Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Energy

Title of Proposal - Grampians Peaks Trail

Section 1 - Summary of your proposed action

Provide a summary of your proposed action, including any consultations undertaken.

1.1 Project Industry Type

Tourism and Recreation

1.2 Provide a detailed description of the proposed action, including all proposed activities.

The 160km Grampians Peaks Trail (GPT) within the Grampians National Park will entail the removal of approximately 14.4ha of native vegetation comprising:
- 12.1ha for 97.5km of new walking track;
- 0.3ha for 1.62km of vehicle access tracks;
- 0.9ha for 11 new hiker camps; and
- 1.1ha for 5 new trailheads and extension to 5 existing trailheads.

A project area map is provided in Attachment 1, and the GPT Master Plan 2014 is provided in Attachment 2.

Along the 97.5km of new walking:
- All low overhanging tree limbs will be cleared to a height of 2,200mm above the finished surface of the new walking trail.
- 55.5km will be cleared of vegetation to a width of 600mm, with existing onsite rock used to bench the trail.
- 38km and 1km will be 800mm and 1.2m wide respectively. On these wider sections the existing humus layer and vegetation will be removed.
- Excavated material will be placed on the low side of the trail, with any topsoil stockpiled in a manner suitable for rehabilitation works.
- Where no stone is available the trail surface will be made up of onsite soil and/or mulched vegetation chipped onto the track.
- In higher use areas (for example closer to carparks), additional gravel sources from a local supplier may be applied to make a more compacted and durable surface.
- All gravel used will be of a type, colour and texture that fits naturally into the environment into which it is to be installed, and is to be certified free of cinnamon fungus.
- There will be no raised edges or other obstacles that may prevent water draining from the walking trail. For example, stone gutters to line the edge of the trail will not be used as they tend to increase water volumes and velocities that may lead to erosion and drainage problems, and raised stone edging to define paths will not be used as they over-emphasise the path and prevent adequate natural water drainage.
- The trail will have a 1:30 cross fall to ensure that water flows across the path.
- Each edge of the walking trail will be sufficiently supported such that the gravel and surface material remains in place.

- Where necessary, rock armouring and low retaining walls shall be constructed to provide additional support to the walking trail. In some locations, the gravel may require edge treatment to hold in place.
- 3km will pass through rocky terrain where no vegetation removal or soil disturbance will be required and construction activity will be limited to installation of trail markers.
- 1km will be boardwalk where the trail passes through areas of soft, boggy, delicate or moist soil or ground (and no stone), to protect the trail from trenching, compaction and erosion.
- 1 large (20m) bridge and 7 medium (14m) bridges will be installed to cross creeks and rivers.

Each of the 11 new hiker camps will incorporate 12 timber tent platforms (except for one camp which will have 16 tent platforms), a toilet (2 cubicle), a small three-sided shelter approx. 10m2, 1.2m wide, timber boardwalk connecting the tent platforms and shelter, and rainwater tanks. Each hiker camp will require the removal of approximately 800 m² of vegetation within a larger site area which varies for each camp ie 12,610m² to 3.850m². Schematic designs for the hiker camps are provided at Attachment 9.

The 5 new trailheads, and the 5 existing trail heads where extensions are being undertaken, will incorporate the infrastructure detailed below with the extent of vegetation clearing totalling approximately 11,338m². Concept plans for each trailhead are provided at Attachment 10.

NEW Trailhead infrastructure, area and extent of vegetation clearing:

Dead Bullock Creek : 24 new carparks, mini bus and coach parking, 3 picnic tables, water tank, and a gathering area. The activity area is 6230m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 1,581m².

Redman Rd: 20 new carparks, mini bus and coach parking, 3 picnic tables, water tank, and a gathering area. The activity area is 2,760m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 2,300m².

Yarram Gap: 8 new carparks, mini bus parking, water tank, and a gathering area. The activity area is 2,180m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 660m².

Griffin: 14 new carparks, mini bus parking, water tank, and a gathering area. The activity area is 1,775m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 660m².

Victoria Valley Rd: 24 new carparks, mini bus and coach parking, 3 picnic tables, water tank, and a gathering area. The activity area is 5170m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 1,935m².

EXISTING trailheads - new infrastructure, area and extent of vegetation clearing:

Mt Zero Picnic Area: 22 existing carparks, 24 new carparks, mini bus and coach parking, 1 new picnic table, and a gathering area. The activity area is 5,910m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 1,290m².

Mt Difficult Rd: 2 existing carparks, 8 new carparks, mini bus parking, a water tank, and a

gathering area. The activity area is 1,660m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 820m².

Borough Huts: 4 existing carparks, 7 new carparks, mini bus parking, a water tank, and a gathering area. The activity area is 1,690m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 347m².

Jimmy Creek: 3 existing carparks, 9 new carparks, mini bus parking, 2 picnic tables, a water tank, and a gathering area. The activity area is 4,020m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 1,380m².

Mt William: 38 existing carparks, mini bus parking, 3 picnic tables, a new toilet and a water tank, and a gathering area. The activity area for the new infrastructure only is 640m², with the extent of vegetation clearing being 365m².

1.3 What is the extent and location of your proposed action? Use the polygon tool on the map below to mark the location of your proposed action.

