Options for enhancing biodiversity governance arrangements for the Australian Alps

Background Reading for Focus Groups

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About this Document
This document provides the essential background reading material to prepare you for participation in the focus group activity. The term governance arrangements can cover many things, but for this discussion, we have put together two main governance options for consideration. In the following pages, we outline the two options designed to improve biodiversity outcomes in the Australian Alps. Such improvements are needed because projections for the future of biodiversity in the area under a range of different scenarios out to 2030 (see scenario snapshots) all suggest a decline in biodiversity values.

The input from this focus group and four others conducted in other places is part of research investigating the best ways of governing large landscapes to achieve desirable biodiversity outcomes. The results from these focus groups will be used in forthcoming workshops. The governance options will be further investigated by testing their robustness, that is, their ability to provide improved biodiversity outcomes, under a number of different possible futures/scenarios.

What’s in the following pages?
- Part A. Biodiversity Governance and the Australian Alps – an introduction
- Part B. Five key findings for future governance of the Australian Alps
- Part C. Governance Options
  - Option 1 - Public-Community-Private partnerships: Building more networked, interactive governance
  - Option 2 - Transboundary authority accountable to a statute: Establishment of a new Australian Alps Management Authority
- Attachment: 2030 Scenario Snapshots with biodiversity outcomes

Landscapes and Policy Research Hub
The Landscapes and Policy Research Hub is supported through funding from the Australian Government’s National Environmental Research Program and involves researchers from the University of Tasmania, The Australian National University, Murdoch University, The Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre, Griffith University and Charles Sturt University.
PART A - Biodiversity Governance and the Australian Alps

Conserving landscapes rich in biodiversity requires long-term planning and understanding how social and ecological systems co-evolve. How such landscapes are governed (that is, the structures and processes that determine who has influence, who decides, and how decision-makers are held accountable) is pivotal to the long-term conservation of biodiversity. Being able to govern across landscapes, like the Australian Alps, where there are multiple jurisdictions and values, is a challenging task.

Governance can improve biodiversity outcomes indirectly by enabling decision-making and management actions that are more responsive to environmental conditions. Better biodiversity outcomes could mean improving the extent and/or condition of biodiversity values or reducing the threat to those values. For example, this might mean an increase in the extent and improvement in condition of heathland and sphagnum bogs. Better outcomes could also include a decline in hawkweed or a reduction in large-scale threats like fire and feral horses.

The purpose of the focus groups is to help refine, modify or discard the two options provided in this paper. The process through which the two governance options were generated is detailed in Figure 1. The revised option or options that come out of the focus groups will then be considered in a subsequent stakeholder workshop using four different scenarios for the future of the Australian Alps (see scenario snapshots). We are seeking to identify the option that workshop participants consider most likely to deliver the best possible biodiversity outcomes across all scenarios.

**Figure 1** Process through which the two governance options were generated

1. **Model development**
   - The research team developed a social-ecological system model for discussion and modification at a stakeholder workshop in April 2013.
   - This model shows how key biophysical and social drivers affect biodiversity outcomes, and highlights the ways in which governance can influence these drivers and outcomes.
   - The model thus provides a basis for identifying governance pathways that could lead to improved biodiversity outcomes.

2. **Scenario generation**
   - Four scenarios of likely futures for biodiversity conservation in the Alps in 2030 were generated by stakeholders at the same workshop in April 2013.
   - All showed a decline in biodiversity values of the alpine and subalpine regions of the Australian Alps, suggesting that improvements in governance arrangements are needed.

3. **Analysis of institutional arrangements**
   - Current institutional arrangements were diagnosed and analysed using a custom-designed framework through 100 interviews with government and non-government managers and policy makers.
   - Issues and opportunities were identified from this analysis regarding the structures and functions of the organisations and procedures associated with managing the Alps.

4. **Learning lessons from elsewhere**
   - A review was undertaken of best practice governance case studies from elsewhere to suggest innovative future approaches to governance of the Australian Alps.

