



**NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service**

# **Blue Mountains National Park and Kanangra-Boyd National Park**

**Plan of management**



# Acknowledgement of Country

The parks covered in this plan are part of an ancient landscape that includes the Aboriginal people. The areas now known as Blue Mountains National Park and Kanangra-Boyd National Park and their surrounding lands and connecting watercourses have traditionally been under the care of the Gundungurra, Dharug, Wiradjuri, Dharawal and Darkinjung Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal people have a deep spiritual and cultural connection to this Country. Their ancestors have lived here for thousands of years, and in doing so, form part of this living landscape.

Connections to Country and the significance of these parks to Aboriginal peoples – past, present and future – are acknowledged and respected. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service acknowledges and supports the role of Aboriginal people in identifying traditional connections and custodians for this place.

## What is 'Country'?

'Country' refers to all parts of the natural environment and these parts cannot be separated. This means that the land, water, animals and plants are viewed as one, and they form Aboriginal peoples' cultural and spiritual identity.

Aboriginal people develop intimate knowledge and connections with places, animals, plants and landscapes which create an interdependence with nature that is based on respect. Aboriginal people care for Country through ceremony, cultural activities, sharing stories of songlines and maintaining connections with the world around them.



Photo 1 Kanangra-Boyd National Park. Simone Cottrell/DCCEEW

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## Summary

**This plan of management was adopted by the Minister for Environment, the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, on 30 July 2024.**

The Blue Mountains National Park and Kanangra-Boyd National Park are located approximately 100 km west of Sydney (Figure 1). These parks are reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act) and are managed to achieve the objects of this Act (see Appendix A). These objects are centred on conserving the natural and cultural values of the parks, as well as fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of these values.

This plan describes how the parks will be managed to achieve the objects of the NPW Act, consistent with the management principles under the Act for national parks.

The plan was developed after consideration of the matters listed under section 72AA of the NPW Act, several workshops focused on the management of recreational issues, and after consultation with Blue Mountains Regional Advisory Committee, Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage Advisory Committee, Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) parties and WaterNSW.

Sections 1 to 8 of the plan summarise the parks' key values, management principles and management considerations. These matters are outlined thoroughly in the *Blue Mountains National Park and Kanangra-Boyd National Park planning considerations* report. The authorised activities tables (Section 8) set out the recreational and commercial activities that are permitted in the park and any requirements to undertake these activities. The scheme of operations (Section 9) describes desired objectives and the proposed management operations.

The plan replaces the *Blue Mountains National Park plan of management* and the *Kanangra-Boyd National Park plan of management* which were both adopted in 2001. All future operations will be consistent with the replacement plan. The plan will also apply to any future additions to these parks.

## Acknowledgements

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) acknowledges the Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks and their surrounding lands and connecting watercourses are the Country of Aboriginal custodians who continue to maintain a connection and care for the lands in the national parks.

This plan of management was prepared by NPWS staff.

# Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks plan of management

## Contact us

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## **Our vision for the parks**

The outstanding beauty, rich heritage and globally important biodiversity of the parks is preserved and the living cultures of the Aboriginal peoples of this place are protected, respected and celebrated. The parks continue to make a significant contribution to the ecosystem health of the largest interconnected area of protected bushland in New South Wales.

People visiting the parks have the opportunity to enjoy a myriad of outstanding nature-based experiences that can help them connect with the culture of this Country, its World Heritage and National Heritage values, its wild and scenic landscapes, and develop a sense of stewardship for this special place.



**Photo 2 View across the Grose Wilderness, Blue Mountains National Park. David Noble/DCCEEW**



# Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks plan of management

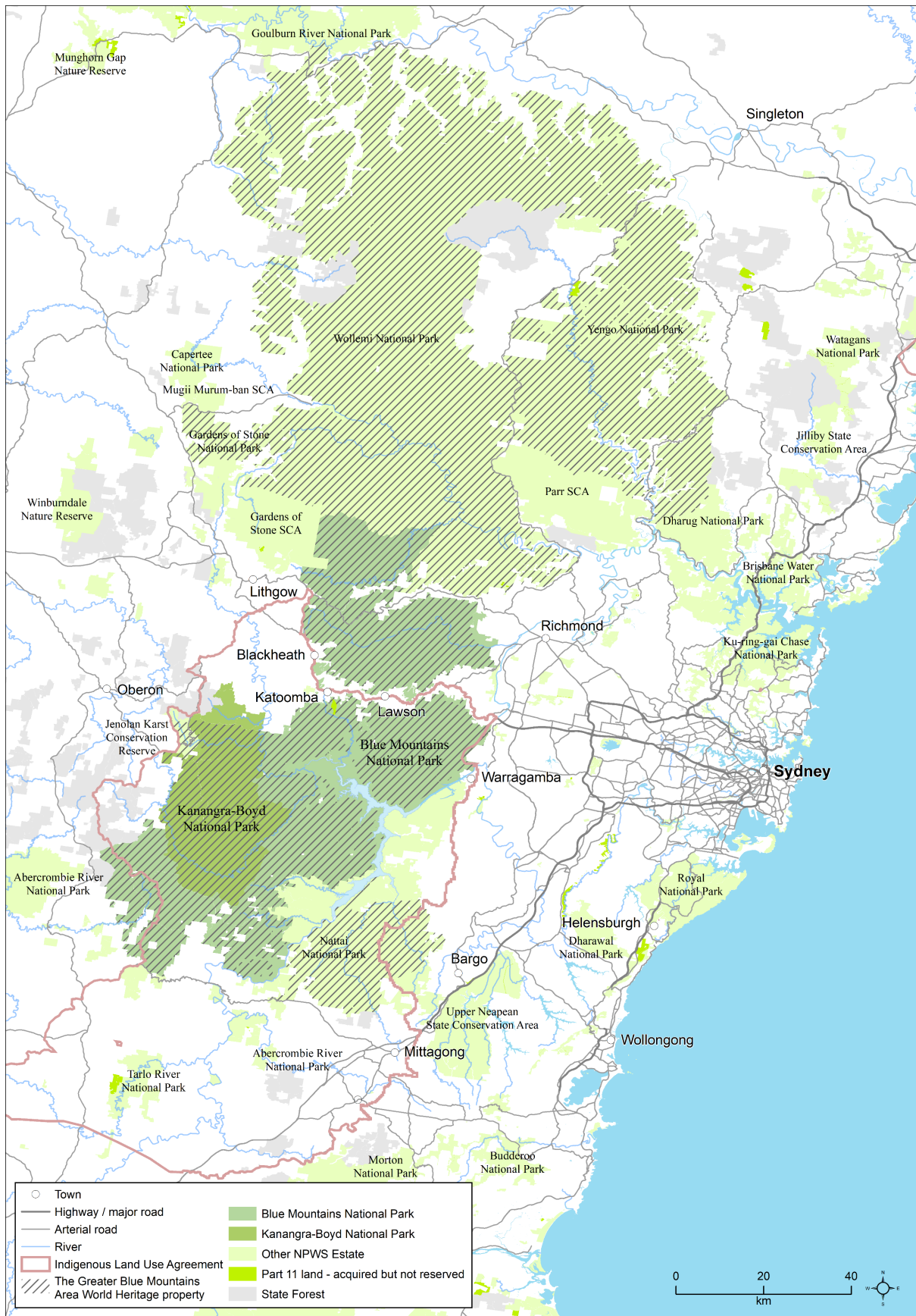


Figure 1 Location of the parks

# Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks

## Why these parks are important

Covering an area of over 340,000 ha, Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks (referred to collectively as 'the parks' in this plan) are a significant component of Country and protect one of the largest and most intact stretches of protected bushland in New South Wales (NSW). The parks are of particular importance because:

- The parks form the core component of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property which is also on the National Heritage List.
- Aboriginal people of the Dharug, Gundungurra, Wiradjuri, Dharawal and Darkinjung language groups retain traditional knowledge and obligations to care for their Country, as they have for thousands of years. There is significant and extensive archaeological evidence of their long association with Country in the parks.
- The parks display spectacular scenery and a range of dramatic geological features of state and national significance, including the escarpments, benched cliffs, narrow slot canyons, pagoda rock formations, waterfalls and karst environments.
- The parks contain a number of rivers and catchments that play an important role in protecting water quality in Lake Burragorang, the Cascade Creek dams and water supply to metropolitan Sydney and the Blue Mountains region.
- Parts of the Grose, Kowmung and Wollangambe rivers, which run through the parks, are declared wild rivers in recognition of their near-pristine condition.
- The parks include a diversity of environments, an unusually wide range of plant and animal species and ecological communities, as well as a large number of threatened, rare and restricted species:
  - of particular significance is the diversity in the *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* genera
  - the habitats for more than 58 threatened plant species, 11 threatened ecological communities and at least 53 threatened animal species are protected in the parks
  - the parks contain several areas declared to be assets of intergenerational significance due to their importance for biodiversity
  - several fossil sites occur in the parks, and many of the species are considered 'living fossils' with lineages to the time of Gondwana, providing an important record of the evolution of species and ecological communities and their adaptation to changing climate conditions.
- The Greater Blue Mountains region is one of the major nature-based tourism destinations in Australia and the parks are a major focus for local, domestic and international tourism, and for a range of recreation activities.
- The parks contain large wilderness areas and provide some of the most extensive but accessible wild places in New South Wales, offering opportunities for solitude, reflection and self-reliant recreation, including the Grose and Kanangra-Boyd wilderness areas and part of the Wollemi Wilderness.
- The parks have a unique value for research across a range of disciplines including biology, palaeontology, archaeology, geology, tourism and social sciences. They have particular value for understanding the influence of landscape-scale processes, such as climate change and fire, and provide valuable opportunities for the study of wilderness

## Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks plan of management

as a benchmark against which environmental changes in more modified landscapes can be better understood.

- The parks have very high educational value, and numerous organised education activities take place, including many NPWS-led activities.
- With a very large percentage of visitors coming to the Blue Mountains region to experience nature and protected areas, the parks provide a range of socioeconomic benefits at local, regional and national scales.
- The parks have social value through their role in inspiring both the development of the conservation movement in New South Wales, and the continued emergence of environmental advocates.

**Table 1 The parks and their regional setting**

Features	Description
Area	344,045 ha (Blue Mountains 269,332 ha; Kanangra-Boyd 74,713 ha)
Reservation date	Blue Mountains National Park was first declared on 25 September 1959 under the <i>Crown Lands Consolidation Act 1913</i> and then reserved under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967</i> on that Act's commencement in October 1967.  Kanangra-Boyd National Park was first reserved on 3 December 1969. The reservation of approximately 16,385 ha of Blue Mountains National Park is depth-limited (to between 15 and 152 m). There is no depth limitation to the reservations of Kanangra-Boyd National Park.
Previous tenure	Crown and public parks, private land
Biogeographic region	South Eastern Highlands and the Sydney Basin bioregions
Other relevant authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathurst, Deerubbin, Pejar and Tharawal local Aboriginal land councils</li> <li>• WaterNSW</li> <li>• Greater Sydney, Central Tablelands and South East Local Land Services regions</li> <li>• Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Oberon, Wollondilly, Upper Lachlan and Penrith local government areas</li> </ul>

## Management principles

Development of the objectives, actions and regulations in this plan has been directed by the management principles outlined in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act).

The NPW Act requires that a national park be managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem function, protect geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena and maintain natural landscapes
- conserve places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value
- protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations
- promote public appreciation and understanding of the national park's natural and cultural values
- provide for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values

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- having regard to the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values:
  - provide for the sustainable use (including adaptive reuse) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.



**Photo 3** Mount Hay summit walking track. Stephen Alton/DCCEEW

# 1. Legal overlays and agreements

The Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks are part of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property which is also on the National Heritage List. They contain significant areas of wilderness, occupy a large part of the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment, and are one of the key attractions in a major tourism region. As a result, the management of these parks sits within a broader landscape planning context.

Management of these parks is subject to the provisions of the NPW Act and NPW Regulation and other NSW and Commonwealth legislation (Appendix A).

Declarations under other NSW and Commonwealth Acts (described below) establish a complex legislative framework that applies to the management of these parks.

## 1.1 Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement

The Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) is an agreement made under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). Registered with the National Native Title Tribunal in 2015, the ILUA acknowledges the Gundungurra People's custodianship, use and management of their traditional lands and waters across an area of about 6,942 km<sup>2</sup> (694,200 ha), including parts of the Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks and a further 19 parks (see Figure 1).

The ILUA is a 'non-native title' agreement, with the claimants agreeing to withdraw their native title claim on registration of the agreement. The Gundungurra People are non-exclusively recognised as the appropriate source of Aboriginal cultural and heritage advice to NSW Government authorities for land covered by the agreement area. The ILUA has established a Gundungurra Consultative Committee that may make recommendations to NPWS on the care, control and management of the parks in the agreement area. The ILUA also specifies a range of matters that require notification to the ILUA parties.

## 1.2 Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property

The Greater Blue Mountains Area was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 for its Outstanding Universal Value, meaning its natural significance is so exceptional 'as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity' (UNESCO 2021).

World Heritage places have been inscribed on the World Heritage List to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

The Greater Blue Mountains Area is a deeply incised sandstone tableland dominated by temperate eucalypt forest and covering over 1 million hectares. Almost all of Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks are within the World Heritage property, and together these parks form about 30% of the World Heritage property (see Figure 1).