Area	Point	Latitude	Longitude
Grampians National Park	1	-36.887267477309	142.37646631749
Grampians National Park	2	-36.889738798981	142.37869791539
Grampians National Park	3	-36.895916753151	142.38470606359
Grampians National Park	4	-36.901956935957	142.39088587316
Grampians National Park	5	-36.911016313736	142.40273050817
Grampians National Park	6	-36.922956577079	142.41800837072
Grampians National Park	7	-36.924466132419	142.42006830724
Grampians National Park	8	-36.931464589385	142.42762140783
Grampians National Park	9	-36.943538847457	142.43586115392
Grampians National Park	10	-36.95615988985	142.44066767247
Grampians National Park	11	-36.969327443535	142.44066767247
Grampians National Park	12	-36.982492719799	142.44135431798
Grampians National Park	13	-36.996204127182	142.44753412755

Area	Point	Latitude	Longitude
Grampians National Park	14	-37.005526472316	142.44959406408
Grampians National Park	15	-37.001139628755	142.45920710118
Grampians National Park	16	-36.999494497159	142.46744684728
Grampians National Park	17	-37.006623143654	142.47980646642
Grampians National Park	18	-37.032938508969	142.49216608556
Grampians National Park	19	-37.053217048463	142.50177912267
Grampians National Park	20	-37.064176165646	142.50315241368
Grampians National Park	21	-37.069107251921	142.50109247716
Grampians National Park	22	-37.066367799123	142.48873285802
Grampians National Park	23	-37.069655130608	142.4866729215
Grampians National Park	24	-37.077872835954	142.49628595861
Grampians National Park	25	-37.096496337495	142.50864557775
Grampians National Park	26	-37.122233053745	142.51139215978
Grampians National Park	27	-37.138656171455	142.52512506993
Grampians National Park	28	-37.149602936374	142.52306513341
Grampians National Park	29	-37.168208800504	142.52443842443
Grampians National Park	30	-37.216343886483	142.54229120763
Grampians National Park	31	-37.220718281614	142.56083063634
Grampians National Park	32	-37.225639172913	142.57181696447
Grampians National Park	33	-37.229466310837	142.58486322911
Grampians National Park	34	-37.239306630716	142.59104303868
Grampians National Park	35	-37.25679736112	142.6013427213
Grampians National Park	36	-37.264994743349	142.59790949376

Area	Point	Latitude	Longitude
Grampians National Park	37	-37.271005589937	142.59104303868
Grampians National Park	38	-37.285211137995	142.60065607579
Grampians National Park	39	-37.303783578371	142.60820917638
Grampians National Park	40	-37.317436859008	142.61164240392
Grampians National Park	41	-37.336001341315	142.59928278478
Grampians National Park	42	-37.351832127868	142.57387690099
Grampians National Park	43	-37.367113858212	142.54297785314
Grampians National Park	44	-37.407486307162	142.51276545079
Grampians National Park	45	-37.426028520846	142.5045257047
Grampians National Park	46	-37.454923403239	142.49010614904
Grampians National Park	47	-37.486531430091	142.45852045568
Grampians National Park	48	-37.493614154085	142.43654779943
Grampians National Park	49	-37.494703744321	142.42830805333
Grampians National Park	50	-37.495248533478	142.40839533361
Grampians National Park	51	-37.531740353011	142.37680964025
Grampians National Park	52	-37.561138682778	142.37062983068
Grampians National Park	53	-37.587260797029	142.36650995763
Grampians National Park	54	-37.604670448818	142.35758356603
Grampians National Park	55	-37.615005502209	142.34522394689
Grampians National Park	56	-37.620988297727	142.34110407384
Grampians National Park	57	-37.623707591088	142.33149103673
Grampians National Park	58	-37.632952444461	142.32943110021
Grampians National Park	59	-37.638390056324	142.32943110021

Area	Point	Latitude	Longitude
Grampians National Park	60	-37.641652432434	142.32256464513
Grampians National Park	61	-37.638933795624	142.31638483556
Grampians National Park	62	-37.631321083308	142.31501154454
Grampians National Park	63	-37.62261988568	142.32050470861
Grampians National Park	64	-37.616093319019	142.3287444547
Grampians National Park	65	-37.608478267156	142.34041742833
Grampians National Park	66	-37.592701750767	142.35071711095
Grampians National Park	67	-37.531740353011	142.36445002111
Grampians National Park	68	-37.49089010895	142.38916925939
Grampians National Park	69	-37.475633620315	142.40221552404
Grampians National Park	70	-37.473453867634	142.44478754552
Grampians National Park	71	-37.44947239265	142.47499994786
Grampians National Park	72	-37.407486307162	142.4955993131
Grampians National Park	73	-37.364385206014	142.52649836095
Grampians National Park	74	-37.327811693938	142.58417658361
Grampians National Park	75	-37.315252500728	142.59859613927
Grampians National Park	76	-37.272098419583	142.57731012853
Grampians National Park	77	-37.252971610765	142.57662348302
Grampians National Park	78	-37.236573337365	142.57319025548
Grampians National Park	79	-37.22454566926	142.53817133458
Grampians National Park	80	-37.21470342291	142.52375177892
Grampians National Park	81	-37.107449200667	142.49422602208
Grampians National Park	82	-37.034582916664	142.46538691075

Area	Point	Latitude	Longitude
Grampians National Park	83	-37.012654553203	142.44135431798
Grampians National Park	84	-36.980298665255	142.42830805333
Grampians National Park	85	-36.947929012429	142.41800837072
Grampians National Park	86	-36.921584228108	142.3905425504
Grampians National Park	87	-36.898525072556	142.36994318517
Grampians National Park	88	-36.886443685641	142.36856989415
Grampians National Park	89	-36.884246864403	142.37680964025
Grampians National Park	90	-36.886443685641	142.37680964025
Grampians National Park	91	-36.886992881074	142.37680964025
Grampians National Park	92	-36.887267477309	142.37646631749

1.5 Provide a brief physical description of the property on which the proposed action will take place and the location of the proposed action (e.g. proximity to major towns, or for off-shore actions, shortest distance to mainland).