5. **Generation of governance options**
   - Results from 1-4 were used iteratively to generate options for improving governance arrangements for the Australian Alps.
PART B - Key issues for future governance of the Australian Alps

The following findings summarise the key issues for future governance of the Australian Alps. These findings are derived from analysis of current arrangements through interviews, the stakeholder workshop and reviewing the literature.

FINDING 1: *Increases in resourcing from multiple sources, both public and private, are essential for effective landscape level biodiversity conservation.*

A consistent concern in pursuing biodiversity conservation in the Australian Alps is the inadequacy of available resources for the required task. Allocation of funds also needs to be flexible enough to enable response to unexpected events or to pursue a change in direction resulting from re-evaluation of strategies. Longer-term, more secure funding is needed rather than relying heavily on applying for short-term competitive funding packages, which inevitably require considerable time and resources to prepare, and manipulation of objectives to meet funding requirements.

Building community support for biodiversity was discussed as a pivotal strategy for redressing inadequate resourcing, which could then influence the vision and political will for increased public funding. In the current political environment, this strategy seems challenging given trends towards lean government and reduced taxation together with public emphasis on ensuring governments focus on enabling economic development. Several interviewees expressed concerns regarding the rollback in resources devoted to actively educating and connecting the community to parks.

In this context there is an inevitable pressure to identify alternative funding sources, such as philanthropic support, other forms of private investment, or charges for selected ecosystem services provided by the Alps parks. Partnerships with the tourism industry are a promising base, with strong foundations already in the Alps. Innovative means of developing enhanced revenue streams associated with park visitors is also part of this broader agenda. Green season tourism could provide more diverse opportunities and buffer against declining snowfall, but views on its potential and the value in pursuing it are mixed.

FINDING 2: *Transcending the constraints related to short-term political cycles and multiple jurisdictions are particularly important if landscape level biodiversity conservation is to be achieved in the Australian Alps.*

Effective management of biodiversity-related programs in the Alps is constrained by political intervention in park management and constantly changing political dynamics. Regular changes of government mean the institutional terrain in the Australian Alps is constantly changing. Ongoing organisational restructuring and policy change can undermine performance, learning and the social cohesion that can nurture innovation. The ‘service provider’ type relationship between different government departments and agencies or sections (for example, the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industry and Parks) can create complexities and tensions.

Regarding multiple jurisdictions (federal, territory, state), managers have become accustomed to working within this multi-jurisdictional system to their advantage, for example, learning from other jurisdictions to finesse their own strategies for achieving biodiversity outcomes. Although this diversity in approaches has benefits it can also undermine the pursuit of a coherent, consistent approach across jurisdictions, especially when responding to a shared problem (for example, feral horses).
The Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program was noted by interviewees as a successful means for dealing with on-ground issues and providing diversity, with learning between members lauded. At the same time, the Program was noted as being ‘in a lull’ and not effectively dealing with political pressures. Interviewees expressed a desire for greater cooperation between parks agencies and other government agencies and departments, especially to allow greater flexibility to vary projects subject to narrow accountability procedures (related to Findings 4 and 5). The Program will need to be more formalised if it is to attract a greater quantum of funding (Finding 1), but the appetite for such a change is mixed and will require collective discussion of costs and opportunities.

FINDING 3: Carefully considering and clarifying roles, responsibilities and skills at all levels of governance will reduce frustration, improve management and enhance the use of science in decision-making.

Authority and power are often not devolved to the governance level where management can be most effective. Emblematic of this were feral horse and fire management policies, where public concerns and political responses were seen by interviewees as disempowering agency staff and preventing them from adopting scientifically-informed strategies. Political and higher level government intervention can also discourage agencies from fulfilling their role as providers of ‘frank and fearless’ advice to senior political leaders. At the same time, the level of scientific expertise within parks agencies has been reduced, and there are challenges involved in successfully negotiating contracts to bring in external scientific expertise that meet both academic and park management requirements. Both trends can act as obstacles to evidence-based management. While staff with generalist expertise may be in a position to acquire a broader systems understanding, specialist skills are also needed to bolster systems understanding with the specialist knowledge required to adequately manage the unique alpine environment.