The Greater Blue Mountains Area satisfies 2 of the natural criteria for World Heritage listing. It contains:

- outstanding examples of ongoing ecological and biological processes significant in the evolution of Australia's highly diverse ecosystems and communities of plants and animals, particularly eucalypt-dominated ecosystems

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- significant natural habitats for the in situ conservation of biological diversity, including the eucalypt and eucalypt-dominated communities, taxa with Gondwana affinities, and taxa of conservation significance.

The parks contain specific examples of the **Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)** of the Greater Blue Mountains Area including:

- a very high diversity of plant communities, including eucalypt-dominated forests and heaths, upland swamps, rainforests, alpine and subalpine communities
- a very high concentration of iconic sclerophyll species, particularly in the Myrtaceae (especially eucalypts) and Fabaceae (including acacia) families
- threatened, rare or endemic taxa
- numerous taxa with Gondwanan affinities, such as the primitive gymnosperm known as the dwarf mountain pine, found on cliff edges in Blue Mountains National Park and regarded as having outstanding significance in representing the evolution of plant life
- relict Gondwanan flora surviving in protected moist gullies, juxtaposed with post-Gondwanan sclerophyll flora on the slopes and ridges, which represent examples of important stages in the climatic, geological and biological evolution of Australia.

The biodiversity values are complemented by numerous other values, including Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage values, geodiversity, water systems, wilderness, recreation and natural beauty.

World Heritage properties are managed in accordance with Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention. Their management is guided by the World Heritage provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) and the management principles in its regulations; that is, to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations the World Heritage values.

The *Greater Blue Mountains Area strategic plan* was prepared to fulfill these responsibilities and establishes a framework for the integrated management, protection, interpretation and monitoring of the Greater Blue Mountains Area. The strategic plan identifies the key threats to the OUV as climate change; inappropriate fire regimes; feral animals, weeds and pathogens; unmanaged visitor impacts, and activities outside the boundaries of the property. While fire is a natural event the devastating fires in the Greater Blue Mountains in 2019–20 have raised new challenges for the World Heritage property, including impacts on species that are attributes of the parks' OUV.

In 2007, the Greater Blue Mountains Area, along with several other World Heritage properties in Australia, were added to Australia's National Heritage List through a process of aligning World Heritage criteria with the National Heritage criteria.

The National Heritage List is established under the EPBC Act to list places of natural, historic and Indigenous places that are of outstanding national heritage value to the Australian nation.

### 1.3 Regulated catchments and special areas

Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks include large parts of the **Sydney Drinking Water Catchment** and **Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment**. These catchments are 'regulated catchments' under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021*. Construction and maintenance of infrastructure, such as management trails, and other management activities are subject to additional assessment and environmental considerations. These relate to water quality and quantity, aquatic ecology, flooding and (outside the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) recreation and public access.

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To protect water quality in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment, a key consideration is whether the activity will have a neutral or beneficial effect (NorBE) on water quality consistent with the WaterNSW NorBE guideline. These planning provisions help ensure important water quality, ecological and catchment values are considered and protected in management and approval decisions for new infrastructure works.

'**Special areas**', established under the *Water NSW Act 2014*, are lands surrounding some drinking water supply storages. They are established to protect the quality of stored waters and/or maintain the ecological integrity of the surrounding lands.

Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks include approximately 141,700 ha of special areas, including the Warragamba Special Area, established in 1942; and Blackheath, Katoomba and Woodford special areas, established in 1991 (Figure 2).

The special areas are subject to the provisions of the Water NSW Act and Regulations. In accordance with the Water NSW Act, the special areas are jointly managed by WaterNSW and NPWS. The *Special areas strategic plan of management* outlines the responsibilities of each agency.

In order to protect water quality, the Water NSW Regulation restricts access to and use of the special areas. WaterNSW has the primary regulatory responsibility for managing access to the special areas and is assisted by NPWS to implement these responsibilities. Public access is regulated in accordance with the following schedules:

- **Schedule 1: No entry** – the lands immediately surrounding the water storages (includes around 35,000 ha of Blue Mountains National Park surrounding Lake Burragorang, the Cascade Creek dams, Lake Medlow and Lake Woodford). Public entry is generally not permitted, however, WaterNSW has provided consent for public vehicle access to McMahons Point Lookout, foot access via the Mount Mouin-Mount Cookem corridor in the Warragamba Special Area, and some parts of the Woodford Special Area are open for recreational use.
- **Schedule 2: Restricted access** – a buffer zone that generally adjoins Schedule 1 lands (includes over 80,000 ha of Blue Mountains National Park and over 26,400 ha of Kanangra-Boyd National Park). Bushwalking, camping and use of non-powered watercraft are generally allowed. Restrictions apply to vehicles, motorised vessels, cycling and horses.

### 1.4 Wilderness areas

Wilderness areas are large, natural and mostly intact areas of land that are declared, protected and managed under the *Wilderness Act 1987*. Around 48% of Blue Mountains National Park and 80% of Kanangra-Boyd National Park is declared wilderness (see Figure 2) including:

- **Wollemi Wilderness** – 25,844 ha of the northern part of Blue Mountains National Park (also extends into the neighbouring Wollemi National Park)
- **Grose Wilderness** – 47,900 ha of the upper Grose Valley of Blue Mountains National Park
- **Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness** – 125,000 ha of Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks, and one of the largest and most rugged wilderness areas in New South Wales.

While the term wilderness often has connotations of undisturbed places, this is a landscape that has been lived in by Aboriginal people for thousands of years. It contains evidence of this occupation and sites that are important to Aboriginal people. The Grose and Kanangra-Boyd wilderness areas hold historic and social significance in terms of the conservation

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movement in New South Wales and the establishment of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property.

Wilderness in the parks is managed to conserve natural features and processes, with a minimum of human interference other than feral animal, weed and fire management to improve ecological outcomes. Aboriginal and historic features must be conserved in accordance with the NPW Act, the *Heritage Act 1977* and the Burra Charter. Public understanding of the values of wilderness and the basis for wilderness management are promoted, and low-impact bushwalking practices are encouraged.

Wilderness areas must be able to provide opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation. Rather than excluding human use, use of wilderness areas is regulated and certain uses are allowed where they are consistent with protecting values. Within the parks' wilderness areas, formed trails are limited but there are basic walking tracks and walking routes and bush camping (i.e. camping outside of designated camping areas) is generally permitted, except in the Schedule 1 special areas as outlined in Section 1.3. There are 3 designated camping areas within the wilderness areas (see Section 5.3)

The Grose and Kanangra-Boyd wilderness areas are among the most accessible wilderness areas in New South Wales and are experiencing increasing pressure for recreational use. Inappropriate recreational use can affect wilderness values. Generally, no visitor facilities will be provided in wilderness, and visitor management will focus on education and the promotion of minimal impact behaviours.

Consideration may be given to management works and minor infrastructure where necessary for environmental protection and visitor safety, and where there are no feasible alternatives. For example, a number of regularly used bush camping sites are on recognised multi-day walking routes (including Burra Korain in the Grose Wilderness, and Mobbs Swamp and Dex Creek in the Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness). Although these sites are small, they are experiencing increasing use and associated impacts, including inappropriate disposal of human waste, vegetation trampling and gradual expansion of the 'footprint' of camp sites. Management works to reduce these impacts may include erosion control, vegetation management on walking routes and the installation of toilet facilities with fly-in – fly-out tanks.



Photo 4 Gang gang cockatoo, Kanangra-Boyd National Park. Michaela Jones/DCCEEW



# Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks plan of management

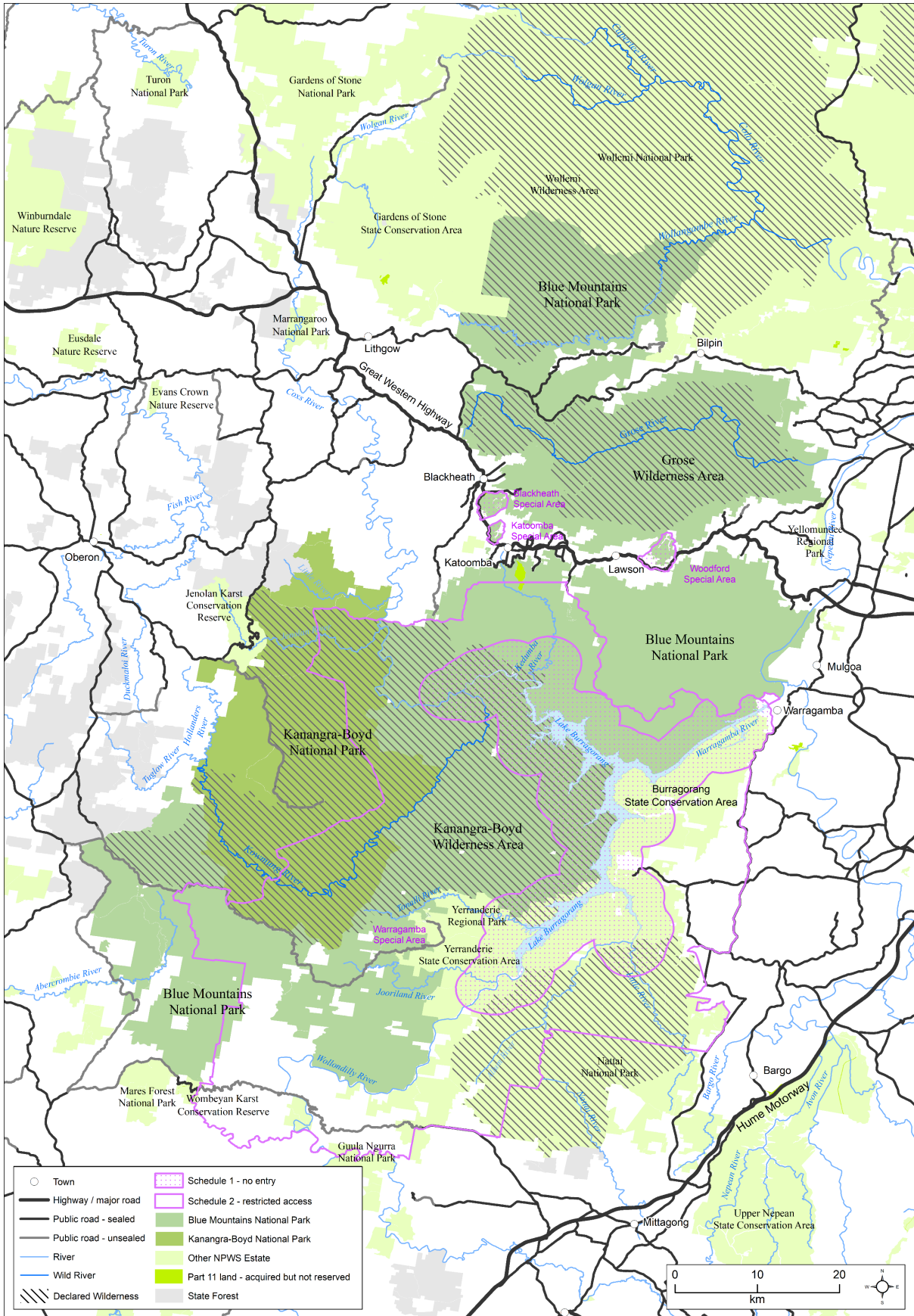


Figure 2 Legal overlays and agreements

### 2. Caring for Country

Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks and their surrounding lands and connected watercourses are in the traditional Country of a number of Aboriginal language groups, including the **Gundungurra, Dharug, Wiradjuri, Dharawal and Darkinjung Aboriginal peoples**. While the boundaries of the parks do not reflect any traditional boundaries of Aboriginal Country, it is understood that the parks are mostly in Gundungurra and Dharug Country. The land, water, animals, plants and landscapes in the parks have **traditional and contemporary significance** for local Aboriginal communities. Distinct culture, language and practice are recognised between the language groups and there is also overlap geographically and through family relationships.

The landscape of the Greater Blue Mountains is the product of long-term and complex interrelationships between people and the environment, with archaeological excavations at Kings Tableland providing evidence of human occupation from at least 22,000 years ago.

The pre- and post-contact story of Aboriginal people in the Greater Blue Mountains is preserved in artefacts, including deposits in open sites and rock shelters, stone implements, modified trees, factory sites for tool production, axe-grinding grooves and extensive artwork, including drawn, painted and stencilled images. The recorded examples of Aboriginal rock art, which relate to Aboriginal stories, have strong connections with Aboriginal language groups, and provide a tangible basis for the **link between Aboriginal people and Country** today. There is a living Aboriginal culture with the Aboriginal community actively involved in caring for Country, park management and education.

The parks contain **Aboriginal places**, declared under the NPW Act, which are culturally sensitive sites of special significance to Aboriginal people. The places include Kings Tableland, Three Sisters, Red Hands Cave and Euroka 'Nye Gnoring'.

Aboriginal heritage and connection to nature are inseparable from each other and need to be managed in an integrated manner across the landscape. NPWS acknowledges these parks as a **cultural landscape** where we aim to: protect natural and cultural values; recognise, respect and sustain traditional and contemporary connections to the land; and engage local Aboriginal people in caring for Country.

The Aboriginal cultural context and the longevity of Aboriginal connection with the land, as expressed in custodial relationships, rock art and occupation sites contribute to the integrity of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property and complement its Outstanding Universal Value.

'Natural resources need to be recognised as cultural resources; there is no separation between the two for Aboriginal people.'