The 97.5km of new track linking to 60km of existing track to create the Grampians Peaks Trail (GPT) is located within the Grampians National Park (GNP), in Western Victoria. The GNP is the fourth largest National Park in Victoria, with an area of 167,219 hectares. The GNP includes three north-south oriented ranges that rise abruptly from the surrounding plains i.e. Victoria Range in the west, the Mount Difficult Range in the north, and the Serra Range in the east, which includes Mount William (the highest peak) and the Major Mitchell Plateau.

The GPT will commence at Mount Zero in the north, and follow the Mount Difficult Range southward to the township of Halls Gap. It will then pass southward over the Major Mitchel Plateau on existing track, on to new track through the Serra Range to the edge of the GNP where it will connect with existing track through private property and Crown Land to terminate at the township of Dunkeld. The GPT does not pass through the Victoria Range or the Victoria Valley.

A map showing the GPT alignment and the townships of Halls Gap and Dunkeld is provided in Attachment 1.

1.6 What is the size of the proposed action area development footprint (or work area) including disturbance footprint and avoidance footprint (if relevant)?

14.4ha

1.7 Is the proposed action a street address or lot?

Lot

1.7.2 Describe the lot number and title. Multiple lots within Property No 2232794

1.8 Primary Jurisdiction.

Victoria

1.9 Has the person proposing to take the action received any Australian Government grant funding to undertake this project?

Yes

1.9.1 Please provide details.

The project has received a total of $30.2M funding with $20.2M being from the Victorian Government and $10M from the Commonwealth Government under the Stronger Regions Fund.

1.10 Is the proposed action subject to local government planning approval?

Yes

1.10.1 Is there a local government area and council contact for the proposal?

Yes

1.10.1.0 Council contact officer details

1.10.1.1 Name of relevant council contact officer.

Northern Grampians Council – Manager Economic Development

1.10.1.2 E-mail

justine.kingan@ngshire.vic.gov.au

1.10.1.3 Telephone Number

5358 8793

1.11 Provide an estimated start and estimated end date for the proposed action.

Start date 03/2018

End date 12/2019

1.12 Provide details of the context, planning framework and State and/or Local government requirements.

The project is being undertaken within a National Park, including some areas identified as Remote and Natural Areas, and must comply with the Grampians National Park Management Plan 2003, the *Victorian National Parks Act 1975*, the *Native Title Act 1993*, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, the *Water Act 1989*, the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG), Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) and the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

In accordance with clause 21D (5) of the *Victorian National Parks Act 1975* any works within a Remote Natural Area requires the approval of the Secretary, subject to the approval of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and this approval is currently being sought with the National Park Advisory Council recommending approval to the Minister by letter dated 22 September 2017.

The project will require removal of native vegetation, which is normally subject, in Victoria, to approval under local government planning schemes pursuant to Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation, however pursuant to clause 52.17-7 the Crown Land exemption applies. Nevertheless although the project does not require a planning permit to remove native vegetation, Parks Victoria have an agreement with DELWP to provide appropriate offsets for impacts to native vegetation and threatened species habitat, consistent with the objectives of the Permitted clearing of native vegetation – Biodiversity assessment guidelines.

Under the local government Planning Schemes a permit is required for the construction or carrying out of works associated with “Accommodation” and “Leisure and Recreation” due to the entire activity area being covered by the Bushfire Management Overlay. As the trail crosses three local government boundaries, namely Southern Grampians Council, Ararat Rural City

Council and Northern Grampians Council, three permits are required. Extensive consultation with each of these Council's and the Department of Environment, Lands, Water and Planning (DELWP) has been undertaken during preparation of the application which will be submitted in the near future.

A permit to impact upon protected flora is required under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and an application has been submitted to DELWP.

A Native Title claim was lodged over the GNP in May 2016 by the Gariwerd Native Title Claim Group. The native title claim group, is the sum of the three native title holding groups already recognised in previous Federal Court determinations in areas to the north, west and south of Gariwerd:

- the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Peoples, as determined in 2005, whose registered native title body corporate (RNTC) is the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation;

- the Gunditjmara People, as determined in 2009 and again in 2011, whose RNTC is the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation; and

- the Eastern Maar People, as determined in 2011, whose RNTC is the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

The Eastern Maar People also currently have a registered native title claim in the Federal Court, and have been seeking resolution of it under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic) (TOS Act).

Parks Victoria has been working collaboratively with the Gariwerd Native Title Claim Group, Native Title Services Victoria, Aboriginal Victoria, and the Department of Justice and Regulation to enable Traditional Owners to develop a high level of ownership over the GPT project, and to support Parks Victoria (as the project sponsor) in delivering the project within current parameters. Parks Victoria recognise the claim group’s aspirations to negotiate a Recognition and Settlement Agreement under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*, to be appointed as the Registered Aboriginal Party under the *Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016*, and to be incorporated under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006.*

Almost three quarters of the park is included in Special Water Supply Catchment Areas listed

under schedule 5 of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. The park includes all or part of the Wimmera Systems, Rocklands, Wannon River Tributaries (Lake Bellfield), Mason Creek (Willaura) and Little Tea Tree Tributaries (Hamilton) proclaimed water supply. The trail crosses two water service areas namely Wannon Water and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water. These service areas encompass a variety of catchments of which two are impacted by the trail, namely Glenelg Hopkins and Wimmera Catchment Management Authority (CMA). Where the trail crosses a creek or river a “Works on Waterways” permit is required from these CMAs.