The complexity of having many layers through the vertical structure of agencies impedes flexibility. While several managers discussed the importance of linking on-ground actions to higher order objectives and assets, it is a challenge to maintain this ‘line of sight’. For many staff it remains difficult to appreciate how their day-to-day work helps achieve a bigger picture vision and strategy, or to identify opportunities to help shape that vision and strategy.

There has also been a shift in organisational culture and norms in parks agencies towards having more of a customer focus, driving expenditure toward those actions more likely to please the public. Juxtaposed with this, the strength of community concern and associated political lobbying has resulted in some frustration among parks agency staff that they are required to undertake work tasks they consider to be contrary to good science, or focusing their efforts away from the primary purpose of protected areas. Examples include bans on aerial culling to reduce feral horse numbers, dealing with wild dogs near the public-private land interface, and an emphasis on meeting area quotas for hazard reduction burning rather than other more biodiversity-related criteria.

FINDING 4: Collaboration and cooperation are an imperative for concerted, coherent actions across landscapes such as the Australian Alps.

The Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program provides an obvious starting point for further collaboration focused on biodiversity conservation in the Alps. This Program has enabled the pursuit of a longer-term agenda, and created spaces for inter-agency learning and building a strong network between staff in middle management positions and below focused on comparing and improving program delivery on the ground. This network has strengthened the skills and capacity of those that are best placed to connect high-level strategic objectives with action on the ground. However, lack of
resources and a need for these staff to also meet their regular work responsibilities means that their involvement is often voluntary. It is these same people who may also be best placed to pursue a more adaptive approach to planning and management. However, to bring such an approach to effect requires organisational changes that shift away from a focus on command and control and enhances flexibility through effective devolution of responsibilities. This requires champions at the top of the organisation as well as commitment of time and resources to enable effective reflection and interaction.

Increasing cooperation between parks agencies and other government and non-government organisations also offers opportunities to access more diverse knowledge and sources of innovation. Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs) are already partners in some cross-tenure management initiatives, but there may be opportunities to expand these partnerships as well as learn from the innovative regional and landscape scale systems-based planning approaches being pursued by catchment management agencies in the Alps and elsewhere. Forums have also been created to facilitate greater collaboration among Australian Alps Traditional Owners. This includes a reference group coordinated by the Australian Alps Liaison Committee (AALC) to enhance collaboration among Traditional Owners across the entire Australian Alps landscape. These initiatives and others involving Aboriginal engagement have provided parks agencies and Traditional Owners with new perspectives and opportunities, including aspirations for enhanced governance responsibilities by Traditional Owners through formal and informal means.

**FINDING 5:** Accountability and legitimacy were identified as critical governance issues that could benefit from new approaches with enhanced prospects for adaptive planning, management and innovation.

Like many government departments, parks agencies are affected by narrow conceptions of accountability and a desire to align governments with the politics of the day. Consistent with broader trends toward ‘managerialism’ in the public sector, some of the organisational leadership are perceived as professional bureaucrats with business expertise rather than having a clear passion, commitment and understanding for protected area management. This results in risk averse behaviour, reduces organisational performance, discourages innovation and undermines collaboration. The trend toward lean governments and a desire to control financial aspects of management translates to heavy reliance on short-term, tied funding, and a decline in discretionary and recurrent funding. Current approaches to accountability encourage a focus on short-term outputs that can be easily measured (that is, ‘doing stuff’), rather than the more difficult task of achieving biodiversity outcomes over the long term. This makes continuity of programmes difficult to achieve, prevents broad reflection on organisational goals and strategies, and discourages more flexible and experimental approaches to management. Reluctance to empower managers to learn and make decisions without political intervention was also linked to this risk aversion and politicisation of the public service.

