. (Source: Mountain Huts Australia <https://mountainhuts.net/bogonghuts/tawonga-huts>)

Tawonga Huts

- Group of four huts.
- Huts were built at various times. One hut was built by SEC in 1928 and transported to the site in the 1980s. One hut was built c1970s but burned down in 2000 and was rebuilt. Were also used as cattlemen's huts.
- Huts are timber-framed and clad in corrugated iron.
- In generally good condition.

Historical archaeological potential

The project areas' phases of historical use create some potential for historical archaeological resources. The archaeological potential was assessed in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Historical Archaeology Survey Report and Desktop Historical Archaeology Assessment. These reports found that the potential for historical archaeology in the study area is low, apart from around the Red Robin Gold Mine and Battery.[14] The Red Robin Gold Mine is located around 3.7km southwest of Westons Hut and some distance from the proposed route, and is therefore not expected to be affected by the proposed action.

In the project area any artefacts that did exist would mostly be likely to be 'isolated artefacts created or deposited by early European pioneers traversing and exploring the landscape'.[15]

2.3.4 Views and vistas

Within the AANP National Heritage place are a wide variety of powerful, distinctive mountain and valley vistas, including 'distinctive range-upon-range panoramas, snow covered crests, slopes and valleys, alpine streams and rivers, natural and artificial lakes, the snow-clad eucalypts and the high plain grasslands, summer alpine wildflowers, forests'.[16] Features of the views and vistas include their remoteness, naturalness, mountain silhouettes against clear skies, expansive views of natural landscapes, ridgelines, granite outcrops and escarpments. Huts in their immediate and broader mountain settings are an important aspect of the visual experience of the AANP National Heritage place.

Within the project area, views and vistas exist in the short, medium and long range.

In the long range, significant views are those across long distances capturing close and distant valleys and peaks and their setting. These views exist along the trail in various and changing forms. A selection of key long-range views have been captured in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing – Stage 1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by Hansen Partnership for Parks Victoria (2024). These views are summarised below.

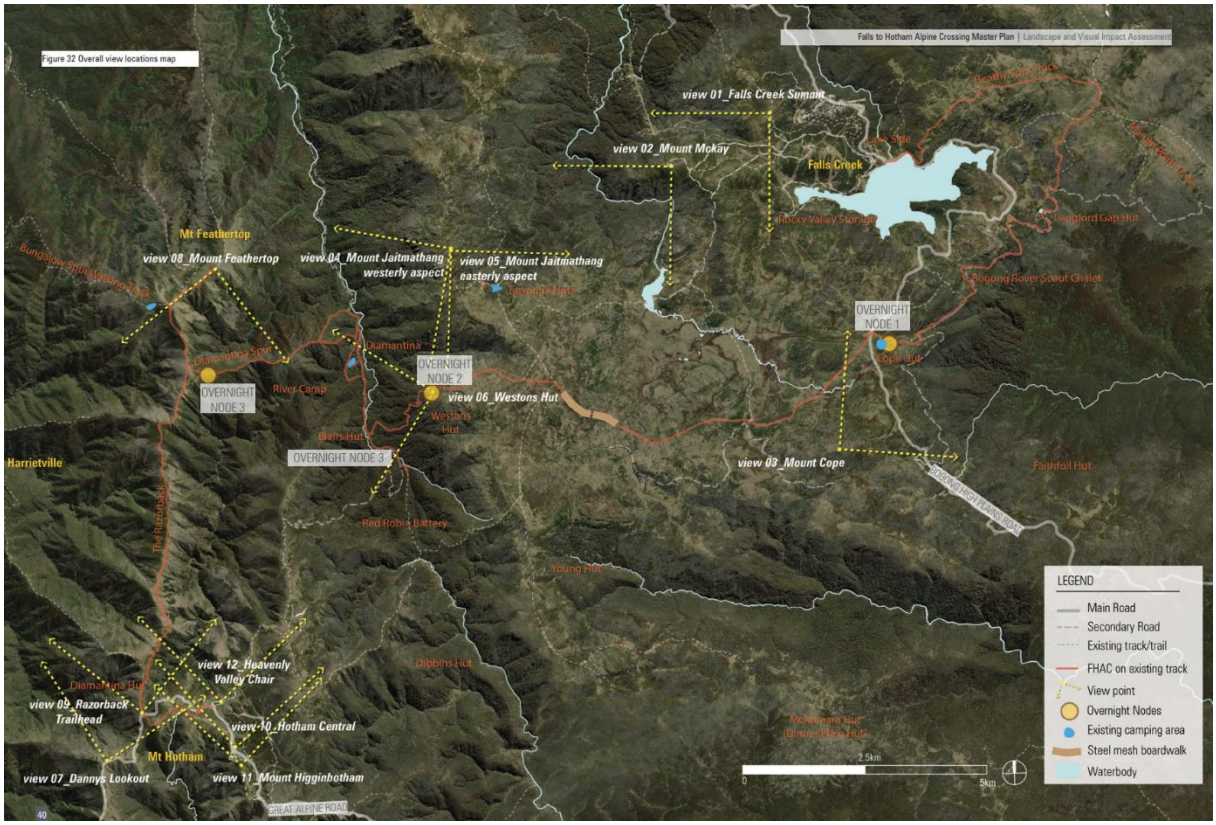


Figure 2.31 Map of long-range views assessed in Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, p 40)

Figure 2.32 View 01 from Falls Creek summit looking southwest, of Falls Creek Alpine Resort ski field and surrounding plains, with distant mountain and valley vistas and ski field infrastructure in the foreground, December 2021. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA001 P2)

Figure 2.33 View 02 from Mount McKay looking southwest, December 2021. This view is an expansive view across the Bogong High Plains and to mountain ranges in the distance. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA004 P2)

Figure 2.34 View 03 from Mount Cope of surrounding plains looking northeast, showing nearby plains and more distant valleys and ridgelines, December 2021. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA007 P2)

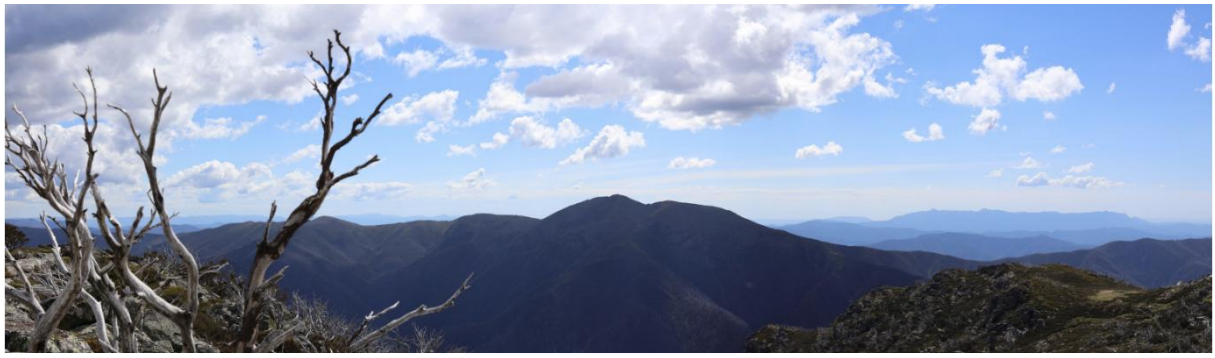


Figure 2.35 View 04 from Mount Jaithmathang looking southwest, December 2021. This view shows the large valleys in the middle distance to mountain vistas beyond. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA010 P2)

Figure 2.36 View 05 southeast from Mount Jaithmathang, December 2021. This view captures the high plains in the middle distances with coverage of snow gums into the valleys. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA013 P2)

Figure 2.37 View 06 southwest from Westons Hut showing the hut in the foreground, surrounded by eucalypts and the distant mountain ridges past the valley beyond, December 2021. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA016 P2)

Figure 2.38 View 07 from Dannys Lookout at the top of Mount Hotham, looking northeast, December 2021. The view captures the gravelled pullout and memorial stone in the immediate foreground looking towards distant ridges and valleys. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA019 P2)

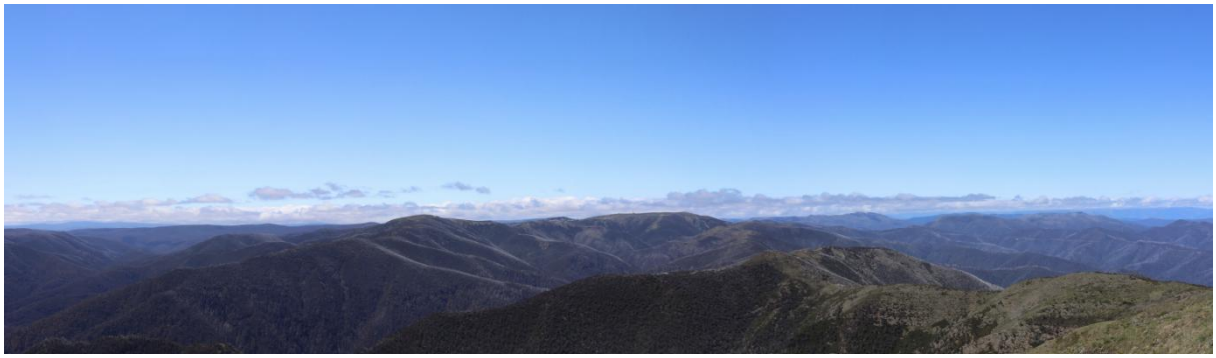


Figure 2.39 View 08 from Mount Feathertop looking south across nearby ridgelines falling away to valleys to the east and west, December 2021. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA022 P2)

Figure 2.40 View 09 looking northeast towards the Razorback Trailhead, with trail signage in the foreground and the trail ridges in the distance, December 2021. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA025 P2)

Figure 2.41 View 10 from Hotham Centre looking northeast, showing Alpine National Park to the eastern side from a more developed location on the west, December 2021. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA028 P2)

Figure 2.42 View 11 from Mount Higginbotham towards the northeast, capturing open plains framed by vegetation, December 2021. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA031 P2)

Figure 2.43 View 12 looking north from Heavenly Valley Chair, of surrounding plains, vegetation and distant mountain views, December 2021. (Source: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing LVIA, VIA034 P2)

Medium and short-range views in the project area include varied views when travelling along the trails of the immediate and medium-distance settings that express the features of the natural landscape, and views in, around and from the overnight node locations of the immediate and more distant natural setting. The views vary across the seasons, and capture features such as the eucalyptus, alpine meadows and rock escarpments passed by the trail, and the visual of historic mountain huts embedded in their remote natural environment.

The ability to appreciate the mountain huts in their natural landscape settings is an important part of understanding how they express different National Heritage values and different stories about the historical uses of the Australian Alps landscape. Westons Hut, for example, originally built as a mountain grazing hut, demonstrates many of the hallmarks of historic huts constructed elsewhere in alpine national parks in association with summer grazing of sheep and cattle; sited at the edge of grassland, oriented northeast to catch the morning sun, and close to the trees for shelter from westerly winds and, historically, ready access to firewood (noting that collecting firewood is now banned in Alpine National Park).

A selection of example views and scenes that capture important landscape qualities experienced at the overnight node locations are provided below.

Note: these views are based on available imagery from a desktop assessment, and GML has not undertaken a site inspection to identify all views and vistas.

Figure 2.44 Cope Hut Camping Area, showing the campground within its immediate visual setting of alpine meadows and Snow Gums. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.45 Camping platform at Cope Hut Camping Area in a snowy landscape. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.46 Cope Hut, looking east, with view of hut alongside trail set within trees. (Source: Parks Victoria, High Country Huts Matterport Scan <https://www.highcountryhuts.org.au/australian-alpine-heritage-huts/cope-hut>)

Figure 2.47 Trail passing through trees at lower elevations. (Source: WSP and Golder, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Geotechnical Assessment of Trail)

Figure 2.48 View from trail of rocky outcrop in distance. (Source: WSP and Golder, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Geotechnical Assessment of Trail)

Figure 2.49 Looking downhill from trail showing Westons Hut isolated within its mountain setting, photographed by Sue Thorburn, 2020, all rights reserved. (Source: Victorian High Country Huts Association <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10158341004391009&set=pcb.10158341005756009>)

Figure 2.50 Westons Hut with view to the west. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 2.51 View of natural landscape around proposed High Knob overnight node. (Source: Parks Victoria)

2.4 Use

Alpine National Park is used for bushwalking, biking, skiing, horseriding, four-wheel driving, fishing and other outdoor activities. In 2015 grazing was banned in Alpine National Park.[17]

The FHAC works area is mostly made up of existing trails that are in regular use. Some areas, however, are currently undeveloped natural landscape. The project area is used for hiking, camping and other outdoor activities.

2.5 Condition

The condition of the project area in Alpine National Park is determined by the state of both its natural and cultural environment. No site inspection has been undertaken during the preparation of this report, but based on other surveys and reporting the condition of the area generally can be understood.

The underlying geology and landforms are generally resilient to change and are assumed to be in good condition. The natural environment is more vulnerable, and 'the alpine environment is one of Australia's most threatened habitats'.[18] The condition of the natural environment has been degraded by threats such as invasive flora and fauna, bushfires, climate change and human recreation. The project area 'has been subject to a range of land uses and environmental conditions throughout history, all of which have had a degree of impact on its natural and cultural values'.[19] Layers of human activity such as grazing and mining have fundamentally changed areas of the landscape and are integrated into the history of the place. Grazing and mining are historical uses, though the nearby Red Robin Battery was still in operation as late as 2013.[20]

The condition of cultural features varies. Some historic huts are in good condition and are regularly maintained, whereas others need substantial restoration work.

The condition of intangible values such as aesthetic values and social values and the attributes that demonstrate them is generally considered to be good, as evidenced by the strong engagement by communities associated with the place. However, their condition is vulnerable to impacts on the attributes that express these values, including the natural and cultural landscape of the project area, and the practice of significant traditions, uses and associations with the place.

2.6 Endnotes

[1] Victorian National Parks Association 2014, *Natural Victoria: Conservation Priorities for Victoria's Natural Heritage*, Nature Conservation Review, full report, Victorian National Parks Association, Melbourne, Appendix 8, p 4.

[2] Parks Victoria, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, March 2018, p 25.

[3] Parks Victoria, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, March 2018, p 28.

[4] Parks Victoria, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, March 2018, p 28; Australian Alps National Parks, 'Vegetation in the Australian Alps', accessed 7 August 2025, p 3 <https://theaustralianalpsnationalparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/vegetation.pdf>.

[5] Australian Alps National Parks, 'Vegetation in the Australian Alps', accessed 7 August 2025, p 3 <https://theaustralianalpsnationalparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/vegetation.pdf>.

[6] YouTube, Adventures of Katelyn, 'Facilities and complete review of Cope Hut campsite: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing', accessed 7 August 2025 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDLjaAcoZF4>

[7] Parks Victoria 2022, *Hut Maintenance Manual: Greater Alpine National Parks*, p 17.

[8] Mountain Huts Australia 'Wallaces Hut', accessed 7 August 2025 <https://mountainhuts.net/bogonghuts/wallaces-hut>.

[9] Mountain Huts Australia, 'Langford Gap Hut', accessed 7 August 2025 <https://mountainhuts.net/bogonghuts/langfords-gap-hut>

[10] Graeme Butler and Associates, 2005, Victorian Alpine Huts Heritage Survey 2004–5, prepared for Parks Victoria, p 93.

[11] Mountain Huts Australia, 'Blairs Hut', accessed 18 August 2025 <https://mountainhuts.net/bogonghuts/project-two-b94g9>.

[12] Mountain Huts Australia, 'Dibbins Hut', accessed 18 August 2025 <https://mountainhuts.net/region-9-mt-hotham/dibbins-hut>

[13] Mountain Huts Australia, 'Ryders Huts', accessed 18 August 2025 <https://mountainhuts.net/bogonghuts/ryders-huts>.

[14] Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Historical Archaeology Survey Report, prepared for Parks Victoria, October 2023, p 15.

[15] Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Historical Archaeology Survey Report, prepared for Parks Victoria, October 2023, p 15.

[16] Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 'Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves, The Alpine Way, Thredbo Village, VIC, Australia', Australian Heritage Database (AHDB), accessed 18 August 2025 <https://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=105891>.

[17] Premier of Victoria, 'Cattle Banned from the Alpine National Park', 17 March 2015, accessed 18 August 2025 <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/cattle-banned-alpine-national-park>.

[18] Parks Victoria, 'Threats and Conservation of the Alps', accessed 18 August 2025 <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/get-into-nature/conservation-and-science/our-amazing-diversity/the-alps/threats-and-conservation-of-the-alps>.

[19] Australian Alps listing on the AHDB.

[20] Ball, M, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 November 2013, 'High on the hills', accessed 26 August 2025 <https://www.smh.com.au/traveller/inspiration/high-on-the-hills-20131113-2xfbl.html>.

3 Heritage significance

3.1 Introduction

Before making decisions to change a heritage place, it is important to understand its heritage values, i.e. its cultural and natural significance. This ensures decisions can retain and protect those values. Statements of significance summarise the heritage values of the place—why it is important and why it was heritage listed to protect those values.

3.2 Heritage listings

The project area is the subject of several heritage listings at national, state and local level. This report only addresses the National Heritage values, but understanding other heritage listings provides useful context.

Table 3.1 Statutory heritage listings for the project area.

Item name	Heritage listing and item ID
Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves	National Heritage List, Place ID 105891
Red Robin Gold Mine and Battery, West Kiewa Logging Road and Machinery Spur Track, Hotham Heights	Victorian Heritage Register, VHR H1881 Alpine Planning Scheme, HO1 Victorian Heritage Inventory, VHI H8324-0035
Blair, Cleve, Cope, Fitzgerald & Tawonga Huts, High Plains, Bogong	Alpine Planning Scheme, HO2
Maisie's Plots, Bogong High Plains Road, Falls Creek	Victorian Heritage Register, VHR H2424 Alpine Planning Scheme, HO211
Wallace's Hut, Wallace's Track, Nelse (Bogong High Plain, Alpine National Park)	Victorian Heritage Register, VHR H1616 East Gippsland Planning Scheme, HO226
Razorback Battery	Victorian Heritage Inventory, VHI H8324-0024

3.3 National Heritage values

The project area is within the AANP National Heritage place and is listed in the NHL for meeting National Heritage criteria A, B, D, E, G and H.

This report assesses impacts on the National Heritage values, covering:

- Criterion A: events and processes—relating to transhumant grazing, scientific research, water harvesting, recreation, glacial deposits and features, periglacial features (both fossil and modern), fossils, karst, biological heritage, moth feasting;

- Criterion B: rarity;
- Criterion D: representativeness
- Criterion E: aesthetic values;
- Criterion G: social values; and
- Criterion H: associations with significant people.

The National Heritage values for the place have been extracted in Table 3.2, below.

Table 3.2 National Heritage values of the AANP National Heritage place. (Source: Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No S237, 7 Nov 2008)

Criteria	National Heritage values
Criterion (a) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history	**Glacial and Periglacial Features** The assemblage of glacial deposits and features in the AANP includes five alpine lakes, thirteen cirques and associated moraines, ice-grooved and polished pavements and erratic boulders. Periglacial features, both fossil and modern, include block streams, permafrost and solifluction deposits. These features are the material expression of the cold-climate, high-altitude history of the AANP, unique in the low-latitude, low-altitude Australian continent. The glacial and periglacial features contribute uniquely to our understanding of the nature of landscape response to climate during the ice ages of the late Quaternary and into the present and therefore has outstanding heritage value to the nation for its importance in the pattern of Australia's natural history (Percival 1985; Galloway 1989; Yeates 2001a; ISC 2004; AALC 2006). **Fossils** The Mt Howitt fish fossil site demonstrates remarkable fossil species diversity and preserves fish fossils across a wide range of life stages from larvae to mature fish, over tens of millions of years. The site contributes an important narrative about the evolution of fish across a number of different marine and freshwater environments, and the development of features that enabled vertebrates to leave the water to exploit terrestrial environments for the first time. Fossils revealed at the site have outstanding heritage value to the nation for their place in vertebrate evolution during the so-called 'Age of Fish' (Vickers-Rich and Rich 1993; Cook ed. 2007). **Karst** The Yarrangobilly karst area contains an outstanding collection of surface karst features including gorges, arches, blind valleys, springs and pinnacle fields. It also contains several hundred caves including six show caves with many intricate cave decorations, open for public viewing (ISC 2004). Yarrangobilly has yielded valuable information on the long-term dynamics of landscape formation. The thick flowstone sequences in Jersey Cave span half a million years and provide the longest continuous fire history record from a single site in Australia (DEH 2006b). Yarrangobilly has outstanding value to the nation for its features and karst processes evident in the limestone karst landscape. **Biological Heritage** The Alps are one of eleven sites recognised in Australia by the IUCN as a major world centre of plant diversity.

Criteria	National Heritage values
	During the late Quaternary and into the present, the high-altitude, cold-climate environment has provided refuge for species in an increasingly arid climate. Containing most of the contiguous montane to alpine environments in Australia, the AANP supports a rich and unique assemblage of cold-climate specialist species that have evolved unique physiological characteristics, enabling them to survive in an environment subject to extreme climate variation. Outstandingly rich flora taxa in the AANP include the daisies (Asteraceae), willow-herbs (Onagraceae), starworts and cushion-plants (Caryophyllaceae), southern heaths (Epacris), bottlebrushes (Callistemon), orchids (Pterostylis, Prasophyllum and Dipodium) and pimeleas (Thymaelaeaceae). Cold-climate adapted and endemic fauna species include the mountain pygmy-possum (Burramys parvus), the alpine she-oak skink (Cyclodomorphus praealtus), Snowy Mountains rock skink (Egernia guthega), Baw Baw frog (Philoria frosti), southern corroboree frog (Pseudophryne corroboree), and the northern corroboree frog (P. pengilleyi). Species of a great many invertebrate taxa are endemic to the Alps. These include stoneflies, caddisflies, mayflies, grasshoppers, and earthworms. Many display cold-climate adaptations, such as the mountain grasshopper (Acripeza reticulata), mountain spotted grasshopper (Monistria concinna) and alpine thermocolour grasshopper (Kosciuscola tristis). The Bogong Moth undertakes regular migration in Australia and an essential part of its lifecycle occurs within the AANP. The AANP is a vital refuge for alpine and sub-alpine flora and fauna species, with a high level of richness and endemism across a wide range of taxa, and therefore has outstanding value to the nation for encompassing a significant and unique component of Australia's biological heritage (Nankin 1983; Costin 1989; Strahan 1995; Good 1995; Boden and Given 1995; WWF and IUCN 1995; Cogger 1996; Crabb 2003 Good 2003; ISC 2004; DSE 2005; AALC 2005; DEC 2006; McDougall & Walsh 2007, ANHAT 2007). **Moth Feasting** The use of an adult insect – the Bogong Moth – as the basis for past large-scale annual gatherings of different Aboriginal groups for ceremonies sets the gatherings in the AANP apart from other Aboriginal ceremonial gatherings and has captured the Australian imagination, making it exceptional in Australia (White 2006). Therefore the AANP has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the importance of Aboriginal social gatherings based on moth feasting in the course, or pattern, of Australia's cultural history. **Transhumant Grazing** The AANP has outstanding heritage value for its association with historic transhumant grazing that commenced in the 1830s. The practice of using alpine high plains to graze stock during the summer months was a significant pastoral activity of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and was continuously practised for a period of over 150 years; making a considerable contribution to the early pastoral industry of south-east Australia. Transhumant grazing created and sustained a distinctive way of life that is valued as an important part of Australia's pioneering history and culture. Evidence of transhumant grazing includes huts, the former grazing landscapes, stock yards, and stock routes. **Scientific Research** The AANP has outstanding heritage value for the scientific research that has taken place since the 1830s, demonstrated by the density and

Criteria	National Heritage values
	continuity of scientific endeavour. Research sites within the AANP include those relating to botanical surveys, soil conservation exclosures, karst research, fauna research, meteorology, fire ecology plots, arboreta and glacial research sites. Space tracking [was] undertaken in the ACT with Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station having played a significant role in the Apollo 11 moon landing mission. **Water Harvesting** Water harvesting in the AANP has outstanding heritage value to the nation for its contribution to the social and economic development of Australia. Water harvested from headwaters in the AANP contributes to the water needs of Canberra and Melbourne. The Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme and the Kiewa Valley Hydro-electric Scheme also contributes to the electricity needs of south-eastern Australia. Both schemes were major post-war reconstruction projects, encouraging migration to Australia and employing over 60,000 displaced persons from post war Europe. Evidence of water harvesting in the AANP for power and irrigation includes the major pondages along with the numerous tunnels, aqueducts, power stations, huts, roads and former settlements, town and work camp sites. **Recreation** The AANP has outstanding heritage value for the longevity and diversity of its recreational use. Snow sports commenced in Kiandra in 1861 with the establishment of the Kiandra Snowshoe Club and expanded from an ad hoc activity by enthusiasts to a multi-million dollar snow sport and tourism industry characterised by the groomed ski slopes, ski lift infrastructure and substantial village resorts. The chalets supported by government were major features of the expanding activity and were established in scenic locations in the early twentieth century when mountain retreats were highly regarded for good health. These include the Mount Buffalo Chalet, the Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct, the Chalet at Charlottes Pass, and the former Hotel Kosciusko and Mount Franklin Chalets.
(b) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation for its possession of rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history	**Landscape and Topography** The high altitudes of the plateaus and peaks in the AANP are prominent in a continent with an average elevation of only 330 metres above sea level. The AANP includes most of continental Australia's peaks over 1,700 metres and all of those over 1,900 metres. These high peaks and plateaus contain the vast majority of alpine and sub-alpine environments in Australia. The AANP experiences extensive snow coverage on a seasonal basis, and its glacial lakes are the only wetlands on the Australian mainland covered by ice sheets in winter. The high-altitude landscape of the AANP has outstanding heritage value to the nation for its topographic heights, uncommon alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems and glacial lakes. (AALC 2005; DEC 2006; Geoscience Australia 2007). **Glacial and Periglacial Features** Continental Australia and its southern territorial islands have experienced periods of historic glaciation, with current snow and ice coverage limited to the highest peaks and altitudes. On mainland Australia, the AANP preserves a concentration of glacial and periglacial features without comparison from the ice ages of the late Quaternary Period.

Criteria	National Heritage values
	The Kosciuszko Plateau is unique in mainland Australia as the only place irrefutably exhibiting landforms shaped by Late Pleistocene glaciers during a series of glacier advances known as the Late Kosciuszko Glaciation. The active and fossil periglacial landforms of the AANP include blockstreams and solifluction features (solifluction is the gradual movement of waterlogged soil down a slope, especially where percolation is prevented by a frozen substrate). They are the most striking and extensive in mainland Australia and demonstrate the widespread effects of cold climate in the Quaternary, mild climate in the Holocene and the absence of intensive Pleistocene ice modification of the elevated landscape of the Victorian and ACT Alps. Therefore the AANP has outstanding heritage value to the nation for containing uncommon glacial and periglacial features (Percival 1985; Yeates 2001; Barrows et al. 2001). **Fossils** The Mt Howitt fish fossil site is globally rare because it preserves a diverse array of fossil fish in uncommon detail at all stages of their lives. It is unique nationally in providing a snapshot of a complete freshwater vertebrate community from the past, and for yielding fossils from all stages of growth of a species, from tiny fish larvae to adult fish, and therefore has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of its preservation of an uncommon aspect of Australia's natural history (Long 2002; Cook ed. 2007). **Alpine and Sub-alpine Ecosystems** The AANP has outstanding heritage significance to the nation for possessing extremely uncommon aspects of Australia's natural history. Alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems are uncommon in the generally arid and warm climate of Australia. The distribution of cold-climate species on the mainland retreated to the higher altitudes of the Alps in the Late Pleistocene as conditions began to warm up. The AANP contains most of the alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems on mainland Australia, supporting flora and fauna species that have evolved to the harsh conditions of the high altitudes. Many of these species are endemic to the Alps and are found nowhere else in Australia. The bog and fen groundwater communities are supported by organic soils and contain exceptional water retention properties. These communities play an integral role in ecosystem function by regulating the slow release of water from saturated peatbeds to the surrounding alpine humus soils, streams and other alpine communities (Good 1995; AALC 2006b). **Eucalypt Flora Community** The AANP provides an outstanding example of the adaptability of a plant genus, the genus Eucalyptus, along a steep topographical transect. The eucalypts dominate the AANP vegetation from the lowlands to as high as the alpine region, where the snow gum (E. pauciflora) defines the treeline. Much of the highest land in Australia occurs within the AANP, which also demonstrates very large topographical variations, which in turn is reflected in the high diversity of eucalypt species replacing each other along the altitudinal and climatic gradient (Costin 1988; Kirkpatrick 1994; ISC 2004; ANHAT 2007).