1.13 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken, including with Indigenous stakeholders.

Consultation on the Draft Master Plan occurred over a 4-week period in May 2014. It involved a questionnaire, and community and stakeholder briefings in Halls Gap, Wartook and Dunkeld. These briefings were attended by approximately 90 people. The plan was also published on the Parks Victoria website, and stakeholder briefings were held in Melbourne with the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA), Bushwalking Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, the Victorian Tourism Industry Council, and Tourism Victoria.

Fifty-four submissions were received via email and 48 questionnaires returned. Feedback received supported the concept of the GPT, including the hiker camps, however some concerns regarding private sector investment in hiker lodges were raised. Establishment of hiker lodges does not form part of the current project.

The final Master Plan (2014) (attachment 5) was released by the Premier of Victoria on 29 May 2015. Since that time ongoing consultation has occurred with stakeholders and community groups through:

- The establishment of a Project Steering Committee, Project Control Group and six Project Working Groups which include representatives from local Councils, traditional owner groups, Regional Development Australia, and DELWP;

- Attendance at local Council meetings, and the GNP Advisory Group;

- Quarterly meetings with representatives from Bushwalking Victoria, Wimmera Bushwalking Club, Ballarat Bushwalkers, Victorian Mountain Tramping Club, and the Grampians Walking Track Support, and the organisers of the Serra Terror.

Additionally, Parks Victoria have:

- attended several meetings with the Gariwerd Native Title Claim Group to investigate

opportunities for establishing genuine joint management over the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park in the future;

- been liaising with Traditional Owners regarding the preparation of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the GPT. Fieldwork for both the Standard and Complex Assessment, which forms part of the CHMP, has been completed;

- invited Traditional Owner groups to attend hiker camp design sessions.

1.14 Describe any environmental impact assessments that have been or will be carried out under Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation including relevant impacts of the project.

A vegetation/flora field verification study was undertaken in spring/summer of 2016/2017. The primary purpose of the study was to assess vegetation type and quality where vegetation removal is proposed for the construction of hiker camps, trailheads and at a sample of random locations along new sections of the GPT alignment. The resulting vegetation quality information was used in conjunction with modelled quality data to determine the vegetation impact and offset requirements under Victoria's Permitted Clearing of Native Vegetation – Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines.

The study also involved floristic assessment at the sample sites, including searches for EPBC listed threatened flora species. A copy of the study is provided at Attachment 4.

Dieback caused by the root-rot fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi* was listed in 2000 as a 'key threatening process' under Section 183 of the *EPBC Act 1999*, and is currently subject to a National Threat Abatement Plan. Consequently, a plan outlining operational procedures to minimise the risk of spread of the soil-borne plant pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi* along the GPT during its construction and operation was prepared. A copy of the Phytophthora Threat Abatement Plan for the Grampians Peaks Trail is provided at Attachment 3

1.15 Is this action part of a staged development (or a component of a larger project)?

No

1.16 Is the proposed action related to other actions or proposals in the region?

No

Section 2 - Matters of National Environmental Significance

Describe the affected area and the likely impacts of the proposal, emphasising the relevant matters protected by the EPBC Act. Refer to relevant maps as appropriate. The interactive map tool can help determine whether matters of national environmental significance or other matters protected by the EPBC Act are likely to occur in your area of interest. Consideration of likely impacts should include both direct and indirect impacts.

Your assessment of likely impacts should consider whether a bioregional plan is relevant to your proposal. The following resources can assist you in your assessment of likely impacts:

• Profiles of relevant species/communities (where available), that will assist in the identification of whether there is likely to be a significant impact on them if the proposal proceeds;

• Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance;

• Significant Impact Guideline 1.2 – Actions on, or impacting upon, Commonwealth land and Actions by Commonwealth Agencies.

2.1 Is the proposed action likely to have ANY direct or indirect impact on the values of any World Heritage properties?

No

2.2 Is the proposed action likely to have ANY direct or indirect impact on the values of any National Heritage places?

Yes

2.2.1 Impact table

Place	Impact
Grampians National Park (Gariwerd)	The project will involve removal of 14.4 hectares of understorey vegetation and trees for the construction of the track, campsites, trailheads and service roads. A description of the vegetation communities, and flora and fauna species that may be impacted by the project are identified in the vegetation assessment for the project undertaken by Biosis, refer to Attachment 4. Key values of the Grampians relate to floristic richness, invertebrate fauna richness, ground-dwelling

Place	Impact
	mammals, outstanding geological structures, evidence of aboriginal occupation over the past 20,000 years, aesthetic characteristics, and Aboriginal art. The proposed works have a very small relative footprint, and do not introduce any new land uses or threats that are not already existent within the Park eg introduced predators (foxes and cats) and Phytophthora cinnamomi (PC). The proposed works will, however, extend some of these uses (hiking and camping), into areas of the park where there are no current facilities, and no PC. Maps identifying the areas within the Park susceptible to PC that the track will pass through are provided in Attachment 3. Measures to mitigate any impacts including PC management during construction and afterwards are addressed in Section 4.1. The project is not likely to lead to the loss, damage, degradation, modification or diminishment of any of the Grampians National Park natural heritage values.

