Healthy Parks Healthy People

Rod Newnham
Regional Manager West, Parks Victoria
Europarc conference Stromstad, Sweden, Sep 2009
It’s a simple message

Healthy Parks: environmental benefits achieved through conserving, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and cultural values

Healthy People: health, well being and other societal benefits associated with the range of experiences and opportunities available
The idea is not that new...

“Abundant evidence is available to substantiate the views of city planners, the medical profession, and psychologists that proper outdoor recreation has a most beneficial effect on the health, morals, and business efficiency of communities, and consequently on the national life.”

Metropolitan Town Planning Commission report
Melbourne

1929
Societal, Economic & Environmental Context

- Living in one of the most urbanised societies in the world
- Obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and mental health issues (anxiety & depression) all rising
- Ageing population and 50+ are more active
- Declining social & community connectedness
- Financial Crisis
- Change from Manufacturing to Service Industry
- Growth of Nature Based Tourism
- Climate change! water, biodiversity decline - loss of species, sea level rise, severe weather patterns
Healthy Parks
Healthy People has never been more relevant!

The social, scientific and medical evidence shows parks...

• provide opportunities for...
  - viewing parks and nature
  - being in nature
  - being in contact with plants and animals
  resulting in healthier people
• provide places for connection resulting in healthier people and communities

...deliver a healthier and better society
examples...


reduces stress, heart rate and other CVD risk factors
improves cognitive functioning
improves mental health

Community and cultural identity, caring for country and protection of culture

Healthy Parks
Healthy People
evidence...

www.parkweb.vic.gov.au and go to the link to the Healthy Parks Healthy People research undertaken by Deakin University

www.parksforum.org and go to the IUCN, WCPA, Parks Forum, People & Parks Foundation publication “The Value of Parks”

www.peopleandparks.org and go to its resource centre
Backing the positioning with solid research…
Dr Mardie Townsend, Deakin University
The scientific evidence shows parks….

- Protect our unique biodiversity
- Provide resilience to climate change
- Delivers ecosystem services – clean air, water, etc

…deliver a healthier environment.
evidence...

- Any climate change report you can find...but have a look at [www.garnautreview.org.au](http://www.garnautreview.org.au) and [www.australia2020.gov.au](http://www.australia2020.gov.au) and follow the link to the sustainability section report

- eg.

  5.5 billion tonnes CO2 sequestration through Australian parks (equiv. over 10 years nett emissions)

  Green space offsets ‘heat island’ (reflective effect) of hard urban surfaces

  Value of $3 billion
  Loss = 50% for 50 years
Healthy Parks
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The evidence shows that parks...

• generate significant economic multipliers – events, upstream health budget savings
• enhance residential property values
• are the reservoir for the fastest growing form of world tourism - NBT
• are geographically dispersed

...resulting in jobs and sustainable communities particularly in regional and rural communities
Evidence

- [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au) and go to the link to the Healthy Parks Healthy People research undertaken by Price Waterhouse Coopers on the Value of Parks – Economically

- Examples…
  
  Grampians National Park $250 million pa direct and indirect benefit.

  Victoria’s National Parks $960m to state economy
Healthy Parks
Healthy People …the journey to date

• From strapline

• award winning brand & communications strategy with partners
• growth of the brand nationally & internationally
• “point of difference” for parks industry and relevance in modern society

• To philosophy – the way we run the business and a new parks management direction
Getting people engaged and connected
…getting people engaged and connected (cont…)
Important that staff own the philosophy...
Ranger, Marcia Johns
Building partnerships & alliances

- Endorsement and support from the health industry
- Expert advice and ambassadors
- Partnerships with other organisations – Yachting Victoria, Sporting Shooters, 4WD Victoria, Bushwalking Victoria.....
- Growth in volunteering
...and more...

- adopted by NSW (Super Group), WA (DEC), SA (DEH), ACT
- Canada, USA, NZ
- Parks Forum Agreement
- People & Parks Foundation
- WCPA (IUCN)
The Road Ahead

For over a century the creation and mainstream protection of parks, has been primarily lead by the conservation minded

If we are to realise the full potential of our parks whilst protecting their values we need to bring the worlds of sustainability and public health together to vastly improve our quality of life and wellbeing

We need to imbed Healthy Parks Healthy People in everything we do!
Leading the Way

To catalyse action, Parks Victoria will stage the International *Healthy Parks Healthy People* Congress at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre in April 2010

- Over 1500 delegates from around the world
- Representatives from many disciplines
- Issues cutting across many portfolios