Comment from Aboriginal person at the Living Country Culture Camp, Jenolan Caves, 2009

NPWS will continue to consult with Aboriginal people on the care and management of Country and will support **joint management arrangements**, including the Gundungurra ILUA, which applies to a significant portion of the parks (see Section 1.1). In accordance with the terms of the ILUA, NPWS recognises the Gundungurra People as being appropriate people to make recommendations to NPWS on the care, control and management of those parts of the parks subject to the ILUA.

Recreation activities in the parks, particularly adventure recreation undertaken on cliff lines and rock faces, have potential to damage Aboriginal cultural heritage values. At popular climbing sites NPWS will assess potential for impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage values, monitor high risk sites and prevent or mitigate impacts where they are occurring.

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There is potential to enhance the identity of these parks as an Aboriginal cultural landscape, including activating cultural tourism and incorporating Aboriginal language in the naming of places, signage and interpretation. There are opportunities for Aboriginal communities to further promote, interpret and share culture in the parks.

The Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the parks are being assessed for potential inclusion on Australia's National Heritage List.

NPWS will continue to enhance and expand knowledge of the natural and cultural values of the parks and their management through research, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

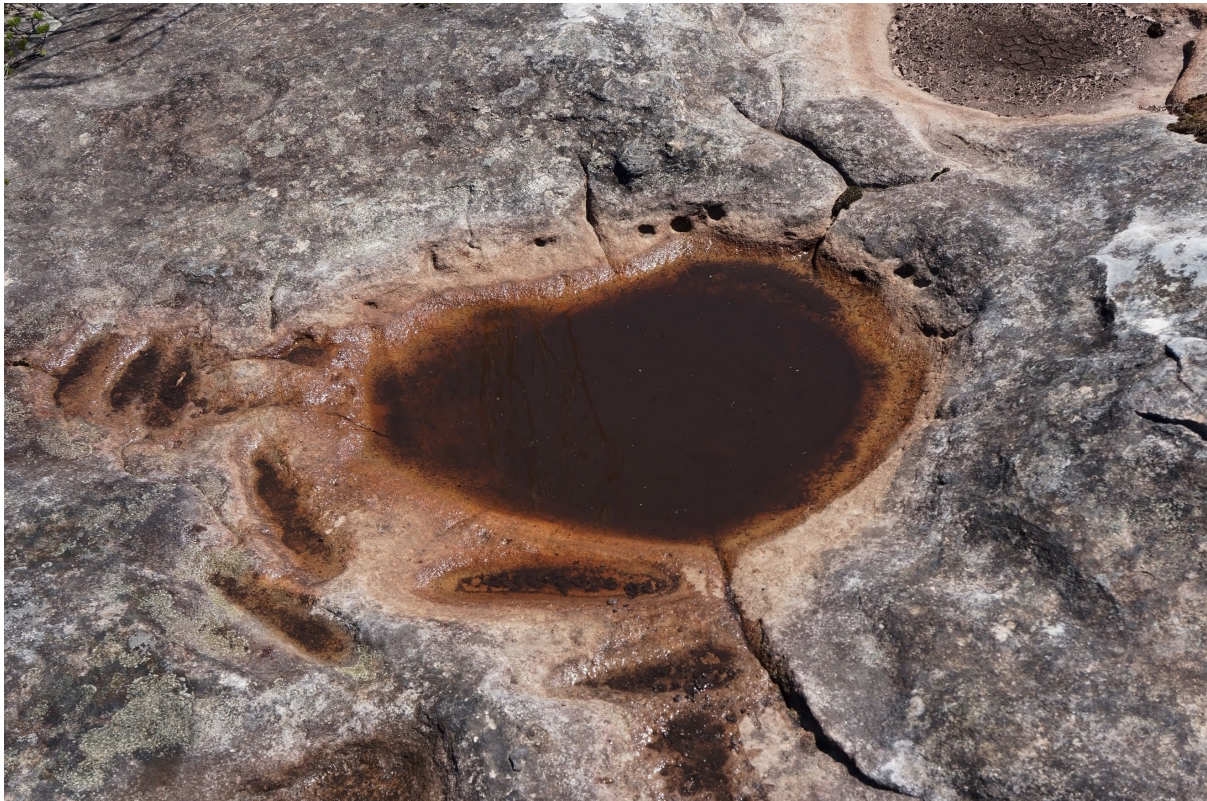


Photo 5 Grinding grooves, Blue Mountains National Park. Stephen Alton/DCCEEW

### 3. Protecting the natural environment

The Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks display evidence of complex geological processes that operated in the area as far back as the early Palaeozoic period (400 million years ago), including uplift, erosion, deposition and the effects of igneous and metamorphic activity. The result is a highly **scenic and visually diverse landscape**. The escarpment is the most prominent landscape feature, while others include benched cliffs, plateaus, narrow slot canyons, pagoda rock formations, waterfalls and karst environments. Specific sites have been recognised as having **geological values** of national significance, including the Jamison Valley and the Yerranderie area. Fossil sites have been recorded, some of which contain elements of Gondwanan flora dating back approximately 285 to 225 million years.

The parks contain a number of large **water catchment** systems encompassing drainage lines, creeks, rivers and their surrounding lands. These catchments are fundamental to maintaining water quality in the Hawkesbury–Nepean River and Lake Burragorang, which supplies most of Sydney's drinking water. The Grose and Wollangambe rivers, and the Glenbrook and Erskine creeks, flow directly into the Hawkesbury River, while the Kanangra, Jenolan, Coxs and Kowmung rivers are part of the Lake Burragorang catchment. Parts of the Kowmung, Grose and Wollangambe rivers are declared **wild rivers** under the NPW Act and are in near-pristine condition. The catchments in the parks act as a natural filtration system for water entering the water storages and are critical in providing high-quality drinking water for populations in Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

The unique combination of climate, topography, slope, elevation, aspect, drainage, geology, soils and fire history has resulted in a high **diversity of plant communities and habitats** in the parks, including rainforests, swamps, heaths and mallees, and extensive areas of eucalypt-dominated forests and woodlands. The parks contain over 1,000 species of native plants and a particularly high diversity of eucalyptus and acacia species. At least 58 **threatened plants** and 11 **threatened ecological communities** listed under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* have been recorded in the parks. Populations of Kowmung hakea, *Solanum amourense*, Coveny's zieria, dwarf mountain pine, mountain trachymene, buttercup doubletail and Gordon's wattle occur in the parks, and key locations in the park have been declared **assets of intergenerational significance** under the NPW Act to enhance protection measures for these species. Blue Mountains National Park protects the only known populations of several threatened plants, including the dwarf mountain pine, Fletcher's drumsticks, Blue Mountains cliff eyebright, Evan's sedge, Coveny's zieria and *Epacris hamiltonii*.

The diversity of plant communities and habitats in the parks gives rise to a similar **diversity of native animals**, with over 420 mammal, bird, frog and reptile species recorded, including at least 53 threatened animal species. Some, such as the Blue Mountains water skink, are unique to the Blue Mountains. The karst systems in Kanangra-Boyd National Park make a particular contribution to the diversity of bat and invertebrate species.

The biodiversity of the parks makes a significant contribution to the OUV of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property. The parks will be managed to protect these values, consistent with World Heritage management obligations. To protect the natural environment of the parks, NPWS will implement fire, weed and feral animal management programs and implement priority actions for protection of threatened species and communities.

**Conservation action plans**, consistent with the NPW Regulation, outline the management and monitoring requirements for the declared assets of intergenerational significance and others will be prepared if further areas are declared.

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Given the exceptional biodiversity values and the threats to these values, biodiversity survey, monitoring of ecosystem health and research to improve the understanding and management of park values are high priority management actions.

Important limestone deposits are found in Kanangra-Boyd National Park, giving rise to extensive **karst landscapes and cave systems** such as those at Tuglow and Colong. Karst systems in the parks provide habitat for some uniquely adapted and rare species and they have potential to yield valuable scientific information. Karst environments are highly sensitive to changes in the catchments above and within cave systems. Visitor access in and around karst environments requires monitoring and regulation to minimise impacts on geological features, cave sediments and animals.

**Erosion and rock falls** are natural processes that occur on steep slopes and areas with highly erodible soils in the parks. This erosion may impact geological formations and also park infrastructure, such as walking tracks and management trails, and is accelerated by the intensity of their use (recreational or other) and by fire. Fallen rock and mass soil movement can lead to greater instability and increase safety risk. Design, management and maintenance of tracks, trails and visitor facilities in the parks must account for these processes.

The **primary threats** to native plants, habitats and animal species in the parks include feral animals, weed invasion, inappropriate fire regimes and unsuitable human activities, while increasing visitor numbers are an ongoing challenge for park management.

The terrain, vegetation and climate of the Greater Blue Mountains region make it one of the most **fire-prone** regions in the world. Fire is a natural feature of many environments and is essential to the survival of many native species and plant communities, including the ancient plant varieties recognised by the World Heritage listing. However, fire can also be a threat to park values, life and property. Inappropriate fire regimes can be a particular threat to ecosystems, plants and animals. The reduction of groundcover, as a result of fire, increases the potential for erosion and nutrient-laden run-off and may threaten water quality.

The **bushfires of the 2019–20 season** were unprecedented in their extent and intensity and had a considerable impact on habitats and populations of animal species, including threatened species, such as the southern greater glider, which is dependent on large, hollow-bearing trees. In response to the fires, there is a greater need for monitoring of species, and amending of operational plans for the management of threatened species, feral animal and weed species and fire to heighten protection for biodiversity impacted by the fires.

NPWS will continue to manage fire to protect life, property, Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage and biodiversity in cooperation with other agencies and neighbours. Fire management strategies have been prepared for the parks, detailing the park values and assets and strategies for the prevention and suppression of unplanned fires.

Over millions of years natural **climate change** and fire have influenced the evolution of the distinctive and diverse plants and animals of the Greater Blue Mountains region. However, in the future, many species and ecosystems may be exposed to conditions beyond those they are adapted to. Increasing temperatures and influences on hydrological process and fire regimes (including increasing fire frequency and intensity) will place additional pressures on animals and their habitats. Anthropogenic climate change may change the size of populations and species distribution and alter the geographical extent and species composition of habitats and ecosystems. Weeds and feral animal species may also be advantaged by climate change.

**Weeds, feral animals and pathogens** can impact a range of park values including biodiversity, cultural heritage, water catchment and scenic values. There are localised and scattered occurrences of weeds in the parks particularly in areas adjacent to urban and rural development, riparian zones, other drainage lines and transport corridors. Among the most

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significant feral animal species in the parks are pigs, wild dogs, feral cats and red foxes, which are widespread in both parks. Deer are an increasing concern. NPWS undertakes feral animal management in accordance with obligations of the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and an NPWS feral animal and weed management strategy that identifies the highest priority programs as those that protect threatened species, communities and populations; water storages; values of the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property and cultural heritage values; and those programs that respond to new and emerging threats.

The parks are under growing pressure from **increasing visitation** and **inappropriate visitor behaviour**, which can adversely impact park values. NPWS will continue to monitor visitor use and impacts and adapt management strategies to respond to changing visitor expectations and emerging impacts on the parks.

NPWS will **work cooperatively with the community** and other land and waterway managers to minimise the impacts of threats and protect the parks' natural values, catchments, and water storages.



Photo 6 Fire management, Blue Mountains National Park. Tim Johnson/DCCEEW

### 4. Protecting our historic heritage

The Greater Blue Mountains has a significant place in the history of European settlement in eastern Australia. Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks both contain numerous sites formally recognised for their historic heritage significance, including walking tracks, lookouts and well-known inspirational views. Blue Mountains National Park, in particular, has played a fundamental role in the development of the early conservation movement in New South Wales.

There are remains of mining sites in both parks. Coal and shale mining took place across both parks from the 1860s, commencing in the Grose and Jamison valleys, while silver was discovered at Yerranderie in 1871. Other mines in the southern Blue Mountains, such as Ruby Creek (lead, silver and zinc) and Mount Werong (gold), were also established in the 19th century.

With the opening of railway stations at Blackheath and Weatherboard (now Wentworth Falls) in 1867 to 1868, the Blue Mountains were more easily accessible from Sydney. Govetts Leap and Wentworth Falls became the first popular scenic lookouts in the Blue Mountains. By the 1870s, travellers passing through the Blue Mountains began to be replaced by visitors who stayed on to enjoy the natural environment. Around this time, the health benefits of the mountain air were also being promoted and people had developed an appreciation of the restorative powers of nature. This became a significant driver in the emergence of the mountains as a destination for nature-based, outdoor recreation.

With the increase in visitors came the development of local nature conservation parks and a complex system of walking tracks and lookouts within the area. By the late 1880s, many of the lookouts and walking tracks in the upper Blue Mountains had been constructed to cater to the growing tourism industry. Bushwalking developed hand-in-hand with nature conservation in the area. In 1932, Myles Dunphy submitted a proposal for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park to the Surveyor-General and Blue Mountains Shire Council. At the same time, bushwalkers were using their own means to protect land that was to become known as the Blue Gum Forest in the Grose Valley. This background has led to Blue Gum Forest being known today as the 'cradle of conservation'. Myles Dunphy's vision of a Greater Blue Mountains National Park began in 1959 and was substantially realised in 2000, with the Greater Blue Mountains Area World Heritage property inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The parks contain a number of **historic heritage items**, including houses and other buildings, walking tracks, staircases, lookouts, passes, roads, mines and remains associated with farming and timber harvesting. The complex of 37 tracks known as the Blue Mountains Walking Tracks is acknowledged to have particular significance and is listed on the State Heritage Register. The tracks were developed over a period of 150 years, with some known to follow Aboriginal footpads, miners' and timber-getters' tracks, surveyors' routes, early roads and purpose-built recreational tracks. Buildings with historic heritage value in Blue Mountains National Park include Maxwell's Hut (in the Kedumba Valley); and the police station, courthouse, St Senan's Church and Joe Deacon's House ruins at Yerranderie.