2.2.2 Do you consider this impact to be significant?

No

2.3 Is the proposed action likely to have ANY direct or indirect impact on the ecological character of a Ramsar wetland?

No

2.4 Is the proposed action likely to have ANY direct or indirect impact on the members of any listed species or any threatened ecological community, or their habitat?

Yes

2.4.1 Impact table

Species	Impact
Downy Star-bush Asterolasia phebalioides Vulnerable	Downy Star-bush occurs on Kangaroo Island South Australia, and within the GNP, Black Range State Park and on private land near the Little Desert in Victoria. Within the Grampians,

Species	Impact
	most records are from elevated rocky sites. It has potential to occur near the GPT alignment within the Mount Difficult Range and the southern Serra Range. This species was not recorded during the field survey of trailheads, hiker camps and track locations, but there is potential for it to occur along the track between survey sites. Direct impact to this species can be avoided by micro siting the track to avoid individual plants. Indirect impacts (erosion, weed invasion, PC) will be avoided through appropriate track design, and hygiene during construction and operation of the track (refer to Section 4.1). The Project is not likely to result in a significant impact to this species.
Grampians Bitter-pea Daviesia laevis Vulnerable	Grampians Bitter-pea is known to occur within the GNP (central and northern areas), Mount Cole State Forest, Langi Ghiran State Park and the Black Range State Park. It occurs in protected montane habitats such as gullies and rocky south facing slopes, growing under an overstorey of Messmate or Grampians Grey Gum. There is potential for this species to occur near the GPT between Roses Gap and Mafeking. This species was not recorded during the field survey of trailheads, hiker camps and track locations, but there is potential for it to occur along the track between survey sites. Direct impact to this species can be avoided by micro siting the track to avoid individual plants. Indirect impacts (erosion, weed invasion, PC) will be avoided through appropriate track design and hygiene during construction and operation of the track (refer to Section 4.1). The Project is not likely to result in a significant impact to this species.
Grampians Rice-flower Pimelea pagophila Vulnerable	Grampians Rice-flower is endemic to the GNP, where it occurs in heathy woodlands with an overstorey of Messmate and/or Brown Stringybark. It is known to occur in four populations, with a total of approximately 70 plants. Most records are in the Mount William / Major Mitchel Plateau area, to the east of the Grampians Tourist road. This species was not recorded during the field survey of trailheads, hiker camps and track locations, but there is

Species	Impact
	potential for it to occur along the track between survey sites. Direct impact to this species can be avoided by micro siting the track to avoid individual plants. Indirect impacts (erosion, weed invasion, PC) will be avoided through appropriate track design and hygiene during construction and operation of the track (refer to Section 4.1). The Project is not likely to result in a significant impact to this species.
Williamsons Bush Pea Pultenaea williamsoniana Vulnerable	The Williamsons Bush Pea is endemic to the GNP, where it occurs between Mount Zero and Halls Gap, growing on sandy soils on rocky slopes. There is potential for this species to occur near the GPT between Mount Zero and Halls Gap. This species was not recorded during the field survey of trailheads, hiker camps and track locations, but there is potential for it to occur along the track between survey sites. Direct impact to this species can be avoided by micro siting the track to avoid individual plants. Indirect impacts (erosion, weed invasion, off-track trampling, PC) will be avoided through appropriate track design and hygiene during construction and operation of the track (refer to Section 4.1). The Project is not likely to result in a significant impact to this species.
Smoky Mouse Pseudomys fumeus Endangered	The Smoky Mouse is endemic to mainland south-eastern Australia and is known to occur in the Grampians, Otway Range, Eastern Highlands and East Gippsland. It occurs in a diverse range of habitats, including Heathy Woodlands, Montane Shrubby Woodland and Rocky Outcrop Shrubland. Within the GNP, Smoky Mouse has been recorded to the south of Halls Gap on the Major Mitchel Plateau, southern Serra Range and Victoria Range. Avoidance of Smoky Mouse habitat has been a key consideration in designing the GPT alignment, particularly in the area near Mount William. Key threats include direct habitat loss, introduced predators, inappropriate (high frequency) fire regimes, habitat fragmentation and dieback caused by PC. To minimize the potential for PC to spread into Smoky Mouse habitat a Phytophthora Threat Abatement Plan

Species	Impact
	for the GPT has been prepared and will be implemented before, during and after construction, a copy is provided at Attachment 3, with a summary of actions provided at Section 4.1. Indirect impacts will be avoided through appropriate track design and hygiene during construction and operation of the track (refer to Section 4.1). Construction of the track will require removal of native vegetation, but this is very minor in relation to the extent of available habitat, particularly in the rocky habitats where Smoky Mouse is most likely to occur. The track is not of sufficient width to fragment populations. Construction of new tracks may provide an additional pathway for predator movement, resulting in a change in movement patterns, however much of the Smoky Mouse habitat is within elevated rocky sites where Foxes and Feral Cats are relatively free to move through the landscape. Construction of new track is not expected to increase the populations of these predators, and hence predation risk, significantly beyond existing levels. Introduced predator control will continue to be a management priority throughout the GNP. The GPT will provide additional access to staff to increase baiting intensity within previously inaccessible areas. The GPT is not likely to result in a significant impact to this species.
Southern Brown Bandicoot Isoodon obesulus Endangered	The Southern Brown Bandicoot is distributed throughout coastal areas from the Eyre Peninsula through to Sydney. Within Victoria it mostly occurs in near coastal areas, but does extend inland into the Grampians region and the Dandenong Ranges. It is widely distributed in the Grampians, with most records to the south of Halls Gap. The Grampians form of the Southern Brown Bandicoot has been identified as a genetically distinct population, with very reduced geneflow to other nearby populations. It inhabits a range of vegetation types, including heathlands, sedgelands, and woodlands and forests with heathy understories. It is thought to prefer sites with sandy soils, a dense understorey and abundant coarse woody