Criteria	National Heritage values
(d) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: • a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or • a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments	**North-East Kosciuszko Pastoral Landscape** The landscape is outstanding for demonstrating the use of mountain resources, namely the summer grasses and herbfields. As a relict landscape of past grazing leases it conveys the principal characteristics of transhumance and permanent pastoralism in a remote environment, these being large areas of open grassy landscapes between timbered ridges and hills, stockman's huts, homestead complexes, stockyards and stock routes. The grasslands with swathes of pioneer shrubs include the Kiandra landscape, Boggy Plain, Nungar Plain, Gulf Plain, Wild Horse Plain, Tantangara Plain, Dairymans Plain, Currango Plain, Long Plain, Cooleman Plain, Kellys Plain, Blanket Plain, Peppercorn and Pockets Saddle (KHA 2008). Homestead buildings include Cooinbil and Old Currango and the modest homestead complexes of Currango and Coolamine with additional features including exotic plantings, sheds, barns, and workers' accommodation. Former stock routes, now fire trails, include the Port Philip Fire and Murrays Gap Fire Trails. Located in the former grazing leases are stockman's huts, Bill Jones Hut, Circuits Hut, Gavels Hut, Hains Hut, Hainsworth Hut, Millers Hut, Oldfields Hut, Pedens Hut, Pockets Hut, Townsends Lodge, Gavels Hut, Long Plain Hut, Gooandra Hut, Schofields Hut, and Witzes Hut (KHA 2008), which in their use and re-use of available materials typify a lifestyle and vernacular bush building technology using hand tools. The array of characteristics relate to over a century of alpine grazing.
(e) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group	The AANP is a powerful, spectacular and distinctive landscape highly valued by the Australian community. The mountain vistas, including distinctive range upon-range panoramas, snow covered crests, slopes and valleys, alpine streams and rivers, natural and artificial lakes, the snow-clad eucalypts and the high plain grasslands, summer alpine wildflowers, forests and natural sounds evoke strong aesthetic responses. Much of the terrain of the AANP is highly valued for its remoteness, and naturalness, including views to and from the region that capture snow clad ranges and mountain silhouettes against clear skies as well as expansive views of natural landscapes from the high points of the Alps. The upper Snowy River and Snowy Gorge, Mount Buffalo, the Kosciuszko Main Range, Lake Tali Karng, Dandongadale Falls, the peaks and ridges between and including Mt Cobbler, Mt Howitt and the Bluff and other high peaks, ridgelines, granite outcrops and escarpments are examples of dramatic awe-inspiring landscapes. Recreational pursuits in these landscapes are enhanced by aesthetic appreciation of their wild and natural quality. Snow-covered eucalypts, huts in mountain settings and mountain landscapes are distinctive Australian images captured by numerous artists and photographers. The mountain landscapes have inspired poets, painters, writers, musicians and film makers.
g) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for	The Australian Alps have a special association with the Australian community because of their unique landscapes, the possibility of experiencing remoteness and as the only opportunity for broad-scale snow recreation in Australia. The AANP is widely recognised by Australians as the 'high country' and many community groups have a special association with the AANP for social and cultural reasons. Mount Kosciuszko is an iconic feature for all Australians and visited by over 100,000 people each year.

Criteria	National Heritage values
social, cultural or spiritual reasons	It was named by the explorer Paul Edmund Strzelecki after the Polish freedom fighter, General Tadeusz Kosciuszko, in appreciation of freedom and a free people, an association that is highly valued by Australia's Polish community. The pioneering history of the high country is valued as an important part of the construction of the Australian identity featuring in myths, legends and literature. The ballad 'The Man from Snowy River' epitomises horsemanship undertaken historically in the rugged landscape. The stories, legends and myths of the mountains and mountain lifestyles have been romanticised in books, films, songs, and television series and many such as the Elyne Mitchell's Silver Brumby novels are part of Australia's national identity. The mountain huts of the AANP constructed for grazing, mining and recreation are valued by communities as a physical expression of the cultural history of the region. They have special associations with many groups, such as mountain cattlemen, skiers and bushwalkers but particularly with huts associations that have been maintaining mountain huts and associated vernacular building skills for over 30 years.
(h) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history	Baron Ferdinand von Mueller is highly recognised nationally and internationally for his contribution to Australian botany, particularly his extensive and thorough botanical collections of the Australian Alps undertaken in several botanical collecting trips on horseback, each of several weeks' or months' duration (Costin et al. 1979). Eugen [sic.] von Guerard was a significant nineteenth century artist producing a prolific record of Australian landscapes. His 1863 painting the "North-east view from the northern top of Mount Kosciusko" is regarded as one of his finest artistically and is in Australia's national collection. Through his ballad "The Man from Snowy River", Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson captured the imagination of the Australian people, stimulating a passion for the High Country and the way of life associated with the mountains. His iconic ballad has had a lasting influence on Australians. The writer Elyne Mitchell and poet David Campbell lived near the mountains and their strong association with the place is expressed in much of their nationally important literary works.

3.4 Expression of the National Heritage values

The National Heritage values of the AANP National Heritage place are expressed through a variety of attributes across the vast National Heritage place, which covers 1,653,180ha.[1]

Understanding how these high-level values are expressed within the project area will help to identify and assess any heritage impacts. This section provides guidance on the attributes and expression of the values in the context of the proposed action.

3.4.1 Understanding expression of the National Heritage values

As the National Heritage values of the AANP National Heritage place are broad-ranging and cover a large geographic area, to understand how they are expressed in the project area requires close analysis of the text of the National Heritage values, cross-referencing against the tangible and intangible elements present in the project area itself. This requires understanding what physical features are in the project area, and how intangible aspects such as social and aesthetic values are demonstrated.

To identify how the heritage values are expressed in the project area, GML has undertaken a desktop assessment based on the National Heritage values and other documents prepared for the project (refer to Section 1.5 for a list of relevant documents).

Due to the large scale of the project area and its setting, there may be physical expressions of the National Heritage values that are not known or that have not yet been discovered (e.g. remnant stockyard fences, archaeological artefacts).

Community consultation and heritage values

Community consultation can help identify how the National Heritage values are expressed.

Targeted consultation on the social heritage values has not been undertaken. However, the findings of broader community consultation are relevant to the extent that they relate to the social and community-held heritage significance.

In August and September 2022, community engagement was undertaken on the draft concept designs for FHAC, including public activities/consultation sessions and online consultation. Based on summaries of consultation outcomes made available to GML, multiple themes and issues related to the National Heritage values are identifiable.

Note that there are several limitations to this data, including that the consultation was not targeted at heritage impacts, and covered a self-selected group of respondents. It also does not include data from earlier public consultation phases on the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan including on the preliminary concept design in early 2016, on the draft Master Plan in late 2016/early 2017, and consultation sessions in 2018. Nevertheless, the data provides useful context.

Themes and issues from community consultation

- History of the Alpine area; layers of the place's story (Aboriginal and European history).
- Importance of the natural environment; preservation and conservation of natural heritage.
- Accessibility of recreational activities to all—not constrained by cost or access limitations.
- Isolation and remoteness—the importance of maintaining these elements.
- Quietness, ruggedness and wilderness; experiencing the challenge of remote recreation.
- Simplicity, lack of clutter or features that detract from the remote environment.
- Freedom and being in nature.
- Importance of the historic look and feel of the mountain huts, their isolation and solitariness.
- The beauty of the untouched natural environment and scenery; uniqueness of the alpine environment.
- Natural, unique views and vistas; views of the mountains, the natural environment, flora and fauna.
- Personal connections to the place, developed over time.
- Sense of community from recreation, e.g. being part of the hiking community, communal activities.

Further information is available in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Consultation Summary Report prepared by Parks Victoria (2023).

Traditional Owner consultation

Parks Victoria has consulted with Traditional Owners as part of the project. The groups consulted with are listed below:[2]

- Bangerang Aboriginal Corporation;
- Dalka Warra Mittung Aboriginal Corporation;
- Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation;
- Dhudhuroa Waywurru Nations Aboriginal Corporation;
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation;
- Jaithmatang Aboriginal Corporation;
- Jaithmathang Traditional Ancestral Bloodline Original Owners First Nation Aboriginal Corporation; and
- Nindi-Ngujarn Ngarigo Monero Aboriginal Corporation.

As stated in the Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Traditional Owner feedback:

> noted the intangible values of the Alpine region and the importance of seasonal travel routes through the mountains. Some groups recounted dreamtime stories and oral histories of the Alpine region, explaining that the Alpine region was often used as meeting locations between Aboriginal groups and sometimes used as initiation areas.[3]

Many representatives notes that the overnight node locations were likely part of travel routes used by Aboriginal people, and West Kiewa Valley was identified as an area of cultural sensitivity.[4]

Further information on Traditional Owner consultation is available in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan prepared by Latitude Heritage for Parks Victoria (2025).

Natural heritage values

The methodology for natural heritage focuses on the natural heritage values and their attributes that occur in the project area. These values have been taken from the NHL citation for the AANP. They have then been confirmed to still be characteristic of the place by reference to accessible sources and plans of management for the parks.

Searches of current Victorian Government databases for endangered ecosystems and threatened flora and fauna, and a Protected Matters Search Tool search of Commonwealth-listed features contributed to this confirmation and also fleshed out the attributes of the natural heritage values.

The identified natural heritage values were then screened by general location to focus on those attributes recorded or known to occur within the project area.

3.4.2 Summary of expression of the National Heritage values

Natural heritage values

Identifying natural heritage values

Natural heritage focuses on the natural significance of ecosystems, biodiversity and geodiversity. Natural significance is defined in the Australian Natural Heritage Charter (Australian Heritage Commission 2002)[5] as the importance of the ecosystems, biodiversity and geodiversity for (i) their existence value, and (ii) their role in intergenerational equity (defined as importance for future generations in terms of their scientific, social, aesthetic and life-support value).

Articles 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 of the Australian Natural Heritage Charter define the essentials of natural heritage. They also illuminate the difference between natural heritage impact assessment and environmental impact assessment. Natural heritage focuses on existence values of naturally significant attributes rather than inferred values or the environmental services that elements of the environment may perform.

Where the place is already on a heritage list (NHL, Commonwealth Heritage List, state or local government heritage schedule) for natural heritage values, either wholly or contributory, it has been judged against criteria that reflect the values identified in the Australian Natural Heritage Charter, and the natural heritage attributes are described in the list citation. In these cases, existing databases of threatened ecosystems and species as well as new survey of these attributes can be used to confirm that the values in a listing or the place's protected status persist and still meet the thresholds of natural significance. They can also provide more detail regarding the attributes of the natural heritage values, thus aiding on-site identification of the values.

Natural Heritage values for the Australian Alps and Reserves National Heritage place

The AANP, of which the FHAC project area is a small part, is in the NHL for its natural and cultural values. The natural heritage values and attributes referenced in the NHL citation are listed in Table 3.3.

The natural heritage values for the National Heritage place pertain to the overall AANP area, with some attributes generally applicable to large areas and others in specific locations contributing to the value of the listed place.

To identify the expression of natural heritage significance in the project area, each value was examined for relevance to the general FHAC project area using database searches for a defined project area, and the results are listed in Table 3.3 below. This more focused examination entailed a check of biodiversity and geodiversity elements of natural significance in existing accessible datasets, mainly comprising data on rare or endangered ecological communities, flora species and fauna species. These datasets were drawn from Commonwealth and Victorian State Government database search returns– and restricted to 'known' records. It also looked at the significant sites listed by the Geological Society of Australia and the GSA Victoria Division.

The biodiversity database search results for the project area were taken initially from the Abzeco Environmental Values Assessment: Desktop Review of 2020 and checked against new searches of Commonwealth and state databases accessed on 16–18 July 2025.

The natural heritage attributes listed in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 below, where they occur in or near the general FHAC project area, have been carried forward into the impact assessment (Section 5.2.1).

Table 3.3 Identified natural heritage values relevant to the FHAC project area.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
Criterion A		
Glacial and periglacial features		
The assemblage of glacial deposits and features are the material expression of the cold-climate, high-altitude history of the AANP, unique in the low-latitude, low-altitude Australian continent.	Five alpine lakes, thirteen cirques and associated moraines, ice-grooved and polished pavements and erratic boulders. Periglacial features, both fossil and modern, include block streams, permafrost and solifluction deposits.	Periglacial features including block streams and solifluction deposits occur in the general project area and contribute to this widespread natural heritage attribute.
Fossils		
The Mount Howitt fish fossil site.	Demonstrates remarkable fossil species diversity and preserves fish fossils across a wide range of life stages from larvae to mature fish, over tens of millions of years.	Specific site, not within the general project area. *Not considered further.*
Karst		
The Yarrangobilly karst area.	Contains an outstanding collection of surface karst features including gorges, arches, blind valleys, springs, caves and pinnacle fields. The thick flowstone sequences in Jersey Cave span half a million years and provide the longest continuous fire history record from a single site in Australia.	Specific site, not within the general project area. *Not considered further.*
Biological heritage		
Outstandingly rich flora taxa.	Daisies (*Asteraceae*), willow-herbs (*Onagraceae*), starworts and cushion-plants (*Caryophyllaceae*), southern heaths (*Epacris*), bottlebrushes (*Callistemon*), orchids (*Pterostylis*, *Prasophylum* and *Dipodium*) and pimeleas (*Thymaelaeaceae*).	Flora species richness, especially in daisies, recorded in the general project area by government databases. Contributes to this widespread natural heritage attribute.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
Contains most of the contiguous montane to alpine environments in Australia.	Montane and alpine environments which support a rich and unique assemblage of cold-climate specialist species.	15 alpine EVCs are modelled to occur within the general project area and contribute to this widespread natural heritage attribute.
Cold-climate adapted and endemic fauna species.	Includes the Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*), the Alpine She-oak Skink (*Cyclodomorphus praealtus*), Snowy Mountains Rock Skink (*Egernia guthega*) (now Guthega Skink [*Liopholis guthega*]), Baw Baw Frog (*Philoria frosti*), Southern Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*), and the Northern Corroboree Frog (*P. pengilleyi*).	The mountain pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*), Guthega Skink *(Liopholis) guthega* and the alpine she-oak skink (*Cyclodomorphus praealtus*) are recorded within the general project area by government databases and contribute to this widespread natural heritage attribute.
Species of a great many invertebrate taxa are endemic to the Alps.	These include stoneflies, caddisflies, mayflies, grasshoppers, and earthworms. Many display cold-climate adaptations, such as the Mountain Grasshopper (*Acripeza reticulata*), Mountain Spotted Grasshopper (*Monistria concinna*) and Alpine Thermocolour Grasshopper (*Kosciuscola tristis*). The Bogong Moth undertakes regular migration in Australia and an essential part of its lifecycle occurs within the AANP.	Two species of stonefly and the Bogong Moth are recorded in the general project area and contribute to this widespread natural heritage attribute.
Moth feasting		
Moth feasting. The use of an adult insect – the Bogong Moth (*Agrotis infusa*) – as the basis for past large-scale annual gatherings of different Aboriginal groups for ceremonies.	Sites of adult moth massing in early summer. Reported variously as 'The Tops', Kosciuszko and Mount Bogong in NHL citation references.	Historical and anecdotal reports of moth feasting include mention of Mount Feathertop, which is on the FHAC alignment.[6] The lack of caves and crevices at Mount Feathertop are counter-indicative of moth aestivation sites. The SWIFFT/Zoos Victoria Moth Tracker database has no sightings at Mount Feathertop.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
		Not considered further for natural heritage. See 'Indigenous heritage values', below, for a discussion of cultural significance.
Criterion B		
Landscape and topography		
Most of continental Australia's peaks over 1700m and all of those over 1900m.	High peaks and plateaus contain the vast majority of alpine and sub-alpine environments in Australia.	The majority of the FHAC alignment is above 1700m with high points of Mount Feathertop (1922m), High Knob (1801m) and Mount Jim (1818m) along the route. Contributory to this widespread natural heritage attribute.
Glacial and periglacial features		
Preserves a concentration of glacial and periglacial features without comparison from the ice ages of the late Quaternary Period.	The Kosciuszko Plateau exhibits landforms shaped by Late Pleistocene glaciers during a series of glacier advances known as the Late Kosciuszko Glaciation. The active and fossil periglacial landforms of the AANP include block streams and solifluction features.	Periglacial features including block streams and solifluction deposits occur in the general project area and contribute to this widespread natural heritage attribute.
Fossils		
The Mount Howitt fish fossil site.	Globally rare preservation of a diverse array of fossil fish in uncommon detail at all stages of their lives.	Specific site, not within the general project area. *Not considered further.*
Alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems		
Alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems are uncommon in the generally arid and warm climate of Australia.	The AANP contains most of the alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems on mainland Australia, supporting flora and fauna species that have evolved to the harsh conditions of the high altitudes.	15 alpine EVCs are modelled to occur within the general project area and contribute to this widespread natural heritage attribute.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
Eucalypt flora community		
The AANP provides an outstanding example of the adaptability of a plant genus, the genus Eucalyptus, along a steep topographical transect.	AANP demonstrates very large topographical variations, which in turn is reflected in the high diversity of eucalypt species replacing each other along the altitudinal and climatic gradient.	EVC mapping indicates that Snow Gum stands along the Langford Aqueduct, Diamantina Spur, and Razorback tracks grade into a range of different eucalypt communities descending the slope. Contributory to this widespread natural heritage attribute.

In addition to the specifically listed attributes, review of the datasets has identified further features of the natural heritage values of this part of the AANP, which contribute to the expression of the National Heritage values. These attributes and their relationship with the general project area are summarised in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4 Additional natural heritage attributes in the FHAC project area.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
Criterion A		
Basalt Temple, a geodiversity feature.	An extensive rock formation composed of weathered hexagonal basalt columns formed by volcanic activity and subsequent erosion. Exhibits unusual magnetic properties. On Brandy Creek Track.	Contributory to geodiversity natural heritage values. This site is 2.5km south of the FHAC track section at Blairs Hut. *Not considered further.*
Criterion B		
Alpine and Sub-alpine Ecosystems		
The AANP contains most of the alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems on mainland Australia, supporting flora and fauna species that have evolved to the harsh conditions of the high altitudes. Many of these species are endemic to the Alps and are found nowhere else in Australia.		
An EPBC listed ecological community (Endangered)	The EPBC listed *Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens* is a mosaic community. Its equivalent is two FFG listed communities (Alpine Bog Community and Fen (Bog Pool) Community.	A modelled EVC which indicates the presence of the EPBC listed community is indicated within the general project area, in the area around Cope Saddle Hut (288 Alpine Valley Peatland).

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
	Six EVC (171, 210, 221, 288, 917 and 1011) modelled communities may be used to infer the presence of the community.	Survey mapping of the alignment has also confirmed the occurrence of this EVC and the Sub-alpine Wet Heathland/Alpine Valley Peatland Mosaic (EVC 211) in the area.
A number of alpine ecological communities which are rare or threatened within the Victorian Alps Bioregion	Nine modelled EVCs listed as rare or threatened in the Victorian Alps Bioregion.	All nine modelled EVCs are indicated within the general project area.
Threatened flora taxa listed in Victoria in the FFG Act	Seventeen flora species currently listed as rare or threatened under the FFGA Act (DELWP 2020b).	Flora list from Vic government database. The database search was restricted to the general project area and therefore represent the threatened flora of that area.
Threatened fauna taxa listed in Victoria in the FFG Act	Twenty-one fauna species listed in FFG Act. Six are also EPBC-listed threatened species.	Fauna list from Vic government database. The database search was restricted to the general project area and therefore represent the threatened fauna of that area.

Indigenous heritage values

Indigenous heritage values are a variety of cultural values held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including but not limited to cultural associations, links, stories, knowledge and memories; tangible and intangible values; land, water, plants and animals; language and traditions; cultural practices and values that can be applied across time and space.

When understanding Indigenous heritage values, it is important to consider the background of Indigenous heritage significance assessments. The Aboriginal community has established that assessing significance against legislated criteria lacks meaning for them, because the criteria and systems were established in a Eurocentric manner that does not respect or reflect their community's views. In this context, the Indigenous heritage values in and around the project area include the National Heritage values as well as a broader expression of Aboriginal cultural significance, as discussed below. The following analysis assists in understanding the National Heritage values.

Indigenous heritage values are not confined to one Traditional Owner organisation as the area is not within any Registered Aboriginal Party's area.

There is interest in the area from several Traditional Owner organisations, including Bangerang Aboriginal Corporation, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, and others.

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* recognises both tangible and intangible Aboriginal heritage. A number of recorded sites are listed on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR), and these mostly relate to artefact scatters.[7] The Aboriginal cultural history of the area, of which annual Bogong Moth feasting plays a significant part, accords with the high number of archaeological sites in the area. The location of artefact scatters may relate to seasonable camps that were used by Indigenous groups during the Bogong Moth feasting season. The cultural significance of Bogong Moth harvesting and feasting was the subject of several studies, including *The Moth Hunters* by Josephine Flood (1980).

Intangible heritage values refer to knowledge and cultural practices associated with the area. This includes cultural traditions associated with seasonal travel and occupation, the use of resources for a range of purposes, the preparation of food and feasting, the manufacture of tools and other items, ceremonial practices, and Creation stories. Intangible heritage can also include language, including European-adopted placenames, such as Bogong.

The Indigenous heritage values of the project area in the broadest sense encompass a whole-of-Country philosophy. Natural features, such as landforms, granite outcrops, waterways and freshwater springs, hold cultural meaning for Indigenous people. So too do the human uses of the area, which are understood through its use as a place of occupation and tool-making, for meetings, food preparation and ceremonial purposes, for resource gathering (particularly Bogong Moths but also medicinal herbs), and as a cultural landscape of pathways that provided access to Bangerang Country, Gunaikurnai Country, Ngarigo Monero Country (NSW), and other nations. The local granite was too hard for tool-making, but large granite platforms were used as grinding stones and granite rocks were used as cooking stones. It is likely that part of the proposed alpine track upgrade follows the route of earlier pathways across the Bogong High Plains used by Indigenous people.

Indigenous occupation and use of the project area was largely confined to the summer months when the high plains were a more hospitable environment. In terms of ceremonial practices, the seasonal feasting on Bogong Moths was a highly significant annual event and a cultural practice unique to the Australian Alps. As well their importance as the focus of large gatherings in summer, Bogong Moths provided a ready food source. The bodies of the moths were stripped of their wings and were roasted over a fire or lightly cooked on heated rocks. One account explains:

> From November to January the moths were collected by smoking them out with small fires, with a bark sheet or blanket placed below to collect them, or through the use of nets.[8]

The moths were either eaten directly or 'pounded into cakes for dry storage'.[9] As Taungurung Elder Uncle Roy Patterson explains, once cooked they were kept with you as a ready food source while you were walking.[10] The moths were valued for their protein and fat content, which made them an important dietary component after the leaner winter months. Particular plant resources were also sourced in the spring and summer both for dietary and medicinal purposes. This includes Snowberry, Mountain Pepper, Native Raspberry, and species of orchid. Snow Gum was used as firewood and to make shelters. Traditional Owners continue to honour the Bogong Moth migration and celebrate the tradition of summer feasting and ceremony associated with the Bogong Moth.

Contemporary Aboriginal cultural values associated with the project area encompass the continued use and occupation of the area by Bangerang, Gunaikurnai, Ngarigo Monero and other Indigenous people following British colonisation. This includes both traditional cultural uses and uses related to colonial settlement. Indigenous people provided essential services, as guides to explorers, for example Strzelecki in 1840; to scientific expeditions, for example Baron Ferdinand von Mueller in 1854; and to settlers in navigating difficult terrain and sourcing food. They also worked as horse-breakers, stockmen and drovers for a number of pastoralists in northeastern Victoria from the c1840s and through the nineteenth century. Aboriginal stockmen were among those who were employed by pastoralists to take cattle to graze on the high plains in the summer. Of great significance is the continued care for Country, ongoing cultural practices and advocacy for conservation measures in Alpine National Park.

Based on the above analysis, the expressions of the Indigenous National Heritage values listed under the EPBC Act are summarised below.

Table 3.5 Identified Indigenous heritage values relevant to the FHAC project area.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
Criterion A		
Moth feasting		
The use of the Bogong Moth as the basis for past large-scale annual gatherings of different Aboriginal groups for ceremonies, a process of exceptional importance in Australian history.	The rocky crevices and caves that make up the habitat of Bogong Moths during the summer months (December to February). Traditional travel routes across the high plains. The traditional social gatherings by Indigenous people for Bogong Moth harvesting. The Bogong Moth was a critical element in the cultural life of First Nations people in the High Country of northeastern Victoria.	Artefact scatters in the project area, likely associated with Indigenous use of the area for Bogong Moth harvesting (refer to the Cultural Heritage Management Plan, Latitude Heritage 2025, Fig 16). The geomorphological features that create Bogong Moth habitat across the project area, in particular rocky outcrops, rock shelters and caves, large boulder outcrops above tree lines.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
	Annual feasts of Bogong Moths were held in summer that were occasions of inter-clan and inter-tribal meetings. In Indigenous culture there are Creation stories that relate to the Bogong Moth, including its migration and habitat, and its importance as a food source.	Bogong High Plains, as a suitable habitat area for Bogong Moths.[11] Trail routes and alignments where they likely follow Indigenous travel routes around Mount Hotham to Falls Creek.

Historic heritage values

Table 3.6 Identified historic heritage values relevant to the FHAC project area.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
Criterion A		
Transhumant grazing		
The practice of using alpine high plains to graze stock in the summer months. The contribution to southeastern Australia's pastoral industry. Transhumant grazing as a distinctive way of life.	The natural and modified natural landscapes used for grazing, including alpine and sub-alpine areas with open grasslands, herbfields and woodland. The stock routes and bridle paths used by graziers. Stockyards. Historic huts used by stockmen, and the characteristic features of the huts such as their form, vernacular design, ingenuity of construction materials and methods and maintenance, their remoteness, the natural characteristics of their immediate settings, siting in sheltered locations or clearings on the edge of grasslands and woodland and broader mountain setting.	Wallace Hut, Westons Hut (Overnight Node 2), Blairs Hut, Dibbins Hut, Pretty Valley Hut, Ryders Huts, Tawonga Huts and their settings. Remnants of fenced stockyards near Tawonga Huts.[12] Post and wire stockyards were identified at Westons Hut in 2005, but are not visible in recent photos and may have been destroyed in the 2007 bushfire. Evidence of the long history of use of the huts for summer grazing, e.g. apple tree at Westons Hut planted as a cultural planting, the open meadow overlooked by Westons Hut. The route of trails where they are overlaid on historical stock routes and bridle paths, demonstrating the features of this important historical phase. Exact locations are difficult to define but indicative routes are mapped in the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Historical Archaeology Survey Report,

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
		prepared by Extent Heritage for Parks Victoria, October 2023, p 8.
Scientific research		
The density and continuity of scientific endeavour in the AANP National Heritage place. Research relating to botanical surveys, soil conservation exclosures, karst research, fauna research, meteorology, fire ecology plots, arboreta and glacial research sites. Connection with space tracking.	Research sites across the AANP National Heritage place. The landscapes, flora and fauna that have been researched (e.g. karsts, glacial features, ecology and biodiversity). Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, in the ACT.	The botanical survey route associated with von Mueller, 1854 (refer to the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Historical Archaeology Survey Report, prepared by Extent Heritage for Parks Victoria, October 2023, p 8). 'Maisie's Plots', the long-term grassland monitoring plots to the north and south of Bogong High Plains Road near Pretty Valley.
Water harvesting		
The hydro-electric schemes that have contributed to the social and economic development of Australia, and provide power for southeastern Australia. The harvesting of water from the headwaters of rivers in the AANP to supply water to Canberra and Melbourne.	Elements associated with the Kiewa Hydro-Electric Scheme, including: • tunnels, roads, former settlements, town and work campsites; • power stations; • dams, pondages and aqueducts; and • huts to support the operation of water harvesting infrastructure, and the siting of these huts in close proximity to water-related infrastructure. The Snowy Mountains Scheme in NSW.	Rocky Valley Storage Dam. Rocky Valley Aqueduct. Cope East and West Aqueducts. Langford East and West Aqueducts. The huts built and used by the SEC: Wallace Hut, Langford Gap Hut, Cope Saddle Hut, Pretty Valley Hut, Tawonga Huts. Their proximity to water infrastructure and setting.
Recreation		
The longevity and diversity of types of recreational use, including skiing, camping, hiking, horseriding and mountain biking. Ski resorts and chalets that are associated with the start of snow sports in Australia, and tourism.	Recreational trails, including hiking trails, fire trails and four-wheel driving tracks. Huts associated with recreational use, including skiing huts and grazing/infrastructure huts that have been repurposed in	Wallace Hut, Cope Hut, Langford Gap Hut, Cope Saddle Hut, Westons Hut, Blairs Hut, Dibbins Hut, Pretty Valley Hut, Ryders Huts, Tawonga Huts and their settings. Cope Hut Camping Area. Diamantina Horse Yards.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
	association with recreational uses. Features that facilitate the longevity of recreational use, e.g. camping locations, skiing infrastructure, horse yards. The varied natural alpine settings for recreational activities, appreciated at close and mid-range views and in expansive panoramas.	Tawonga Huts horse camp. Existing Falls to Hotham walking tracks, and other existing tracks that are used by walkers.
Criterion B—Rarity (Refer to natural heritage values above)		
Criterion D—Principal characteristics of a class of place		
The North-East Kosciuszko Pastoral Landscape that demonstrates the use of mountain resources, as a relict landscape of past grazing leases, transhumance and pastoralism in a remote environment.	Kosciuszko National Park in NSW.	Not expressed in the project area.
Criterion E—Aesthetic characteristics		
The presence and expression of powerful, spectacular and distinctive landscapes valued by Australians. The strong aesthetic responses evoked by the views, natural environment and sounds of the place. The peaks, valleys and ridges that are examples of dramatic, awe-inspiring landscapes. The distinctive Australian landscape imagery of mountain landscapes, mountain huts and snow-covered eucalypts captured by numerous artists and photographers. The way recreational pursuits in the landscape are enhanced by aesthetic appreciation of their wild and natural quality.	The expansive panoramas and distinctive views and vistas of the project area, including long, medium and short-range views of mountain vistas, peaks and valleys, streams, rivers and lakes, snow-clad landscapes, eucalypts, high plain grasslands, wildflowers and meadows, and forests. The natural sounds of the environment. The expression of the views in different locations when moving through the project area, e.g. along trails, at lookouts and mountain summits, when approaching and arriving at a hut or camping area at the edge of woodland, grassland or a herbfield and experiencing them in the natural environment.	Wallace Hut, Cope Hut, Langford Gap Hut, Cope Saddle Hut, Westons Hut, Blairs Hut, Dibbins Hut, Pretty Valley Hut, Ryders Huts, Tawonga Huts and their settings. Views throughout the project area, including but not limited to those of Cope Hut and Westons Hut and settings, the Bogong High Plains, Mount Cope, Mount Feathertop, Mount McKay, Mount Jaithmathang, and Razorback Trailhead. The trail alignments with limited infrastructure and visual intrusion, e.g. through the use of minimal camping platforms and amenities buildings at Cope Hut Camping Area, the single hut without additional infrastructure at Westons Hut,

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
The way in which the mountain landscapes have inspired poets, painters, writers, musicians and filmmakers.	The expression of the remoteness, isolation and naturalness of the place. The distinctive sense of place, and the feelings of remoteness, wildness and being immersed in nature. The demonstration of these features in both broad views and more localised settings, with an absence of visual, aural or physical intrusions (e.g. inappropriate development, non-natural sounds, excessive crowds). The views of mountain huts isolated in their natural, remote mountain settings.	and the undeveloped setting at High Knob.
Criterion G—Social value		
The special association with the Australian community arising from the AANP National Heritage place's unique landscapes, the possibility of experiencing remoteness, and as the only opportunity for broad-scale snow recreation. Australian's recognition of the place as the 'High Country'. Mount Kosciuszko as an iconic feature for all Australians and for Australia's Polish community. The association between the pioneering history of the High Country and the construction of Australian identity. The mountain huts' physical expression of the cultural history of the place, including its use for grazing, mining and recreation. The association between huts associations and the mountain huts.	The ability to experience remoteness in the project area, facilitated by some infrastructure while still maintaining the isolated natural environment, minimal development, and the absence of visual, aural and physical intrusions. Skiing areas. The strong associations with the project area by the Australian community, mountain cattlemen, skiers, bushwalkers and huts associations. The ability to have a communal experience while still maintaining the unique wilderness experience (e.g. through dispersed camping). The use and visitation of the project area by huts association members, bushwalkers, and others. The activities that express and reinforce the social value of the project area, e.g. bushwalking, collective	The natural and cultural environment of the project area, which is the basis for the special associations people have with the place, including geomorphology, views, flora and fauna. Wallace Hut, Cope Hut, Langford Gap Hut, Cope Saddle Hut, Westons Hut, Blairs Hut, Dibbins Hut, Pretty Valley Hut, Ryders Huts, Tawonga Huts and their settings. The tradition of vernacular hut repair and the materials and methods used on these huts. The intangible connection between the Victorian High Country Huts Association and these huts. Falls Creek and Mount Hotham skiing areas. The isolation and remoteness of the FHAC trail alignment. The use of the FHAC trail alignment for recreation including walking, horseriding and camping.