NPWS will continue to identify, respect, protect and interpret the rich history and historic heritage of the parks. Management of historic heritage places will be guided by relevant conservation management plans or heritage action statements, and statements of heritage impact will be prepared and implemented as required. Many of the historic heritage items in the parks have not been formally assessed for significance and condition. Before decisions are made about their future management, assessment is required.

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Photo 7 Grand Canyon Track, Blue Mountains National Park. John Spencer/DCCEEW

The **adaptive reuse** of historic heritage buildings can protect their significance, enable their history to be interpreted and shared, and assist ongoing management. NPWS will continue to identify opportunities for new uses of historic heritage buildings where this supports their ongoing conservation and is consistent with conservation management plans or heritage action statements, relevant NPWS policies and the NSW Heritage Act. Opportunities for adaptive reuse include Maxwell's Hut (bushwalker accommodation) and Yerranderie buildings (NPWS management use and/or visitor accommodation).



Photo 8 Maxwell's Hut, in the Kedumba Valley. Chris Banffy/DCCEEW



# 5. Providing for tourism, visitor use and enjoyment

Blue Mountains National Park is the most visited national park in New South Wales, with an estimated 6.4 million visits in 2022. Kanangra-Boyd National Park also provides significant visitor opportunities but has fewer visitors.

Blue Mountains National Park, the heart of the Greater Blue Mountains Area, is a cornerstone of the region's vibrant tourism sector. The park is one of Australia's most iconic nature-based tourism destinations and continues to inspire large numbers of people to experience and appreciate 'wild' places, and support parks and their conservation. Recreation and tourism are important aspects of the conservation and management of the parks. NPWS will continue to provide for and manage a range of nature-based tourism and recreational opportunities that are sustainable, compatible with the conservation of the national parks' natural and cultural values and that complement regional tourism strategies.

The way people enjoy the parks is changing. This creates challenges and opportunities for managing sustainable visitor opportunities in the parks. The parks are under growing **pressure from increasing visitation**, with some of the more popular locations seeing environmental impacts, the capacity of existing facilities exceeded and visitor experience diminished. Monitoring of visitor use and impacts is necessary and management approaches need to be flexible to respond to changing visitor expectations and emerging impacts on the parks. The terrain, changeable weather and variability in visitors' outdoor experience and preparation levels mean that visitor safety and education will continue to be a focus for management.

Recreational use of the parks will be managed in a regional and landscape context, recognising that opportunities for some activities may be best provided outside the parks. Recreational activities are restricted in some locations, including the special areas, wilderness areas and some specific locations, depending on the nature of the activity (see Sections 1.3 and 1.4, and Table 6 in Section 8). NPWS will continue to promote adherence to relevant codes of practice to maximise the environmental sustainability of visitor activities in the parks.

NPWS will continue to provide visitors with opportunities to understand and appreciate the parks' values, including World/National Heritage values. These opportunities will be delivered through interpretation, digital technologies, the visitor information centre at Blackheath, commercial tour operators, and education programs and guided activities delivered by NPWS. There is significant **potential to expand Aboriginal cultural tourism** in the parks, providing opportunities to celebrate and share culture while building business opportunities for members of the local Aboriginal communities.

## 5.1 Visitor access

The primary means of visitor access to the parks is private vehicle, although a number of popular destinations in Blue Mountains National Park are accessible by public transport or are within walking distance from train stations and towns. The Great Western Highway and Bells Line of Road dissect the northern part of Blue Mountains National Park and, from these major roads, secondary routes provide sealed road access to numerous park entry points (see Figure 3).

The Oberon-Colong Stock Route road is the main access to Yerranderie and the southern area of Blue Mountains National Park; and access to Kanangra-Boyd National Park is primarily by Kanangra Walls Road. Park roads, many of them unsealed, provide public

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access to a range of visitor destinations within the parks, including walking tracks, picnic and camping areas.

A network of management trails provides access primarily for park management. These trails are generally not open for public vehicular use but, together with the network of walking tracks, they provide visitors with walking access to a range of destinations in the parks (see Section 5.3). Some management trails (generally those outside wilderness and special areas) are also available to visitors for cycling and, in some locations, horse riding (see Sections 5.4 and 5.5).

Public access to those sections of the parks that are special areas is restricted or limited to protect drinking water catchments (see Section 1.3).

Some improvements to access and parking at visitor precincts will occur as visitor demand continues to increase. In some locations however, the expansion of facilities is highly constrained and further development has potential to impact on the environment and diminish the visitor experience. Therefore a range of strategies in addition to visitor facility refurbishment and development will be considered to ensure that levels of visitor use are sustainable and the quality of the visitor experience is maintained over the long term. Strategies may include booking systems, promotion of lesser known visitor opportunities, implementing shuttle services and encouraging improvements to public transport.

Visitor access to parts of the parks, or for particular activities, may be closed during periods of bushfire risk, extreme weather events, or maintenance or improvement works. Park gates are closed and locked at night in the Glenbrook area. NPWS will continue to monitor designated walking, cycling and horse riding routes and may close routes on a seasonal, temporary or ongoing basis if necessary for rehabilitation, environmental or cultural site protection, or public safety.

Limiting group sizes for recreational activities (both commercial and non-commercial activities) is an effective tool for minimising impacts on park values and managing visitor safety and experience (see Table 6 in Section 8). In wilderness areas, a general group size limit of 8 people has been established to protect wilderness values and ensure opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation.

### 5.2 Visitor facilities

Visitor facilities enable people to access the parks safely and enjoy a range of unique, nature-based experiences. When carefully designed and located, visitor facilities ensure that the movements of vehicles and people are contained and managed to minimise pressure on the parks' values and protect the visitor experience. To maintain the natural and undeveloped character of the parks, visitor facilities will generally continue to be confined to areas that are already developed or modified.

Legal overlays established by the Water NSW Act and Wilderness Act and the park management zones identified in this plan (see Table 5 in Section 8) also dictate the location and type of visitor facilities that may be developed in the parks. To ensure water quality protection, visitor facilities will not be developed within special area Schedule 1 lands. Visitor facilities in wilderness will only be considered when visitor impacts compromise wilderness values and no other management options are feasible. In Schedule 2 lands, where some existing visitor facilities exist, any further infrastructure or improvements to existing facilities will prioritise water quality protection.

The **visitor facility zone** provides opportunities for improvement to existing infrastructure and facilities in support of sustainable visitor use and quality of experience. The zone comprises visitor precincts, visitor nodes and some camping areas.

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Within the visitor facility zone **visitor precincts** generally contain well-developed facilities which are intensively used (Table 2 and Figure 3). Facilities typically include formalised roads and car parking, barbecues, picnic shelters, toilets, interpretation, track heads and lookouts. Some visitor precincts also have a visitor centre and/or a food outlet. At visitor precincts there is potential for the intensification of visitor use and improvements to visitor facilities.

New infrastructure or upgrades will be designed to respond to increasing demand, enhance the visitor experience, improve safety, manage impacts and increase the resilience and effectiveness of the facilities.

Such improvements will be of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the setting and will be subject to detailed planning and environmental impact assessment. Where new or revised precinct plans identify significant change to existing facilities or expansion of the footprint of facilities the plans will be made available for public comment.

The improvement and expansion of visitor facilities is constrained by the need to protect park values, consider visitor safety and ensure quality visitor experiences. The enhancement of visitor facilities continues to be only one of the management responses to address increasing visitor numbers.

**Table 2 Visitor precincts in the visitor facility zone**

Visitor precinct	Main visitor sites within the precinct
<b>Blue Mountains National Park</b>	
Glenbrook	Euroka, Jelly Bean Pool, Blue Pool, The Ironbarks, The Oaks, Red Hands Cave, Nepean Lookout, Tunnel View Lookout, Mount Portal
Wentworth Falls	Wentworth Falls Picnic Area, Valley of the Waters (including the Conservation Hut)
Katoomba	Narrow Neck up to the locked gate, Three Sisters
Blackheath	Govetts Leap Lookout, Anvil Rock, Perrys Lookdown
Evans-Grand Canyon	Evans Lookout, Grand Canyon car park and track head at Neates Glen, Point Pilcher
Megalong	Green Gully, Galong cabins, Dunphys Camping Area
Yerranderie	Yerranderie – Government Town, including the camping area <sup>A</sup>
<b>Kanangra-Boyd National Park</b>	
Kanangra Walls	Kanangra Walls Road, Kanangra Walls Lookout

A = Yerranderie – Private Town is in the adjacent Yerranderie Regional Park.

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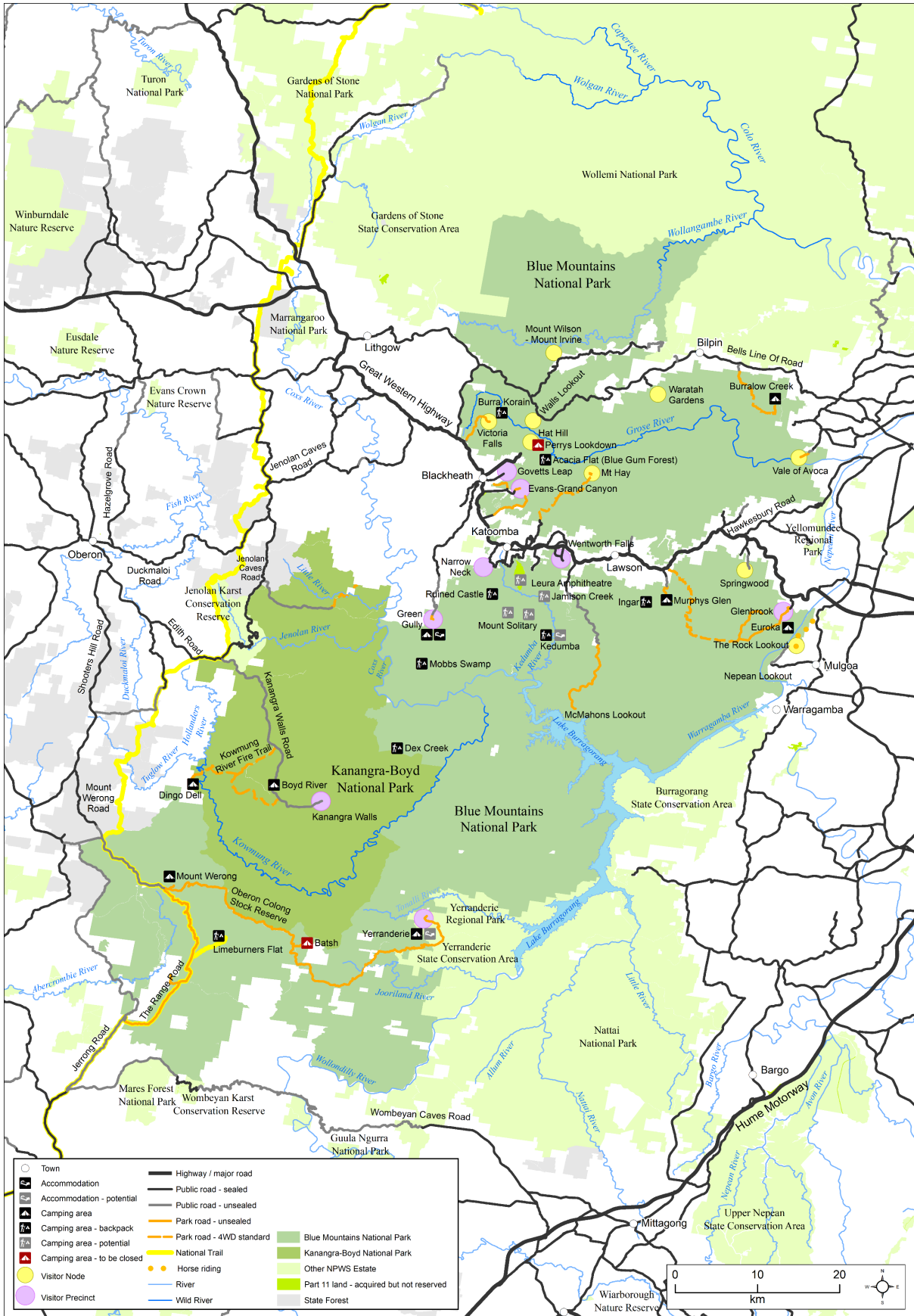


Figure 3 Visitor destinations and access

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**Visitor nodes** are smaller scale destinations with moderately developed visitor facilities such as lookouts, informal car parks, toilets and picnic areas (Figure 3). At these locations there is potential for upgrades to existing facilities and a moderate level of new facilities appropriate to the local environment.

There are other visitor destinations in the **general management zone** that have basic visitor facilities at a scale that supports the protection of park values. Generally, these destinations will only see maintenance and periodic refurbishment without any further expansion.

