

“Save public access to world famous Dyurrite Arapiles - support climbing and cultural heritage coexistence”

Parks Victoria's new plan for Arapiles-Tooan State Park closes down 1810 rock climbing routes, 63% of climbs in the park and over 50km of climbs. In addition, off track walking will be banned in the majority of the park. The areas that are closed are not able to be negotiated or influenced by public submissions, according to Parks Victoria. Submissions close on 2 December.

The large scale restrictions proposed in this plan create division, enable ignorance, and isolate communities from each other and nature. It is not a unified way forward for traditional owners, locals, visitors, climbers and nature lovers - all who love and have a history of caring for this special place.

The climbing community believes better solutions can be implemented to allow many more climbing routes to remain open, while still protecting and celebrating the cultural and ecological values found at Dyurrite/ Arapiles.

To highlight these issues, Australia's peak climbing organisations address this open letter to the Victorian Premier and Minister for Parks Victoria, requesting they intervene to enable meaningful consultation.

This letter has been signed by over 20,000 individuals and people represented by businesses and organisations impacted by this plan to date. You can use the QR codes to add your signature to the open letter,

and importantly as a Victorian sign the Parliamentary Petition to enable debate in the Legislative Assembly around this issue.

More information on the issue can be found here: www.climbingvictoria.com/resources



Open Letter



Parliamentary Petition

OPEN LETTER

Climbing at Arapiles/Dyurrite

Re: A request for a full and proper consultation with the climbing community and other affected stakeholders before the Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park Plan of Management is amended.

To: the Hon Steve Dimopoulos and the Premier Jacinta Allan

Rock climbing at Arapiles/Dyurrite is a profound and life enhancing experience that has been embraced by generations of climbers. Parks Victoria propose to close half of the climbing areas and the majority of the climbing routes, including many of international renown. This has occurred without any engagement with recognised climbing stakeholders such as Climbing Victoria.

Parks Victoria claim that they involved the Gariwerd Wimmera Reconciliation Network in formulation of the plan. This organisation has publicly stated that they have not provided input to Parks Victoria and that they are not a representative for the climbing community. Their sole role was to help the Barengi Gadjin Land Council in their understanding of climbing at Arapiles/ Dyurrite.

In the draft plan, open for public submissions for a mere 28 days, it is made clear that the areas marked as closures are not open to negotiation. This is not “consultation” and the reasons for these closures are opaque.

Climbers do not dispute that Aboriginal Cultural heritage and the environment need protection, but they do dispute that rock climbing results in harm - given appropriate management. The push by Parks Victoria to equate climbing with harm is a false dichotomy. There

are many alternatives to closure that climbers could offer, but they have not been allowed to provide input.

The natural environment at Arapiles/Dyurrite has been significantly restored over past decades, predominantly through the efforts of climbers. In addition climbers have been instrumental in reporting and instituting protection of areas of cultural heritage and ecological sensitivity well before this became a focus of government agencies.

Evidence of cultural harm has not been provided to Victorian climbing representatives.

The climbs that will be banned under the current proposal range from the classic Tiptoe Ridge, which is often every child's first introduction to this enchanting place, right through to the world famous Punks in the Gym that was first completed by Wolfgang Gullich in 1985 - the hardest climbing route in the world at the time. Hundreds of classic, world class routes will no longer be accessible if this plan is implemented. Immersion in the natural world through climbing cannot be replaced by curated experiences.

Coming hard on the heels of Parks Victoria's closures of vast areas in the Grampians/ Gariwerd, the closure of Arapiles/Dyurrite climbing areas will create economic hardship in local towns, and recruitment to service industries such as health and education will be significantly impacted. Climbers, who stay in the area for prolonged visits, contribute substantially to the local visitor economy.

Outdoor education opportunities will be further curtailed. The ability to undertake adventurous play and recreation is directly linked to well-being, improved resilience and mental health across all ages. International climbers visiting Australia predominantly do so in order to visit Arapiles/Dyurrite. These actions will all but cripple international climbing tourism to Australia.

This sham consultation process needs to be stopped and Parks Victoria must engage directly with all stakeholders, to create a new draft plan.

We, the undersigned climbing organisations, businesses and individuals, call on the Victorian State Government to postpone implementation of the Management Plan for the Arapiles-Tooan State Park (Dyurrite Cultural Landscape) to allow proper engagement and consultation with Victorian climbing representatives, and other relevant stakeholders.

Climbing Victoria Inc.

Australian Climbing Association Victoria

Climbers Club of Tasmania

Australian Climbing Association NSW Inc

Australian Climbing Association Queensland

Canberra Climbers Association

Climbers Association of Western Australia

Sydney Rock Climbing Club

Climbing Club of South Australia



Australian Climbing Association (Vic)



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