Species	Impact
	debris. Key threats to the survival of the Southern Brown Bandicoot include habitat loss, habitat modification, habitat fragmentation, frequent burning, degradation of vegetation structure by PC and predation by foxes and cats. Limiting the extent of trail through the Southern Brown Bandicoot habitat has been a key consideration in designing the GPT alignment, particularly in the area near Mount Christabel. The heathlands associated with the Wannon River have been identified as high value areas for the Southern Brown Bandicoot. The GPT crosses these heathlands near Mount Christabel, and the location of the crossing has been chosen to minimise disturbance (ie a section where the heathland narrows). To minimize the potential for PC to spread into Southern Brown Bandicoot habitat a Phytophthora Threat Abatement Plan for the GPT has been prepared and will be implemented before, during and after construction, a copy is provided at Attachment 3, with a summary of actions provided at Section 4.1. Construction of the track will require removal of native vegetation, but this is very minor in relation to the extent of available habitat. The track is not of sufficient width to fragment populations. Presence of the track may lead to an increase in predator access through the heathlands, but also provides an opportunity to increase predator control (baiting) activities. Construction of new track is not expected to increase the populations of these predators, and hence predation risk, significantly beyond existing levels. The GPT is not likely to result in a significant impact to this species.
Heath Mouse Pseudomys shortridgei Endangered	Within Victoria, the Heath Mouse is limited to the far south-west (including Lower Glenelg National Park) and the Grampians Region, including GNP and Black Range State Park. The GNP is considered a stronghold for the species in Victoria. It is widely recorded within the Grampians to the south of Roses Gap, including near the GPT alignment near Mount William and along the southern Serra Range. It

Species	Impact
	is most frequently recorded in dry heathland and heathy woodland that has been burnt within the last 5 – 15 years. Key threats include habitat loss, increased fire frequency and intensity, fox and cat predation, habitat degradation by PC and climate change. To minimize the potential for PC to spread into Heath Mouse habitat a Phytophthora Threat Abatement Plan for the GPT has been prepared and will be implemented before, during and after construction, a copy is provided at Attachment 3, with a summary of actions provided at Section 4.1. Construction of the track will require removal of native vegetation, but this is very minor in relation to the extent of available habitat. The track is not of sufficient width to fragment populations. The GPT may lead to an increase in predator access, and how predators move through the area, but most Heath Mouse habitat is relatively accessible to foxes and cats currently. Predator access is not expected to increase significantly and the presence of the track will increase opportunities for predator control (baiting) in areas previously difficult for staff to access. The GPT is not likely to result in a significant impact to this species.

2.4.2 Do you consider this impact to be significant?

No

2.5 Is the proposed action likely to have ANY direct or indirect impact on the members of any listed migratory species, or their habitat?

No

2.6 Is the proposed action to be undertaken in a marine environment (outside Commonwealth marine areas)?

No

2.7 Is the proposed action to be taken on or near Commonwealth land?

No

2.8 Is the proposed action taking place in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park?

No

2.9 Is the proposed action likely to have ANY direct or indirect impact on a water resource related to coal/gas/mining?

No

2.10 Is the proposed action a nuclear action?

No

2.11 Is the proposed action to be taken by the Commonwealth agency?

No

2.12 Is the proposed action to be undertaken in a Commonwealth Heritage Place Overseas?

No

2.13 Is the proposed action likely to have ANY direct or indirect impact on a water resource related to coal/gas/mining?

No

Section 3 - Description of the project area

Provide a description of the project area and the affected area, including information about the following features (where relevant to the project area and/or affected area, and to the extent not otherwise addressed in Section 2).

3.1 Describe the flora and fauna relevant to the project area.

The GNP has a rich diversity of flora, with approximately 975 native vascular plant species, which represents one third of the species occurring within Victoria. The Park is notable for being one of the most important botanical reserves in Victoria, with a rich and colourful wildflower display in spring. The Park also has a high diversity of faunal habitats and a high diversity of fauna species, including more than 230 bird species, 40 mammal species, 30 reptile species and 11 amphibian species. The invertebrate fauna is likely to be similarly rich, but is poorly known due to the lack of detailed studies.

Field based flora surveys were conducted at 11 hiker camps (including one group camp), 8 trail heads and 19 sites on the alignment between October 2016 (Spring) and January 2017 (Summer). At each field assessment site, the following information was collected:

- a list of vascular flora species, including threatened species listed under the EPBC or FFG Acts;

- a vegetation quality (habitat hectare) assessment (DELWP 2004); and

- the potential for significant fauna was considered, with evidence of occupation such as scats, scratchings, and burrows recorded.

The sites for surveying were selected through a stratified randomisation process based on EVC and Position. EVCs were sampled in proportion to their area occurrence along the GPT; and sample points were located on the proposed GPT alignment and at least 100m from an existing road or track.