Aspect of National Heritage significance	Details of attribute	Presentation in project area
	activities to maintain and repair huts, horseriding. The bushwalking trails. The historic huts, and the tradition and practice of vernacular repair and maintenance of the huts. The myths, legends, literature and media that tell the stories of the High Country. Mount Kosciuszko.	Cope Hut, Westons Hut and Dibbins Hut designated camping areas, with limited infrastructure.
Criterion H—Significant people		
The special associations with: • Baron Ferdinand von Mueller and his contribution to Australian botany; • Eugene von Guérard and his artistic representations of Australian landscapes; • Banjo Paterson and his works, which captured Australian imaginations and the way of life in the High Country; and • Elyne Mitchell and David Campbell and their nationally important literary works' connections with the place.	The overall place, landscape and variety of natural and cultural elements that were experienced by the significant people listed in the adjacent column, which inspired their significant works and associations. The connection with individual art pieces, for example *North-east view from the northern top of Mount Kosciusko* and 'The Man from Snowy River'.	The botanical survey route associated with von Mueller, 1854. The natural and cultural environment of the project area, which is the basis for the special associations with the life or works of von Mueller, von Guérard, Paterson, Mitchell and Campbell as it relates to the Australian Alps, including the geomorphology, views, flora and fauna.

3.5 Management plan guidance

The relevant planning document for the project area is the Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan (2016). This plan covers management of Alpine National Park; it is not a heritage or conservation management plan, but does have heritage policies.

Key goals and strategies related to heritage are listed below.

Table 3.7 Extracts of relevant goals and strategies from the Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan (2016).

Goal	Relevant strategies
Traditional Owners guide the protection of Aboriginal features, places and objects of cultural significance.	• Collaborate with and assist Traditional Owners to protect, enhance and interpret significant places such as at Tali Karng. • Work with Traditional Owners to prepare cultural values mapping to assist with management decisions and public education.
Heritage and connections are recognised and respected, and understanding of heritage values and places are enhanced.	• Ensure park information acknowledges Aboriginal culture and, where appropriate, Aboriginal names of features. • Use community knowledge and skills and facilitate volunteer involvement in managing historic places and promoting appropriate use, such as the historic cattle yards at Tawonga Huts, Campbell's Yards and Rocky Plain and identify the location and significance of horse trails, including investigating their possible reinstatement. • Liaise with groups with long associations with the parks such as mountain grazing families and walking and skiing clubs to enhance the recognition and interpretation of their cultural heritage. • Investigate ways of facilitating access for Traditional Owners to undertake cultural practices and traditional use of natural resources. • Improve understanding of historic areas and cultural landscapes and support use for cultural research and education • Enhance cultural heritage visitor and tourism experiences with park visitor information and interpretive facilities. • Involve the community with interpreting the parks' heritage and record the community's knowledge of heritage values and connection.
The cultural significance of historic areas and places is conserved and appropriate compatible use permitted.	• Manage huts to ensure that values are protected by: – appropriate maintenance works and access – recognising and promoting their value as a distinct heritage tourism experience – encourage visitors to adhere to the Code of Hut Use, including not using of huts for accommodation and ensuring visitors are aware of the need to be self-reliant – continuing to keep huts open for temporary shelter, except where safety or risk to values deems otherwise – ensuring visitors who do use huts for shelter, refuge and other purposes do so in a safe and appropriate manner. • Work with the Victorian High Country Huts Association, Mountain Cattlemen families and other groups with an interest in huts to maintain and record the cultural significance, condition and the risks facing huts.

Goal	Relevant strategies
Maintain Mount Feathertop as a premier hiking and winter destination, retaining its remote and natural character. Investigate linking Mount Feathertop into the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing while protecting the area's character.	• Provide facilities to support self-reliant walkers and cross-country skiers. • Permit dispersed camping • Maintain The Razorback, Bungalow Spur, Diamantina Spur and North West Spur walking tracks as key walker and skier only access tracks to Mount Feathertop. • Investigate feasibility of including Mount Feathertop as part the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing. Ensure development of new facilities for the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing are sympathetic to the area's landscape.
[For Red Robin Visitor Experience Area] Provide the opportunity for walking, basic camping, cycling and horse riding, with some camping with horses.	• Maintain Dibbins Hut, Blairs Hut and Westons Hut; discourage use for shelter except in emergencies. • Permit dispersed camping except within 100m of Dibbins Hut camping platforms. • Protect the heritage values of the Red Robin Mine and Battery while allowing for compatible uses, including potential use of the area as part of Falls to Hotham Crossing (section 8.3). • Maintain designated camping areas at Dibbins Hut, Blairs Hut and Westons Hut. • Investigate feasibility of linking to Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing; including alternative link between Diamantina Horse Yards and Diamantina Spur Track. • Allow for horse riding access to Westons Hut and to Dibbins Hut only via Cobungra Gap (refer to map 4G).
[For Bogong High Plains Visitor Experience Area] Provide the opportunity (non-winter) for scenic driving and a range of easily accessible recreation opportunities, such as short to medium walks to areas with significant historic values. Provide the opportunity for cross-country winter recreation.	• Support the development of the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing, including new types of accommodation and linkages between Falls Creek Alpine Resort and the park. • Maintain start of Heathy Spur Track as a key visitor gateway and trailhead. Maintain Pretty Valley Pondage area as a secondary trailhead. • Protect and interpret the area's significant historic features, with priority to Wallaces Hut – Cope Hut and Tawonga Huts and Yards precincts. • Do not permit use of Wallaces Hut for shelter or accommodation. Discourage use of other huts for shelter except in emergencies. • Permit dispersed camping except within 200m of Bogong High Plains Road, 200m of Wallaces Hut or within 100m of designated Falls–Hotham Alpine Crossing camping areas. • Maintain Tawonga Huts, Pretty Valley and Langford West as designated camping areas, including facilities to allow camping with horses.

3.6 Endnotes

[1] 'Inclusion of a Place in the National Heritage List' Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. S237, 7 November 2008.

[2] Parks Victoria, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Consultation Summary Report, January 2023, p 8.

[3] Latitude Heritage, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan #18890, prepared for Parks Victoria, May 2025, p 38.

[4] Latitude Heritage, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) #18890, prepared for Parks Victoria, May 2025, p 38.

[5] Australian Heritage Commission 2002, *Australian Heritage Charter for the conservation of places with natural heritage significance*, second edition, Environment Australia, Canberra.

[6] For example, Payten, RF 1949, The festival of the bogong moth: Letter to A S Le Soeuf, 15 June 1949, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

[7] These sites are mapped in Latitude Heritage, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan #18890, prepared for Parks Victoria, May 2025.

[8] Cahir, F., Clark, I. and Clarke, P. (2018), Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge in South-eastern Australia: perspectives of colonists, CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne, p 78.

[9] Cahir, F., Clark, I. and Clarke, P. (2018), Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge in South-eastern Australia: perspectives of colonists, CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne, p 78.

[10] Patterson, R and Jones, J 2020, *On Taungurung Land: Sharing History and Culture,* Aboriginal History Monographs, ANU Press, p 106.

[11] Latitude Heritage, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan #18890, prepared for Parks Victoria, p 65.

[12] Latitude Heritage, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan #18890, prepared for Parks Victoria, p 24.

4 The proposed action

4.1 Project background

The FHAC project has been developed to convert the existing alpine crossing into a hiking experience that enriches the current walking opportunities in the High Country and offers a drawcard for the region.[1] The goal of the project is to establish an iconic walk popular with users, with a trail experience commensurate with the area's natural assets.[2] The project benefits include:

- Environment: By consolidating and upgrading the walking track it will reduce the environmental impacts by keeping walkers on the track and off sensitive vegetation areas. The new longer route will avoid new facilities from being established within a designated 'remote and natural area' of the national park, which the current route passes through. Tent platforms will also minimise the impact of visitors.
- Community: The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing will add to the tourism offer in Victoria's High Country and be a key drawcard for domestic and international visitors. It will bring tangible economic benefits to the alpine resorts and towns in all seasons, as well as other local businesses and tour operators. It will also engage a new generation of advocates who appreciate and value the unique alpine environment.
- Visitors: the track will allow well-managed access to some of the most spectacular views in the alps.[3]

4.2 Description of action

The proposed action is the creation of a 52km hike between Falls Creek and Mount Hotham, incorporating Mount Feathertop.

The scope of the action includes:

- track upgrades and new track infrastructure along priority sections of the existing track;
- new and upgraded signage;
- establishment of three overnight node hiker camps at Cope Hut (Overnight Node 1 or OV1), Westons Hut (Overnight Node 2 or OV2) and High Knob (Overnight Node 3 or OV3);
- conservation works on historic huts along the FHAC; and
- laydown and construction phase works.

The following sections describe the works in more detail.

4.3 The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing walk

The project involves creating a new 52km hike called the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing. The new route will follow existing trails in Alpine National Park, including some sections of the existing 37km Falls to Hotham route. It will be a three-night/four-day walk with three overnight nodes along the route.

The proposed FHAC starts at the Lakeside Carpark on the eastern side of the Rocky Valley Dam at Falls Creek and ends at Mount Loch carpark at Mount Hotham Alpine Resort. The proposed route for each of the three days is described below:

- **Day 1**—Walkers follow an informal unnamed track below the northern wall of Rocky Valley Dam, before joining Heathy Spur Track for 5.2km. The FHAC trail then continues south along the Big River Fire Trail and Australian Alps Walking Track, and joins the Langford East Aqueduct Road, skirting the edge of the Bogong High Plains Plateau. At Langford Gap Hut, the trail continues southwest along Langford West Aqueduct Road, passing Wallaces Track (which leads to Wallace Hut) and joining with Cope Hut Track to the Cope Hut overnight node.
- **Day 2**—The FHAC continues west along Cope Hut Track, crossing Cope Creek, and at the intersection with Bogong High Plains Road continues southwest along the Australian Alps Walking Track for 9.3km, passing Cope Saddle Hut. At the well-known marker Pole 333, the trail continues west on Westons Spur Track, crossing a basalt cap and escarpment to the Westons Hut overnight node.
- **Day 3**—From Westons Hut, the FHAC trail descends into the Kiewa West Valley along Westons Spur Track until it reaches the West Kiewa Logging Road. The trail then continues north along the West Kiewa Logging Road, passing Blairs Hut at the bottom of the valley to Diamantina Horse Yards on the eastern side of the Kiewa River West Branch. The trail then continues west, ascending the Diamantina Spur Track. The track then traverses the rounded ridgeline at the top of the spur before reaching the High Knob overnight node.
- **Day 4**—From High Knob, the Diamantina Spur Track reaches the Razorback. Walkers can choose to continue north to ascend Razorback Track to Mount Feathertop (5.2km return). Walkers can also continue south along Razorback Track towards Mount Hotham (10.6km), joining the Diamantina Link Track at the intersection with the Great Alpine Road to reach the Mount Loch carpark at the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort.

The track has been divided into sections for planning purposes (Figure 4.1). Each trail section is numbered and named in Table 4.1 below, with the existing track type indicated. Note: sections 8, 9, 10, 17 and 18 are omitted because they have been excluded from the final route.

Existing pathway widths vary across the route; informal tracks and walking tracks are typically 400mm wide, and vehicle tracks are usually 3m wide.

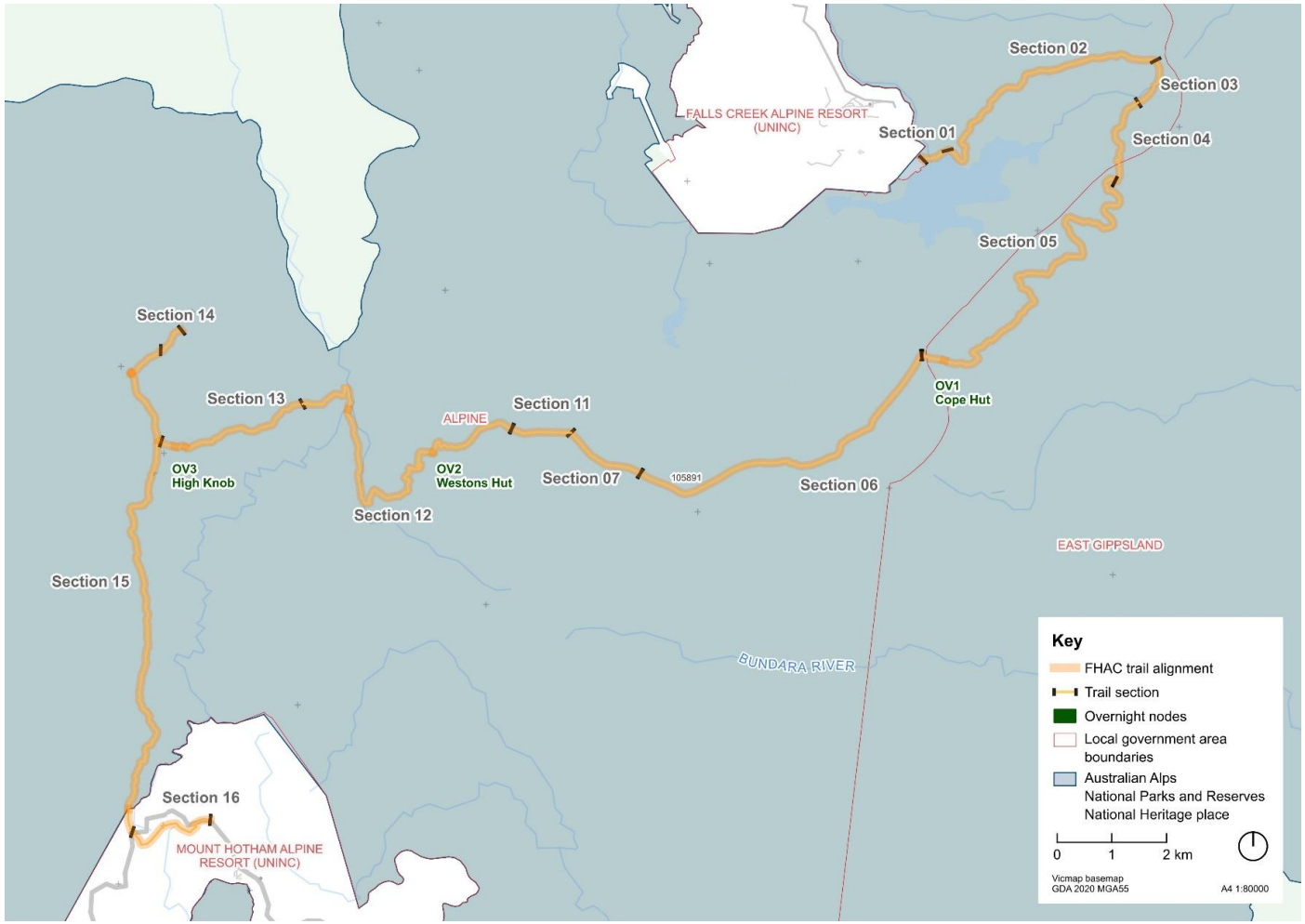


Figure 4.1 FHAC trail alignment with sections of route marked. (Source: Vicmap with GML overlay)

Table 4.1 Sections of FHAC and existing type of track.

Trail section	Track name	Type
1	Unnamed track below Rocky Valley Dam wall	Informal track
2	Heathy Spur Track	Walking track
3	Big River Fire Trail	Four-wheel driving track
4	Australian Alps Walking Track	Walking track
5	Langford East Aqueduct Road	Four-wheel driving track
	Langford West Aqueduct Road	Four-wheel driving track
	Cope Hut Track	Walking track
6	Australian Alps Walking Track	Walking track
7	Australian Alps Walking Track	Walking track
11	Westons Spur Track	Walking track
12	Westons Spur Track	Walking track
	West Kiewa Logging Road	Four-wheel driving track
	Diamantina Spur Walking Track	Walking track
13	Diamantina Spur Walking Track	Walking track
14	Razorback North Walking Track to Mount Feathertop	Walking track
15	Razorback Track, Razorback North	Walking track
16	Diamantina Link Track	Walking track

4.4 Description of proposed works

4.4.1 Track upgrades and new track infrastructure

The FHAC will follow existing tracks. Some portions of existing track will be upgraded as part of the project. The track upgrades are aimed at improving track condition, resilience and visitor access. There will be approximately 12km of trail works in total dispersed along the 52km trail.

The types of upgrade works are listed in Table 4.2 below, along with the total length of trail segments where these works will take place.

Note that works will happen within these segments, but not necessarily along 100% of these segments; trail works will occur on specific parts of the track. Locations of track upgrades are shown on the maps at Appendix A—Track upgrades works.

Table 4.2 Types of track upgrade works.

Type of work	Approximate total length of trail segments where work will occur[4]
Installation of boardwalks	924m
Drainage	8690m
Gravel resurfacing	532m
Rubber matting	84m
Stepping stones	173m
Stone pitching	596m
Stone steps	780m
Track re-formation (benching)	26m

Further information on the approach to the upgrade works is provided below.

Installation of boardwalks

Elevated boardwalks will be built over sensitive or challenging terrain. The boardwalks will be made of steel mesh 600mm or 900mm wide (depending on site requirements), constructed in 3m sections and elevated 350mm above the ground. The mesh will be laid on top of the frame, and footings will be screw piles. Where there is shallow bedrock, concrete footings may be used. The boardwalks will change directions every 9m to break up the visual effect.

In some places where steps are needed on the boardwalk sections, mesh steps (900mm wide) will be installed.

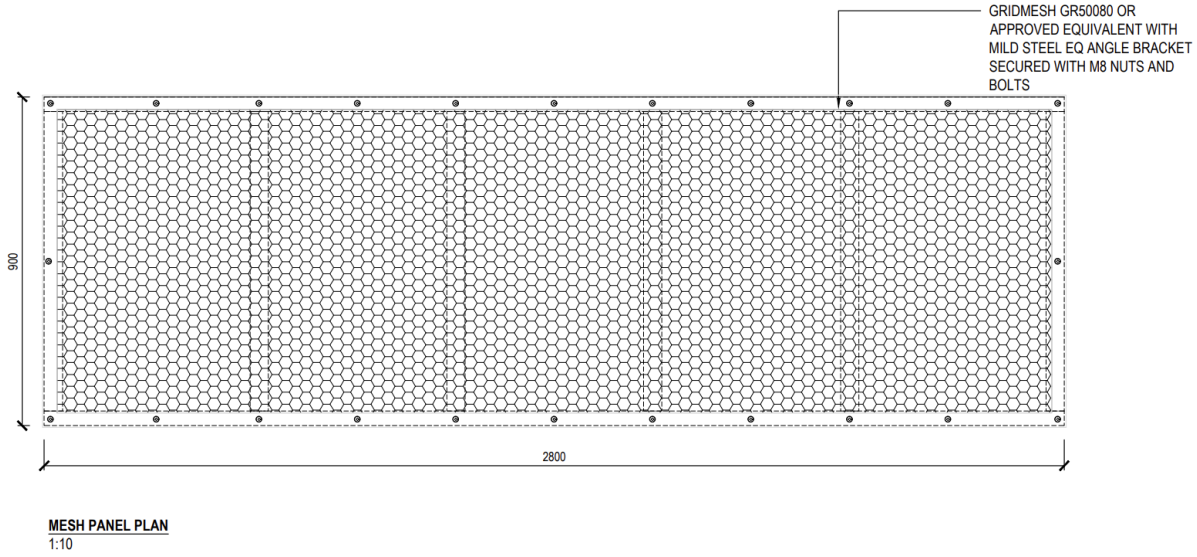


Figure 4.2 Design drawing of boardwalk mesh panels. (Source: Hansen for Parks Victoria, Kit of Parts: Track and Trail Elevated Walkway – Option 1, Drawing No. L.81.2005 T2, 19/06/2025)

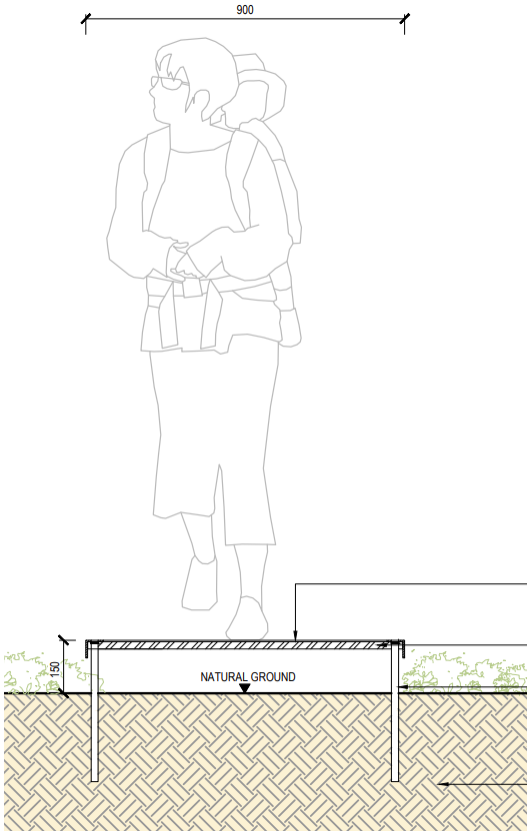


Figure 4.3 Drawing of typical mesh step. (Source: Hansen, Drawing No L.81.2000 T2, 19/06/25)

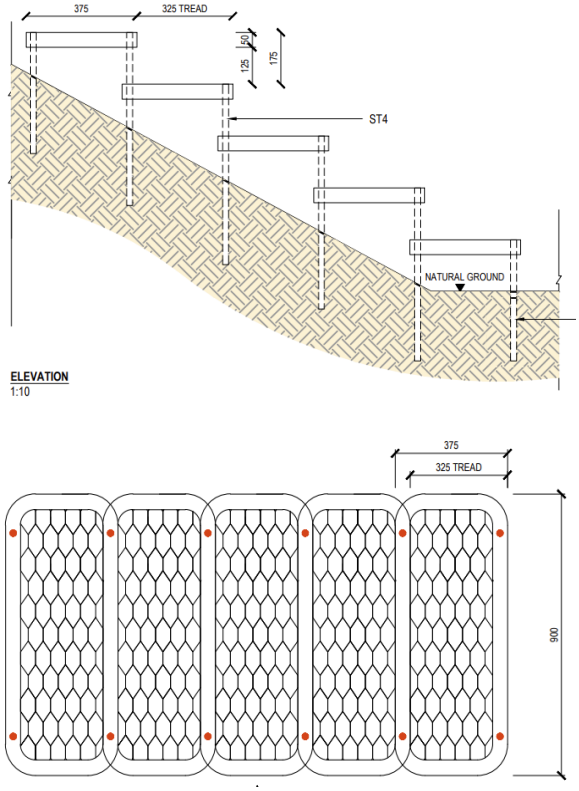


Figure 4.4 Drawing of mesh steps. (Source: Hansen, L.81.2001 T2, 19/06/2025)

Stone steps and stepping stones

Stepping stones will be installed to create a stable pathway across boggy terrain. The stones will be sourced from outside Alpine National Park.

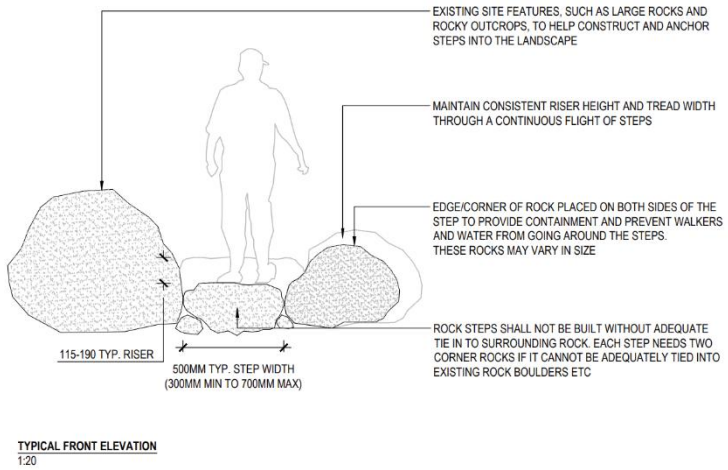


Figure 4.5 Typical design for stepping stones. (Source: Hansen for Parks Victoria, Kit of Parts: Track and Trail Elevated Walkway – Option 1, Drawing No. L.81.2002 T3, 05/08/2025)

Stone steps will be installed in selected locations where needed to navigate uneven terrain. Steps are only required if the slope is more than 1:2.[5] Steps will be installed via hand excavation, grading and use of mortar or other binding agents to maintain stability. Widths of stepping stone sections will vary, but will typically be 500mm (300mm minimum to 700mm maximum).

In two locations close to Diamantina Spur, steps will be carved into the existing stone surface.

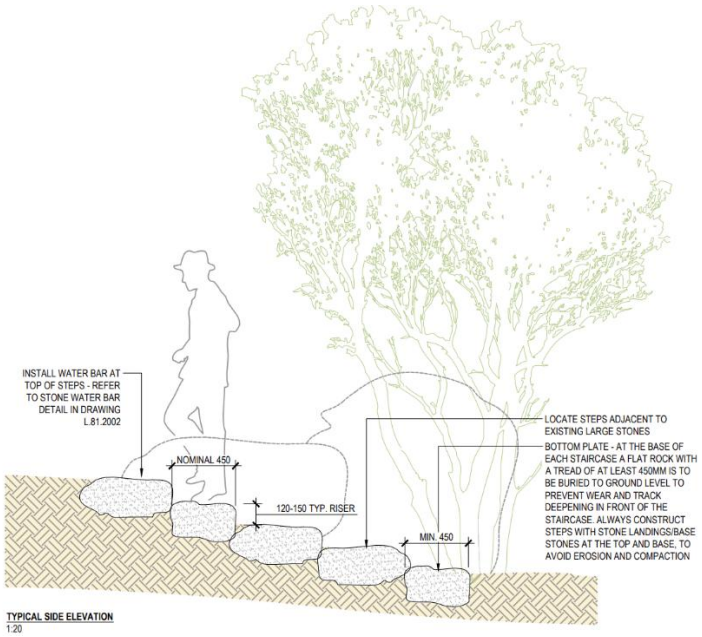


Figure 4.6 Typical design for stone steps. (Source: Hansen for Parks Victoria, Kit of Parts: Track and Trail Elevated Walkway – Option 1, Drawing No. L.81.2002 T3, 05/08/2025)

Track re-formation and resurfacing

There will be works to consolidate and define the trail across parts of the route.

