

Hi I'm Deborah Prentice from Parks Victoria in Australia and I work with a fabulous team of people to put the Healthy Parks Healthy People approach into action. I'm sure there's many of you here today who are also working to make this happen.

I am super excited to be here to share the Australian Healthy Parks Healthy People experience and look forward to hearing from the presenters after myself who sound like they have taken Healthy Parks Healthy People and created some fantastic programs. I was equally excited to hear about the new Jumala Communique for Europarc – how amazing to think that what started as a tag line at Parks Victoria about 20 years ago, has become a movement to connect people to nature to increase their health and wellbeing.

So how did it all start?



*If you care for your Country  
your Country cares for you*



Of course while we phrased the line, first Nations communities have known and practiced the connection between nature and human health for a lot longer. I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land from where I am presenting today and pay my respects to their elders past, present and future. Australian Aboriginal communities say that “if you care for country, it cares for you.”

## Our land and marine resources provide the critical ecosystem services to support our health and wellbeing

### Provisioning goods

Water supply  
Raw materials (e.g. Honey)



### Regulating services

Water filtration  
Climate regulation - Carbon storage and sequestration  
Local climate regulation (cooling/air quality)  
Coastal protection  
Flood mitigation  
Genetic diversity  
Pollination



### Cultural services

Landscape Amenity  
Recreational enjoyment  
Tourism  
Physical and mental health  
Cultural and spiritual connection



### Supporting services

Habitats for species



VICTORIA

Even while caring for our respective countries natural areas, and even for people who never go near a parks, we all receive ecosystem services that are vital to our health. These are the foundations of our physical, mental, spiritual and economic health.



So after the marketing tag line Healthy Parks Healthy People worked so well we started attaching programs to it – Pram strolls for parents to get out of the house with their newborn babies, Junior ranger programs for kids and their carers to engage with their local parks, brochures and partnerships.

Then we started to spread the word – around Australia and around the world!

The conservation sector and in particular park management agencies took the idea and grew it and morphed it into all sorts of variations. This slide only indicates a few of the many programs.

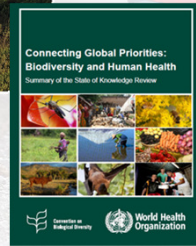
- Changes in **policy** to include human health in environment policies and the benefits and importance of nature imbedded into health policy.
- Increased **research** and evidence backing up what we all know intuitively – that spending time in nature is good for you!
- Awareness and advocacy – like the #Nature For all campaign
- But policy and research only get you so far – so it has been the expansion in **programs, particularly partnership programs** that has really connected people to nature for their health and wellbeing.

Globally, there are several countries that have pushed ahead to create innovative programs that connect communities to nature for health and wellbeing benefits. These include park prescriptions such as Park RX in the U.S, initiatives in Finland, Forest bathing in Japan, Korea and China and, in the UK, nature-based outdoor health programs are now being supported by the national health service.

## Evidence

### Exposure to nature and the outdoors:

- blood pressure ↓
- stress hormones ↓
- heart rate ↓
- mood ↑
- cognitive function ↑
- quality of life ↑
- physical recovery ↑
- immune system ↑
- musculoskeletal strength ↑
- environmental stewardship ↑



*'...The evidence connecting parks and health is substantial, offering strong justification for the promotion of, and investment in, parks as settings that enhance the health and wellbeing of community members across their lifespan....'*



The body of evidence for the connection between healthy environments and positive community health has been well documented.

The health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor exercise and exposure to natural settings has also grown exponentially over the past decade. Not only is there now strong evidence that being in nature is good for us, we also have good evidence that if we spend regular time in nature from when we are young, our behaviours are more likely to be environmentally positive.

# Healthy Parks Healthy People

## Principles

- ☐ Contact with nature is critical for our physical, mental, social and spiritual health.
- ☐ Healthy nature sustains our life, livelihoods and enhances liveability.
- ☐ Conserving parks for present and future generations provides inspirational and therapeutic settings that foster lifelong connections with nature and each other.
- ☐ HPHP is at the foundation of how we manage parks and gives us the opportunity to improve the health of both our parks and communities.



And so it evolved...

For PV, HPHP has evolved become a set of principles and values that provide are the foundation for how we should manage our parks - for the mutual benefit of nature and people.