The occurrence of EPBC listed threatened species is discussed further in Section 2.2, and the vegetation types are discussed in Section 3.3 – 3.7. No EPBC listed species were identified during the surveys. The location of the surveys and a copy of survey results is provided within Attachment 4.

Further information regarding the flora and fauna values of the Park can be found in the Grampians National Park Management Plan (Attachment 5).

3.2 Describe the hydrology relevant to the project area (including water flows).

The Grampians receives a relatively high and reliable rainfall. The park contains the headwaters of several substantial streams: the Wannon River and Fyans Creek (Barriyaloog Creek), in the valley adjacent to the Mount William Range; the Glenelg River, in the Victoria Range (Billawin Range); and a small tributary of the Wannon River called Dwyers Creek.

Almost three quarters of the park is included in Special Water Supply Catchment Areas listed under schedule 5 of the Catchment and Land Protection Act. All or part of the Wimmera Systems, Rocklands, Wannon River Tributaries (Lake Bellfield), Mason Creek (Willaura) and Little Tea Tree Tributaries (Hamilton) proclaimed water supply are within the GNP.

The high-quality water harvested from the Grampians is of fundamental importance to the economy of western Victoria and is a very important value of the park. Wannon Water and Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water each harvest water from the Grampians for supply to towns and farms in the areas they service.

The Park surrounds several large constructed water storages, including Lake Bellfield, Lake Wartook and the Moora Reservoir.

3.3 Describe the soil and vegetation characteristics relevant to the project area.

The majority of soils within the GNP are shallow and infertile, and combined with the steep slopes are highly susceptible to erosion when vegetation cover is disturbed. Soils range from deep alluvial sediments in river valleys through to rocky outcrops where soil is virtually absent. A large proportion of the project area supports heathy woodlands growing on deep nutrient poor sands resulting from downslope outwash.

Seven Broad Vegetation Types (BVTs) and 40 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) occur within the GNP. The proposed GPT passes through a subset of these, including 17 EVCs, three EVC complexes and two EVC mosaics. One of the EVCs namely Montane Rocky Shrubland is endemic to the GNP. Several other EVCs are represented in the GNP by endemic floristic

communities.

The length and proportion of new track proposed within each EVC is outlined in the Native Vegetation Assessment undertaken by Biosis (refer Attachment 4). Most the track passes through vegetation types which are common and well represented within the Park, with over 80% of the alignment passing through seven units – Heathy Woodland, Rocky Outcrop Herbland, Rocky Outcrop Shrubland, Rocky Outcrop Herbland, Heathy Dry Forest, Lowland Forest and Shrubby Foothill Forest.

Track construction methods will be varied in response to site characteristics, including vegetation type and underlying soil type. Where the track passes through exposed rocky outcrops, including Rocky Outcrop Shrubland, Rocky Outcrop Herbland and Montane Rocky Shrubland, (47% of the length), removal of vegetation will be very minor with most works being some pruning of shrubs and marking of the trail.

3.4 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values relevant to the project area.

GNP is listed as a Natural Heritage Place.

Key values that contribute to the significance of the park include:

- Floristic richness, including a high degree of endemism within a range of plant families (Cunoniaceae, Epacridaceae, Fabaceae, Orchidaceae, Thymeleaceae and Myrtaceae).- Terrestrial and freshwater invertebrate richness.

- Archaeological evidence of human occupation for more than 20,000 years, including the nationally significant concentrations of rock art.

- Geological structures including sedimentary deposits, igneous intrusions and faults.

- Aesthetic values stemming from the dramatic landforms, scenic lookouts and panoramic views across the park and surrounding countryside.

3.5 Describe the status of native vegetation relevant to the project area.

Bioregional Conservation Status (BCS) is used within Victoria to define the conservation status

of Ecological Vegetation Types within each bioregion. The classification (Least Concern, Depleted, Rare and Vulnerable) is based on a regional assessment of the remaining extent of each EVC in relation to the pre-1750 predicted extent. The trail passes through EVCs assessed as Least Concern (92% of trail length), Depleted (2% of trail length), Rare (4% of trail length) and Vulnerable (2% of trail length).

The GNP Management Plan 2003 (Attachment 5) identifies EVCs that are endemic to the GNP (with some small nearby outliers). The GPT passes through one endemic EVC Montane Rocky Shrubland, for a length of 3.6 km (3.7% of the trail length). Montane Rocky Shrubland occurs on rocky outcrops where very little vegetation or soil disturbance is required to construct the trail.

The trail does not pass through any vegetation communities listed as threatened under either the *Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

3.6 Describe the gradient (or depth range if action is to be taken in a marine area) relevant to the project area.

The trail passes through a range of landforms, with gradients ranging from flat to very steep.

The GPT Design and Infrastructure Manual (June 2012) (Attachment 6) specifies that trail gradients should, where possible, not exceed 1:10. Where steeper gradients are unavoidable, the manual specifies that the trail should include steps and/or drainage features to minimise erosion risk, and that steep sections should not exceed 20m in length.

3.7 Describe the current condition of the environment relevant to the project area.

The majority of the GNP supports high quality vegetation. Although over 200 introduced plant species are known to occur within the Park, weed cover in most vegetation types is very low. Sites with low nutrient or skeletal soils, which occur across most the Park, are particularly low in weed cover. Weeds are more abundant close to existing disturbances (roads and the park edge) and sites that have been subject to past disturbances such as timber harvesting, quarrying and grazing. Most sites with weed infestations still support a diverse native understorey. Sites on more fertile ground, such as alluvial valleys are typically more prone to invasion by herbaceous weeds, particularly grasses. Infestation of Sallow Wattle Acacia longifolia is a significant problem in the northern section of the Park, (where it can reach 100% cover) and can result in significant vegetation structural change and depletion of floristic diversity.