The tiered system of planning in parks provides for short, medium, and long-term strategies, but many plans of management are overly ambitious given tight resources. A lack of connection between long-term strategic and short-term business planning mean delivery on many objectives is simply not feasible, raising legitimacy concerns. On the evaluation side, ‘State of the Parks’ reporting offers a progressive step toward evaluating management effectiveness, with a focus on formative evaluation (that is, learning to improve).
PART C - Identifying and describing the governance options

A broad range of governance options exists (Figure 2). This range of options has been constrained to those considered possible within a democratic Westminster-style system of government. The other conditions bounding the scope of options considered are detailed in Table 1 and relate to how land and biodiversity management responsibilities are allocated and realised in Australia. Of the range of possible future governance approaches two in particular (shaded red in Figure 2) seem to potentially address the major issues and build on current strengths, as identified through the interviews, stakeholder workshop and analysis of best practice elsewhere. These are the two options that will be explored in detail in the focus groups. The following two options concern governance arrangements for the 11 protected areas encompassed by the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program, plus the Victorian Alpine Resorts.

Figure 2  Spectrum of Governance Possibilities for the Alps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Arrangements</th>
<th>Implications for governance options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under the Australian Constitution, states have responsibility for land management, and history suggests constitutional change in Australia is difficult.</td>
<td>Limits Commonwealth involvement; truly ‘national’ national parks currently only exist across Commonwealth of Australia lands, so establishing a ‘national’ national park involving the states is likely to be politically unfeasible, even if it were deemed permissible under the Constitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States have their own legislation and regulation that dictates their responsibilities.</td>
<td>Inter-jurisdictional collaboration is limited by dictated legislative and regulatory responsibilities and accountabilities. Statutory bodies are subject to relevant state and Commonwealth legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity is both a public and private good, with requirements imposed in particular on the management of threatened species, to achieve public good.</td>
<td>Public interest and associated legislative commitments, particularly with respect to threatened species, are likely to persist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although biodiversity is a public good, its management is strongly determined by land tenure.</td>
<td>Assuming land tenure is unlikely to change (that is. all biodiversity values will not be privatised), the current land tenure and accompanying approaches to biodiversity management are likely to remain as given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australians have a strong cultural commitment to national parks but the associated purposes have changed over time.</td>
<td>Biodiversity cannot be assumed to have primacy as a park purpose indefinitely, and its valuing by society may change as social values change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPTION 1 - Public-Community-Private partnerships: Building more networked, interactive governance

This option highlights opportunities to further engage tourism and community interests in biodiversity governance in the Australian Alps, by building on the success of the long-standing inter-jurisdictional collaboration through the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program by expanding membership of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee, the central coordinating body (Figure 2). The focus in the following detail is on building partnerships in a way that is aligned with the conservation values of the Alps, while providing opportunities for more actors to participate and a broader base. Many of the recommendations still focus on procedural changes in the park agencies because, in the absence of legislative change, formal authority still rests with those organisations.

Figure 2 Structure of the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program
(Source: AALC Strategic Plan 2012-2015)
Overarching governance structure

1. Expand the Australian Alps Liaison Committee to include tourism industry and Catchment Management Authorities/Local Land Services and local government representation. This would bring in key user group and community interests. Formalise through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) similar to current arrangements but with expanded membership. Use this expanded committee to collectively decide which other stakeholders should be engaged as partners, committee members or as members of the reference groups.

2. Pursue additional partnerships through both the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program and at an individual agency level. Integrate partner building activities into both terms of reference for the program and at an agency level into job descriptions. Such an approach can protect against government cutbacks and provide opportunities to innovate that are not otherwise available with public funds. It also builds more interactive governance, in which power and responsibility are shared more broadly, which can help build community acceptance. The following partnerships are presented as possibilities, but this list is not exhaustive:

   a. Support the establishment of a Centre for Australian Alps Social-Ecological Research. Increasing the research profile of the Alps can help attract additional resources and interest, as well as provide evidence to support management and policy. This could be funded by the trust (see Point 16).

   b. Foster partnerships with adjoining landholders to leverage benefits from existing governmental policies such as the Australian Government’s connectivity initiatives.

   c. Increase the number of Aboriginal people working on country in the Alps, on a contracted basis, for example, providing guided tours.

   d. Jointly initiate a community education and engagement campaign with non-government organisations (for example, national parks association, Australian Wildlife Conservancy) focused on the conservation and natural values of the Australian Alps.