We have made  
some great  
progress



Here's a bit of a timeline for key events and milestones over the last 10 years.

#### EVENTS & MILESTONES:

Over the last decade, there have been some significant international events that have helped shape the health and nature agenda.

Events drive the partnerships and legacies created there live on beyond the event itself

I'd like to highlight some key milestones along this timeline that have helped shape the health and nature agenda as is presently.

1. The 1<sup>st</sup> Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress 2010
2. The IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014
3. The World Conservation Congress in 2016
4. The 15<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Public Health in 2017
5. The CBD CoP 14 decision on biodiversity and health

NEXT SLIDE: WORLD PARKS CONGRESS AND PROMISE OF SYDNEY



*“The link between ecological health and human health is not a hopeful guess but a proven reality.”*

National Geographic, November 2014



Parks Victoria in collaboration with US National Park Service delivered Stream 3 - Improving health and Well-being.

The overall recommendations was to **unlock the value of parks for our health and well-being while conserving biodiversity**

**National Geographic stated that the link between health and nature was in the top 5 of take home messages for this significant event.**

“As a medical doctor and public health scientist, it is my professional opinion that conservation biologists can actually save more lives and prevent more illness than the health sector.” Dr Johnathon Patz

## IUCN Resolution #64

*“Strengthening cross-sector partnerships to recognise the contributions of nature to health, well-being and quality of life.”*

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai‘i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:

REQUESTS the Director General to work in collaboration with the World Health Organisation to develop global and regional programmes that advance the value of nature, including parks and protected areas, for health and well-being benefits;



IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawaii saw the passing of Resolution #64 which called on the IUCN and WHO to work together to *“strengthen cross sector partnerships to recognise the contributions of nature to health, well-being and quality of life.”*

Parks Victoria led this work but not without the significant contribution of many IUCN members including all Australian states and key international partners in US Canada, Korea, Colombia, Scotland, Finland, NZ and many more.

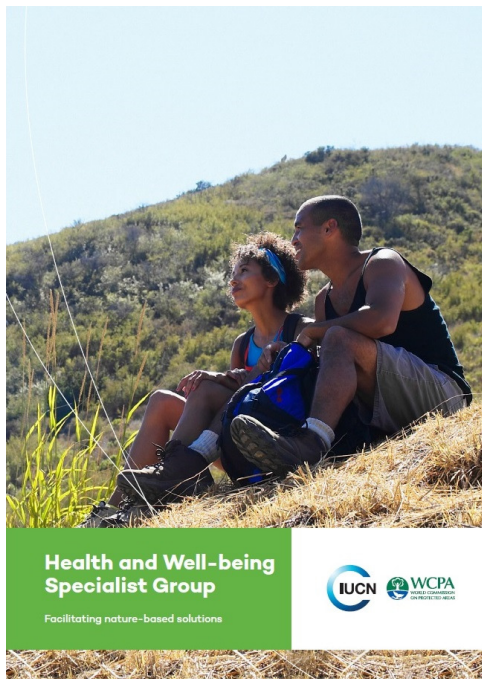
Health & nature focused policy, partnerships and programs is clearly a priority for the IUCN and its members. **This is significant.**

Following on from this, the CoP13 meeting in Cancun Mexico, hosted by the CBD further developed initiatives and recommendations to link biodiversity and human health – in fact it was a key focus of the meeting.

There is also a new motion that has been put forward to WCC 2020 by Europarc Federation supported by many other members ....

At a global scale we have made some in-roads into joined up policy through initiatives such as WCC resolution 64 that seek stronger cross sector partnerships, as well as emerging connections between IUCN, CBD and WHO and others. However we need to do more. Likewise the Planetary Health movement is creating strong messages that connect climate change impacts into the mix. Initiatives such as natural capital accounting are also seeking to measure the impact of loss of ecosystem services.

NEXT SLIDE: HEALTH & WELL-BEING SPECIALIST GROUP



## Areas of Focus

Mainstream health and well-being benefits of nature across sectors.

Facilitate partnerships to influence policies and plans.

Continue to support the building of evidence.

Encourage the development of standard metrics to measure benefits.

My colleague Jo Hopkins is on the IUCN Healthy and Wellbeing Specialist group.