**Camping areas** (see Table 3) may be upgraded, consistent with their zone, to enhance visitor amenity, facilitate booking systems, ensure public safety or minimise environmental impacts. New walk-in camping areas may be implemented to support the Mount Solitary Walk (see Figure 4 and Table 3). At camping areas in the visitor facility zone (see Table 3) site hardening, tent platforms or elevated camping decks may be implemented to manage environmental impacts, and associated facilities such as toilets and barbecue shelters may be considered. In these locations, tents and other temporary facilities associated with supported camping experiences may be provided. Potential locations include Euroka and Dunphys camping areas, and the camping areas associated with the Mount Solitary Walk. Camping platforms will not be introduced in the wilderness zone.

Low levels of use, alternate accommodation options and site and environmental constraints render some camping areas unsustainable. The camping area at Perrys Lookdown will be closed and made available for day use only, and the Batsh Camping Area will be closed.

**Toilets and waste management** processes or facilities will be progressively implemented at camping areas, other visitor nodes and accommodation locations as required. Facilities will be designed to minimise the impact of both the facility and its maintenance. In designated camping areas in wilderness (i.e. Dex Creek, Mobbs Swamp, Burra Korain), the establishment of minimal impact toilet facilities (with fly in – fly out tanks) may be considered where necessary for environmental protection.

**Visitor accommodation** is available in the 2 Galong cabins at Green Gully in Megalong Valley. Maxwell's Hut in the Kedumba Valley is being adapted for visitor accommodation, and supporting infrastructure such as toilets, a hard-roofed shelter or camp kitchen may be installed at the site. Other buildings in the parks may also be considered for adaptive reuse for visitor accommodation or other visitor facilities (see Section 6.2, Table 4).

**Table 3 Designated camping areas and other accommodation**

Name	Location	Current use	Future management
<b>Visitor facility zone</b>			
Acacia Flat (Blue Gum Forest)	Grose Valley	Walk-in camping	No change
Batsh <sup>B</sup>	Southern Blue Mountains	Vehicle-based camping	To be closed
Boyd River	Kanangra Walls Road	Vehicle-based camping	No change
Burralow Creek	Bilpin	Vehicle-based camping	No change
Dingo Dell	Kowmung River trail	Vehicle-based camping	No change
Dunphys <sup>A</sup>	Megalong Valley	Vehicle-based camping	No change
Euroka <sup>A</sup>	Glenbrook	Vehicle-based camping	No change
Galong cabins at Green Gully <sup>A</sup>	Megalong Valley	Cabins	No change

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Name	Location	Current use	Future management
Jamison Creek <sup>B</sup>	Jamison Valley	Nil	Potential walk-in camping
Kedumba <sup>B</sup>	Kedumba Valley	Walk-in camping	No change
Leura Amphitheatre	Jamison Valley	Nil	Potential walk-in camping
Limeburners Flat <sup>BD</sup>	Southern Blue Mountains	Walk-in camping	No change
Maxwell's Hut <sup>BC</sup>	Kedumba Valley	Cabin/hut	Potential accommodation
Mount Solitary <sup>B</sup>	Jamison Valley	Bush camping	Potential walk-in camping
Mount Werong <sup>D</sup>	Southern Blue Mountains	Vehicle-based camping	No change
Murphys Glen	Woodford	Vehicle-based camping	No change
Perrys Lookdown	Blackheath	Vehicle-based camping	To be closed
Ruined Castle <sup>B</sup>	Jamison Valley	Walk-in camping	No change
Yerranderie – Government Town <sup>AB</sup>	Yerranderie	Vehicle-based camping	No change
General management zone			
Ingar	Wentworth Falls	Walk-in camping	No change
Wilderness			
Burra Korain	Grose Valley	Walk-in camping	No change
Dex Creek	Dex Creek	Walk-in camping	No change
Mobbs Swamp	Megalong Valley	Walk-in camping	No change

A = site is part of a visitor precinct.

B = site is also within Schedule 2 land.

C = Maxwell's Hut is being adapted for visitor accommodation.

D = site is part of the National Trail.



Photo 9 Mount Solitary from Princes Rock. Elinor Sheargold/DCCEEW

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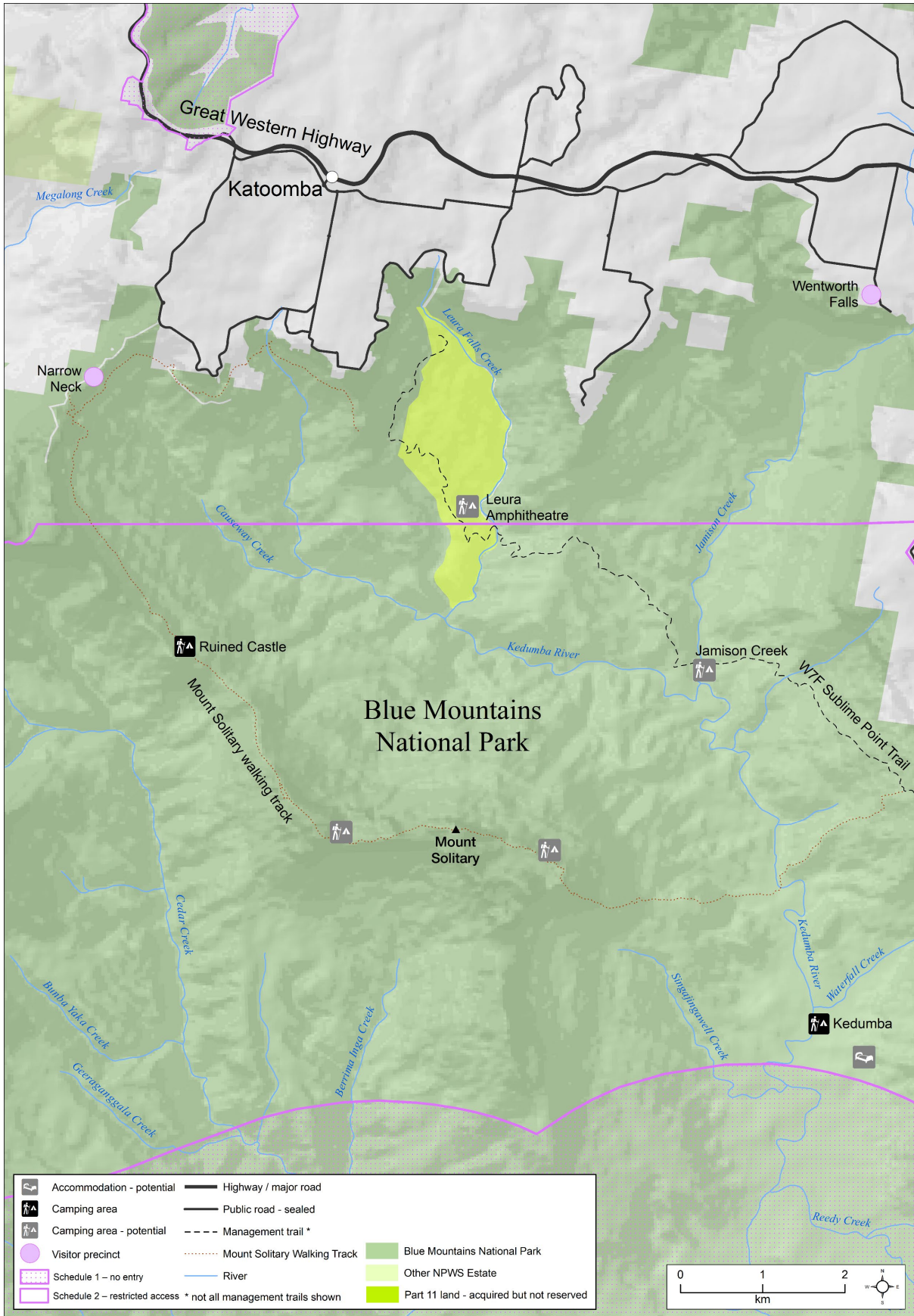


Figure 4 Detail of Mount Solitary Walk and camping locations

### 5.3 Bushwalking and camping

Bushwalking in Blue Mountains National Park and Kanangra-Boyd has historic and contemporary significance. In many ways, the creation of the parks had its seed in the dedication of bushwalkers attracted to the region. A network of walking tracks provides world-class bushwalking opportunities.

There are over 145 km of walking tracks as well as unmarked, unconstructed multi-day bushwalking routes through wilderness and remote areas, including the Kanangra to Katoomba 3-day walking route, which links the 2 parks. The walking tracks are complemented by more than 100 lookouts. Walking tracks range from hard surface, all-access paths in visitor precincts to rough, steep and unmarked tracks suitable for experienced bushwalkers with specialised skills. Many of the walking tracks have historic heritage value, and a number have been restored in accordance with a conservation management plan.

Facilities and walking tracks along the multi-day Mount Solitary Walk will be improved, with potential improvements to include: a new track connection in the Jamison Valley to provide an alternative to walking on the management trail; new and upgraded camping areas, including toilet facilities (see Table 3 and Figure 4); and the installation of tent platforms and shelters may be considered at some sites.

Opportunities for supported or serviced camping, where tents and services are provided by commercial tour operators, may be offered at some camping areas in the parks. Camping sites for independent visitors will continue to be available. Irrespective of whether serviced camping is made available, booking systems may be needed to manage numbers in camping areas. Bush camping (i.e. camping outside of the designated camping areas) is also allowed in the parks, subject to location and other conditions (see Table 6 in Section 8).



Photo 10 Boyd River Camping Area, Kanangra-Boyd National Park. Nick Cubbin/DCCEEW



### 5.4 Cycling

Cycling is popular in the parks and is permitted on public roads, some management trails, and some designated tracks. Restrictions apply to cycling in wilderness areas and special areas (see Table 6 in Section 8 and Appendix B). A popular route in Kanangra-Boyd National Park is the 21-km Boyd River Loop which follows management trails on the Boyd Plateau. The Woodford-Oaks cycling route in Blue Mountains National Park is recognised as one of the classic mountain bike rides in New South Wales. There is a section (about 7 km) of designated mountain bike single track on this route.



Photo 11 Woodford-Oaks cycling route, Blue Mountains National Park. Stephen Alton/DCCEEW

### 5.5 Horse riding

Horse riding in the parks is permitted on public vehicle access routes (public and park roads) and other designated routes. Horse riding is not permitted in wilderness areas and Schedule 1 lands and is only permitted on a small number of public roads in the Schedule 2 lands. Designated routes are identified by notices at the relevant park entry points and inclusion in park maps. Designated routes include the Rileys Mountain Trail in the Blue Mountains National Park, east of the Nepean River and the multi-use National Trail in southern Blue Mountains National Park (see Table 6 and Figure 3).

Users of the National Trail may camp overnight with horses at the Mount Werong and Limeburners Flat camping areas.

### 5.6 Caving

Access to caves is not allowed without a permit. Permits include conditions on access to ensure sensitive areas are carefully managed.

Recreational caving occurs in Kanangra-Boyd National Park, attracting those with an interest and skills in 'wild' caving (i.e. in undeveloped caves with minimal or no infrastructure) rather

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than the more developed caving experiences (i.e. guided tours on pathways in 'show caves') offered at nearby locations in other reserves such as Jenolan and Wombeyan caves. Popular caves in Kanangra-Boyd National Park include Colong and Tuglow. A number of smaller and remotely located karst environments are also found in this park (including Hollanders River, Church Creek and Billys Creek).

The karst areas in Blue Mountains National Park are relatively small, difficult to access and may have potential to yield valuable scientific information. Public entry into the caves in this park will only be for authorised scientific purposes (see Table 6 in Section 8).

### 5.7 Adventure recreation

The adventure recreation activities of rock climbing, abseiling, canyoning and white water paddling are permitted in the parks where they are undertaken in accordance with the provisions in Table 6 in Section 8 of this plan. Although NPWS takes reasonable steps to manage risks, participants must carry a level of personal responsibility for their own safety, particularly in relation to the use of any fixed protection or access infrastructure. Other adventure activities are prohibited in accordance with the NPW Regulation (see Table 6 in Section 8).

Blue Mountains National Park has a profile as an international **rock climbing** destination and there are many popular climbing sites in the park. In contrast, little rock climbing occurs in Kanangra-Boyd National Park. **Abseiling** occurs in both parks, often in association with canyoning, caving or rock climbing and as a standalone activity on accessible cliffs throughout the parks. Major sites include Narrow Neck, Malaita Point and Mount Portal in Blue Mountains National Park.

A number of commercial operators are licensed to offer climbing and abseiling instruction and guiding in the parks. Some sites are very popular, leading to occasional congestion and associated impacts on visitor safety and enjoyment. Rock climbing and abseiling activities have potential to damage Aboriginal cultural heritage and biodiversity values, including the habitat of threatened species, communities and populations. These impacts can occur in both limestone and sandstone environments. NPWS will monitor impacts at key sites and undertake mitigation as necessary, such as by restricting or rerouting access, formalising and hardening footpads and unofficial tracks, or by temporarily or permanently closing sites.

**Canyoning** may combine bushwalking, wading, swimming, jumping, boulder hopping, scrambling, rock climbing or abseiling to travel through a 'canyon' (i.e. a deep gorge). In Blue Mountains National Park, the canyons are mostly creeks and small, narrow gorges, referred to as 'slot' canyons. In Kanangra-Boyd National Park they are often larger, 'drop' or waterfall canyons. The number of users at some canyons has increased significantly and popular sites can experience congestion, user conflict and impacts on visitor enjoyment and safety. NPWS will continue to maintain a booking system (in addition to licensing requirements) for commercial use of canyons and will investigate other options for improving the management of recreational use of popular canyons.