Track benching will occur to re-form tracks and create a stable trail surface on sloped terrain. Where required, the works will cut into the slope to form a flat, bench-like surface. The downhill edge of the trail will be built up (usually with removed fill) to create stability. For these sections, the final pathway width will typically be 500mm (300mm minimum to 700mm maximum) within a variable (1500mm maximum) corridor of disturbance for cut and fill and surface treatments.

Resurfacing will occur in some locations. This will involve removing any debris or vegetation from the trail and adding lightly compacted gravel to the trail surface to a nominal depth of 100mm to smooth out the surface and improve drainage.

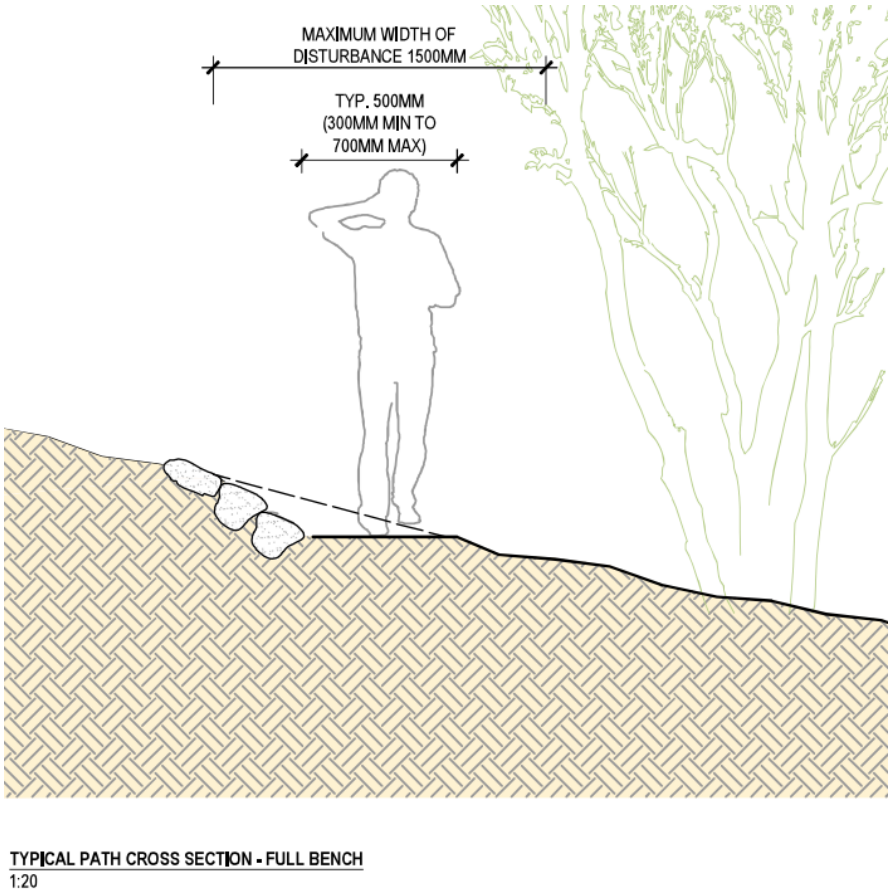


Figure 4.7 Typical design for trail benching variations—full benches. (Source: Hansen for Parks Victoria, Kit of Parts: Surface material and treatments, Drawing No. L.81.5000 T3, 13/08/2025)

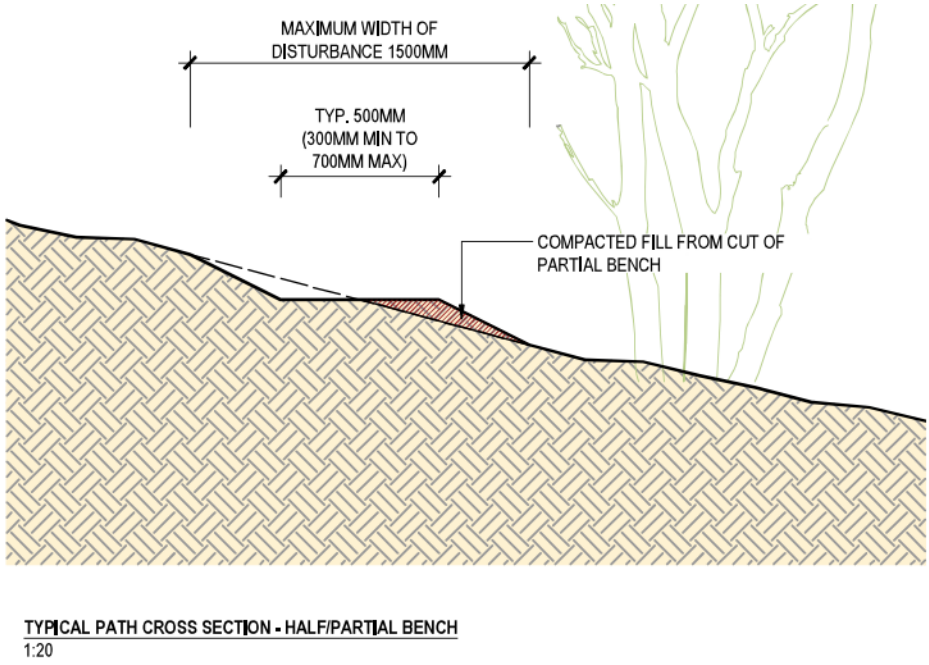


Figure 4.8 Typical design for trail benching variations—half/partial benches. (Source: Hansen for Parks Victoria, Kit of Parts: Surface material and treatments, Drawing No. L.81.5000 T3, 13/08/2025)

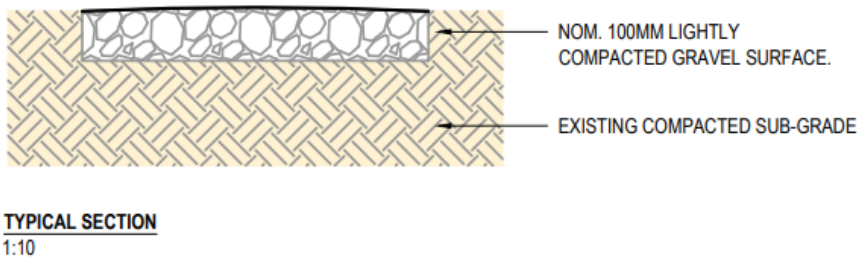


Figure 4.9 Typical design for gravel resurfacing. (Source: Hansen for Parks Victoria, Kit of Parts: Surface material and treatments, Drawing No. L.81.5000 T3, 13/08/2025)

Drainage works

Water bars, made of either timber or stone depending on the terrain, will be installed throughout the route to manage water flows, at varying distances ranging from every 50m (most commonly) to every 5–7m in some areas. Water bars manage erosion control and are installed at an angle across the trail to redirect surface water. A small trench is dug in the trail, the water bar installed, and then backfilled for stability. New water bars will be installed and existing water bars that have been dislodged will be reinstalled.

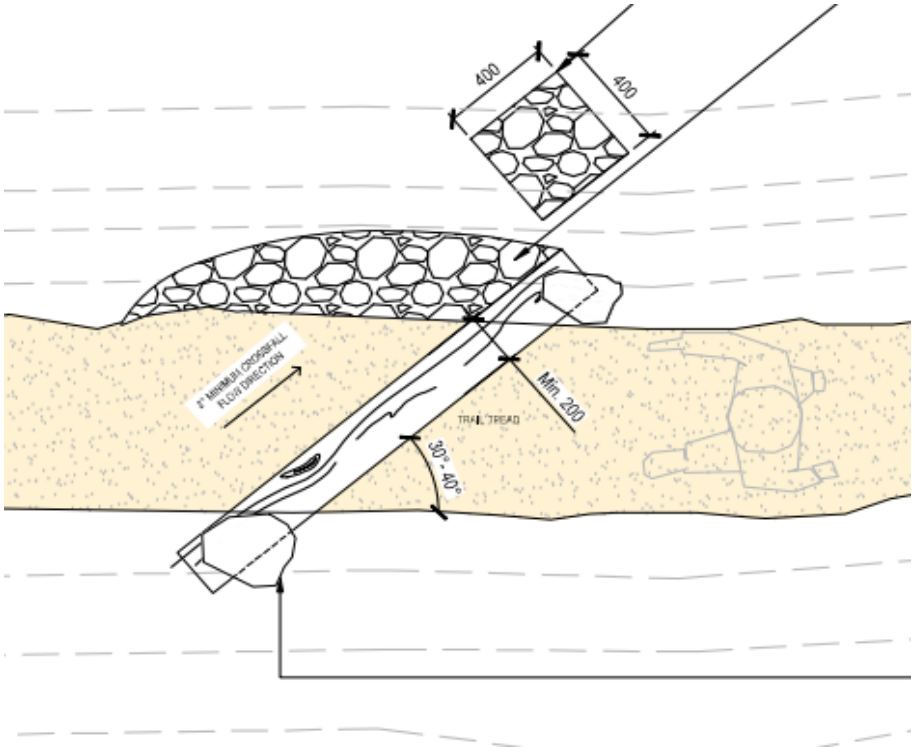


Figure 4.10 Example of timber log-style water bar. (Source: Hansen for Parks Victoria, Kit of Parts: Timber Water Bar, Drawing No. L.81.2004 T3, 13/08/2025)

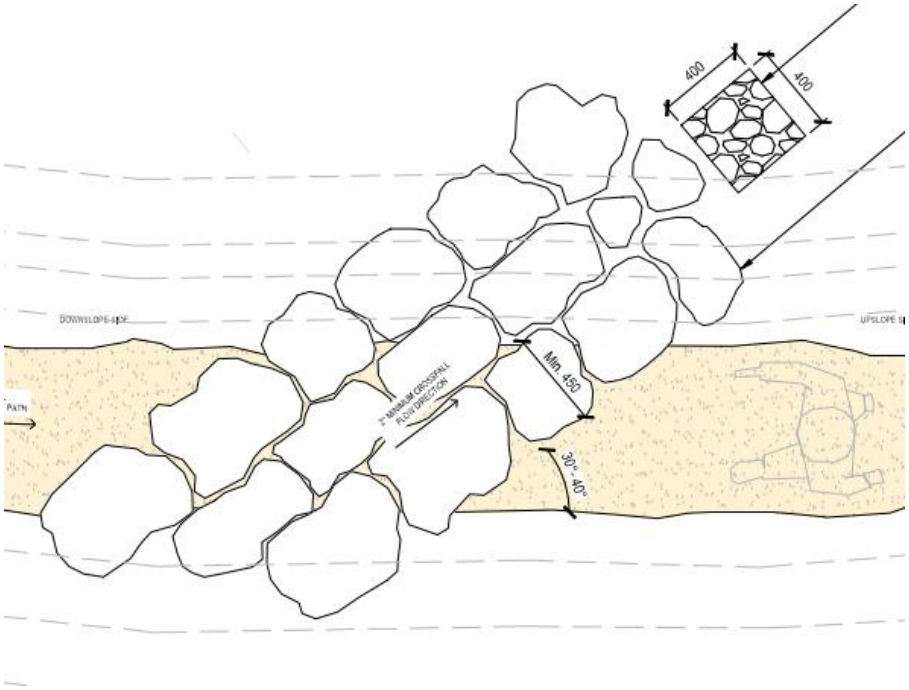


Figure 4.11 Example of stone water bar. (Source: Hansen for Parks Victoria, Kit of Parts: Stone Water Bar, Drawing No. L.81.2003 T3, 13/08/2025)

4.4.2 New signage

New signage will be built along the trail, with information, wayfinding and interpretation material.

The signs will be a mix of types and designed in line with the Parks Victoria Signage Manual (2023). New signs will be primarily located near the overnight nodes.

In total 53 signs are proposed: 44 of these would be a replacement for existing signs, with 9 new signs. In total 29 of the signs would be single post totem or fingerboard signs, whereas 24 would be information or straddle boards. The depth of ground disturbance to install footings would range from 50cm to 70cm.

Examples of the types of signs to be used, from the Parks Victoria Signage Manual, are below. Dimensions including heights for signage would be determined in accordance with the Parks Victoria signage guidelines, having regard to the context for each sign, sightlines, and optimal viewing heights and distances. For some signs, visitor safety, risk management and visual impact will also be considerations.

Figure 4.12 Large information board (not to scale). (Source: Parks Victoria Signage Manual)

Not to Scale

Figure 4.13 Interpretation and information board (not to scale). (Source: Parks Victoria Signage Manual)

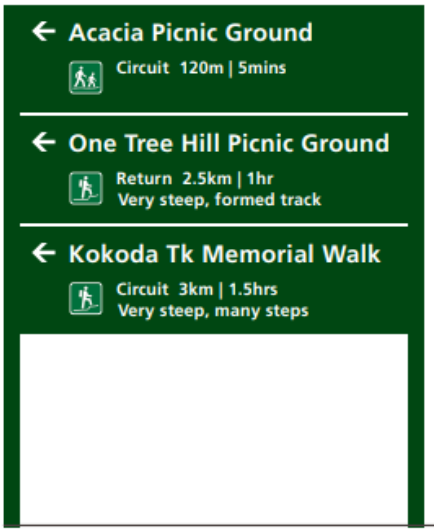


Figure 4.14 Trailhead straddle (not to scale). (Source: Parks Victoria Signage Manual)

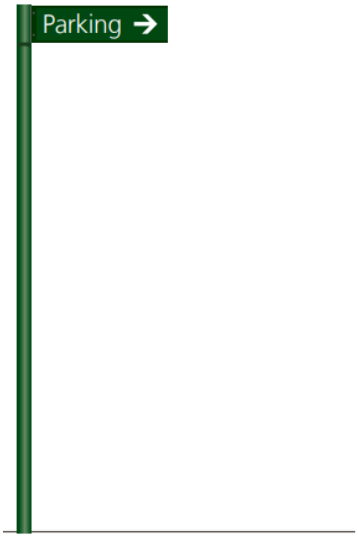


Figure 4.15 Fingerboard (not to scale). (Source: Parks Victoria Signage Manual)

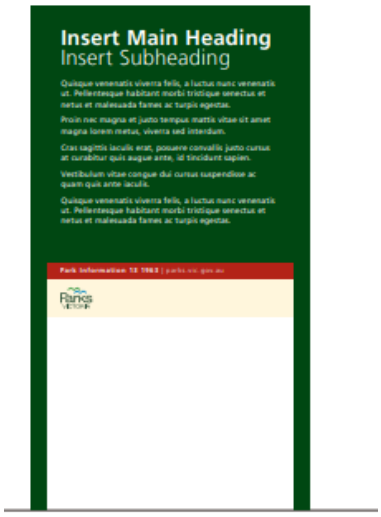


Figure 4.16 Multi-purpose board (not to scale). (Source: Parks Victoria Signage Manual)

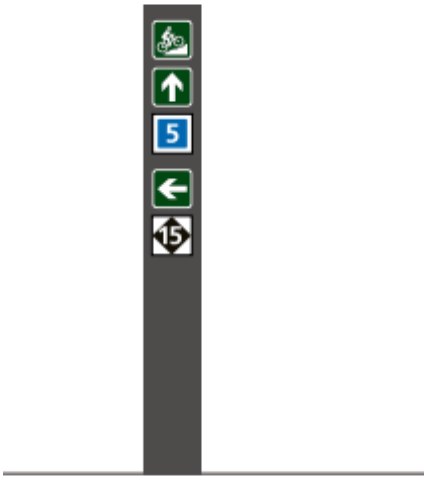


Figure 4.17 Directional totem (not to scale). (Source: Parks Victoria Signage Manual)

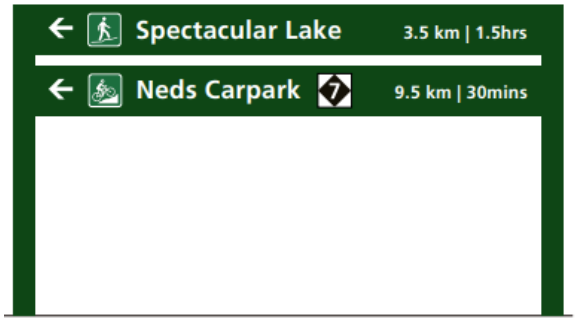


Figure 4.18 Directional straddle (not to scale). (Source: Parks Victoria Signage Manual)

4.4.3 Overnight node hiker camps

There will be three overnight nodes for the FHAC—two new nodes at Westons Hut and High Knob, and updates to an existing camping area at Cope Hut. The site plans for the nodes are at Figure 4.24 to Figure 4.26. Dispersed camping will not be allowed within 100m of the tent platforms at each node, as per the policies of the Greater Alpine National Park Management Plan (2016). Designated camping areas will remain at Dibbins Hut, Blairs Hut, Tawonga Huts, and Pretty Valley, and dispersed camping will continue to be allowed elsewhere in accordance with the Greater Alpine National Park Management Plan.

Overnight Node 1: Cope Hut

At Overnight Node 1, the proposed action will include:

- three new tent platforms (Type A—3500mm x 3800mm, no steps), with 10 footings to 500mm;
- replacement of decking on the five existing tent platforms, from fibreglass reinforced plastic decking to timber decking;
- a new communal area, which would be a circle of boulders around a small, gravelled area (approximate diameter 4000mm);
- two small circular seating platforms (approximate diameter 1500mm) with four footings, 500mm depth, on gravel pads, adjacent to the communal area; and
- establishment of a gravel pathway network between the tent platforms and the communal area (approximately 700mm width), laid with granitic gravel.

The communal area would be located at the end of the approach track into Overnight Node 1, northwest of Cope Hut. The tent platforms will be raised above the ground on posts, and finished with hardwood decking. Some platforms will have several small steps leading to the platform itself.

Gravel pathways are proposed to limit track braiding and physical impacts of visitors at the campsite, by encouraging foot traffic to stay to defined paths and therefore limiting progressive, distributed impacts to vegetation over time.

Figure 4.19 Example of an existing tent platform in Alpine National Park. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 4.20 Render of proposed tent platforms. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Overnight Node 2: Westons Hut

At Overnight Node 2, the proposed action will include:

- eight new tent platforms (3 x Type A—3500mm x 3800mm, no steps; 5 x Type B—3500mm x 3800mm and access steps 1000mm wide), with 10 footings to 500mm depth;
- a new two-cubicle amenities block with six waste pods, a water tank and solar panels on the roof;
- a new communal area, with the same design and dimensions as at Overnight Node 1;
- two small circular seating platforms with four footings to 500mm depth, on gravel pads, adjacent to a new communal area; and
- establishment of gravel pathways between the tent platforms, the communal area and the amenities block (approximately 700–1000mm), laid with granitic gravel.

The communal area would be close to Westons Hut, northeast of the verandah. The amenities block at this node will be about 25m east of Westons Hut, within the same clearing. It will be built on a platform of approximately 6m x 4.5m (not including the water tank), with waste pods at the lower platform level, and stairs up to a deck level, with two toilets and a storage area. A tank will be immediately adjacent. From the base of the platform to the roof peak, the amenities block will be approximately 6m high.[6] The roof and exterior would be finished in corrugated iron, and solar panels would be installed on the roof and the rear elevation of the building. The block will be oriented roughly east–west, with the deck facing roughly south and a skillion roof. This location and orientation facilitates safe helicopter access to remove the waste pods.

The location of the camping platforms has been selected based on the site slope, and because the area has less environmental sensitivity than nearby areas of native vegetation. The camping platform locations have a greater amount of introduced species as ground vegetation.

The gravel pathways and communal area are proposed to limit track braiding and physical impacts of visitors at the campsite, by encouraging foot traffic to stay to defined paths.

Figure 4.21 Render of proposed amenities building. (Source: Parks Victoria)

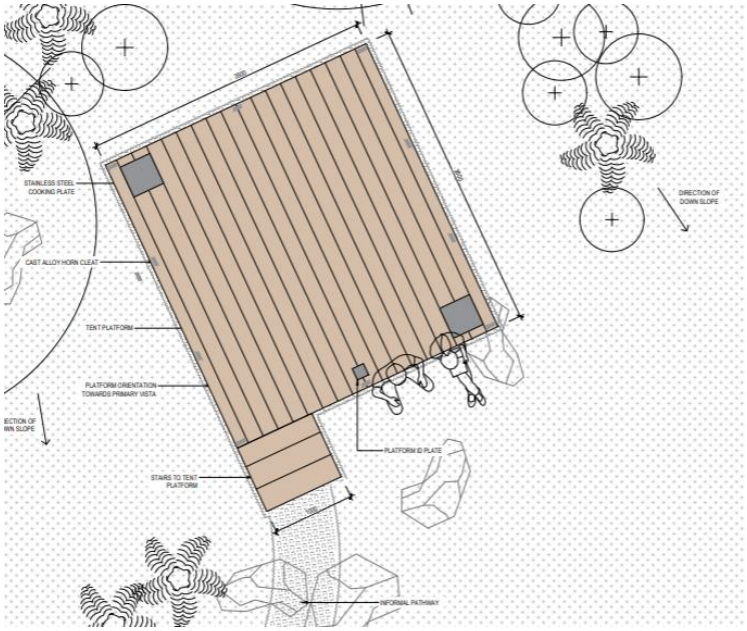


Figure 4.22 Drawing of example tent platform (Type B—3500mm x 3800mm, with steps). (Source: Hansen, L.81.3001.1 T1, 21/01/2025)

Overnight Node 3: High Knob

At Overnight Node 3, the proposed action will include:

- eight new tent platforms (5 x Type A—3500mm x 3800mm, no steps; 3 x Type B—3500mm x 3800mm and steps), with 10 footings to 500mm depth and 1700mm-wide access stairs;
- a new communal shelter building with water tanks, which will be powered by solar panels on the amenities block;
- open gravelled area in front of the shelter, with two small, circular seating platforms with four footings, to 500mm depth, on gravel pads, and gravel paths at the node between infrastructure, laid with granitic gravel and
- a new amenities block with a water tank and waste pods.

The amenities block at Overnight Node 3 will be the same design as at Overnight Node 2, except that it will have a larger storage platform that extends to the eastern side of the building, creating a platform of approximately 6.5m x 6m, and overall height of approximately 6m (see Figure 4.21).

The communal shelter building and amenities block will be in the southwestern portion of the High Knob Overnight Node. The proposed shelter will be a rectangular building with a skillion roof, approximately 10m x 5m (not including water tanks) and 6m high from the set-out level to roof peak. Two water tanks on separate platforms will be next to the shelter on the southeastern corner. The shelter will have a protected external deck under an overhang on the northern side, and the interior will include storage, an airlock space and a communal main room for campers to gather. The shelter is not intended for sleeping and has no bunks, but would have internal timber seating.

The exterior of the timber shelter would be clad in hardwood timber on the main exterior elevations, with the recessed exterior wall alongside the northern deck clad in flat sheet metal. The roof would be corrugated iron, windows would be timber-framed with aluminium covers, and the deck would be expanded mild steel mesh.[7]

Figure 4.23 Render of proposed communal shelter. (Source: Parks Victoria)

Figure 4.24 Overnight Node 1: Cope Hut site plan. (Source: Hansen Partnership for Parks Victoria)

Figure 4.25 Overnight Node 2: Westons Hut site plan. (Source: Hansen Partnership for Parks Victoria)

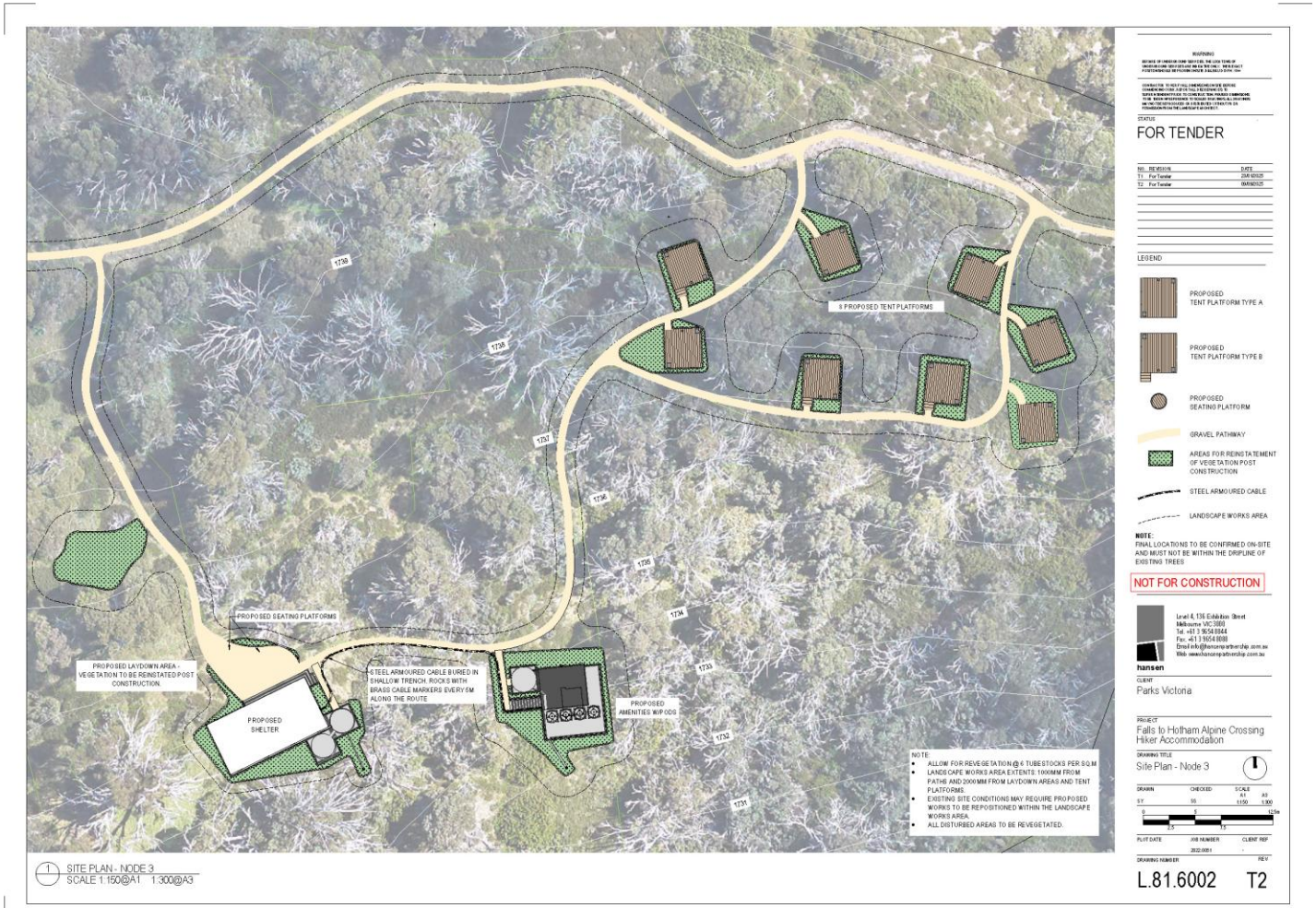


Figure 4.26 Overnight Node 3: High Knob site plan. (Source: Hansen Partnership for Parks Victoria)

4.4.4 Trail works and node construction phase works

Construction phase works for the trail works and nodes will include establishing laydown areas for materials, tools and equipment for undertaking works.

For trail works, dedicated laydown areas have not been defined, but materials will be laid down along the existing trail corridor where works are happening, and within a buffer zone on either side of the trail. The total disturbance area will vary based on the type of works:

- boardwalks—2.9m;
- stepping stones and stone steps—2.5m;
- stone pitching—1.5m;
- track re-formation and benched steps—2.5m;
- gravel resurfacing—1.5m;
- rubber matting—0.5m; and
- drainage works—3m.

At the three overnight nodes, laydown areas have been defined (refer to Figure 4.23 to Figure 4.25 for locations). Areas of vegetation may be cleared for the material laydown areas and for construction. Laydown areas specified for revegetation after construction will be revegetated after the works are complete.

At Overnight Nodes 2 and 3 (Westons Hut and High Knob), as well as in trail areas with difficult road access, materials will be delivered via helicopter to the laydown areas. Materials will be delivered by vehicle where there is existing road access.

The Overnight Node visitor infrastructure has been designed to avoid tree removal. Some Overnight Node and trail works may encroach on tree protection zones. Tree protection zones will be established around trees, to be determined by a qualified arborist and in accordance with AS 4970-2009 'Protection of Trees on Development Sites', and any tree protection management plan. Any tree pruning required would be carried out in accordance with AS 4373-2007 'Pruning of amenity trees'.[8] Micro-siting of works to avoid encroachment on trees and advice from an arborist in accordance with the tree protection zone protocols will be used to minimise the need for tree pruning.

Works will be completed by hand or handheld power tools with no heavy machinery.

4.4.5 Historic huts conservation works

The following work items have been scoped by the Victorian High Country Huts Association and Parks Victoria.

Wallace Hut

- General maintenance activities.

Cope Hut

- Replacement of the door handle.
- Inspection to identify and block draughts.

Langford Gap Hut

Works to Langford Gap Hut will involve substantial restoration, while retaining the original form and function of the current hut.

- Replacement of rotting or damaged weatherboards.
- Removal of internal asbestos containing lining and replacement with non-hazardous alternative.
- Repair or replacement of roof.

Cope Saddle Hut

- Reinstatement of the fireplace.

Westons Hut

- Replacement of cladding on northern elevation.

Blairs Hut

- Replacement of corrugated iron sheeting on roof.
- Replacement of several deteriorating structural logs and new wooden chinking gaps to secure.