It aims to:

NEXT SLIDE: NATURE IS GOOD MEDICINE

## **Health & Well-being Establishment**

- ToR approved by ExcCo, March 2017.
- Established an Advisory Committee of approx.15 experts from health and environment representing 10 countries.
- Will work closely with ILG (convened by WHO and CBD) as well as other SG's, T/F & Commissions.

Find out details from Jo

## Health & Well-being

### Links across IUCN WCPA & Regions

- #NatureForAll (CEC/WCPA)
- Urban Conservation SG (WCPA)
- Medicinal Plants (SSC)
- Wildlife Health SG (SSC)
- ORO & Planetary Health
- Urban Taskforce (Johnny Hughes)
- CEESP



Jo to add content

## **Health & Well-being**

### **Achievements to date**

- Support of 18 organisations across 10 countries and growing
- Promotional prospectus and webpage
- World Leaders Dialogue at 15<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Public Health with IUCN (President) and WHO (Dr Maria Neira)

## Nature is Good Medicine



Back in Australia,

In 2017, the 15<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Public Health was held in Melbourne. It was an event of many 'firsts...'

It was the first time that the Healthy Parks Healthy People approach was delivered in the context of a 'public health congress' rather than a 'conservation' congress.

This was also the first time that the IUCN and the WHO jointly delivered a World Leadership Dialogue titled **Nature is Good Medicine** where an expert panel discussed the **benefits of nature for human health and well-being**.

It was also the first time that a state **Biodiversity Strategy (Bio 37)** was released in the context of a congress on public health!

NEXT SLIDE: VICTORIAN MEMO FOR HEALTH AND NATURE






## Victorian Memorandum for Health and Nature, 2017

*“..Ensure that we can maximise the physical and mental health benefits to all Victorians of spending time in, enjoying and actively caring for the environment.”*

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/victorian-memorandum-for-health-and-nature>






Locally some governments have actively started to more actively join up health and nature. In Victoria we have the Victorian Memorandum for Health and Nature, co-signed by the Ministers for Health and Environment in 2017; In SA we also have seen high level government agreements bringing stronger links between health and nature .

Also announced at this event was the **Victorian Memorandum for Health and Nature 2017** was personally released by the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change at the opening of the **15<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Public Health 2017**, in partnership with the Hon. Jill Hennessy, Minister for Health.

This pledges the government to working in collaboration across the environment and health portfolios to deliver better health outcomes for communities and better outcomes for the environment. This event directly translated in to positive action and outcomes for Victoria...\$80M in funding.

There is now **strong policy recognition in Victoria**, with the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2021* and *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037*, both recognising the importance of nature for health and wellbeing.

## Health & Well-being

### What's next?

- Build engagement with members and health sector
- Collaborate to make impact, influence which result in outcomes at key events  
(e.g.: EcoHealth , World Urban Parks, Communities Conservation and Livelihoods )
- Framework for integrated health and nature policy and programs with government
- Utilize Panorama

Ask Jo and then delete



## Nature-based health and wellbeing programs

Previous slides showed a few examples of programs from around the world, I'll finish off with an example from Parks Victoria.

So, we have done much of the foundational work in policy development, we've built the evidence and we've advocated for the benefits of nature.

Although there's always more you can do in policy and evidence, our main focus now is on programs.



A good program according to me involves mutually beneficial partnerships.

In Victoria we are actively partnering with many community and health organisations to activate the benefits of parks for physical and mental health. These are just some of our partnerships – I’m sure you have many of your own examples.



The partnerships can be across these four main strategic priorities. A lot of the physical settings and facilities will be in our parks, some will be shared with local government/councils or even private organisations. A partnership with an accessibility organisation would provide input into how to design settings and facilities to support nature-based health;

Partnering in delivery of on-ground programs or events might mean working with Heritage organisations to put on an Heritage event in our parks thus attracting people who otherwise might not visit parks ;

Partnering with health organisations means we can tailor the message of Healthy Parks Healthy People to health professionals so they can promote the benefits of parks message to their clients or patients. This is providing quality information and resources.

And partnering with academic organisations to continue to build evidence and advocacy.

# Walking



## Walking

SEMPHN

Nellie

SMRC – beyond the mainstream culture to include the nearly 50% of the Victorian population who come from outside Australia

Welcome Walks and suite of volunteer led walking offers.