**Slacklining** is an emerging recreation activity in the parks. Basic slacklining (where webbing is less than 2 m off the ground) may be undertaken in the parks but must not use built visitor facilities or inhibit public access. Highlining and other slacklining variations may be allowed with consent of NPWS.

Some rivers in the parks, including the Kowmung, Cox and Grose rivers, provide opportunities for canoeing, kayaking and packrafting, including **white-water** experiences even at low water levels.

## 5.8 Volunteer activities

NPWS values, encourages and actively promotes opportunities for people to volunteer in the parks. A range of volunteers continue to make significant contributions to wildlife conservation, bush regeneration and the management of other park values, and there is potential for these programs to expand through enhanced volunteer recruitment and training.



Photo 12 Morong Falls Trail, Kanangra-Boyd National Park. Nick Cubbin/DCCEEW

## 6. Park infrastructure and services

A range of NPWS-managed infrastructure is required in the parks to protect park values, provide opportunities for visitors and to facilitate management operations and emergency response. This infrastructure includes roads and management trails, car parks, walking tracks and lookouts, water mains and sewers, and buildings providing visitor services, helicopter and aircraft landing facilities, NPWS work locations and associated storage.

NPWS assets and infrastructure are managed and maintained through the NPWS Asset Management System. This system provides the framework for delivering, maintaining and replacing NPWS assets necessary to support safe and sustainable visitor experiences and park management operations, and to minimise impacts on park values. Facilities will be maintained or upgraded consistent with Table 6 in Section 8.

### 6.1 Roads and trails

#### Park roads and public access

Public roads provide access to park entry points and several key locations within the parks. In addition, more than 140 km of sealed and unsealed 'park roads' provide public access to many other destinations in the parks (see Figure 3). Typically, the public roads are maintained by local councils, while NPWS is responsible for maintenance of the park road network.

Public use of the helicopter and aircraft landing facilities in the parks is not permitted except for emergency response and authorised park management activities.

Park roads may be subject to temporary or partial closures and realignments for visitor safety reasons or to protect park values. No new park roads will be constructed in the parks.

#### Management trails

Over 300 km of management trails in the parks provide access for management operations such as fire management, weed control, feral animal control, maintenance of park facilities and services, and search and rescue activities. Management trails are generally multiple use; as well as providing for management access, they can be used by visitors for walking and, at some locations, cycling and horse riding.

Vehicle use of management trails is only available for purposes authorised by NPWS. They may be gated to prevent use other than for park management and other authorised purposes. Access to the management trail network is mostly via public roads, or secure access via Crown land.

Many of the management trails in the parks are identified as strategic or tactical fire trails under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. The relevant bush fire management committees' fire access and fire trail plans, which identify access requirements for fire suppression and management purposes, include NPWS-managed lands. When implementing works to maintain trails at the prescribed fire trail standards, NPWS will ensure these works are carried out in a manner that minimises impacts on the parks' natural and cultural heritage values. The construction of any new trails identified in the fire access and fire trail plans will require an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

Unsealed roads and impervious surfaces, including sealed roads and car parks, can present risks to water quality. The application of water-sensitive design principles in the design and maintenance of roads will reduce this risk. Temporary trails created in emergency situations,

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and where there is no prudent alternative (e.g. during wildfire control), will be rehabilitated as soon as practical after the incident. Management trails no longer required for park management purposes may be reduced in width and designated for recreation (e.g. for walking, cycling or horse riding) or closed and revegetated.

Some park roads and management trails extend across adjacent lands owned and managed by other authorities or private individuals. A reserve access strategy will be prepared and implemented for the parks. The strategy will establish the status of all existing accesses and identify options for securing access for public and management purposes where necessary.

New vehicle trails will be prohibited in wilderness and, where they already exist, they will be closed and revegetated except if required for necessary management purposes.

### 6.2 Buildings

There are a range of buildings and structures in the parks, with many being visitor facilities, including toilets and shelters in picnic and camping areas. The more major types of buildings are listed in Table 4. Some are currently occupied by third parties under a lease or licence arrangement. Consideration may be given to renewing existing leases/licences or granting of new leases/licences, consistent with the NPW Act. Future use options for buildings in the parks are listed in Table 4.

Any potential adaptive reuse of existing buildings and structures, or their demolition, is subject to heritage, environmental and sustainability assessments and approvals, and must be consistent with any required conservation management plan or heritage action statement.



**Photo 13 Galong cabins at Green Gully, Megalong Valley, Blue Mountains National Park. Simone Cottrell/DCCEEW**

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**Table 4 Buildings in the parks**

Locality	Building	Current use	Potential future use
<b>Blue Mountains National Park</b>			
Glenbrook	NPWS depot and office	NPWS management use	No change
	Park entry booth	Visitor information and park entry	No change
Wentworth Falls	Conservation Hut	Cafe	Cafe, visitor use; community use
Kedumba Valley	Maxwell's Hut (historic slab hut)	Building restoration in progress	Accommodation for bushwalkers
Blackheath	Blue Mountains Heritage Centre	Visitor information/retail	No change
	NPWS depot and office	NPWS management use	No change
Green Gully, Megalong Valley	Galong cabins	Visitor accommodation	No change
	Carlton's House	Historic ruin	No change
Mount Werong	Stone hut	Campers' shelter	Decommission and remove
Yerranderie – Government Town <sup>A</sup>	Police station; courthouse	NPWS management use	Visitor use including accommodation
	St Senan's Church	Catholic community use	Approved community use
	Joe Deacon's House	Historic ruin	No change

<sup>A</sup> Other NPWS buildings in Yerranderie (i.e. the post office, Mrs Barnes's boarding house, Slippery Norris and Krubi Cottage in Private Town) are located in neighbouring Yerranderie Regional Park and not subject to this plan.

## 7. Non-park infrastructure and services

The parks contain infrastructure and other assets which are owned and operated by other organisations or individuals that are not related to the use or management of the parks. This includes electricity transmission lines, telecommunication cables and water and wastewater infrastructure. Access will continue to be provided for the use, operation and maintenance of this infrastructure.

All non-NPWS infrastructure and use of the parks by third parties requires authorisation to lawfully occupy and use the land. This authorisation is managed by leases, licences, easements and other access agreements. These instruments define the minimum requirements for ensuring the protection of the natural and cultural values of the parks. Water and wastewater infrastructure is allowed in the special areas for the purposes of enabling WaterNSW to exercise its functions (see Table 6 in Section 8).

NPWS maintains a public register (see link in 'More information' section) which identifies leases, easements and rights of way granted under Part 12 of the NPW Act, plus any licences for telecommunication facilities.

New infrastructure can only be constructed on-park pursuant to authorisation under Part 12 of the NPW Act, and only following the necessary justification that no alternative is feasible and the completion of an environmental impact assessment.

NPWS will seek removal of all redundant infrastructure and revegetation of disturbed sites and access roads that are no longer required, except where other relevant considerations, such as environmental impact, justify leaving them in situ.

There are parcels of non-NPWS land, some with infrastructure, that are completely or partially surrounded by the parks or where a route through park provides the only feasible access. NPWS will facilitate access across NPWS land to these properties in accordance with the NPW Act. The transport of stock or animals to these lands is permitted.



Photo 14 Nepean River from Rileys Mountain Lookout, Blue Mountains National Park. Elinor Sheargold/DCCEEW

## 8. Permissible activities

**Table 5** Legal overlays and zones

Legal overlays and zones	Location	Purpose
S1 – Special areas (Schedule 1)	Warragamba, Blackheath, Katoomba and Woodford special areas in Blue Mountains National Park (Figure 2)	Declared under the Water NSW Regulation 2020 to enable catchment management and the protection of water quality
S2 – Warragamba Special Area (Schedule 2)	Warragamba Special Area in Blue Mountains National Park and Kanangra-Boyd National Park (Figure 2)	Declared under the Water NSW Regulation to provide a buffer to Schedule 1 special areas and secure catchment management and the protection of water quality
W – Wilderness	Wollemi Wilderness – Blue Mountains National Park (25,844 ha) Grose Wilderness – Blue Mountains National Park (47,900 ha) Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness – Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks (125,000 ha) (Figure 2)	Declared under the Wilderness Act to provide for the permanent protection of wilderness areas and their proper management
V – Visitor facility zone	Visitor precincts (Table 2), camping and accommodation nodes (Table 3), other visitor nodes (Figure 3)	To provide infrastructure and facilities to support sustainable visitor use and quality visitor experiences
G – General management zone	Areas not included within the above zones or legal overlays (Figures 2 and 3)	To provide for conservation and self-reliant recreation

Table 6 identifies the activities that can be undertaken in the parks. Some are authorised without a requirement for consent from NPWS, while others require consent for each occasion. In the Warragamba Special Area (Schedule 2) some activities may also require consent from WaterNSW in accordance with the Water NSW Regulation 2020. Activities not shown in the table may be regulated by signage in the parks or by consent. All activities are subject to relevant legislation and policies.



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**Table 6 Permissible activities**

Note: refer to Table 5 for overlay/zone code descriptions

Activity	Overlay/zone					Comment
	S1	S2	W	V	G	
<b>Public access</b>						
Public access	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	In Schedule 1 areas, public access to McMahons Point Lookout and parts of the Woodford Special Area is allowed without further consent. Public access elsewhere within Schedule 1 is not allowed (Figure 2).
<b>Visitor facility development</b>						
Visitor facility development	x	✓	x	✓	✓	Visitor facility developments are subject to an assessment of environmental and heritage impacts. Substantial developments will generally involve detailed planning and may also involve community consultation (see Section 5.2). Some facility development may be considered in wilderness areas for the protection of wilderness values (see Sections 1.4 and 5.2).
<b>Utilities</b>						
Infrastructure in special areas	✓	✓	x	x	x	Relates to infrastructure or access required by WaterNSW and Sydney Water for the purpose of exercising their functions.
Other utilities infrastructure	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	Other new utility infrastructure (including but not limited to pipelines, powerlines and telecommunications facilities), and access to that infrastructure through park, is subject to NPWS authorisation. The grant of that authorisation may be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the NPW Act.
<b>Research</b>						
Research	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Any research is subject to NPWS consent under the NPW Regulation (in addition to any licence required under the Biodiversity Conservation Act).
<b>Commercial activities, events and functions</b>						
Visitor accommodation	x	x	x	✓	x	Adaptive reuse of existing buildings for visitor accommodation may occur. At these locations commercial services may be engaged to support visitors and the operation of the facilities.
Kiosk, cafe and restaurant	x	x	x	✓	x	Development and operation of a kiosk, cafe or restaurant (in existing buildings only) under a lease or licence with conditions may be considered.
Filming and photography	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Commercial filming and photography may be allowed under consent.
Commercial recreational activities and tours	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Commercial tours, recreational and educational activities may be allowed under a licence. A group size limit of 8 people applies in wilderness areas. Other group size limits apply to adventure recreation activities (see below).
Commercial events, functions and other services	x	✓	x	✓	✓	Commercial events, functions and other services provided for a fee (including mobile food vendors, transport services, party entertainers and celebrants) may be allowed under a consent or licence.

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Activity	Overlay/zone					Comment
	S1	S2	W	V	G	
<b>Non-commercial visitor activities</b>						
Barbecues, portable stoves, wood fires	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Portable gas, liquid fuel stoves and solid fuel fires are allowed. Residues from solid fuel fires must not be deposited in the park.</p> <p>Wood fires are allowed in constructed fireplaces (where provided).</p> <p>Woodfires are allowed outside of constructed fireplaces only where bush camping is allowed (see 'camping' below). In Schedule 2 land other restrictions may apply.</p> <p>Fires are prohibited during total fire bans and park fire bans, and seasonal bans on solid fuel fires may be implemented depending on fire weather.</p>
Bushwalking and trail running	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Allowed unless an area has been identified as closed for this activity by park signage and/or routine park visitor notification channels. Events may be allowed under a consent. Commercial tours are subject to licensing requirements.</p>
Camping	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Allowed at designated camping areas (see Table 3).</p> <p>Bush camping (outside of designated camping areas) is also allowed without consent, except under the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• within 200 m of a public road, constructed walking track, designated camping area, picnic area, formalised lookout or other visitor facility</li> <li>• within a limestone outcrop or karst area</li> <li>• within any 'slot' canyon</li> <li>• anywhere it is signposted that camping is not permitted.</li> </ul>
Caving	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Consent from NPWS is required for each occasion or series of occasions. The group size limit for caving is 8 people*.</p> <p>Seasonal closure of caves containing maternity or overwintering bat colonies (e.g. Colong Cave) will occur.</p> <p>Public access to caves in Blue Mountains National Park will only be for authorised scientific purposes.</p>
Cycling	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Within Schedule 2 areas cycling is only allowed on public roads. Within wilderness areas cycling is only allowed on designated management trails (see Appendix B).</p> <p>Elsewhere, cycling is allowed on public roads and management trails, and may also be allowed on single-width tracks if designated and signposted for cycling. Cycling is not allowed on walking tracks or off-trail.</p> <p>Cycling events may be allowed under a consent. Commercial tours are subject to licensing requirements.</p>
Dog walking	x	x	x	x	x	<p>Dogs and other pets are not allowed in the national parks. This prohibition does not apply to a person being accompanied by their trained and registered assistance animal in the park or a person transporting an animal in a vehicle to other land only accessible through the park.</p>