3. Work with the Australian Alps National Landscape initiative to identify opportunities to increase revenue from tourism, part of which could be directed to biodiversity management. This could include partnerships with the ski resorts or development of nature-based tourism infrastructure (for example, eco-lodges) in the parks or adjoining land. The agencies could take the lead on green season tourism partnerships, which are not a major focus of the resorts, but can buffer against declining winter visitation.

4. Build on the platform of State of the Parks reporting to integrate governance dimensions into effectiveness evaluation. This could focus on the principles of good governance (for example, inclusiveness, fairness, legitimacy) with qualitative measures used, similarly to the measurement of many other elements widely reported in management effectiveness evaluations. To emphasise the importance of long-term commitment and negative impacts of frequent organisational change, governance dimensions such as continuity of funding and structural change should be included in this expanded evaluation.

5. Broaden accountability, for example, building on the existing agency reporting structures and working with funding sources, to move from narrow, ‘functional’ accountability to broader social and environmental accountability. For example, rather than emphasising expenditure of funds on outputs (for example, number of hectares managed for weeds), develop key performance indicators based on biodiversity outcomes and performance (for example, implementation of experimental adaptive management). Though this will need to start within park agencies and with the federal agencies, mechanisms will be most effective if adopted by all members of the
expanded Australian Alps Liaison Committee. A less formal process for ensuring accountability of the other partners should also be established, with social objectives providing a promising starting point.

**Roles and responsibilities**

6. Integrate collaborative and landscape-scale management into agency job descriptions and organisational structures, for example, dedicating a specified number of hours to cooperative program activities. This not only empowers managers to devote time to these activities as a normal part of their jobs, but it is a strategy that can buffer the program from changes in the external environment. Legal reforms, such as integration of cross-border collaboration into the objects of enabling legislation (for example, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974), should also be explored.

7. Foster champions to reinvigorate the cooperative management program. The coordinator, with the advice of other Australian Alps Liaison Committee members, should identify senior managers from agency and non-agency partners who are willing to
   a. support staff participation in the program;
   b. ensure the program tackles the more significant and strategic cross-border issues, and
   c. communicate the benefits of the program to political leaders. Champions at middle management and below should also be identified to ensure the continued success of the program’s operational focus.

8. Delegate a more appropriate level of authority to Alps agency managers to use discretion in the day-to-day management of biodiversity. The details of this power-sharing would be decided in negotiation between park management agencies (that is, Parks Victoria and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service) and the government departments (that is, Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage). These negotiated roles and responsibilities should be recorded in a Memorandum of Understanding or Heads of Agreement. Empowerment of managers is not just formal but also psychological, so these changes must be clearly communicated to staff and highlighted by senior managers.

9. Continue to engage with traditional owners to determine their aspirations for collaborative management and governance and to identify partnership opportunities.

**Adaptive capacity**

10. Develop a program in each of the agencies to encourage and enable staff to introduce innovative and collaborative approaches to conserving biodiversity and securing resources. The program should include multiple strategies known to foster innovation including:
   a. providing a designated arena or pathway for staff to introduce ideas, even in their formative stages;
   b. granting discretion to employees to change work practices;
   c. providing designated time for staff to read, reflect and discuss ideas;
   d. incentivising innovation (for example, funding development and implementation of innovative ideas, including experiments and pilot studies).

Award sponsorship and the cost savings of innovation offer ways to pay for incentives. Innovations can be small or large, from improvements in park management or organisational practices to new partnerships and initiatives. Middle managers are the most common source of innovation, but entrepreneurial activity can occur at all levels. For these strategies to work,
sanctions for unsuccessful innovations must be minimised. The Australian Government could jointly fund this program or develop its own.

11. Continue to leverage on the benefits of diversity that come with multiple jurisdictions, but do so in a more structured way using experimental adaptive management. The cooperative program provides a forum to discuss areas that would benefit from such an approach.

12. Embed foresighting as a formal part of each of the reference groups\(^1\). Foresighting is a process of identifying emerging threats and potential strategies to mitigate them. This could be included in the terms of reference for each group, reported on, and then formally considered in the process of strategic planning.