Dibbins Hut

- Replacement of logs that make up walls.
- Replacement of roof sheeting and installation of new insulation.
- New window fixings.
- Replacement of damaged elements of any interior framing.

Pretty Valley Hut

- Replacement of weatherboards.
- Repair to building framing.
- Removal of hazardous asbestos.
- Restoration or replacement of window.

Ryders Huts (four huts)

- Door and floor replacement in two huts.
- Installation of new cowl on fireplace flue in main hut.

Tawonga Huts (four huts)

- Replacement of floorboards, door, interior lining and windows in three of four huts.
- Removal of asbestos in one hut.

Conservation works methodologies

It is anticipated that the works will be undertaken by the Victorian High Country Huts Association and contractors as required for specialist work (eg: asbestos removal). The works will be undertaken in accordance with the Hut Maintenance Manual for Greater Alpine National Park (Parks Victoria, 2022). Specific methodologies for each hut will be determined by the Victorian High Country Huts Association closer to the commencement of works. In general:[9]

- Works locations will be accessed by vehicle on existing access roads except for Westons Hut and Dibbins Hut, where materials will be transported by helicopter.
- Laydown areas for materials and tools will be within or beneath hut footprints. If this is not possible, materials will be stored on nearby roads or access tracks.
- Both traditional construction methods and modern tools will be used, taking into account safety, precision and productivity.
- Materials used for restoration will prioritise traditional or sympathetic materials (e.g. timber, corrugated metal sheeting), but may not be replaced like-for-like in all circumstances (e.g. due to supply limitations, transport issues or safety). In these cases, sympathetic modern replacement materials will be selected.

4.4.6 Operation of the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing

The works will facilitate the operation of the FHAC trail, and are anticipated to increase the capacity of the walk and visitor numbers.

Ongoing operational activities will involve regular inspection and maintenance of the trail infrastructure. Vegetation management along the trail will be consistent with other tracks within Alpine National Park; vegetation will be managed to the width of the track, only to limit encroachment.

The establishment of new visitor facilities at the three overnight nodes will necessitate operational and maintenance activities at the three sites. The two new toilet facilities at Westons Hut and High Knob are storage pod systems that will require periodic emptying and replacement. Pods will be airlifted from site once they reach 75% capacity and will be taken off site for emptying. Currently, there are two helicopter flights to Alpine National Park per year, to service existing toilets. It is anticipated that an additional one to two flights per year may be required to service the toilets at Westons Hut and High Knob, increasing the total number of helicopter flights to up to four per year.

Operational and maintenance requirements for other visitor facilities will be minimal, and will consist of regular inspection and maintenance to be undertaken as part of existing schedules. Vegetation will be managed to limit encroachment only, in accordance with Parks Victoria's standard maintenance operations.

4.5 Options analysis and design development

4.5.1 Design process

Planning for a revised FHAC has been under way since at least 2015.[10] Initial investigation included testing five alternative route alignments and community consultation. A preferred route alignment was selected for further analysis. This route has been further refined following an ongoing design process that considered issues including heritage, environmental, engineering and practical constraints and opportunities, and community feedback.

Parks Victoria has considered a variety of options as part of developing the project scope. These options are summarised below. More information on the design process can be found in the various design documentation stages associated with this project.

Table 4.3 Design alternatives and options considered.

Design and operations options
4 Overnight Nodes In the 2018 FHAC Master Plan, four overnight nodes were proposed. The nodes were located near Cope Hut, Tawonga Huts, Blairs Hut and Mount Feathertop. Following community consultation in 2022/2023, the number of overnight nodes was reduced to three, and the size of the node footprints and extent of works was reduced. Reducing the number of overnight nodes would have a reduction in the associated extent of heritage impacts.
West Kiewa River valley Aboriginal cultural sensitivity Consultation with Traditional Owners as part of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan identified the West Kiewa River valley and Tawonga Huts as sensitive areas and places of important intangible heritage for Aboriginal communities. Consequently, this area was removed from the project scope.
Location of overnight nodes As well as removing the original Overnight Node 2 in the 2018 FHAC Master Plan near Tawonga Huts, an overnight node that was located near Blairs Hut in the 2018 FHAC Master Plan was relocated to Westons Hut (now Overnight Node 2).[11] Both Tawonga Huts and Blairs Hut are included in HO2 on the Alpine Shire Heritage Overlay, and relocating the nodes avoids impacts to these huts. Westons Hut also has heritage value as part of the National Heritage values of the AANP National Heritage place. Heritage impacts from the relocated Node 2 are assessed in this report.

Design and operations options

Construction of hikers huts and more communal shelters

The FHAC Master Plan (2018) proposed operated huts at each overnight node, with beds for two to three people. A communal hut was also proposed at each node with a separate kitchen, for hut operators to provide catered hiking packages.[12] The operated huts were proposed to be leased to a private operator offering serviced hiking packages.

The operated huts have now been removed from the scope of works, and a communal shelter is only proposed at Overnight Node 3: High Knob.

Reducing the number of new structures would also reduce heritage impacts; remaining impacts are assessed in this report.

Operating model

The FHAC Master Plan (2018) proposed a model for the walk that included commercial and/or licensed tour operators running hikes and experiences on the FHAC.

Following community feedback, Parks Victoria is now investigating an operating model that allows walkers to book walks themselves, without using a licensed tour operator.[13]

Construction of new trails

Some new sections of trail were proposed to be constructed, to connect existing trails and make new routes for hikers. These would have required a variety of new works including trail clearing and infrastructure. The 2018 FHAC Master Plan also proposed trail works in areas classified as Remote and Natural Areas under the *National Parks Act 1975* (Vic).

New trails have been removed from the project scope and the proposed action will now only involve upgrades to existing trails.

New gravel pathways are, however, proposed within the three overnight nodes. The impacts of these pathways are assessed in this report.

Other design refinements

The following design refinements have been incorporated into the project scope:

- The size of communal shelters was reduced.
- The number of tent platforms has been reduced, from the 12 at each node proposed in the FHAC Master Plan, to 8 at each node (including existing platforms at Cope Hut camping areas).
- The location of tent platforms has been refined based on factors including the environmental sensitivity of the area, proximity to other tents and infrastructure, views and weather.
- Different locations for the amenities building at Westons Hut were considered. Two options were investigated—the proposed location, and an alternative position northeast of Westons Hut closer to Westons Spur track. These two options were chosen based on the constraint of safe helicopter access/exit and flight paths to extract waste pods. The alternative location was not selected as it would have placed the amenities building in a more prominent visual location to walkers arriving at the hut.

4.6 Endnotes

[1] Parks Victoria, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, March 2018, p 9.

[2] GHD, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Business Case, prepared for Parks Victoria, May 2022, p 12.

[3] Parks Victoria, 'Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Project', accessed 17 August 2025 <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects/eastern-victoria/falls-to-hotham-alpine-crossing-project>.

[4] Based on GIS data provided by Parks Victoria

[5] Hansen, L.81.2001 T1, 21/01/2025.

[6] Hansen, A-61-2002 T2, 24/01/25.

[7] Hansen, Tender Drawings, Issue T2.

[8] Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd, July 2025, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Hiker Accommodation Trail Works Technical Specification, Rev T4, p 4.

[9] Parks Victoria, Scope of works: Conservation and repairs to huts along the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing, Alpine National Park (Bogong High Plains to Mount Hotham), August 2025.

[10] Parks Victoria, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, March 2018, p 9.

[11] Extent Heritage, 'Memorandum to K2LD, 20 August 2024'.

[12] Parks Victoria, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan, March 2018, p 55.

[13] Parks Victoria, 'Community Update: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Winter 2023', accessed 17 August 2025 <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/-/media/project/pv/main/parks/images/corporate-site/projects/falls-to-hotham/fhac-community-update_winter23.pdf?rev=fcf887e3f8a24479b68f6dfb345ffd28>.

5 Heritage impact assessment

5.1 Approach to impact assessment

This section of the report assesses the impacts of the proposed action and the work items as outlined in Section 4. When developing the proposed action, Parks Victoria has made design changes that have avoided and minimised impacts, summarised at Section 5.4. This impact assessment now considers the severity of the residual impacts of the action as proposed.

The impact assessment identifies whether the proposed action is likely to have a significant impact on the National Heritage values. The Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 provide guidance on matters that are likely to have a significant impact on heritage values. These include if there is a real chance or possibility the action will cause one or more heritage values to be lost, degraded or damaged, or notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished.

When deciding whether an action must be referred under the EPBC Act, only adverse impacts can be considered. Potential beneficial heritage impacts, or social and economic benefits, may be considered at the final assessment and approval phase. This impact assessment therefore focuses on identifying the degree of adverse impact to assist Parks Victoria in complying with its self-referral obligations under the EPBC Act.

EPBC Act heritage management guidance

DCCEEW has published several documents to assist heritage place managers in making decisions about National Heritage places. These include *Working Together: Managing National Heritage Places,* published by the then-Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in 2008.

Particularly relevant to this project is the advice on referrals and approvals, change, and adaptive re-use.

As stated in Managing National Heritage Places, a self-assessment of significant impacts should be objective and based on sufficient information. The assessment process should:

- Consult the official heritage values to ensure the proposal is consistent with the values;
- Consult a management plan, if there is one, to ensure the proposal is consistent with the management recommendations and/or conservation policies;
- Consult the National Heritage management principles to be consistent with them;

- Consider the action in the broadest context, including its related activities and infrastructure;
- Look at all possible alternatives to the action or proposal;
- Look at any possible subsequent effects the action may have on other matters of national environmental significance or in the future;
- Select an action that does not, or is not likely to, significantly impact on heritage values;
- Undertake measures which mitigate the impact on National Heritage values;
- Document the decision about taking the action and demonstrating how the action is not likely to have an adverse impact on heritage values; and
- Refer actions that may have a significant impact.[1]

Types of impacts

The method for assessing the impact in this assessment follows a graded scale that has been adopted from the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 and 1.2 for the EPBC Act. The following terms assist in distinguishing between different relative levels of potential heritage impacts:

- **Severe/significant** impacts generally have two or more of the following characteristics:

  (a) permanent/irreversible;
  (b) medium–large scale; and
  (c) moderate–high intensity.

- **Moderate** impacts generally have two or more of the following characteristics:

  (a) medium–long term;
  (b) small–medium scale; and
  (c) moderate intensity.

- **Minor** impacts generally have two or more of the following characteristics:

  (a) short-term/reversible;
  (b) small-scale/localised; and
  (c) low intensity.

The Significant Impact Guidelines also provide guidance on the thresholds of significance for impacts on heritage values under the EPBC Act.

A 'significant impact' is considered to be 'important, notable, or of consequence, taking into consideration the context and intensity of the work'.[2] The level of impact depends on the sensitivity, heritage constraints and tolerance for change of the location in question, and on the intensity, duration and scale of the proposed works.

The scale of an action and its impacts requires consideration when predicting the degree of impacts; generally, a larger-scale action with widespread impacts is more likely to have a significant impact on the heritage values than a smaller-scale action with localised impacts. Considering the scale in conjunction with the intensity and duration/frequency of the impacts is important. Intensity refers to the strength and concentration of potential impacts.

The severity or degree of impact alone does not necessarily indicate a significant impact on the overall heritage values of a place. The potential impacts of the action must be considered in the context of the environment or the place in which the action will take place.

5.2 Assessment of impact

5.2.1 Natural heritage values impact assessment

Screening of potential encroachment on natural heritage values by the planned works area (track alignments and OV footprints plus construction and laydown curtilages) was enabled by the site environmental survey work undertaken by Abzeco and consolidated by Parks Victoria. The combined GIS layers from these surveys allowed mapping of potential encroachments on the natural heritage attributes.

Encroachments are the primary focus in this HIA because natural heritage is based upon its existence value and physical encroachment on natural heritage attributes are the main potential threat to existence in this tightly environmentally managed project (where indirect impacts are minimised).

Where the potential for encroachment of works on natural heritage attributes was identified, the likelihood and significance of that encroachment were assessed via consideration of the extent and nature of the works. This followed the EPBC Act Significant Impact Guidelines for determining whether a proposed action is likely to have a significant impact on a heritage place. The assessment method included a graded scale for impacts on significance in terms of duration, scale and intensity.

Encroachment of proposed action on natural heritage values

Given the established natural heritage values for the project area, the degree to which the proposed works encroach upon these National Heritage values and their attributes was examined.

On-site data was taken from the consolidated threatened ecological communities and threatened flora and fauna lists in the final FHAC Environmental Assessment (Abzeco 2025) and GIS layers provided by Parks Victoria.

The detailed survey results enabled the identification of where track alignment and overnight node areas coincided with the identified natural heritage attributes. The results of this analysis are summarised in the illustrated analysis below.

Encroachment of FHAC works on identified Natural Heritage values/attributes

Feature: Periglacial features.

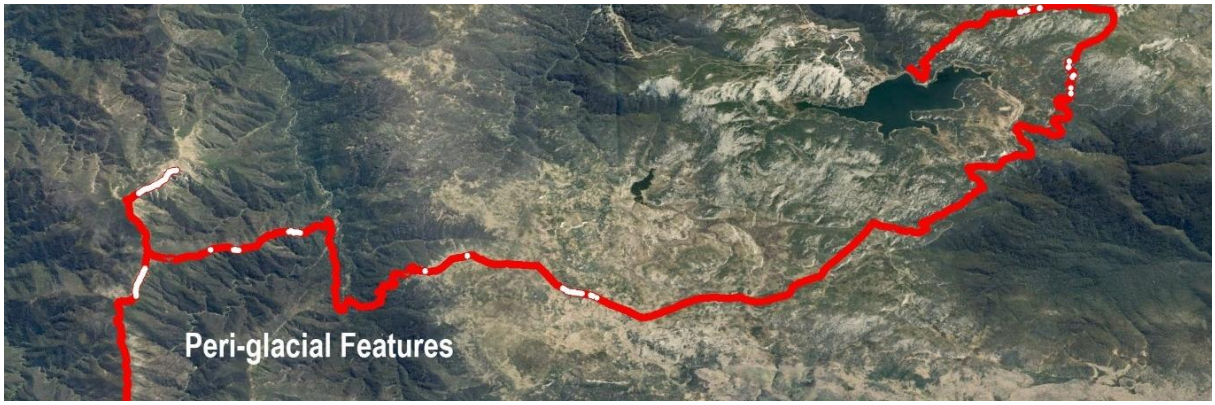


Figure 5.1 FHAC trail alignment (red) showing intersections with identified periglacial features (white).

Commentary: Numerous encroachments on blockstreams along track sections 2 and 4. Numerous scarps and benches on track section 7 (high plains). Scree slopes and cliffs are extensive along sections 12, 13 and 15. Solifluction is restricted to the western high plains section (section 7).

Feature: Flora species richness, especially in daisy genera.

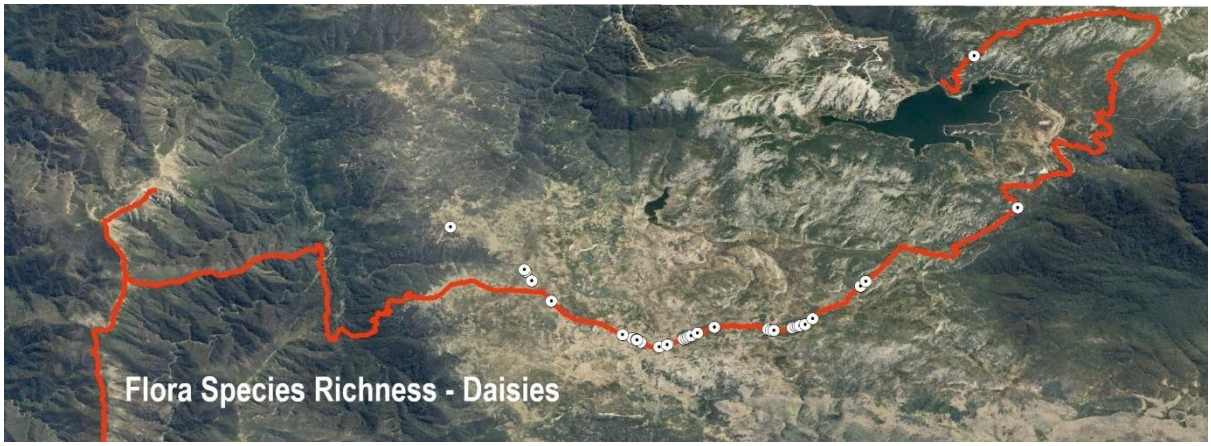


Figure 5.2 FHAC trail alignment (red) showing intersections with identified flora species richness (white).

Commentary: Five different daisy genera were recorded along the track alignment in site survey. These are predominantly along the high plains sections (6 and 7).

Feature: Montane and alpine environments and unique habitats.

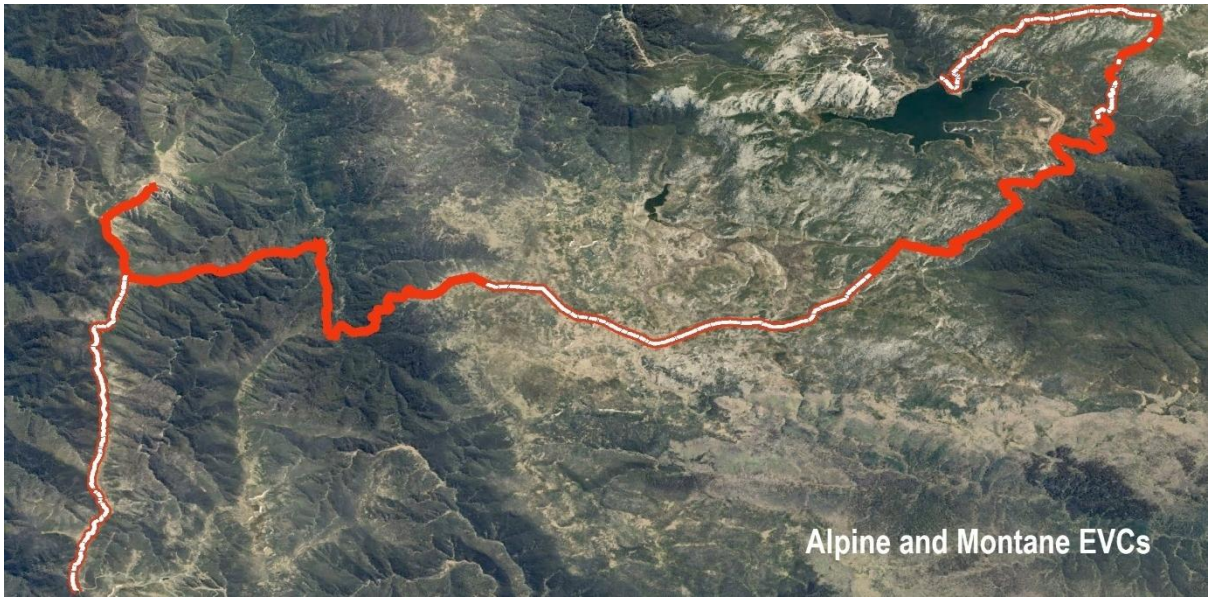


Figure 5.3 FHAC trail alignment (red) showing intersections with montane and alpine environments and unique habitats (white).

Commentary: Eleven alpine, sub-alpine and montane EVCs occur along the track alignment and OV nodes. They are characteristic of the landscapes of track sections 2, 6, 7 and 15. Areas assessed as 'Cleared/severely disturbed' in the site survey are omitted in the above figure.

Feature: The NHL-cited fauna: the Mountain Pygmy-possum, Guthega Skink and Alpine She-oak Skink.

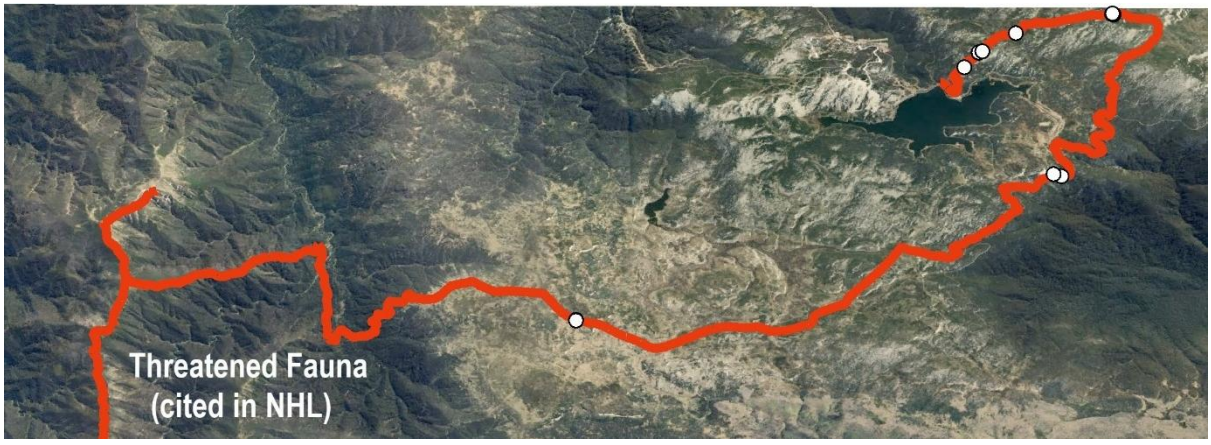


Figure 5.4 FHAC trail alignment (red) showing intersections with NHL-identified fauna (white).

Commentary: The Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*) has previously been recorded in the vicinity of the project area (Victorian Biodiversity Atlas), and potential habitat was identified in survey along section 5. Guthega Skinks *(Liopholis guthega)* are recorded in survey along the track alignment, predominantly on track sections 2 and 4.

The Alpine She-oak Skink (*Cyclodomorphus praealtus*) has been recorded nearby, on the tracks to Tawonga Huts.

Feature: Species of threatened stonefly.

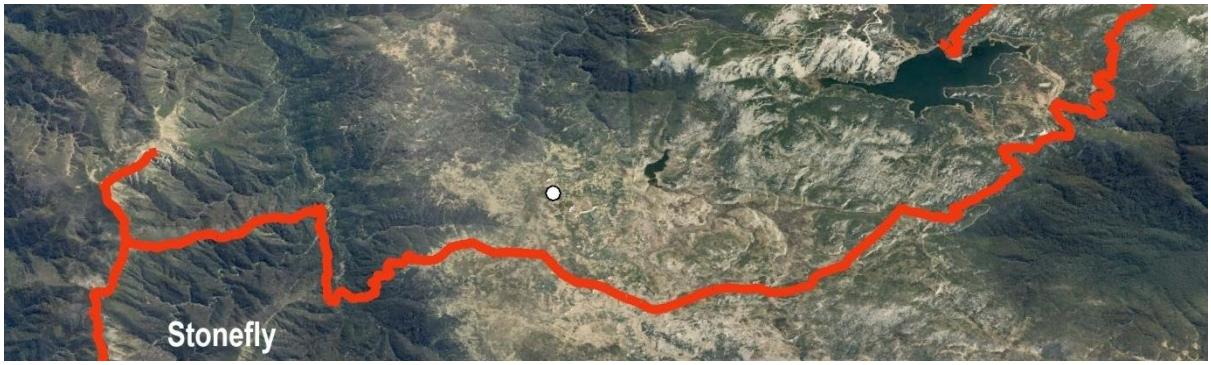


Figure 5.5 FHAC trail alignment (red) showing recorded location of threatened stonefly (white).

Commentary: One species (Alpine Stonefly [*Thaumatoperla alpina*]) recorded near Tawonga Huts, but no sightings on preferred FHAC track alignment, nor overnight nodes.

Feature: Snow Gum stands that grade into a range of different eucalypt communities descending the slope.

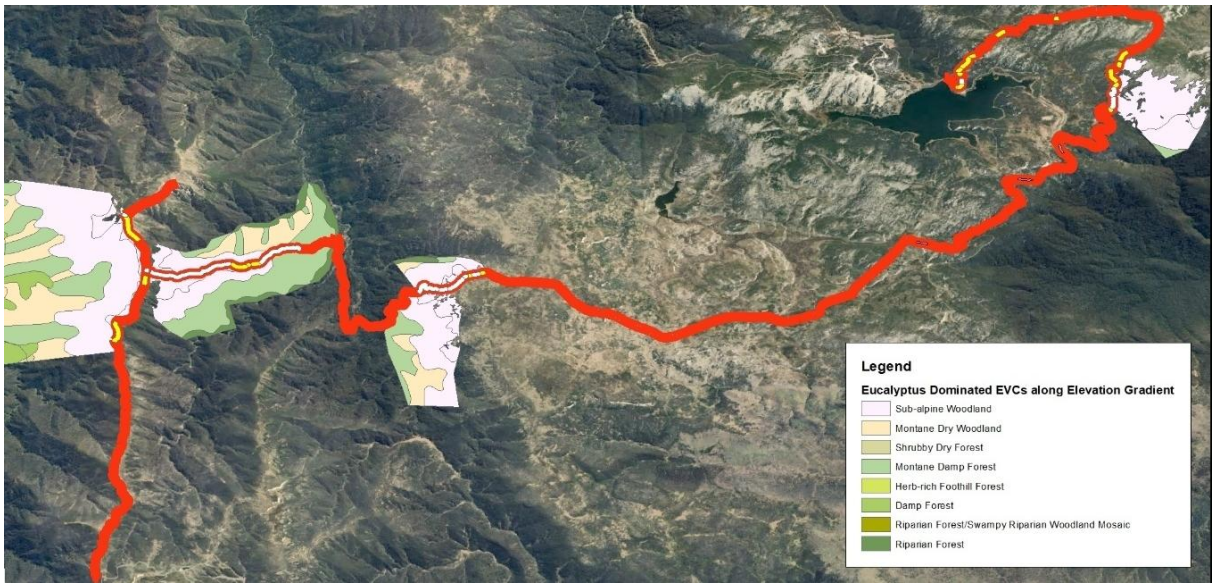


Figure 5.6 FHAC trail alignment (red) with intersections with EVCs.

Commentary: A long stretch of Diamantina Track (track section 13) and the Spur Track east of Westons Hut (track section 11) have good quality Sub-alpine Woodland (*E. pauciflora*), which are contiguous with downslope gradients of different Eucalyptus communities. Disturbed Sub-alpine Woodlands occur along northern Razorback Track (section 15), also contiguous with downslope gradients of different Eucalyptus communities.

Feature: EPBC listed community component (Alpine Valley Peatland EVC and mosaic EVCs with peatland).

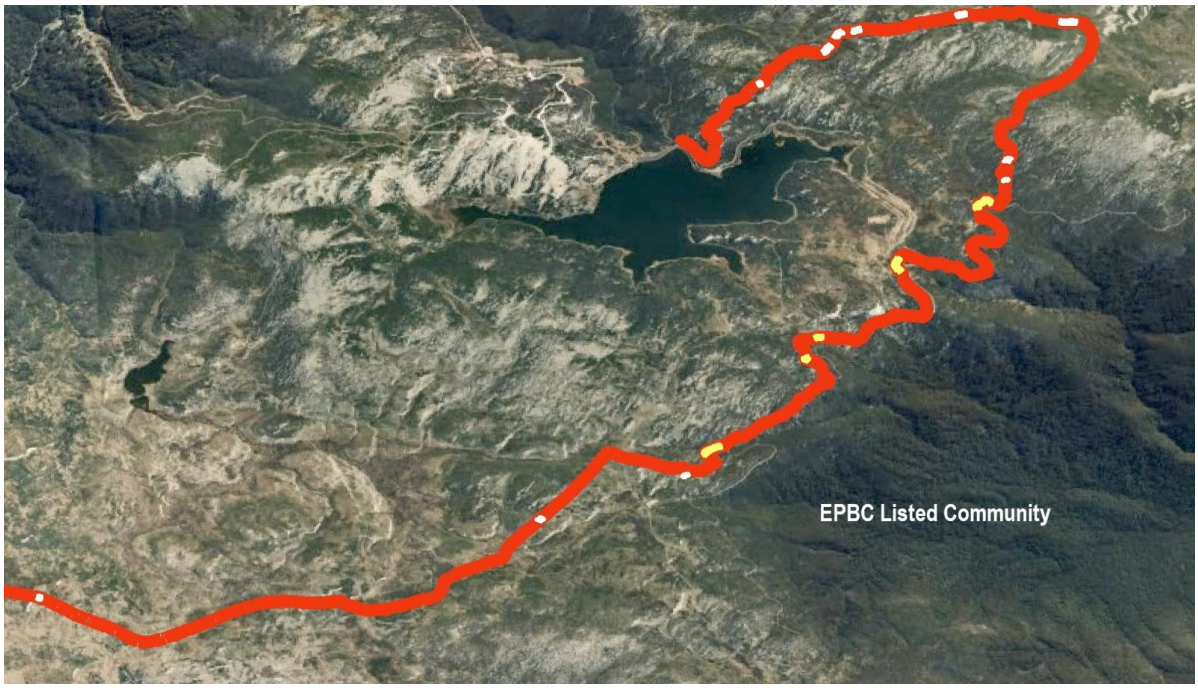


Figure 5.7 FHAC trail alignment (red) showing intersections between good-condition areas of the indicated community (white) and disturbed-condition areas (yellow).

Commentary: Good-condition areas of these EVCs occur within mosaic communities along Heathy Spur Track between Langford Gap Hut and Lake Side (in white in the figure—sections 2, 3 and 4). A small pure stand of Alpine Valley Peatland occurs on the track near Mount Jim, and another at the Cope Hut OV site.