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Activity	Overlay/zone					Comment
	S1	S2	W	V	G	
Drones and model aeroplanes	x	x	x	x	✓	Consent is required for recreational use of drones in the parks. Drone exclusion areas apply. Drones may be used for park management, emergency or law enforcement purposes and may be authorised as part of a commercial filming consent. The operation of drones is also subject to conditions and relevant civil aviation regulations.
Fishing	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Regulations and licensing requirements under the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i> apply.
Fossicking	x	x	x	x	x	Not permitted.
Group activities, non-commercial events and functions	x	✓	x	✓	✓	In wilderness areas groups of 8 people or less are allowed without consent*. Elsewhere, all group gatherings and private functions involving more than 40 people may be allowed under a consent. Organised public events of any size (such as public ceremonies, and club and sporting events) require consent.
Horse riding	x	x	x	✓	✓	Allowed only on public and park roads and designated routes as signposted. Designated routes include the Rileys Mountain Trail and the National Trail in Blue Mountains National Park. Events may be allowed under a consent. Commercial tours are subject to licensing requirements.
Landing of aircraft	x	x	x	x	x	Aircraft are not permitted to land within the parks unless part of an authorised management operation or for emergency purposes.
Slacklining (basic)	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Basic slacklining (webbing is less than 2 m off the ground) is allowed unless sites have been identified as closed for this activity by park signage and/or routine park visitor notification channels. Highlining and other slacklining variations may be allowed with consent of NPWS (see adventure recreation activities).
Swimming and aquatic activities	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Swimming and aquatic activities, including non-powered boating (e.g. canoeing, kayaking and packrafting) are generally allowed. Restrictions apply to white-water paddling (see below).
Vehicle access (including motorbikes)	x	✓	x	✓	✓	Registered vehicles (including 4-wheel drives and motorbikes) are allowed on public and park roads (Figure 3). Roads may be temporarily closed to prevent damage, such as in wet weather, or to support management activities. Off-road access is not permitted.
<b>Adventure recreational activities</b>						
Abseiling and rock climbing	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	Allowed except at the locations identified in Appendix C and any other site or location identified as closed for this activity by park signage and/or routine park visitor notification channels. Participants in these activities are solely responsible for their own safety.

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Activity	Overlay/zone					Comment
	S1	S2	W	V	G	
						<p>The group size limit for abseiling is 8 people*.</p> <p>The group size limit for rock climbing is 5 people (including a guide to client ratio of 1:4)*.</p> <p>NPWS will not assess or maintain bolts or other fixed protection points, except where this infrastructure has been installed by NPWS. Depending on circumstances the installation and maintenance of bolts and other fixed protection points may be allowed by consent.</p>
Canyoning	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Canyoning is allowed unless sites have been identified as closed for this activity by park signage and/or routine park visitor notification channels.</p> <p>Overnight camping in 'slot' canyons is not permitted.</p> <p>The group size limit for canyoning in wilderness areas is 8 people*.</p> <p>The group size limit for canyoning (without abseiling) elsewhere is 10 people*.</p> <p>NPWS will not assess or maintain bolts or other fixed protection points, except where this infrastructure has been installed by NPWS. Depending on circumstances the installation and maintenance of bolts and other fixed protection points may be allowed by consent.</p>
Highlining	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Basic slacklining (webbing is less than 2 m off the ground) is allowed (see above).</p> <p>Consent from NPWS is required for highlining and any other slacklining variations.</p>
White-water paddling	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	<p>Allowed except at any site or location identified as closed for this activity by park signage, direction and/or routine park visitor notification channels.</p> <p>For visitor safety NPWS will regulate paddling in Glenbrook Gorge during flood events.</p>
Other adventure activities	x	x	x	x	x	<p>Adventure activities (other than those detailed above) are not allowed unless authorised by this plan. The following activities are not authorised by this plan: base jumping, bungee jumping, hang-gliding, parachuting, paragliding, parasailing, via ferrata and zip lining.</p>

\* Larger groups may be considered and authorised on a case-by-case basis.

## 9. Scheme of operations

The scheme of operations in Table 7 details the plan’s objectives and operations that are proposed to be carried out on the land. Operations in the scheme of operations may contribute to more than one objective, but to avoid repetition operations are only listed once against the most significant objective.

A management priority has been assigned to each operation to guide the allocation of resources. These priorities are based on an assessment of the risks posed by threats to the parks’ values, the feasibility of mitigating the impacts of these threats or opportunities to improve the condition of park values.

NPWS’s performance in meeting the objectives in the scheme of operations will be measured through periodic assessments. Performance in delivering the objectives in the scheme of operations will be measured through regular audits of this plan of management.

The scheme of operations sets strategic goals and priorities. Subsidiary plans consistent with this plan of management may also be developed to guide operations at an operational level. Subsidiary plans enable adaptive responses to new information or changed circumstances, such as for feral animals, weeds, fire and recreational activities, as required by NPWS policy. Review and assessments of performance will be used to inform adaptive management in these subsidiary plans as well as any required adjustments and improvements to future plans of management for the parks.

Conservation action plans will be prepared and implemented to manage and monitor land declared to be assets of intergenerational significance under the NPW Act.

The implementation of operations set out below may be subject to statutory responsibilities under the NPW Act and other relevant state and Commonwealth legislation, including environmental and heritage impact assessments and approvals. Further community consultation on the proposed operations may be undertaken as part of these processes.

Information on popular recreational or commercial activities that are permitted in the park is provided in Table 6. More detailed information on other activities is available on the NPWS website (see link in ‘More information’ section).

**Table 7 Scheme of operations**

Objective	Operations	Priority
<b>Protecting World Heritage and National Heritage</b>		
1. World Heritage and National Heritage values are identified, protected, conserved, presented and transmitted to future generations and, if appropriate, rehabilitated	a. Manage the parks consistent with World Heritage and National Heritage management obligations, the <i>Greater Blue Mountains Area strategic plan</i> , and any other subsequent planning documents relevant to the Greater Blue Mountains Area.	Very high
<b>Protecting wilderness and wild rivers</b>		
2. The wilderness quality of the declared wilderness areas is protected and continues to provide	a. Manage wilderness areas consistent with the management principles defined in the Wilderness Act.	Very high
	b. Monitor recreational impacts and, in response, undertake works and install essential minimal	High

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Objective	Operations	Priority
opportunities for self-reliant recreation	infrastructure if necessary to maintain wilderness values and wilderness experience for visitors.	
3. The natural, hydrological and geomorphological processes associated with the parks' wild rivers and their catchments are maintained or restored	a. Manage wild rivers and their catchments consistent with the management principles for declared wild rivers defined in the NPW Act.	Very high
<b>Caring for Country</b>		
4. There are increased opportunities for Aboriginal people to build connection to Country and care for Country	a. Encourage and facilitate Aboriginal community involvement in management of Country and strategic planning and management of the parks.	High
	b. Ensure any Aboriginal cultural tourism developed in the parks is culturally appropriate and delivers social and economic benefits to the Aboriginal community.	High
	c. Support the local Aboriginal community to access Country to maintain, renew or develop cultural connections and practices. This may include culture camps on Country and non-commercial cultural use of resources.	High
	d. Support the development and operation of formal and/or informal agreements or partnerships with Aboriginal people and communities for the management of the parks.	High
	e. Develop and communicate information about Aboriginal culture and heritage in the park in partnership with the Aboriginal community, and where appropriate.	High
5. Aboriginal cultural heritage values in the parks are respected and protected	a. Assess potential for impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage values at key climbing sites. Monitor high risk sites and prevent and/or mitigate impacts as necessary.	High
	b. In collaboration with Aboriginal people, establish a program to identify threats to cultural objects and places, and implement a process for management and protective works where required.	High
	c. Undertake activities to enhance identity of the parks as an Aboriginal cultural landscape, including incorporating Aboriginal language in the naming of places, signage and interpretation where possible.	High
	d. Encourage and support research that will assist with the management and interpretation of Aboriginal cultural values, objects and places. Ensure such research is carried out in collaboration with Aboriginal people.	Medium

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Objective	Operations	Priority
<b>Protecting the natural environment</b>		
6. Geological and landform features in the parks, including karst areas, are protected and conserved	a. Monitor and regulate visitor use and park management activities to minimise impacts on geological features, including karst areas.	Medium
7. Catchment values, water quality and flow regimes in the parks are protected and improved	a. Implement the joint management responsibilities with WaterNSW for the special areas in the parks.	Very high
	b. Maintain or upgrade and realign/adjust if necessary, park roads and management trails to meet park management and visitor needs, reduce erosion, and minimise impacts on water quality and other park values.	High
8. The extent, diversity and condition of priority habitats, plant and animal species and communities are maintained or improved	a. Undertake or support the implementation of relevant actions (as identified in the NPWS Threatened Species Framework for zero extinctions, the Biodiversity Conservation Program and any conservation action plans) to promote the recovery of threatened species, populations, ecological communities and assets of intergenerational significance in the parks.	Very high
	b. Ensure fire management programs consider protection of biodiversity, cultural values, water quality, habitat connectivity and plant communities with limited ability to recover (e.g. upland swamps).	Very high
	c. Manage feral animal species and weed species in accordance with relevant feral animal and weed management strategies, targeting priority threats and adapting to new information and emerging threats.	Very high
	d. Monitor habitat condition and ecosystem health, and identify existing and emerging threats to support adaptive management.	High
	e. Work cooperatively with Local Land Services, regional pest committees and park neighbours to manage feral animal and weed species at a landscape scale and minimise impacts on the park.	High
	f. Implement or support restoration and revegetation programs where required in priority habitats, including wilderness and wild river habitats, or where necessary to restore World Heritage and National Heritage values.	Medium
	g. Undertake or support biodiversity surveys to update and increase knowledge of species diversity, distribution and abundance.	High
	h. Support research relevant to improving our understanding and conservation of park values and assisting NPWS with park management.	High

## Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks plan of management

Objective	Operations	Priority
9. Understanding of the impacts of climate change on park values is improved and informs management of park values	i. Consider the potential impacts of climate change on park values and identify and incorporate actions to build resilience into all management programs.	High
<b>Protecting our historic heritage</b>		
10. Historic heritage places in the parks are understood and conserved	a. Protect historic heritage items in accordance with their assessed significance.	High
	b. Prepare, implement and/or revise conservation management plans or heritage action statements for historic heritage sites as required, including the Blue Mountains Walking Tracks and buildings at Yerranderie, Green Gully and Kedumba Valley.	High
	c. Assess the historic heritage value and significance of potential historic heritage sites, objects and places in the parks.	Medium
<b>Providing for visitor use and enjoyment</b>		
11. The parks offer a range of appropriate, sustainable, high-quality, meaningful visitor opportunities and experiences	a. Provide a range of sustainable visitor opportunities as listed in Table 6 and Figure 3.	High
	b. Undertake actions to provide the public with an understanding and appreciation of the parks' values, including their World Heritage and National Heritage values.	High
	c. Monitor recreational use and impacts. Use the results to adaptively manage recreational activities to ensure sustainable use, including site works and management of visitor numbers.	Medium
	d. Identify, assess and manage risks to visitor safety, including undertaking risk assessments of high-risk areas. Management actions may include closure of areas, realignment of tracks and trails, and installation of barriers.	High
	e. Support community partnerships in the parks, aligning activities to the protection and restoration of park values and other park management priorities.	High
12. Visitor opportunities support state and local economies, and contribute to community health and wellbeing	a. Support appropriate Aboriginal-run business development opportunities.	High
	b. Authorise an appropriate range of events, functions and commercial activities, subject to bookings, approvals and conditions (see Table 6) (including the requirement for appropriate interpretation of park values).	High
<b>Park infrastructure and services</b>		
13. Park infrastructure adequately services management needs, facilitates quality visitor experiences	a. Establish and maintain the fire trail network consistent with approved fire access and fire trail (FAFT) plans and prescribed standards under the Rural Fires Act. Where required, establish new trails after environmental impact assessment and consistent with	Very high



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Objective	Operations	Priority
and has minimal environmental impact on park values	the approved FAFT plans, and on alignments that minimise impacts to park values.	
	b. Provide, maintain and upgrade a network of tracks for walking and, where designated, cycling. Close and rehabilitate unauthorised and unnecessary tracks.	High
	c. Provide, maintain and upgrade visitor precincts (Table 2), visitor nodes (Figure 3) and camping areas (Table 3) subject to environmental impact assessment, consideration of carrying capacity and site planning.	High
	d. Implement new walking tracks to: (i) provide an alternative to the fire trail section of the Mount Solitary Walk in the Jamison Valley; (ii) connect Springwood with Martin's Lookout; and (iii) connect The Oaks Trail with Campfire Creek in the Glenbrook area. Implement track realignments, short connecting links and formalise footpads, if necessary to protect park values or improve visitor safety.	Medium
	e. Investigate options for the adaptive reuse of buildings (including heritage buildings) and structures in the parks, and implement where appropriate.	Medium
	f. Prepare and implement a reserve access strategy to secure park access for public and management purposes.	Medium
	g. Identify and rectify park boundary errors, boundary encroachments and proposed boundary adjustments in accordance with the NPW Act.	Low
14. Fire is managed to protect life, property and park infrastructure and to conserve and benefit park values	a. Implement the park fire management strategies.	Very high
	b. Revise and adjust the fire management strategies as required to take account of emerging threats and new information such as fire ecology recommendations and traditional Aboriginal burning practices.	Very high
	c. Participate in strategic fire planning through the relevant bush fire management committee and emergency management committee and maintain cooperative arrangements with local Rural Fire Service's brigades, other firefighting authorities and surrounding landowners.	Very high
	d. Undertake targeted and strategic hazard reduction activities (including prescribed burning, slashing and other mitigation measures) to protect infrastructure, property and park values.	Very high
	e. Maintain and enhance capability for rapid remote area fire suppression to protect life, property and park values.	Very high
<b>Non-park infrastructure and services</b>		
15. Non-park infrastructure and services have minimal	a. Work with other agencies, land managers and park neighbours to minimise impacts on park values from adjacent land uses.	High

## Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks plan of management

Objective	Operations	Priority
impact on park values and are appropriately authorised	b. Ensure all approved non-NPWS uses and occupancies of NPWS land are authorised in accordance with Part 12 of the NPW Act.	High
	c. Seek removal and site rehabilitation by the relevant owner and operator of obsolete or disused infrastructure.	Low

## More information

- [Blue Mountains National Park and Kanangra-Boyd National Park planning considerations](#)
- [Greater Blue Mountains Area, UNESCO World Heritage Convention webpage](#)
- [National Parks and Wildlife Service \(NPWS\) website](#)
  - [Public register](#) which identifies leases, easements and rights of way granted under Part 12 of the NPW Act
- [NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water](#)
  - [Assets of intergenerational significance](#)
  - [Biodiversity Conservation Program](#)
- [Special areas strategic plan of management](#)

See the planning considerations report for details on other documents referred to in this plan of management.