13. Increase community engagement with conservation in parks through community outreach, and strategies to increase visitation and loyalty. This can assist with revenue raising and enhancing political support.

**Budget and funding**

14. Reserve profits from partnerships, user fees, etc to be used as discretionary funds to deliver on biodiversity objectives.

15. Develop strategies for facilitating longer term discretionary funding from both government and external sources, such as trust funds and endowments. Such funds should be linked to key performance indicators that are outcome-based. One strategy is to secure a larger one-off allocation for biodiversity that is treated as an endowment over a longer period, for example, seven to 10 years. Funding based on the ecosystem service value of the Alps as the headwaters of the Murray-Darling catchment provides another potential source of funding.

16. Secure seed funding to establish an Australian Alps Research and Management Trust. Charge this Trust with three roles. First, raise funds from philanthropic sources and private investors to support the Centre for Australian Alps Social-Ecological Research, and contribute along with government investments to implementation of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee strategic plan. Second, advise the agencies and the committee on how to increase revenue from beneficiary and user pays systems. Third, fund and support research positions in the partner organisations.

17. Investigate legal mechanisms to enable the Australian Alps Cooperative Management Program to apply independently for additional funding allocations. Following the lead of other landscape-scale and connectivity initiatives, this could include establishment of an incorporated body or a special purpose company under the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001.

\(^1\) Climate Change and Adaptation, Ecological Systems and Processes, Water and Catchments, Invasive Species Management, Fire Management, Visitor Experiences, Stakeholder Engagement and Communication, Indigenous People’s Engagement, and Cultural Heritage
OPTION 2 - Transboundary authority accountable to a statute: Establishment of a new Australian Alps Management Authority

This new governance structure addresses key issues generated through the involvement of multiple jurisdictions. It emphasises a form of statutory authority that is accountable to a statute rather than a Australian Government minister to provide political distance and emphasise accountability to biodiversity objectives. A statutory authority was chosen because of its capacity to achieve greater consistency across the whole of the Alps and access more substantial sources of funding than existing arrangements.

Overarching governance structure

1. Establish an Australian Alps Management Authority governed by a board. Board members comprise representatives from Parks Victoria, Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council (Victoria), NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, ACT Division of Territory and Municipal Services, and a chair appointed by the Federal Minister for the Environment. Legislation passed by the Commonwealth of Australia and each jurisdiction would establish the board and specify that its appointees must have demonstrated experience in protected area management. The legislation also specifies that the primary responsibility of the board is to ensure that management of the Australian Alps is directed towards the goals specified in the act. These goals are consistent with the specification and purpose of an International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category II Protected Area.

2. Maintain and enhance the current reference groups of the Australian Alps Liaison Committee under the new authority structure and enable them to provide an important network function supporting collaborative learning.

Strategic planning, reporting, evaluation and improvement

3. Engage with key stakeholders to establish and maintain:
   a. a set of outcome-driven key performance indicators consistent with the goals specified in the acts;
   b. a process and methods for monitoring, evaluating, reporting and improving performance;
   and
   c. an overarching strategic plan for the Australian Alps, that indicates strategies for achieving the goals and meeting the key performance indicators (see 4 and 5 below).

4. Produce the strategic plan using a collaborative process including all key internal and external stakeholders. It is to be informed by an understanding of the Alps as a social-ecological system, and focuses on a limited number of key strategic points of intervention that serve to direct key investments and management actions. An authority planning team ensures that the plan is regularly updated, with input from a stakeholder advisory committee (whose members are paid sitting fees) and a science advisory committee. Business and operational plans are an integral part of the strategic planning process. To allow for wider engagement and accountability, a full review of the plan is undertaken and publicly reported every five years.