Other disturbed peatland mosaics along the alignment are in the Langford Aqueduct sector (in yellow above).

Feature: EVCs listed as rare in the Victorian Alps Bioregion.

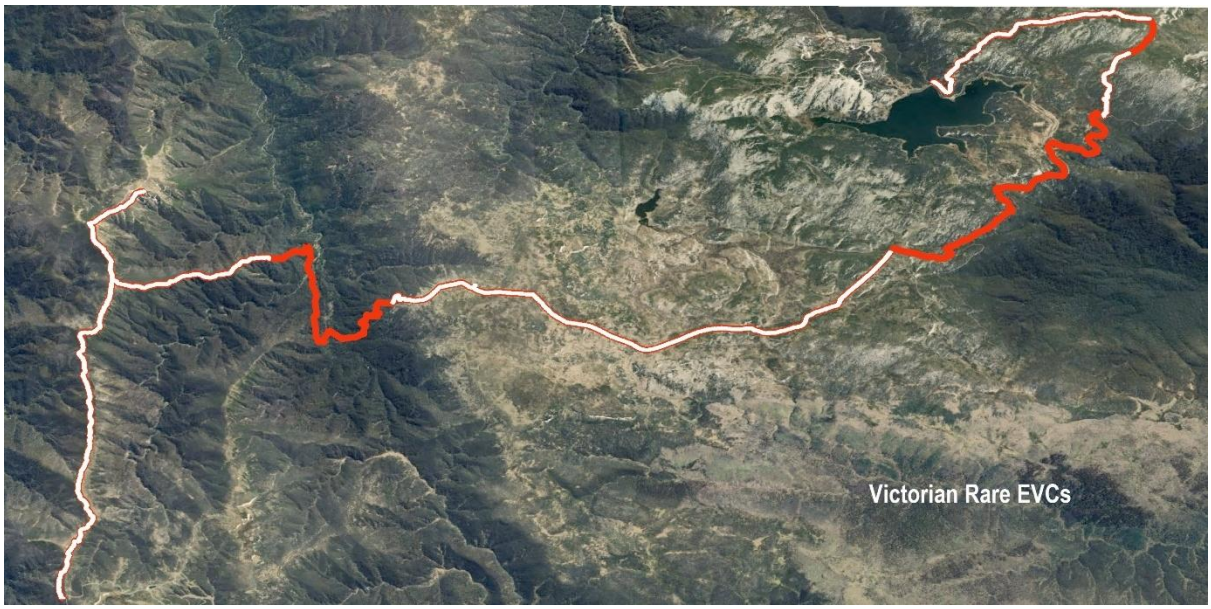
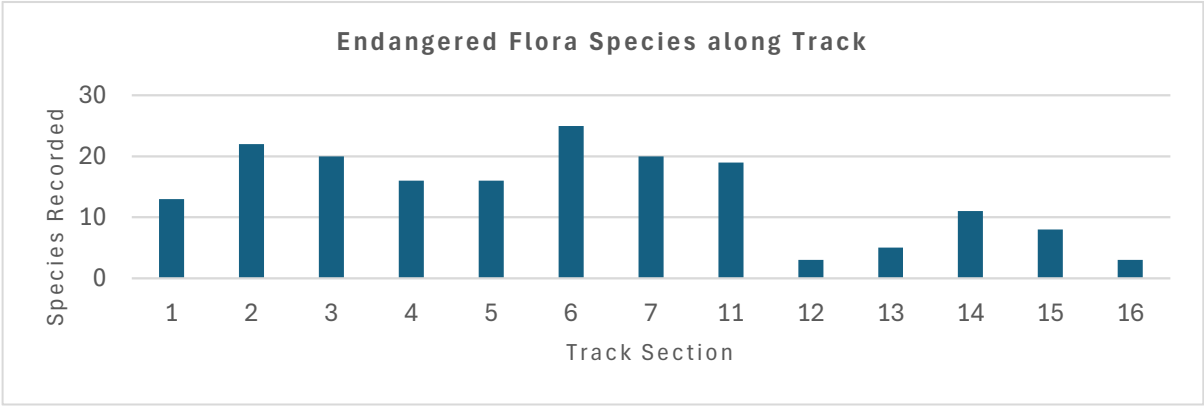


Figure 5.8 FHAC trail alignment (red) showing intersection with EVCs listed as rare or threatened in the Victorian Alps Bioregion (white).

Commentary: These EVCs cover most of the track alignment, with relatively undisturbed sections along Razorback, Diamantina Spur, Heathy Spur and between Westons Hut and Copes Hut on the high plains.

Feature: Rare or endangered Victorian flora.



Sixty threatened flora species in Victoria have been recorded along the track alignment, with one listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act.

The latest available cumulative survey records for threatened flora are not geolocated. They are identified as occurring along numbered track segments. The highest number of threatened fauna species occur in the eastern and central sections of the track (track sections 2, 3, 6, 7 and 11).

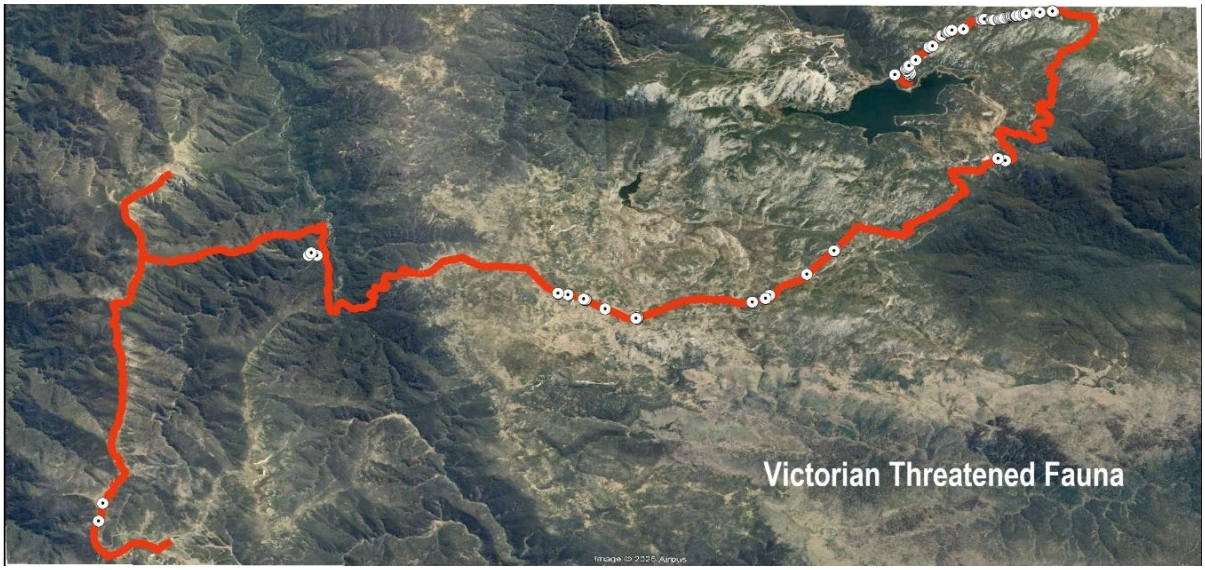


Figure 5.9 FHAC trail alignment (red) showing intersection with threatened fauna (white).

Commentary: Nine threatened fauna species were recorded on or adjacent to the FHAC alignment by survey, including seven EPBC-listed threatened species. Track section 2 has numerous recordings along its whole length; the remainder are mainly in the high plains sections (6 and 7).

A list of the potential encroachments of track and OV works on identified natural heritage attributes is provided in the following points:

1. Potential encroachments on **periglacial features** include multiple blockstreams along track sections 2 and 4, numerous scarps and benches from ice and water sculpting on track section 7 (high plains), and scree slopes and cliffs indicating freeze shattering are extensive along sections 12, 13 and 15. Solifluction phenomena are restricted to the western high plains track section (section 7).
2. **Floristic species richness** cited in the NHL is exemplified by five different daisy genera being recorded along the track alignment in site survey. These are predominantly along the high plains section (6 and part of 7).
3. Eleven **alpine, sub-alpine and montane EVCs** providing unique habitats occur along the track alignment and OV nodes. They are characteristic of the landscapes of track sections 2, 6, 7 and 15.
4. The **NHL-cited fauna** Guthega Skink (*Liopholis guthega*) is recorded in survey along the track alignment, predominantly on track sections 2 and 4. The Alpine She-oak Skink (*Cyclodomorphus praealtus*) has been recorded nearby, on the tracks to Tawonga Huts and similar habitats occur along track section 15. Habitat for the Mountain Pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*) has been identified along track section 5.

5. Good-quality Sub-alpine Woodlands (*E. pauciflora*) that are contiguous with **downslope gradients of different Eucalyptus communities** occur along Diamantina Track (track section 13) and the Spur Track east of Westons Hut (track section 11). Disturbed Sub-alpine Woodlands occur along northern Razorback Track (section 15), also contiguous with downslope gradients of different Eucalyptus communities.
6. Good-condition areas of an EVC component of the **EPBC-listed community** (*Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens*) occur within mosaic communities along Heathy Spur Track between Langford Gap Hut and Lake Side (in white in the figure—sections 2, 3 and 4). A small pure stand of Alpine Valley Peatland occurs on the track near Mount Jim, and another at the Cope Hut OV site. Other disturbed peatland mosaics are along the alignment in the Langford Aqueduct sector.
7. **EVCs listed as rare in the Victorian Alps Bioregion** cover most of the track alignment, with relatively undisturbed sections along Razorback, Diamantina Spur, Heathy Spur and between Westons Hut and Copes Hut on the high plains.
8. Sixty **flora species listed as rare or threatened in Victoria** have been recorded along the track alignment, and one listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act. The highest number of threatened fauna species occur in the eastern and central sections of the track (track sections 2, 3, 6, 7 and 11).
9. Eleven **fauna species listed as rare or threatened in Victoria** (out of 21 species returned by the database search) were recorded on or adjacent to the FHAC alignment by survey, including eight EPBC-listed threatened species. Track section 2 has numerous recordings along its whole length; the remainder are mainly in the high plains track sections (6 and 7).

Comparative analysis of identified natural heritage attributes

Limited comparative analysis of the natural distribution of these attributes permitted by existing regional datasets indicates that according to the NHL citation and more recent literature, **periglacial features** are distributed fairly widely over the alpine areas.[3] However, the FHAC Environmental Assessment (Abzeco 2025), quoting Rosengren and Webb 2024, provides a definitive statement on the local context of these features:

> The glacial and periglacial features contribute uniquely to our understanding of the nature of landscape response to climate during the ice ages of the late Quaternary and into the present and therefore has outstanding heritage value to the nation for its importance in the pattern of Australia's natural history. By virtue of their rarity in relation to Australian continental physical and climatic attributes, the areas examined in this study are of national geoheritage significance. Their stock is limited and none are considered 'expendable'.[4]

Modelled EVCs for the region from the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action show that the **alpine, sub-alpine and montane EVCs** that provide unique habitats are widespread and extensive within the NHL area, and that the EVC equivalents of the EPBC-listed community (*Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens*) are very restricted and naturally fragmented. The modelled EVCs for the region also show that many representations of different eucalypt-dominated communities transitioning one into another down slopes occur in the area surrounding FHAC.

Downloads of **threatened flora records** from the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas show that the rare and threatened species sighted along the FHAC in survey are also widely recorded in the surrounding area within 20km of FHAC, including the single EPBC-listed species (Shining Cudweed). The data also show that the species richness of daisies is widespread over the high plains, with over 400 records of daisies of 30 different taxa within 20km of FHAC.

Downloads of **threatened fauna records** from the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas show that the endangered skink species sighted along the FHAC in site surveys are also widely recorded in the surrounding region. No additional sightings of Mountain Pygmy-possum have been recorded within 20km of FHAC.

In summary, it is unlikely that any of the attributes listed above as potentially impacted by FHAC works are unique to the site. However, all are considered to be variously contributory to the suite of natural heritage values cited in the National Heritage listing of the AANP. The degree to which their existence value will be impacted will depend upon the duration, scale and intensity of disturbance of the proposed works.

Discussion of impacts

The works described in Section 4 of this HIA are characteristically minimalist in their footprint and construction approach. This has been an overriding design feature of the FHAC planning, which has developed over the course of project planning—responding to biodiversity and geodiversity values as they have been encountered in desktop appraisals and later in site surveys. This has led not only to the 'light' on-ground treatments of track upgrades and camping facilities in environmentally sensitive locations but also to the rejection of track alignment and overnight node alternative sites in favour of less sensitive ones.

As a result, the design of works along the track has adapted to the site environments at a fine scale, taking account of the need to avoid or minimise impact on the natural heritage attributes encountered. This is illustrated by the following summary of the scope of works section by section, which matches the type of track treatment (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Draft scope of track works and natural features.[5]

Track section	Works	EVC1	EVC2	Recorded species	Periglacial feature
2	Stone Steps	Alpine Grassland	-	Pimelea axiflora	
2	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Alpine Valley Peatland	Guthega Skink	
2	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Alpine Valley Peatland	Guthegas nearby	
2	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Alpine Valley Peatland	Guthegas nearby	
2	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Tussock Skink	Blockstream
2	Rubber Matting	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Tussock Skink	Blockstream
2	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Tussock Skink	Blockstream
2	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Guthega Skink	
4	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	-	Blockstream
4	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	Blockstream
4	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Sub-alpine Woodland		Blockstream
4	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	Blockstream
4	Boardwalk	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	-	
4	Boardwalk	Alpine Valley Peatland	Sub-alpine Woodland	Habitat for aquatic inverts.	Blockstream
4	Boardwalk	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	-	Boulders
4	Boardwalk	Alpine Valley Peatland	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	Blockstream
6	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	B. foliosa	
6	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Tussock Skink, C. lilacina, C. jackiana, P. introloba	
6	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Tussock Skink	
6	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Tussock Skink, B. foliosa	
6	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	

Track section	Works	EVC1	EVC2	Recorded species	Periglacial feature
6	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	
6	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	B. foliosa	
6	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	B. foliosa	
6	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	E. c glandulosa	
6	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	-	
6	Rubber Matting	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Ewartia nubigena	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	A. nitidulum	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Dwarf Heathland	-	Guthega Skink colony	Solifluction
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	-	Guthega Skink (at west end)	Basalt benches and scarps
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Dwarf Heathland		-	Basalt benches and scarps
7	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Tussock Skink	Basalt benches and scarps
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	-	Basalt benches and scarps
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	-	Basalt benches and scarps

Track section	Works	EVC1	EVC2	Recorded species	Periglacial feature
7	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	-	Basalt benches and scarps
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	Tussock Skink, Alpine Water Skink, Alpine Bog Skink, Habitat: Aquatic inverts.	Basalt benches and scarps
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Dwarf Heathland	-	-	Solifluction
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Tussock Skink	Solifluction
7	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	-	-	Solifluction
11	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
11	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
11	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
11	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Valley Peatland	-	
11	Boardwalk	Alpine Dwarf Heathland	Alpine Grassland	-	
11	Track re-formation / Benching	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	Dusty Daisy Bush, Royal Grevillea	
11	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	Blockstream
11	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	
11	Boardwalk	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	
11	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	
11	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	
11	Stepping Stones	Alpine Damp Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	
11	Stepping Stones	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	-	
11	Boardwalk	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	
11	Drainage	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	-	Blockstream

Track section	Works	EVC1	EVC2	Recorded species	Periglacial feature
12	Drainage	Montane Damp Forest	-	Tussock Skink, habitat for Smoky Mouse	
12	Drainage	Montane Damp Forest	-	Tussock Skink	
12	Drainage	Montane Damp Forest	-	Tussock Skink; habitat for Mountain Skink	
12	Stone Steps	Montane Damp Forest	-	-	Scree
12	Drainage	Montane Damp Forest	-	-	Scree
12	Stone Steps—chisel	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	-	Scree
12	Stone Steps—benched	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	-	Scree
12	Drainage	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	-	Scree
13	Stone Steps—benched	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	Mountain Skink	
13	Stone Steps—chisel	Sub-alpine Shrubland	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	Scree
13	Drainage	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	Craspedia maxygrayi	
13	Stone Steps—benched	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	-	Scree
14	Stone Pitching	Alpine Grassland	Snowpatch Grassland	E. c eglandulosa, A glacilis, S diander	Scree
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	Scree
15	Drainage	Sub-alpine Shrubland	Sub-alpine Woodland	Tussock Skink	
15	Drainage	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	Habitat for Mountain Skink	Scree
15	Stone Steps	Sub-alpine Shrubland	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	Scree
15	Stone Steps	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	-	
15	Stone Steps	Alpine Grassland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	
15	Stone Steps	Sub-alpine Shrubland	Sub-alpine Woodland	-	

Track section	Works	EVC1	EVC2	Recorded species	Periglacial feature
15	Gravel resurfacing	Alpine Grassland	-	Tussock Skink	
15	Drainage	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	Tussock Skink	
15	Stone Steps	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	-	
15	Stone Steps	Alpine Grassland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	Tussock Skink	Scree
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	-	-	Scree
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Alpine Rocky Outcrop Heathland	-	Scree
15	Drainage	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	-	Scree
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	Alpine Rocky Outcrop Heathland	-	Scree
15	Stone Steps	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	-	
15	Stone Steps	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	-	
15	Drainage	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	-	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	-	-	
15	Drainage	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	-	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	-	-	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	-	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	Tussock Skink	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Tussock Skink	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	Tussock Skink	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	-	Tussock Skink; habitat for Alpine She-oak Skink	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	
15	Drainage	Alpine Grassy Heathland	Sub-alpine Shrubland	-	

This information shows how boardwalks and stepping stones are being assigned for track treatment in areas of peatland communities to avoid foot traffic and ensure sub-drainage is not disturbed. Boardwalks, along with stepping stones, are also being prescribed for the majority of crossings of blockstreams and solifluction areas, and to minimise disturbance of skink habitats.

Similarly, OV installations will include elevated camping platforms and services to minimise surface and vegetation disturbance.

The potential impacts of proposed works at FHAC are assessed as follows:

- Duration—The duration of the proposed action (construction) is short-term for each location. The trail and OV installations will be reversible.
- Scale—The scale of the proposed action is small/localised. The proposed works are along existing tracks, with a small (1.5m) side allowance for construction access and laydown.
- Intensity—The intensity of the proposed action on the site is **low**. The planned treatments along the track are appropriate for the environmental conditions and values. There is extensive use of boardwalks and stepping stones to protect the natural surface and vegetation. Similarly, camp platforms and services at the OVs are to be elevated to minimise effects on ground surface and vegetation.

5.2.2 Indigenous heritage values impact assessment

The historical association with moth feasting in the project area contributes to the National Heritage values of the AANP National Heritage place.

Artefact scatters in the project area may be associated with the practice of moth feasting. The 2025 CHMP identified that these are primarily located away from works area, but some artefact scatters were identified along the trail route. Artefacts were recovered at a section of the trail on the Bogong High Plains: two artefacts at Overnight Node 2 (Westons Hut), and four at the southern end of the Razorback Track (refer to Figure 140, 2025 CHMP).

The geomorphological features that create Bogong Moth habitat will not be affected by the proposed action, as it does not include works that would alter the rocky outcrops and caves that make up the Bogong Moth habitat.

The artefacts on the Bogong High Plains would not be affected by the proposed action as they are not within a works area, and the artefacts from Overnight Node 2 were collected as part of the CHMP assessment.[6] On the Razorback Track, proposed drainage trail works would intersect with the area in which artefacts are recorded, and therefore could physically impact these, damaging or displacing them.

Physical impacts to artefacts associated with traditional Aboriginal usage of the area would diminish the ability to interpret this important historic process. Under the requirements of the CHMP, the artefacts on the Razorback Track must be collected and moved outside the works area before the proposed action commences, and then repatriated back to a location unlikely to be disturbed in future.[7]

In the context of the remaining unaffected artefacts, significant Aboriginal places that have been avoided via the project design, and the avoidance of impacts of other features associated with moth feasting such as the Bogong Moth habitats, the degree of impact from the proposed action would be minor.

In the instance that unanticipated finds or artefacts were discovered that are associated with the Indigenous heritage values of the project area, there would be the risk of potential adverse impacts, ranging from minor to severe. This risk could also be minimised through effective mitigation measures (see the recommendations below).

Based on the above, the likely impact on this aspect of the National Heritage values is **minor**.

5.2.3 Historic heritage values impact assessment

This HIA identifies the features and attributes that express the National Heritage values, with an analysis of potential impacts on those values.

Criterion A

Transhumant grazing

The AANP is historically significant for its association with transhumant grazing, expressed in the project area through multiple features including the historic huts, remnants of stockyards, stock routes and evidence of grazing landscapes such as alpine meadows and clearings.

Construction phases

During construction phases for huts conservation works, track works (upgrades and new track infrastructure), signage installation, overnight node construction, landscaping and revegetation works, there will be temporary impacts to the National Heritage values and attributes that are associated with transhumant grazing.

At the historic huts, there would be small-scale, localised and low-intensity impacts from laydown of materials at Wallace Hut, Westons Hut, Blairs Hut, Dibbins Hut, Pretty Valley Hut, Ryders Huts and Tawonga Huts. The construction works would temporarily alter the alpine grazing landscape around the huts, but this physical and visual impact would be kept minimal by the proposal to store materials within the hut footprints or on existing nearby trails and roads.

Trail upgrade works and overnight node construction would have similar temporary impacts, particularly at Westons Hut (OV2), which was specifically associated with transhumant grazing. Sections of grassland will be temporarily cleared for laydown areas, altering the expression of the alpine meadows used for grazing. The laydown areas would be remediated after the works, effectively mitigating the temporary impacts.

Impacts to this aspect of the National Heritage values from construction phase works would therefore be minor.

Huts conservation works

Conservation works to Wallace Hut, Westons Hut, Blairs Hut, Dibbins Hut, Pretty Valley Hut, Ryders Huts and Tawonga Huts will all affect huts connected with transhumant grazing. The historic huts have been regularly upgraded over time. Their high heritage significance derives from their remaining early or historical original fabric, scale, form, location and settings. Where huts have been altered, the current huts are also significant because they continue to interpret the original historic form, fabric and functions of the buildings as isolated, rustic huts built and maintained in a vernacular style in remote grazing locations.

The exact scope of the works varies but will involve the removal and replacement of existing fabric. Replacement materials may be like-for-like or sympathetic modern replacements. Because the scope of works to the huts has not been specifically defined (e.g. through preparation of a schedule of works with methodologies), information is not available on how much historical fabric vs more recent materials may be changed. For some huts the extent of fabric replacement could be large, e.g. at Dibbins Hut replacing wall logs, roof sheeting, and some interior framing is proposed.

The Burra Charter states that conservation is an integral part of good management of a heritage place, and that it requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary, and as little as possible.[8] Repairs that are necessary to conserve the building are not inconsistent with the heritage values, but must be undertaken in a suitable way to minimise the heritage impacts. Reconstruction of a place with new material is acceptable in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter where a place is incomplete due to damage and there is sufficient information to reproduce the earlier state of the fabric.[9] This reconstruction should be identifiable as new fabric on close inspection or through additional interpretation.

The proposed action as scoped in Section 4.4.5 complies with the above principles. The replacement materials will match the original like-for-like, or be sympathetic to the original material and form, and will be distinguishable as new work via visual inspection and documentation of the proposed scope of works. Consequently, the significant form and fabric of the historic huts will be generally maintained.

Where fabric cannot be kept, it will be repaired in a way that is consistent with its significance and heritage best practice.

Although some huts are now quite different from their original form and materials (e.g. Westons Hut, rebuilt after fires, and Dibbins Hut, which was substantially modified in the 1980s), the proposed action will not further depart from the current form and fabric. In the absence of details to inform a detailed reconstruction of the earlier historic huts, an approach of changing 'as much as necessary, as little as possible' is an appropriate heritage practice, and will be implemented in this case. Consequently the proposed works are likely to be conservation works that are not inconsistent with the heritage values.

It is important that the principles of the Burra Charter, Hut Maintenance Manual and other relevant documents such as the 2005 Graeme Butler study are followed when undertaking the works to the historic huts. Noting the lack of detailed design planning at this stage, deviation from the scope of works and these principles could increase the impacts e.g. from decisions made on the ground when the works are under way that could cause alterations to the historic form, remove more existing fabric than necessary, or introduce non-sympathetic materials. This risk can be sufficiently addressed by complying with the scope and principles assessed in this HIA.

Trail works and overnight nodes

There would be some impacts to this aspect of the National Heritage values from the trail works and overnight node construction. The open meadows that were used for grazing, particularly near Westons Hut (OV2), will be altered by the addition of new gravel paths, communal gathering areas and seating platforms (gravel paved), camping platforms and buildings.

The new and upgraded existing camping platforms will result in further additional infrastructure in a landscape where the values are derived from the existence of open meadow spaces with limited built elements. At Cope Hut (OV1) and High Knob (OV3) the camping platforms will be dispersed across the overnight node with some nestled in among the trees and others in different clearings, which will help reduce the visual impacts.

At Westons Hut the camping platforms are distributed in two groups: one of five and the other of three platforms. The grouping of three platforms sits in a clearing that appears to be fully or partially screened by trees and other vegetation from the rest of the overnight node, including from Westons Hut, which helps reduce the visual impact. The grouping of five camping platforms sits in a more open part of the overnight node, upslope from Westons Hut. The platforms themselves will be low to the ground and screened by vegetation, but will facilitate camping and so will often have more visible tents on them. When entering the node from the northwest, the platforms with tents will be visible on the left.

The group of five platforms will be partially obscured when viewed from Westons Hut by vegetation to the northeast of the hut between the two clearings. However, some visibility may remain, particularly when there are tents on them. The proposed amenities building in close proximity to and east of Westons Hut would be partially screened by low vegetation in the area, but due to its scale and height, would still be visually prominent in the setting of Westons Hut. In particular, it would be very noticeable when looking northwest from Westons Hut itself, and from the current camping/picnic area in front of the hut.

The design of the works at Westons Hut is intended to minimise visual impacts. However, the residual combined impacts of the physical changes to the landscape and visual changes from formed gravel paths, group of five camping platforms (often with tents on them) in the alpine grassland and the amenities block at Westons will still alter the historic landscape from a mountain clearing where the only built structure is a stockman's hut. The proposed action will obscure and detract from the ability to appreciate the historic character of the grazing landscape as simple and natural alpine meadows suitable for stock to some degree.

This impact will primarily be noticeable at Westons Hut (OV2), which is associated with transhumant grazing via the historic hut. At Cope Hut (OV1) and High Knob (OV3) the impact will be less noticeable as the areas were less strongly associated with alpine grazing. The scale of this change will be medium within its immediate setting and as experienced at a human scale, but small within the context of the transhumant grazing features across the vast National Heritage place as a whole. The intensity of the works will be low, as they involve light-touch physical changes that could be reversed. Although the proposed duration of the works is long-term, the reversibility of the changes helps mitigate the effect. Trail works outside the overnight nodes will have no additional impact, as they will be on existing trails.

Historical archaeological potential in the study area is low, and therefore impacts on this aspect of the National Heritage value as expressed through historical archaeology are not expected.

Therefore, the likely impact of the proposed action on this aspect of the National Heritage values would be minor to moderate.

Scientific research

The place is nationally significant for its association with scientific research, expressed in the project area through the environment that has been studied, the botanical survey routes and Maisie's Plots.

Maisie's Plots and von Mueller's botanical survey route are near the project area but will not be physically impacted by the proposed works.

There will some minor changes to the environment of the project area generally through the construction of the overnight nodes; works to the trail and the historic huts will be confined to the existing footprints. The works to the overnight nodes would clear a small amount of vegetation—the scale of cleared vegetation would be very small, of low intensity and reversible. The ability to identify and understand the history of scientific endeavour in the landscape through the heritage attributes would be maintained. Consequently, no impact on this aspect of the National Heritage values has been identified.

Water harvesting

The nationally significant association with water harvesting is expressed through the elements of the Kiewa Hydro-Electric Scheme in the project area.

The proposed action will affect several huts built and used by the SEC—Wallace Hut, Langford Gap Hut, Cope Saddle Hut, Pretty Valley Hut and Tawonga Huts. The connection between these huts and the nearby water infrastructure will not be affected. As discussed above in relation to **transhumant grazing,** there will be changes to the existing material fabric of the buildings. The types of impacts will be the same as those identified in relation to transhumant grazing—the conservation works will not be inconsistent with the National Heritage values, assuming they are undertaken in accordance with the scope outlined in the HIA, the principles of the Burra Charter and the Hut Maintenance Manual.

Recreation

The project area is historically important for the longevity and diversity of types of recreational use in the Australian Alps, expressed through the historic huts, camping areas, horse yards and walking trails.

The proposed action will not adversely impact this aspect of the National Heritage values. The historical association of the project area with recreation will be maintained, as the proposed action is intended to facilitate the ongoing recreational use of Alpine National Park.

Criterion D

There will be no impacts to this aspect of the National Heritage values, which is associated with the Kosciuszko National Park in NSW.

Criterion E

The aesthetic values of the AANP National Heritage place derive from the dramatic and diverse alpine landscapes, expansive panoramas and distinctive views and vistas, the natural environment, sounds and other sensory qualities, and the responses they evoke.

These values can be experienced at multiple locations and vantage points, with different locations offering different experiences of the aesthetic values of the National Heritage place—some at close range, in enclosed settings, others over immense distances, many in combination. These values are embodied in the project area and works area, as well as the whole National Heritage place.