## Appendix A: Planning framework

In addition to common law, the key laws and policies which apply to how we manage our parks are outlined below (this is not a complete list).

### Commonwealth legislation

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* – protect areas and objects that are of particular significance to Aboriginal people
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* – matters of national environmental significance including World Heritage and National Heritage, threatened species and ecological communities and migratory species.
- *Native Title Act 1993* – Indigenous land use agreements

### NSW legislation

The following laws apply to how we manage the parks (this is not a complete list):

- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and NPW Regulation
- *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021, including:
  - Chapter 6 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity & Conservation) 2021
- *Water NSW Act 2014* and Water NSW Regulation 2020 (NSW) – special areas
- *Wilderness Act 1987* (NSW) – wilderness areas
- *Heritage Act 1977* – historic heritage
- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* – threatened species
- *Biosecurity Act 2015* – diseases and pest species
- *Rural Fires Act 1997* – mitigation of fire hazards and the response to wildfire events

### NPWS policies and strategies

A range of NPWS policies and strategies apply to park management, including:

- park management policies
- regional pest management strategies
- fire management strategies

### Objects of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*

1. The objects of the NPW Act, set out in section 2A of the Act are:

- (a) The conservation of nature, including, but not limited to, the conservation of—
  - (i) habitat, ecosystems and ecosystem processes, and
  - (ii) biological diversity at the community, species and genetic levels, and
  - (iii) landforms of significance, including geological features and processes, and

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- (iv) landscapes and natural features of significance including wilderness and wild rivers,
  - (b) the conservation of objects, places or features (including biological diversity) of cultural value within the landscape, including, but not limited to—
    - (i) places, objects and features of significance to Aboriginal people, and
    - (ii) places of social value to the people of New South Wales, and
    - (iii) places of historic, architectural or scientific significance,
  - (c) fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of nature and cultural heritage and their conservation,
  - (d) providing for the management of land reserved under this Act in accordance with the management principles applicable for each type of reservation.
2. The objects of this Act are to be achieved by applying the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
3. In carrying out functions under this Act, the Minister, the Secretary and the Service are to give effect to the following—
- (a) the objects of this Act,
  - (b) the public interest in the protection of the values for which land is reserved under this Act and the appropriate management of those lands.

## Management principles – World Heritage and National Heritage

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 identify the management principles for Australian World Heritage and National Heritage properties.

The primary purpose of management of natural heritage and cultural heritage of a declared World Heritage property must be, in accordance with Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention, to identify, protect, conserve, present, transmit to future generations and, if appropriate, rehabilitate the World Heritage values of the property.

The objective in managing National Heritage places is to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit, to all generations, their National Heritage values.

## Appendix B: Cycling in wilderness

Within **Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness**, cycling is only allowed on the following management trails (see Figure 5):

- Ruby Creek management trail
- Wattle Creek management trail.

Within **Grose wilderness**, cycling is only allowed on the following management trails (see Figure 6):

- Winmalee complex of trails which includes Springwood, Blue Gum, Bees Nest and Shaws Ridge management trails.
- Lawson Ridge management trail
- Burramoko management trail
- Mount Banks Road (management trail)
- Hurleys Heights management trail.

Cycling within wilderness areas will only be permitted on the identified management trails where the activity will not degrade wilderness values or threaten the ability of the NPWS to meet its obligations under the Wilderness Act. The environmental impacts of cycling will be monitored and closures or restrictions on access may be implemented if required.

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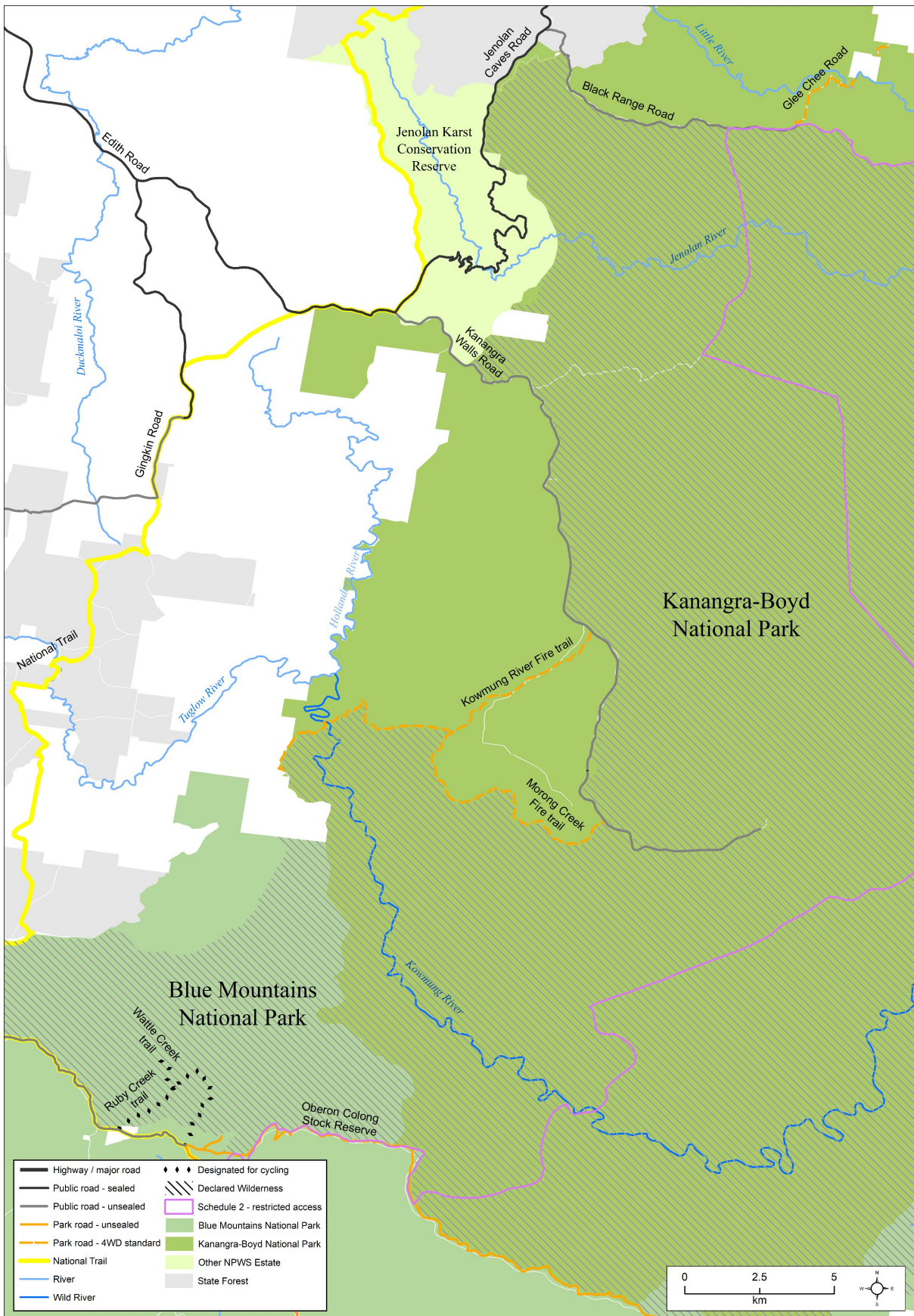


Figure 5 Management trails designated for cycling: Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness Area

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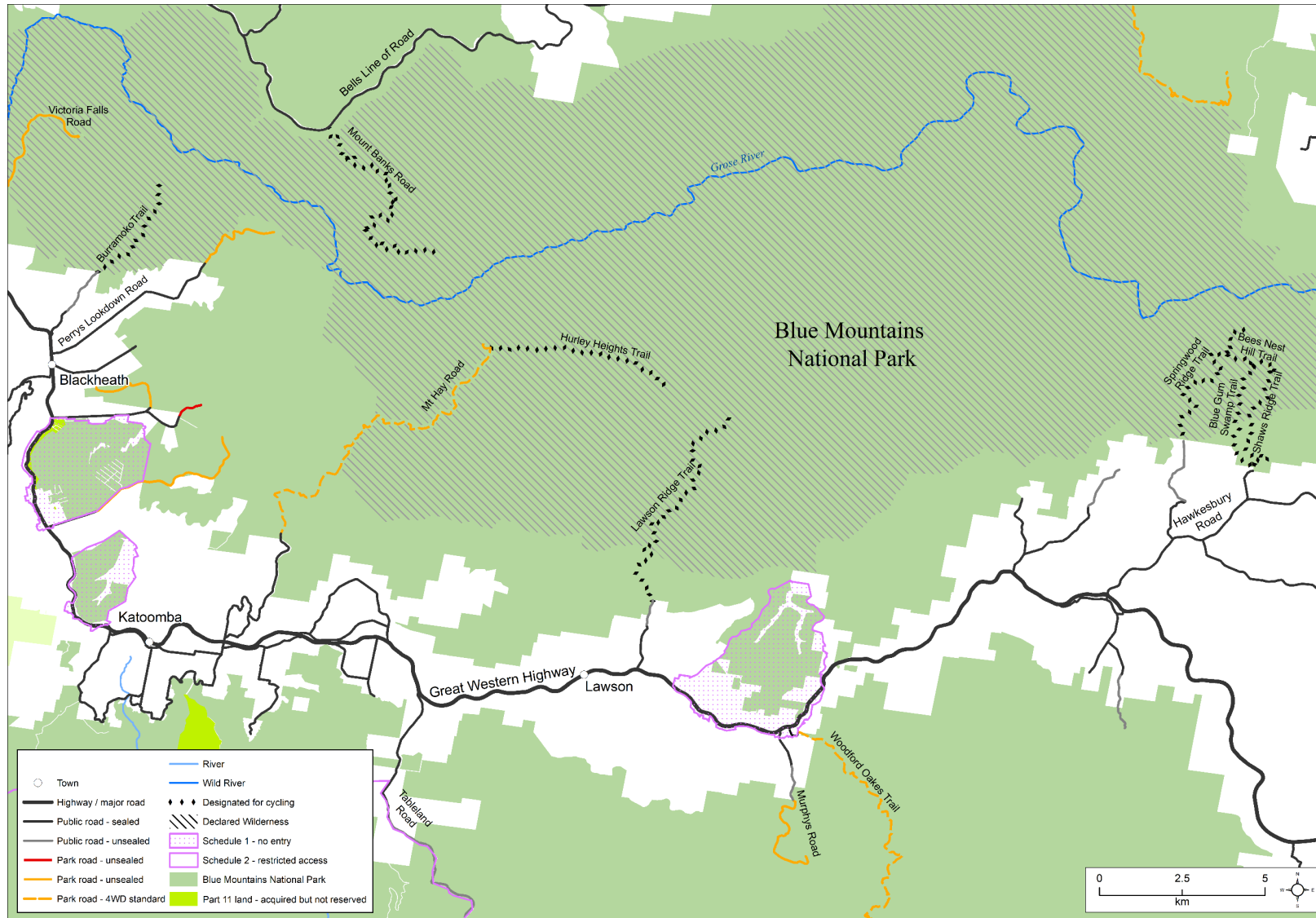


Figure 6 Management trails designated for cycling: Grose Wilderness Area



## Appendix C: Restrictions on adventure activities

The following areas are closed to rock climbing and abseiling:

- Jamison Valley cliff line from Rocket Point to the Valley of the Waters
- Grose Valley cliff line from Horseshoe Falls to Barrow Lookout (50 m south-east of Bridal Veil Falls)
- declared Aboriginal places
- any cliff line where on-cliff activities may pose an unacceptable risk to other park visitors and no other mitigation strategy is feasible
- limestone cliffs in karst areas (except when a caving permit authorises surface abseiling to access a cave)

The following areas are closed to abseiling:

- Glenbrook Gorge from Glenbrook Creek downstream from the causeway
- Jamison Valley cliff line from Giant Stairway to Furber Steps
- Mount Banks main cliff line
- all formal lookouts, except if specifically permitted by signage (e.g. Mount Portal).

Note: Abseiling only closures do not apply to abseiling undertaken as access to or as part of accessing climbing routes.

## Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd national parks plan of management

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