5. Enable Parks Victoria, Alpine Resorts Boards (Victoria), NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and ACT Division of Territory and Municipal Services to work with their key stakeholders to develop an adaptive planning process for the achievement of goals specified in the acts and to meet management responsibilities as delegated by the authority. This adaptive planning process will include the submission and shared evaluation of annual reports of performance against the key performance indicators specified by authority, including monitoring, evaluation and improvement.
activities. Financial accountability would be tied to the completion of this process, with clear understanding that failed experiments will occur and are an important part of learning. A substantial level of day-to-day decision-making authority is devolved to NSW, Victorian and ACT regional staff, as directed by the strategic plan.

6. Enable authority decisions and their rationale, and the performance management system to be transparent to stakeholders through publicly available annual reports.

**Collaboration and cooperation**

7. Use current networks (in particular through the Australian Alps Liaison Committee and its reference groups), and agency staff ‘champions’, to build agency and broad community support for developing a new vision for the Australian Alps and its management, including the establishment of the authority and its strategic plan, as well as the adaptive planning process of each agency involved (see Point 5 above).

8. Increase community engagement with conservation in parks through community outreach, and strategies to increase visitation and loyalty. The Australian Alps Liaison Committee could be the champion of expanded community outreach programs within the new structure, and this commitment should be included in the strategic plan and included in annual reporting mechanisms.

9. Continue to engage with traditional owners to determine their aspirations for collaborative management and governance.

**Budget and funding**

10. Secure seed funding to establish an Australian Alps Research and Management Trust and pursue ecosystem service funding (refer to Option 1, Points 15 and 16 for details).
**2030 SCENARIO SNAPSHOTS**

*Australian Alps*

**Communities & Attitudes**

- **RIP - Take the Package Now**
  - We Care But It's Too Late
  - Strongly Antagonistic

- **Multi Use Park**
  - Strongly Supportive

- **Alpine Dreaming**

**Invasive Processes**

- Large Increase
- No Change

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### Plausible Biodiversity Outcomes under the 2030 Scenarios

#### RIP - Take the Package Now

- **Wetlands Extent**
  - Large and continuing decline
- **Wetlands Condition**
  - Very poor & worsening
- **Grasslands Extent**
  - Moderate decline
- **Grasslands Condition**
  - Degraded
- **Heathlands Extent**
  - Some expansion
- **Heathlands Condition**
  - Moderate
- **Boulder Health Extent**
  - Moderate decline
- **Boulder Health Condition**
  - Very poor
- **Snowpatch & Feldmark Extent**
  - Almost disappeared
- **Snowpatch & Feldmark Condition**
  - Very poor

#### Multi Use Park

- **Wetlands Extent**
  - Large but slowing decline
- **Wetlands Condition**
  - Poor & worsening
- **Grasslands Extent**
  - Small decline
- **Grasslands Condition**
  - Good
- **Heathlands Extent**
  - Some expansion
- **Heathlands Condition**
  - Moderate
- **Boulder Health Extent**
  - Small decline
- **Boulder Health Condition**
  - Poor
- **Snowpatch & Feldmark Extent**
  - Declining
- **Snowpatch & Feldmark Condition**
  - Poor

#### We Care But It is Too Late

- **Wetlands Extent**
  - Large but slowing decline
- **Wetlands Condition**
  - Poor & worsening
- **Grasslands Extent**
  - Moderate decline
- **Grasslands Condition**
  - Degraded
- **Heathlands Extent**
  - Some expansion
- **Heathlands Condition**
  - Moderate
- **Boulder Health Extent**
  - Moderate decline
- **Boulder Health Condition**
  - Poor
- **Snowpatch & Feldmark Extent**
  - Declining
- **Snowpatch & Feldmark Condition**
  - Very poor

#### Alpine Dreaming

- **Wetlands Extent**
  - Moderate but slowing decline
- **Wetlands Condition**
  - Poor to good depending on location
- **Grasslands Extent**
  - Small decline
- **Grasslands Condition**
  - Good
- **Heathlands Extent**
  - Some expansion
- **Heathlands Condition**
  - Good
- **Boulder Health Extent**
  - Small decline
- **Boulder Health Condition**
  - Moderate
- **Snowpatch & Feldmark Extent**
  - Declining
- **Snowpatch & Feldmark Condition**
  - Moderate

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