Construction phases

During construction phases for track works (upgrades and new track infrastructure), signage installation, overnight node construction, landscaping and revegetation works, there will be temporary impacts on the aesthetic values from the visibility of the works activity at intervals along the track sections and overnight nodes, visibility of materials and equipment in laydown areas along the trail corridor (which has been defined for the project area), and in defined areas at the overnight nodes.

These visual impacts will be temporary, small-scale and localised, and mitigated by containing the materials in defined areas. Physical impacts from the laydown and storage of materials will be reversible, as rehabilitation of vegetation will be carried out in the defined areas following completion of construction works.

During works activity associated with the trails and overnight nodes and huts works there will be impacts from noise, to be experienced mostly at close range, but noise of some construction activity will carry further beyond the project areas. These impacts will be intermittent and temporary, small-scale, and mitigated by the use of hand tools where possible (supplemented by power tools). Impacts will be minimised by avoidance of using heavy machinery. Overall the impact from this aspect of the proposed works on the aesthetic National Heritage values will be minor.

Signage

New signage will have visual impacts. Although 53 signs are proposed, only 9 of these will be new signs. Approximately 50% of the new/replacement signs (29 of 53) will be totem poles or fingerboard signs. There would be physical impacts from ground disturbance for the signage footings. These would be small-scale, localised, and low-intensity with depth of ground disturbance at 50cm to 70cm.

The slim and narrow form of these signs and their colourways will minimise their visual impact. The physical impacts from the signage would not create any additional aesthetic impact. For some wayfinding signs, visual impact is important to their function. The balance of the signs (24 of 53) would be information or straddle boards. The larger and taller of these signs are the trail head straddles and multi-purpose boards. The directional straddles are shorter. The coordinated suite of new signs, their contemporary design, non-bulky form, low or human scale, fineness of posts and themed colourways will help to reduce their visual impacts on the aesthetic National Heritage values, resulting in overall minor impacts from this aspect of the works.

Trail works

The works to upgrade sections of trails will result in changes to those sections of the trails and some localised physical and visual impacts on the aesthetic values of the National Heritage place.

Trail works will be limited to the sections of trails identified as requiring interventions. This approach is consistent with the Burra Charter, which advocates a cautious approach to change: 'do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained'.[10]

The upgraded trails are designed to sit within the footprints of the existing trails (i.e. they will not be widened), which will reduce the physical and visual impact of trail works on the aesthetic qualities of the landscapes they pass through, and retain the aesthetic qualities of the existing narrow trails winding through the landscape. The existing widths of four-wheel driving tracks will also be retained, thereby resulting in minimal impacts arising from these works. Resurfacing will use lightly compacted gravel, which will not change their existing appearance. Some of the upgrades are designed to integrate into the natural landscape, such as the stepping stones and stone steps, trail benching, and resurfacing with a lightly compacted gravel. The cut and fill associated with trail benching will be in defined corridors and extended only as far as required to regrade and re-form sections of track that have been lost or degraded over time.

While they will be visible, the elevated boardwalks and mesh steps will be clearly contemporary in design, fine lightweight structures and transparent materials that will have the appearance of sitting lightly on the landscape. The articulation at 9m intervals is intended to minimise the visual impacts of the boardwalks.

The water bars for drainage will be visually prominent along the trails and have physical impacts within the works area of the trails. Their intent—to manage erosion—will, however, ensure unsightly and damaging physical impacts from erosion will be appropriately managed. Water bars will be limited to the locations identified as requiring drainage interventions (typically at about 50m intervals; at closer intervals where required). This approach is consistent with the Burra Charter, which advocates a cautious approach to change. The designs for the water bars are practical and as minimal as possible to be effective but not over-engineered. Materials (timber or stone) are sensitive to the natural environments in which they will be situated, which will help to reduce their visual impact.

Overall the impacts from trail works to the aesthetic National Heritage values are considered to be minor, being small in scale, localised and low-intensity.

Overnight nodes

There will be some visual and physical impacts on the aesthetic values of the National Heritage place at the three overnight nodes as a result of the proposed action, through the addition of new elements to these landscapes. The impacts are different for each overnight node, because the elements and their arrangement at each node differs, and each node has different existing conditions: topography, vegetation cover and landscape character, and existing built and other introduced features.

The open meadows that contribute to the aesthetic values of the National Heritage place, particularly near Cope Hut (OV1) and at Westons Hut (OV2), will be altered by the addition of new gravel paths, communal gathering areas (gravel paved) and seating platforms (on gravel pads), camping platforms and buildings.

The new amenities structures, communal shelter and areas, gravel pathways and upgraded existing camping platforms will result in further additional infrastructure in a landscape where the aesthetic values are derived from the existence of open grassy meadows with limited built elements. At Cope Hut (OV1) the camping platforms will be dispersed across the overnight node with some nestled in among the trees and others in different clearings, which will help reduce the visual impacts. At High Knob (OV3), the eight camping platforms will also be dispersed throughout the overnight node, and the two new buildings will be inserted into separated clearings, which will help reduce visual impacts. Topographic variation, and the lightly wooded areas among which the camping platforms will be inserted at OV3 will help to further reduce impacts.

At Westons Hut (OV2) the eight camping platforms are clustered in two groups—one of five and the other of three platforms. The grouping of three platforms sits in a clearing that appears to be fully or partially screened by trees and other vegetation from the rest of the overnight node, including from Westons Hut, which helps reduce the visual impact. The grouping of five camping platforms sits in a more open part of the overnight node. The platforms themselves will be low to the ground and obscured to an extent by vegetation, but they will often have tents on them, making them more noticeable. They will be visible in the landscape, particularly when approaching Westons Hut from the northeast. From Westons Hut itself the platforms are expected to be obscured by vegetation between the hut clearing and the camping platform clearing.

The proposed amenities structure in close proximity to and east of Westons Hut would be visually prominent in the setting of and views from Westons Hut. Although the contemporary design and materials selected for the amenities structure are considered appropriate, the presence of the amenities structure itself, and its close positioning to Westons Hut, means that visual impacts will remain. The pathways will be more noticeable at the Westons Hut OV2 than at OV1 and OV3, because the site is more open and views are particularly focused around the camping area in front of the hut.

The design of the works at Westons Hut is intended to minimise visual impacts. However, the residual combined impacts of the formed gravel paths, camping platforms (often with tents) prominent in the alpine grassland and the amenities block in close proximity to the hut will visually alter the aesthetic qualities of the landscape from a simple mountain clearing where the only built structure is the small hut.

Figure 5.10 View from verandah of Westons Hut, looking northeast. The camping platforms will be behind the stand of vegetation in the mid-ground on right. The amenities structure will be in front of the vegetation on the right. (Source: High Country Huts 3D scan <https://www.highcountryhuts.org.au/australian-alpine-heritage-huts/westons-hut>)

Across the overnight nodes, the proposed action will to an extent detract from the ability to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of the AANP National Heritage place, because it will involve the construction of new structures and infrastructure within important viewing locations that diminish the ability to appreciate and interpret the distinctive historic landscape. Although the visitor infrastructure will not be prominent in long, distant views (as discussed in the LVIA), it will be visible at medium and close-up views, which are also important expressions of the National Heritage values.

In the relatively constrained viewing windows of the overnight nodes, the amenities structures, communal shelters, paths and camping platforms will be noticeable in a relatively large portion of the view. However, in the context of the larger AANP National Heritage place, the scale of the visual impact becomes smaller. Important views and expressions of the aesthetic heritage values will still be maintained through large sections of the project area, and long-distance views will generally not be affected.

The three overnight nodes, where the greatest impact arises, are constrained locations in terms of the entire project area. The proposed duration of the impact is long-term, but designed to be reversible. The intensity of the impacts would be minor to moderate, with noticeable visual changes in the immediate setting of the overnight node, but less intensive changes to views from a distance. Overall, the likely impacts of the proposed action would therefore be minor to moderate.

Other work and operational items

The huts conservation works would have negligible impact on the aesthetic National Heritage values under this criterion if undertaken in accordance with the scope in this HIA. The existing visual form of the huts will be maintained.

Operationally, the proposed action would involve increased impacts on the aesthetic heritage values from visual and soundscape changes. Increased camper numbers at the nodes may create more noise and visual intrusions, which detract from the ability to appreciate the significant views, landscape and wild and natural qualities that are part of the National Heritage values. Helicopter visits to the area to collect waste will increase from two visits annually to three–four visits annually, creating a localised impact from their noise. These impacts could be of moderate intensity, but short-term and small-scale because of their localised and transient nature, overall creating a likely minor impact on the National Heritage values.

Criterion G

The AANP National Heritage place is recognised at a national level for its special associations with several groups, including Australians generally, mountain cattlemen, skiers, bushwalkers and huts associations. These social heritage values are expressed through several attributes.

Effects on social heritage values associated with landscapes and remoteness

The special association is partly due to the unique landscapes and the possibility of experiencing remoteness in the heritage place. This social value of the place to the Australian community, particularly regular users of Alpine National Park, will be diminished to some degree by the proposed works.

<u>Construction phase works</u>

Construction phase works would temporarily affect features that create the special associations and sense of connection with the AANP National Heritage place for the Australian community. The remote and unique landscape will be temporarily altered and obscured by laydown areas and construction zones. Workers on site may be seen by visitors, further affecting the sense of the place as a remote and unique landscape.

Although the heritage place does have a history of ongoing human use and construction of trails and infrastructure, for the majority of the time the lack of new development or active works programs allows visitors to retain an unimpeded experience of the remoteness of the place and its natural landscapes, which will be affected by the works. These impacts could occur at various times along the full length of the trail, at the historic huts and overnight nodes, making them relatively large-scale in the context of the place. However, the impacts will be of temporary duration and low intensity, with the temporary construction areas remediated after the works. Consequently, the impact on this aspect of the National Heritage values would be minor.

Overnight node and trail upgrade works

The construction of new infrastructure at the overnight nodes will increase the development within the place by adding gravel paths, communal areas, camping platforms, facilities, and structures (two amenities buildings, at High Knob and Westons Hut, and one communal shelter at High Knob). These works will diminish the ability to experience a sense of remoteness in the project area because new infrastructure will make the project area feel less isolated and naturalistic, and more altered by humans.

At each of the three overnight nodes, the experience of the place will be altered, leading to a change in people's feelings and sense of connection with the place. At Westons Hut (OV2) and High Knob (OV3) the change will be most notable, as the works at these locations involve adding new buildings, as well as camping platforms, gravel trails and communal gathering areas, making the locations feel more curated. The degree of change will be present but less substantial at Cope Hut (OV1), as the action involves fewer new infrastructure items—three new tent platforms, plus new paths and a communal area.

Impacts to the sense of remoteness will also arise from new signage. Nine of the signs proposed will be new. These will further contribute to a sense of a curated, human-altered landscape, diminishing the sense of remoteness and experiencing a unique natural landscape that the community values. Trail upgrades and new track infrastructure will further intensify this impact to a small degree, as trails that are currently in a more simple, unformed state will have some sections that become more clearly defined and constructed. However, as trail upgrade works will occur only along existing tracks, the alteration of the unique landscapes beyond what is already there will be limited.

The impacts on social heritage values are evidenced by public feedback during the consultation, in which some members of the community have indicated that the proposed action will diminish the sense of isolation and remoteness they feel when visiting the project area. This consultation was on early iterations of the project design that had more intensive development, which has now been removed from the project scope.

Nevertheless, it is useful indicative evidence of the effect of new development on community-held values for the place.

The scale of the works will be larger within their immediate setting, but small–medium in the context of the larger heritage place. The sense of remoteness will still be maintained throughout large sections of the project area as users travel along the FHAC trail, where the only alterations will be trail works upgrades. The three overnight nodes, where the greatest impact arises, are reasonably small, constrained areas in terms of the entire project area. The proposed duration for the overnight node works is long-term, but designed to be reversible. The intensity of the works would be moderate. The works involve physically clearing vegetation for new paths and communal areas. Visually, the new buildings will be a highly noticeable visual change when within the overnight nodes. The impact on people's experience of the site will therefore be moderately intensive—this is distinguished from physical impacts on the buildings, which have been minimised through their foundation designs. The overnight nodes will be visible only when users are close to or within the nodes, and not at large-scale views, mitigating the visual impact to some degree, but alterations to the important sense of remoteness will remain.

Overall, there will be some diminishing of the ability to experience remoteness that is valued by the community as part of the National Heritage values. Therefore, the likely adverse impacts of the proposed action on this aspect of the National Heritage values would be moderate.

Effects on other aspects of social heritage values

Aspects of the proposed action are consistent with the National Heritage values under this criterion. Significant associations with the place arising from recreational use and the mountain huts as a physical expression of the cultural history of the region will be maintained, as the recreational use of the project area will not be affected, and works to the historic huts will be consistent with the National Heritage values if undertaken in accordance with best practice (as discussed under criterion A above). The ongoing maintenance and upgrades to the huts using vernacular building skills is an important aspect of the social heritage values of the place and the proposed works are consistent with this.

Criterion H

The AANP National Heritage place is significant for its association with Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Eugene von Guérard, Banjo Paterson, Elyne Mitchell and David Campbell.

The addition of new infrastructure at the overnight nodes will alter, to a small degree, the natural and cultural landscape that makes up the area that was studied by von Mueller, and that inspired the creative works of Paterson, Mitchell and Campbell.

In the context of the AANP National Heritage place, these changes will be small-scale, low intensity and reversible. The environment that inspired their research and works will still be able to be understood and interpreted through the large areas of unaltered landscape in the National Heritage place. Overall, the association between the significant people and the AANP National Heritage place will be maintained as a historical connection. The likely impact of the proposed action on this aspect of the National Heritage values would be negligible.

Von Guérard's significant association with the Australian Alps in the National Heritage values is connected with his painting *North-east view from the northern top of Mount Kosciusko,* which depicts a location outside the project area.

5.3 Impact assessment conclusion

5.3.1 Significant Impact Guidelines analysis

Under the EPBC Act, actions that are likely to have a significant impact on a matter protected by the Act must be referred to the Minister for the Environment and Water for approval. As outlined at Section 5.1, the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1, prepared by the Commonwealth Government, provide additional specific guidance for determining whether impacts to protected heritage values are significant.

The Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 also provide a non-exhaustive list of 'criteria' (questions for the proponent) to assist in determining whether a proposed action is likely to have a significant impact on protected heritage values.[11] If the answer is 'yes' to one or more of the questions listed at Table 5.2, it is expected that the action is likely to have a significant impact on the environment.

The Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 note that:

> To have a significant impact on National Heritage values, it is not necessary for an action to impact upon the whole of a National Heritage place, all of the values of a National Heritage place, or a whole value of a National Heritage place. It is sufficient if an action is likely to have a significant impact on a part, element, or feature of a National Heritage place which embodies, manifests, shows, or contributes to the values of that place.[12]

The impacts of the proposed action, as analysed in Section 5.2 above, have been considered against these criteria below.

Table 5.2 Assessment of potential impacts to the National Heritage Place against EPBC Act Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1.

Significant Impact Guideline Is there a real change or possibility that the action will:	GML commentary
Values associated with geology or landscapes	
damage, modify, alter or obscure important geological formations in a National Heritage place	No, the important geological formations in the project area will remain intact.
damage, modify, alter or obscure landforms or landscape features, for example, by clearing, excavating or infilling the land surface in a National Heritage place	No, the proposed action will not alter landforms or landscape features. Some minor vegetation clearing will occur, which will be remediated.
modify, alter or inhibit landscape processes, for example, by accelerating or increasing susceptibility to erosion, or stabilising mobile landforms, such as sand dunes in a National Heritage place	No, the proposed action will not alter or inhibit landscape processes. Small areas of vegetation clearing will occur and then be remediated, and are not expected to affect erosion or other processes.
divert, impound or channelise a river, wetland or other water body in a National Heritage place, and	No, the proposed action will not impact any water bodies.
substantially increase concentrations of suspended sediment, nutrients, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, or other pollutants or substances in a river, wetland or water body in a National Heritage place; permanently damage or obscure rock art or other cultural or ceremonial features with World Heritage values.	No, the proposed action will not increase pollutants in water bodies, or damage or obscure rock art or cultural or ceremonial features.
Biological and ecological values	
modify or inhibit ecological processes in a National Heritage place	The proposed action will not modify or inhibit processes in the project area or National Heritage place. There will be some minor alterations to the natural environment, but these will not affect ecological processes.
reduce the diversity or modify the composition of plant and animal species in a National Heritage place	The proposed action will not reduce the diversity or modify the composition of plant and animal species. There will be some minor impacts and vegetation clearing as part of the proposed action, but the proposed design and mitigation measures have minimised impacts to avoid impacts to biodiversity.
fragment or damage habitat important for the conservation of biological diversity in a National Heritage place	No, the proposed action will not fragment or damage habitat important for conserving biological diversity. Habitat impacts will be minimal and not have larger effects on the habitat integrity.

Significant Impact Guideline Is there a real change or possibility that the action will:	GML commentary
cause a long-term reduction in rare, endemic or unique plant or animal populations or species in a National Heritage place,	No, the proposed action will not cause a long-term reduction in rare, endemic or unique plant or animal populations. The scale and intensity of the impacts means that there will be minimal effects on plant or animal populations.
fragment, isolate or substantially damage habitat for rare, endemic or unique animal populations or species in a National Heritage place	No, the proposed action will not fragment or damage habitat for rare, endemic or unique animal populations or species. Habitat impacts will be minimal and not have larger effects on the habitat integrity.
Wilderness, aesthetic or other rare or unique environment values	
involve construction of buildings, roads or other structures, vegetation clearance, or other actions with substantial and/or long-term impacts on relevant values, and	The proposed action will involve the construction of structures and vegetation clearance; however, the impacts of this will be minimal, not substantial and long-term. The proposed vegetation clearance will be in small, localised areas. The new structures constructed have been designed and sited to minimise visual impacts, and the construction methodology involves minimal physical intrusions and is reversible. Trail works will be constrained to existing trail alignments, and so this aspect of the works will not notably have substantial or long-term impacts on heritage values.
introduce noise, odours, pollutants or other intrusive elements with substantial and/or long-term impacts on relevant values.	The proposed action will facilitate some increase in intangible intrusive elements such as noise from more visitors along the walk; however, these are not expected to have substantial or long-term impacts on the relevant values. The increase in noise will be transient and variable, from more visitors and from helicopters removing waste pods. Helicopters will only fly in to remove waste three–four times a year, and the increase in noise from visitors will be limited by the camping capacity of each site and be at a human scale. Interpretive materials and guidance will encourage users to minimise intrusive noise and behaviours. Noises and other intrusive elements associated with the construction phase will be temporary.
Historic heritage values	
permanently remove, destroy, damage or substantially alter the fabric of a National Heritage place in a manner which is inconsistent with relevant values	No. The proposed action does involve alteration to the fabric of historic huts, part of the National Heritage place. However, the works are consistent with the National Heritage values, as their purpose is conserving the huts.

Significant Impact Guideline Is there a real change or possibility that the action will:	GML commentary
	The practice of vernacular building repair is an expression of the National Heritage values.
extend, renovate, refurbish or substantially alter a National Heritage place in a manner which is inconsistent with relevant values	No. The proposed action does involve altering historic parts of the National Heritage place (the historic huts), but the works are consistent with the National Heritage values because they are for conservation.
permanently remove, destroy, damage or substantially disturb archaeological deposits or artefacts in a National Heritage place	The proposed action is not expected to impact archaeological deposits or artefacts. The potential for historical archaeology is low and no historical artefacts impacted have been identified. Some Aboriginal archaeological artefacts have been identified; see further discussion below.
involve activities in a National Heritage place with substantial and/or long-term impacts on its values	No. The proposed action will not have substantial or long-term impacts on the National Heritage values. The impacts that have been identified are of a minor to moderate severity, and although they will be longer term they are generally reversible.
involve the construction of buildings or other structures within, adjacent to, or within important sight lines of, a National Heritage place which are inconsistent with relevant values, and	The proposed action involves the construction of structures within viewlines that express the National Heritage values. These are partially inconsistent with the National Heritage values, because they will result in noticeable visual changes, more so at the Westons Hut overnight node OV2. However, the proposed action will support continued use of the Australian Alps for recreation (consistent with criteria A and G) and transmission and appreciation of the aesthetic values of the National Heritage place (criterion E). The visual impacts are not substantial in the context of the whole place.
make notable changes to the layout, spaces, form or species composition of a garden, landscape or setting of a National Heritage place in a manner which is inconsistent with relevant values.	The proposed action makes some changes to the landscape of the AANP National Heritage place but they are minor to moderate.
Other cultural heritage values	
restrict or inhibit the continuing use of a National Heritage place as a cultural or ceremonial site causing its values to notably diminish over time	The proposed action will not inhibit use of the site for cultural reasons. Access will be maintained, and important social uses such as recreation will be facilitated.
permanently diminish the cultural value of a National Heritage place for a community or	The proposed action is not likely to permanently diminish the cultural value of the place to a community or group.

Significant Impact Guideline Is there a real change or possibility that the action will:	GML commentary
group to which its National Heritage values relate	This assessment finds there are likely to be some impacts on social heritage values, but these will be moderate.
destroy or damage cultural or ceremonial, artefacts, features, or objects in a National Heritage place, and	The proposed action will not destroy or damage artefacts, features or objects in the National Heritage place. Several Aboriginal cultural heritage artefacts along the Razorback Track are within the works area. However, impacts to these will be avoided because they will be salvaged and then repatriated after the works are complete.
notably diminish the value of a National Heritage place in demonstrating creative or technical achievement.	No. The AANP does not have National Heritage values for demonstrating creative or technical achievement.
Indigenous heritage values	
restrict or inhibit the continuing use of a National Heritage place as a cultural or ceremonial site causing its values to notably diminish over time	No. The proposed action would not inhibit the continuing use of the place as a cultural site, for example inhibiting the historical practice of moth feasting.
permanently diminish the cultural value of a National Heritage place for an Indigenous group to which its National Heritage values relate	No. Based on consultation with Traditional Owners undertaken as part of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan (Latitude Heritage, 2025) the proposed action would not diminish the cultural value of the place for Indigenous groups.
alter the setting of a National Heritage place in a manner which is inconsistent with relevant values	No. The proposed action would not alter the setting of the National Heritage place in a manner inconsistent with Indigenous National Heritage values.
remove, destroy, damage or substantially disturb archaeological deposits or cultural artefacts in a National Heritage place	The proposed action would only temporarily disturb cultural artefacts in the place. Aboriginal cultural heritage artefacts on the Razorback Track would be temporarily relocated and stored, then repatriated after the works are complete.
destroy, damage or permanently obscure rock art or other cultural or ceremonial, artefacts, features, or objects in a National Heritage place	No. The proposed action would not destroy, damage or obscure rock art or other significant artefacts, features or objects.
notably diminish the value of a National Heritage place in demonstrating creative or technical achievement	No. The AANP is not significant for demonstrating creative or technical achievement.

Significant Impact Guideline Is there a real change or possibility that the action will:	GML commentary
permanently remove, destroy, damage or substantially alter Indigenous built structures in a National Heritage place, and	No. The proposed action will not damage any Indigenous built structures in the AANP.
involve activities in a National Heritage place with substantial and/or long-term impacts on the values of the place.	No. The proposed action would not involve activities with long-term impacts on the National Heritage values. The proposed action will facilitate activities such as hiking, camping and vernacular repair of historical buildings, which are consistent with the National Heritage values.

5.3.2 Discussion of findings

The proposed action would have a variety of impacts on the extensive National Heritage values of the AANP National Heritage place, at varying degrees of severity. The National Heritage values of the place are complex, multi-layered and intersect with each other in a variety of ways. The natural and cultural landscape of the place contributes to the natural, Indigenous and historic heritage significance, the variety of important themes in Australia's natural and cultural history expressed at the AANP National Heritage place, and the aesthetic and social importance of the project area to the community.

Through the project development, the design refinement has avoided and mitigated impacts, e.g. through relocation of overnight nodes away from sensitive cultural locations and the design and construction methodology for trail works and overnight nodes.

Residual impacts on the natural heritage values and Indigenous heritage values from the project have been assessed as minor.

Impacts to the historic heritage values under criteria A, D, E, G and H vary. Some aspects of the works will have negligible or minor impacts on the attributes and expression of the National Heritage values. Other aspects of the work will have more substantial impacts. In particular, the works to the overnight nodes will have the most notable heritage impacts, on several aspects of the National Heritage values under multiple criteria. To understand the overall degree of impact, the full context and intensity of the impacts must be considered from all aspects of the proposed action. The cumulative physical and visual effect of multiple changes to the overnight nodes will cause the most notable heritage impacts under criteria A, E and G.

As well as the above adverse impact findings, the proposed action has potential for beneficial impacts to the heritage values in instances where it facilitates the practice, transmission or interpretation of the National Heritage values. In particular, these may relate to:

- Conserving the historic huts that are an expression of transhumant grazing, scientific research and water harvesting history in the AANP National Heritage place (criterion G). Conservation of the huts is consistent with the National Heritage values, and will ensure that these attributes can continue to remain in good condition.
- Facilitating the recreational use of the AANP National Heritage place (criteria A and G).
- Facilitating the ongoing traditional practice of vernacular hut maintenance and management (criterion G).
- Facilitating access for community appreciation of the social and aesthetic heritage significance of the place (criteria E and G). The proposed activity will enhance the ability to appreciate the National Heritage aesthetic values by creating facilities and infrastructure to support increased visitation by a potentially broader range of people and abilities, and allow more people to engage in recreational activities in the area.

As stated at Section 5.1, beneficial impacts are not considered under the EPBC Act when determining whether an action needs referral, but may be considered as part of any final assessment and approval.

It is important to balance the beneficial impacts of the proposed action against the adverse impacts. Regardless of the benefits of the project, residual adverse impacts should be minimised as much as possible within the proposed action. Beneficial impacts should be identified and supported through the project delivery.

5.3.3 Summary of impact findings

Based on the assessment of impacts in this report, the following adverse impacts to the National Heritage values have been identified.

Table 5.3 Adverse impacts on National Heritage values.

National Heritage value	Summary of adverse impact findings
Criterion A	• Impacts on natural National Heritage values under this criterion have been assessed as **minor.** – With planned avoidance, design and mitigation measures in place, the impacts of the proposed actions can be reduced to the point where minimal, if any, natural heritage values are likely to be irreversibly lost or notably altered. • Impacts on Indigenous National Heritage values under this criterion associated with moth feasting have been assessed as **minor.** • Impacts on historic National Heritage values under this criterion associated with transhumant grazing have been assessed as **minor to moderate.** • Impacts on historic National Heritage values under this criterion associated with scientific research have been assessed as negligible.

National Heritage value	Summary of adverse impact findings
	• Impacts on historic National Heritage values under this criterion associated with water harvesting have been assessed as negligible. • Impacts on historic National Heritage values under this criterion associated with recreation have been assessed as negligible.
Criterion B	• Impacts on natural National Heritage values under this criterion have been assessed as **minor.** – With planned avoidance, design and mitigation measures in place, the impacts of the proposed actions can be reduced to the point where minimal, if any, natural heritage values are likely to be irreversibly lost or notably altered.
Criterion D	• This National Heritage value is not affected by the proposed action. No impacts will occur.
Criterion E	• Impacts on National Heritage values under this criterion have been assessed as **minor to moderate**.
Criterion G	• Impacts on National Heritage values under this criterion have been assessed as **moderate**.
Criterion H	• Impacts on National Heritage values under this criterion have been assessed as negligible.

Taken at its highest level, the proposed action is likely to have a **moderate** adverse impact on the National Heritage values of the AANP National Heritage place.

On this basis, the likely impacts of the proposed action do not meet the likely significant impact threshold requiring a referral to the Minister for the Environment and Water, based on impacts to the National Heritage values.

Impacts to other, non-heritage protected matters may warrant referral, and are outside the scope of this assessment.

5.4 Recommendations

This HIA concludes that the proposed action, as outlined in Section 4, is likely to have impacts up to moderate severity on the National Heritage values.

To optimise heritage outcomes it is recommended that Parks Victoria further reduces impacts as much as possible by implementing the following recommendations.

5.4.1 Natural heritage values

On the basis of the finding of minor impacts to the natural National Heritage values, there are no recommendations for the safeguarding of natural heritage values over and above the list of policies and impact mitigation measures set out in the FHAC Environmental Assessment (September 2025).

The policies and measures to minimise or mitigate impacts set out in that report that are most relevant to the protection of natural heritage values are as follows:

- Construction planning and management will be undertaken with a commitment to micro-siting to minimise impacts on threatened flora species, impacts to canopy trees and key habitats for threatened fauna species. Specifically, works will be micro-sited to avoid and minimise biodiversity and geodiversity losses.
- Pre-construction surveys:
  - threatened flora—targeted threatened flora surveys;
  - threatened fauna—pre-clearance fauna surveys; and
  - trees—an overall assessment of potential impacts to trees resulting from works.
- Construction Environmental Management Plan:
  - A site-specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to address the following:
    - site induction protocols;
    - pre-construction surveys;
    - timing and scheduling of construction works;
    - site supervision arrangements;
    - vehicle and machinery hygiene;
    - delineation of works areas;
    - 'no-go zone' requirements;
    - vegetation removal prescriptions and controls;
    - Fauna Management Plan; and
    - site design and construction controls to protect sensitive periglacial landforms and deposits.
- Implementation of CEMP during construction:
  - CEMP implementation and monitoring is to follow two guiding principles:
    - 'Building from the trail' where construction activity is confined to the pre-determined construction buffer. This is to apply to both track and OV construction sites.

- Minimisation of disturbance to any native vegetation. This will include clear demarcation of areas of native vegetation to be retained during works.

It is concluded that, with planned avoidance, design and mitigation measures in place, the impacts of the proposed actions can be reduced to the point where minimal, if any, natural heritage values are likely to be irreversibly lost or notably altered.

5.4.2 Indigenous heritage values

To address the minor heritage impact to Indigenous National Heritage values identified in Section 5.2, it is recommended that the conditions and contingency actions in the 2025 CHMP are implemented.

These measures are summarised below. Full detail of the measures is available in the 2025 CHMP:[13]

- Cultural heritage induction—a cultural heritage induction must be completed by all personnel involved in ground disturbing works, before works commence. The induction must be conducted by a registered Heritage Advisor under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) and Traditional Owner groups must be invited to attend.
- Relocation of artefacts on Razorback Track—if the four artefacts of VAHR 8324-0218 (Razorback LDAD) can be relocated, they must be moved outside of any location that will be impacted by the activity before works commence.
- Curation and artefact repatriation protocol—all cultural heritage material recovered during the complex assessment conducted for this CHMP must be securely stored at the offices of the Heritage Advisor until it is repatriated within the activity area.
- Discovery of human remains—follow the protocol outlined at Section 4.1.1 of the 2025 CHMP.
- Discovery of Aboriginal cultural heritage—follow the protocol outlined at Section 4.12 of the 2025 CHMP.
- Custody and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage—follow the processes outlined at Section 4.1.3 of the CHMP.
- Compliance with the CHMP—follow the processes outlined at Section 4.1.5 of the CHMP.

5.4.3 Historic heritage values

To reduce impacts on the historic heritage values identified in Section 5.2 to be as minimal as possible, the following measures are recommended:

- Take opportunities to refine the design for the overnight nodes to minimise impacts on historic (criterion A), aesthetic (criterion E) and social (criterion G) heritage values, particularly at Overnight Node 2 (Westons Hut), by addressing the following issues:

- Minimise the width and number of pathways within the overnight nodes as much as possible and consider design options to ensure paths, pads beneath the communal seating, and other gravel surfaced areas are not visually prominent, e.g. through reduction in size, colour or materials selection.
- Minimise the visual prominence of the camping platforms, communal shelter, and amenities structures as much as possible, e.g. through micro-siting and optimising opportunities for screening through existing vegetation.

- If there are any departures from the scope of works as outlined in this HIA, prepare an updated HIA and seek advice from a suitably qualified heritage expert.
- Prepare a photographic archival record of all overnight nodes, the historic huts and a representative sample of trail works areas, showing the works areas before and after works are undertaken. Ensure the records are stored in a permanent, centralised database for record-keeping.
- Keep alterations to the historic huts as minimal as possible. Repair fabric with traditional materials and techniques as a priority over replacing materials. Only replace existing material if it is in too bad a condition to be repaired, or it is not feasible to maintain for safety reasons.
- Ensure all workers and volunteers (including those working on historic huts) have a heritage induction before commencing work, familiarising them with the National Heritage values, the findings of this HIA, the Burra Charter and its relevant principles, and any other important information.
- In communications, signage and/or interpretation materials for the FHAC, include information on the importance of the National Heritage values in accessible locations, asking visitors to respect these, particularly the aesthetic and social values relating to the unique natural environment, the sense of remoteness and the sounds of the Australian Alps. For example, this could include trailhead signage, printed and online FHAC walk information, and signage at the nodes.
- Ensure signage is placed in locations that will not obstruct or obscure views. Minimise the number of signs as much as possible and avoid duplication. Where existing signs are being replaced, avoid installing larger replacement signs with more visual impact.
- For non-Aboriginal archaeological artefacts, implement an unexpected finds protocol, as outlined in the mitigation measures of the FHAC Environmental Assessment (September 2025).

5.5 Endnotes

[1] Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2008, *Working Together—Managing National Heritage Places.*

[2] Department of the Environment 2013, *Significant impact guidelines 1.2 – Actions on, or impacting upon, Commonwealth land and Actions by Commonwealth Agencies* (Significant Impact Guidelines 1.2), Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, p 3.

[3] e.g. Parks Victoria 2016, Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan; Australian Alps National Park 2015, 'Geology of the Australian Alps', accessed 17 August 2025 <www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/37598216/geology-of-the-australian-alps-australian-alps-national-parks>.

[4] Abzeco, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Environmental Assessment, prepared for Parks Victoria, January 2025.

[5] Adapted from FHAC GIS shapefiles provided by Parks Victoria.

[6] Latitude Heritage, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan #18890, prepared for Parks Victoria, May 2025, p 206.

[7] Latitude Heritage, Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Cultural Heritage Management Plan #18890, prepared for Parks Victoria, May 2025, pp 5, 6.

[8] Burra Charter, Article 3 and 4.

[9] Burra Charter, Article 20.

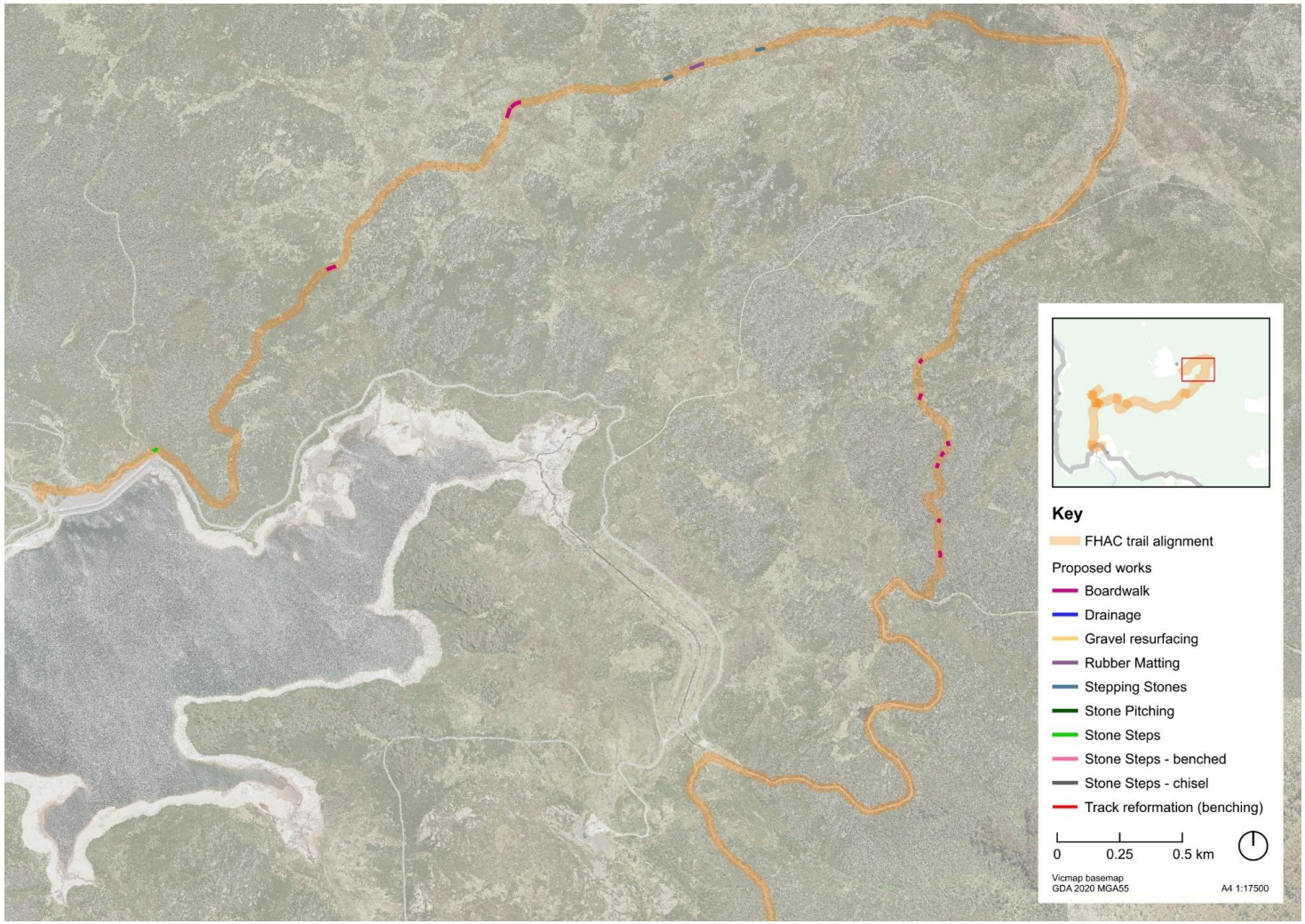
[10] Burra Charter, Article 3.

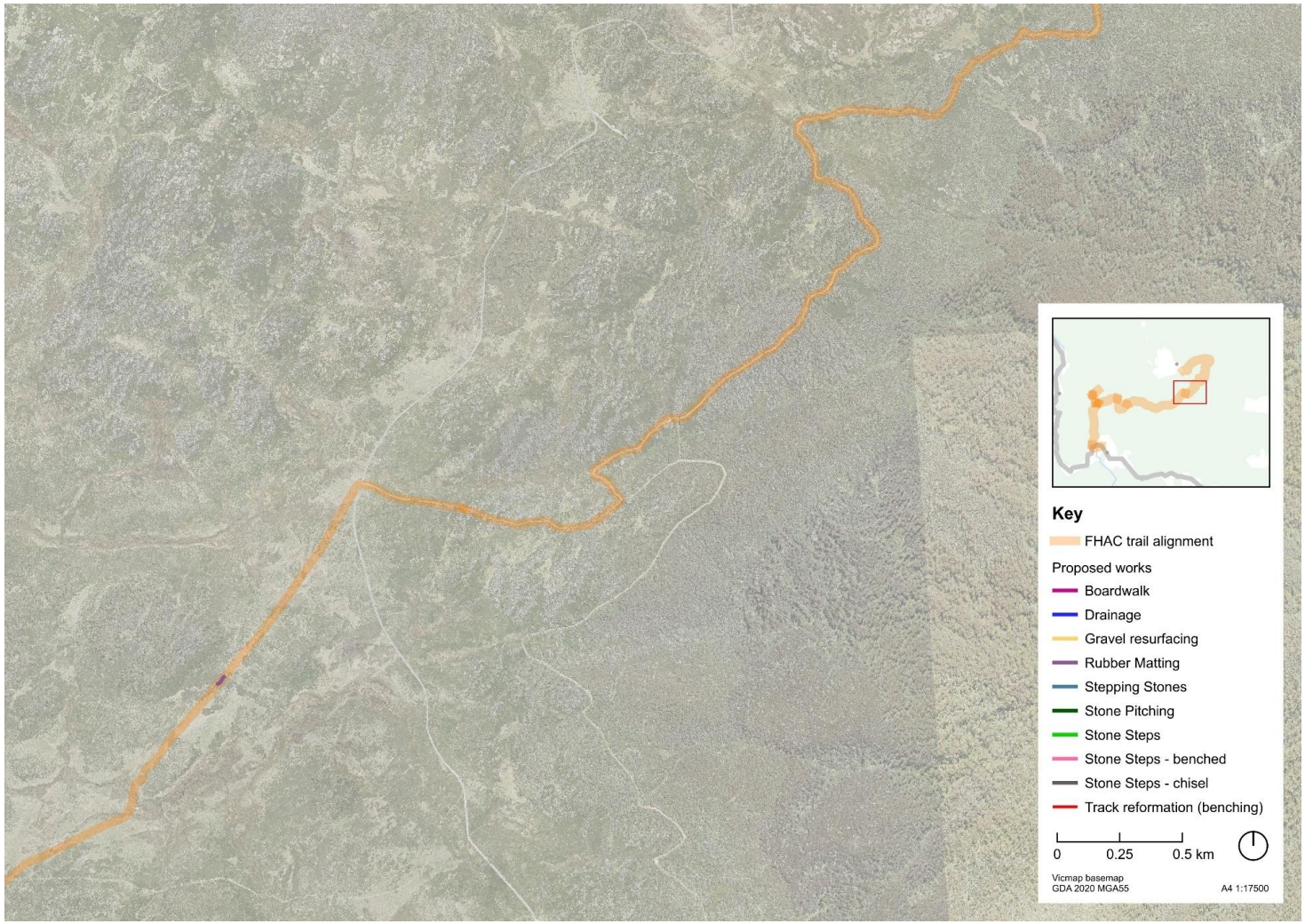
[11] Department of the Environment 2013, Significant Impact Guidelines 1.2, p 16.

[12] Australian Government Department of the Environment, 2013, S*ignificant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance*, p 22.

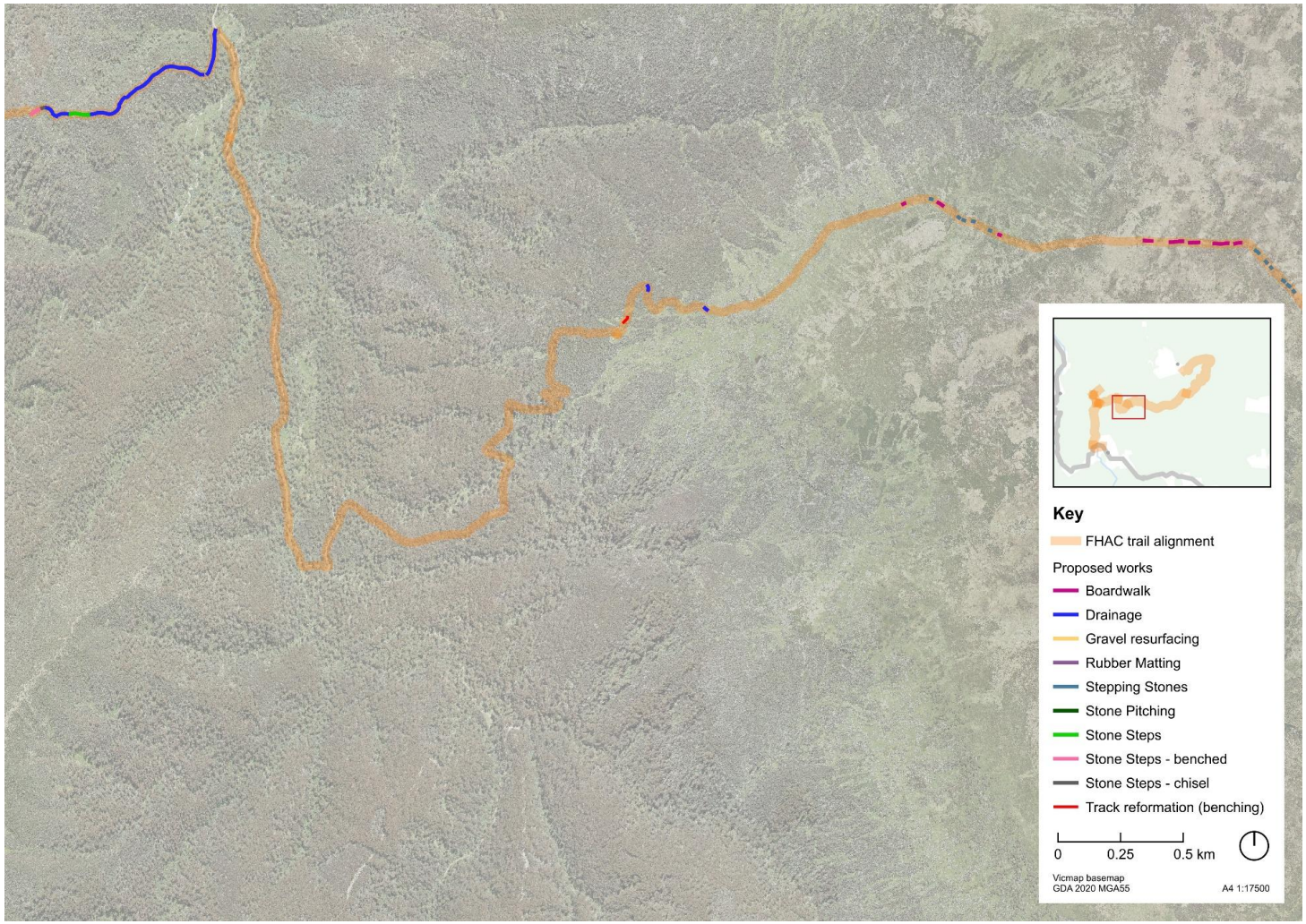
6 Appendices

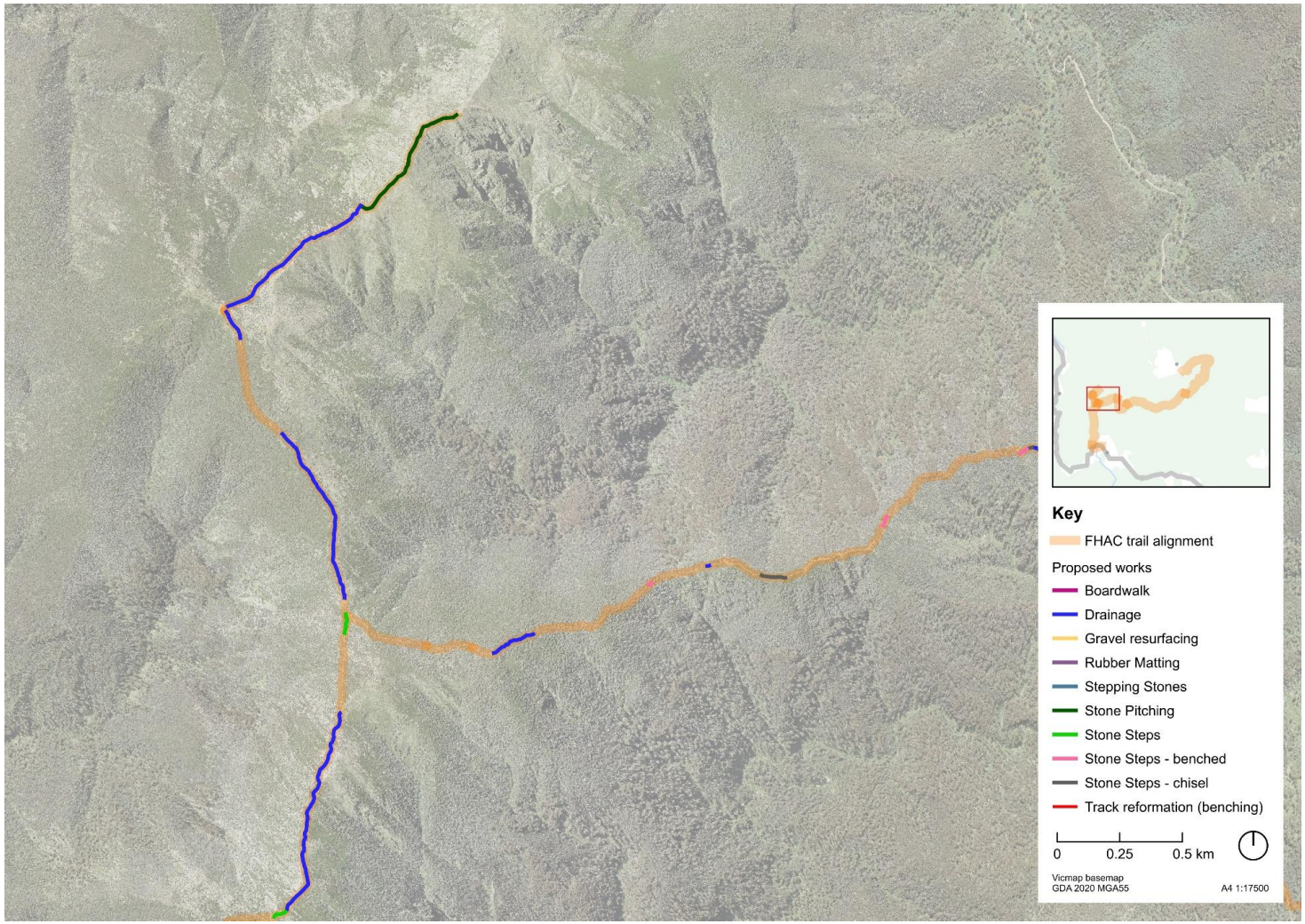
Appendix A—Track upgrades works

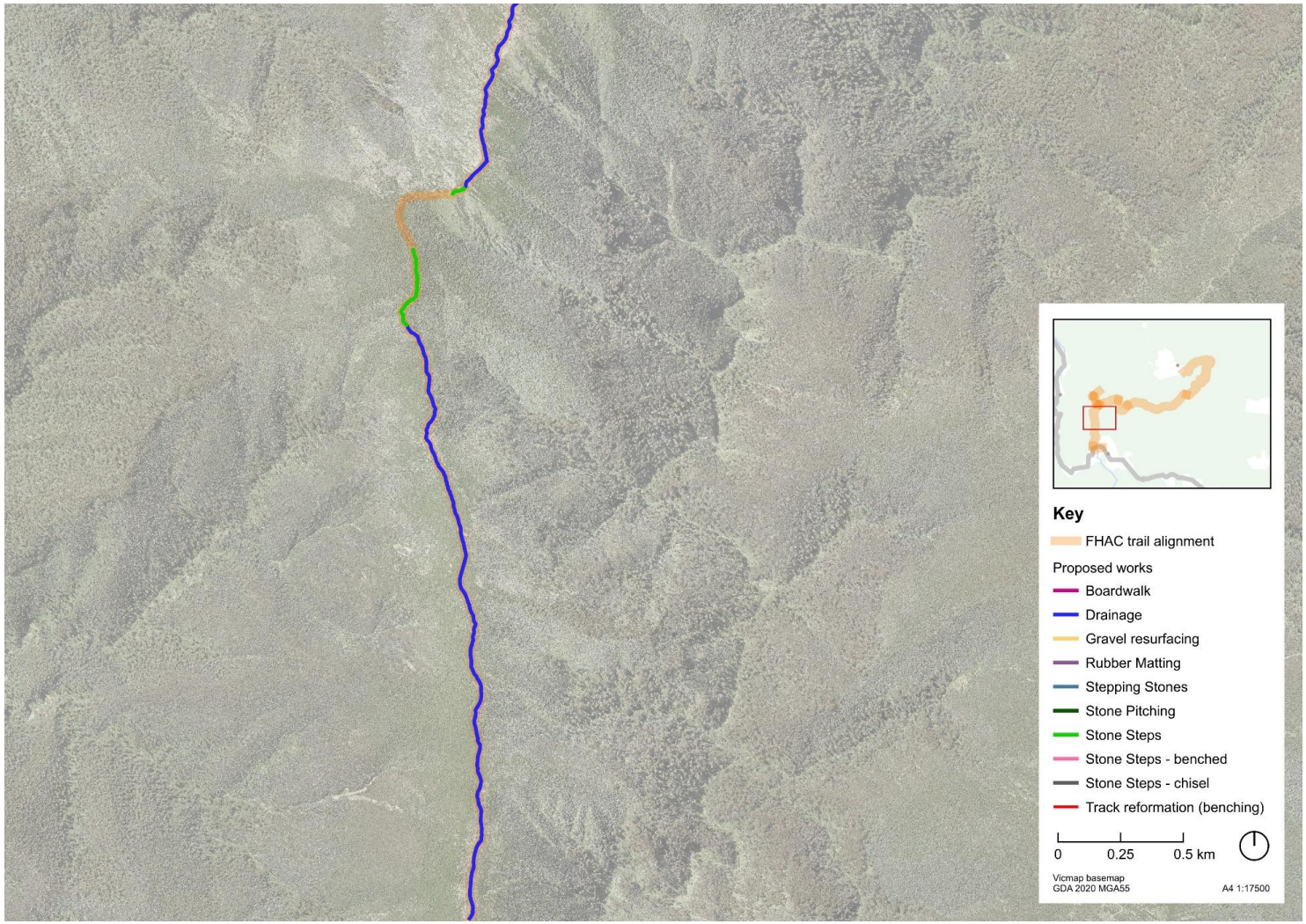

Key
FHAC trail alignment
Proposed works
Boardwalk
Drainage
Gravel resurfacing
Rubber Matting
Stepping Stones
Stone Pitching
Stone Steps
Stone Steps - benched
Stone Steps - chisel
Track reformation (benching)
0
0.25
0.5 km
Vicmap basemap
GDA 2020 MGA55
A4 1:17500


Key
FHAC trail alignment
Proposed works
Boardwalk
Drainage
Gravel resurfacing
Rubber Matting
Stepping Stones
Stone Pitching
Stone Steps
Stone Steps - benched
Stone Steps - chisel
Track reformation (benching)
0
0.25
0.5 km
Vicmap basemap
GDA 2020 MGA55
A4 1:17500


Key
FHAC trail alignment
Proposed works
Boardwalk
Drainage
Gravel resurfacing
Rubber Matting
Stepping Stones
Stone Pitching
Stone Steps
Stone Steps - benched
Stone Steps - chisel
Track reformation (benching)
0
0.25
0.5 km
Vicmap basemap
GDA 2020 MGA55
A4 1:17500


Key
FHAC trail alignment
Proposed works
Boardwalk
Drainage
Gravel resurfacing
Rubber Matting
Stepping Stones
Stone Pitching
Stone Steps
Stone Steps - benched
Stone Steps - chisel
Track reformation (benching)
0
0.25
0.5 km
Vicmap basemap
GDA 2020 MGA55
A4 1:17500


Key
FHAC trail alignment
Proposed works
Boardwalk
Drainage
Gravel resurfacing
Rubber Matting
Stepping Stones
Stone Pitching
Stone Steps
Stone Steps - benched
Stone Steps - chisel
Track reformation (benching)
0
0.25
0.5 km
Vicmap basemap
GDA 2020 MGA55
A4 1:17500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Stone Steps - chisel
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0.5 km
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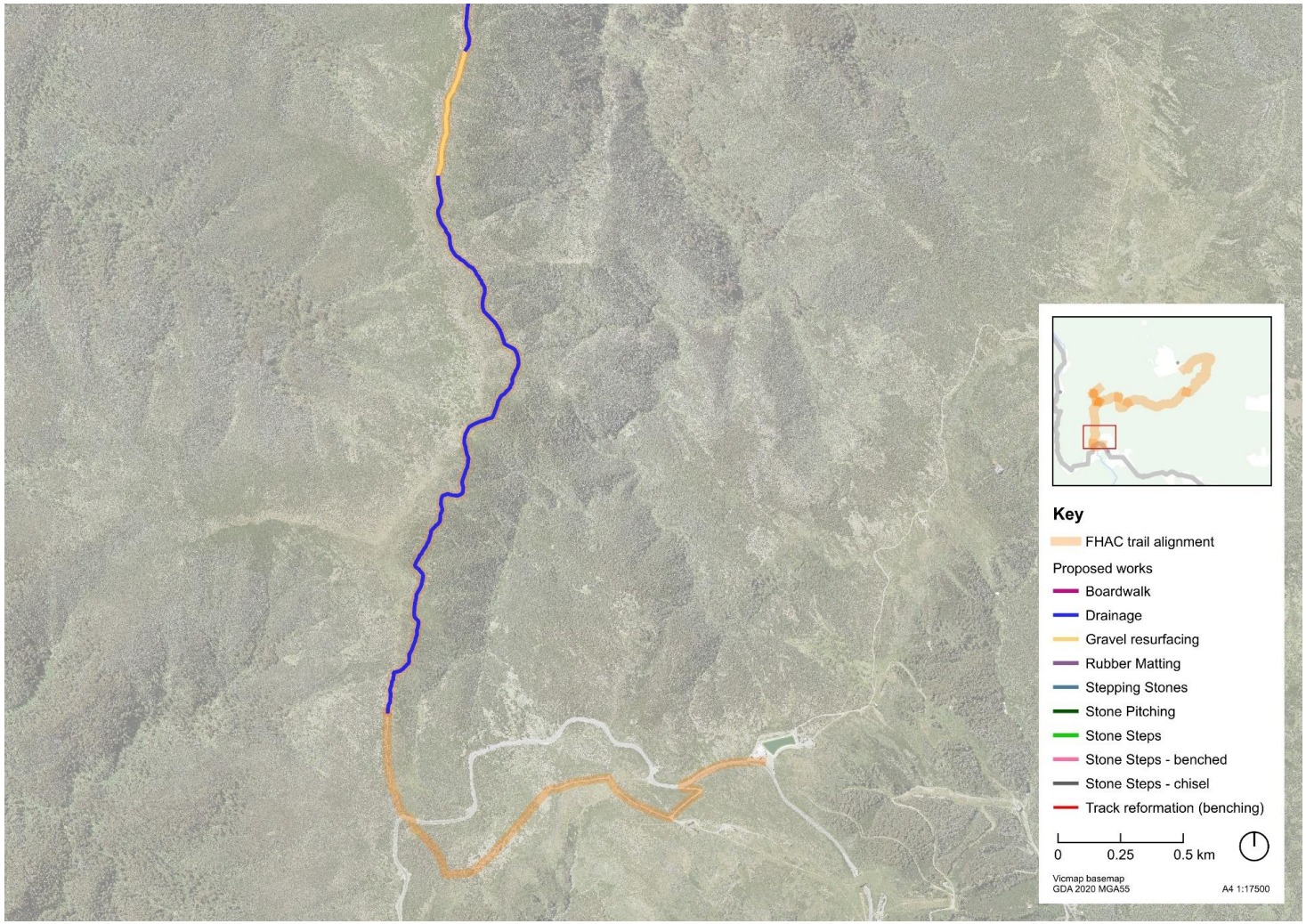
A4 1:17500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