Pest animals are present, including foxes, rabbits, cats, goats and feral bees. A large Deer population is also present within the Park.

Cinnamon Fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC) presents a serious risk to vegetation condition within the Park. The susceptibility of native plants to this pathogen is highly variable, so infestations can result in a change in vegetation composition from a diverse understorey to an understorey dominated by a small number of resistant species. The soil borne pathogen has been recorded at a range of sites throughout the Park (refer to Attachment 3) and has potential to spread downslope when conditions are wet, or to be transported by vehicles, walkers or through movement of soil or gravel during construction activities. Implementation of hygiene measures to manage the risk of PC spread during construction and operation of the track is a high priority consideration.

The GNP has been subject to several severe and extensive wildfires in 2005/2006 and January 2014, including sections traversed by the proposed GPT.

High rainfall in January 2011 caused a series of severe landslides throughout the Park. There were 192 landslips of at least five metres wide, with the most damage occurring on the southern Serra Range near Mount Abrupt. These landslides resulted in damage to vegetation and park infrastructure, including walking trails and roads.

3.8 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage Places or other places recognised as having heritage values relevant to the project area.

The GNP is listed as a Natural Heritage Place. The key values are described in Section 3.4.

3.9 Describe any Indigenous heritage values relevant to the project area.

The Park has significant indigenous heritage values, including:

- A landscape rich in Aboriginal dreamtime stories, and a strong current association with Aboriginal people.

- The largest concentration of rock art sites in Victoria.

- Significant archaeological features, including quarries, mounds, surface scatters and scarred trees.

3.10 Describe the tenure of the action area (e.g. freehold, leasehold) relevant to the project area.

The Grampians National Park is included in Schedule Two (National Parks) of the National Parks Act 1975 (Vic) in 1984.

The southern extent of the GPT, between the GNP and the township of Dunkeld, traverse's freehold, road reserve, Council reserve and Creek Reserve managed by the Salt Creek Public Lands Committee.

3.11 Describe any existing or any proposed uses relevant to the project area.

The National Park is used for conservation, recreation, research and education.

The GNP Management Plan 2003 (Attachment 5) specifies five management zones and three overlays, within which a range of activities are permitted or prohibited (GNP Management Plan tables 2 and 3). A full review of the GNPMP, is scheduled for 2017/2018 and will provide the opportunity for a holistic approach to planning for the increased visitation levels and the larger infrastructure items required for the GPT such as trail head locations. However, the review may be delayed until the outcome of the Native Title Claim is known.

The park is a very attractive tourism destination, due to the stunning scenery, striking wildflower displays, nature-based outdoor education for schools, and a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities including bushwalking, rock-climbing and camping.

Section 4 - Measures to avoid or reduce impacts

Provide a description of measures that will be implemented to avoid, reduce, manage or offset any relevant impacts of the action. Include, if appropriate, any relevant reports or technical advice relating to the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed measures.

Examples of relevant measures to avoid or reduce impacts may include the timing of works, avoidance of important habitat, specific design measures, or adoption of specific work practices.

4.1 Describe the measures you will undertake to avoid or reduce impact from your proposed action.

The construction and operation of the GPT has potential to impact upon threatened shrub species and threatened small and medium sized mammals.

Considerations for minimising impacts through the design phase and outlined within the GPT Design and Infrastructure Manual (June 2012) (Attachment 6) have included:

- Using existing walking tracks where possible.

- Selecting alignments that minimise impacts on sensitive vegetation types and species habitat.

- Trailhead locations have been selected to make use of existing facilities, or are planned to be constructed in previously disturbed sites.

- Minimisation of new service roads to access hiker camps, with six of the eleven new camps to be serviced by helicopter.

- Utilising contour lines, to ensure gradients are shallower.

- Minimising water crossings i.e. rivers, creeks and boggy ground.

- Minimising the length of track through riparian environments.

- Utilising existing site features, such as ‘snig’ lines that may provide for shallower gradients.

- Avoiding significant existing trees or fragile vegetation.

- Avoiding a site where Grampians Pincushion Lily *Borya mirabilis* has been established by translocation.

- Aligning the trail on the up-hill side of large trees to protect the root system from unnecessary compaction and erosion.

- Aligning the trail to integrate (rather than remove) existing site features, such as significant rocks and trees.

-Aligning the trail to reflect walker desire lines (to avoid off-track ‘goat’ paths developing).

The GPT Construction Specification manual (November 2017) (Attachment 7) specifies a range of design principles which will apply during construction of specific sections of track, to minimise environmental impact, and include:

- the requirement for Construction Environmental Management Plans to be produced by contractors building each section of track;

- keeping the trail as narrow as possible to minimise intrusion into the landscape;

- provision of a cross fall to the trail of 1:30 at all times, to ensure that water flows across (not along) the path;

- no raised edges or other obstacles that may prevent water draining from trail;

- the use of gutters is to be avoided wherever possible (they tend to increase water volumes and velocities that may lead to erosion and drainage problems);

- grade dips are to be provided at regular intervals to remove surface water and assist drainage;

- where gradients are steeper than 1:10, steps and other details will be considered to avoid drainage and erosion problems;

- where steep gradients are unavoidable, they are to be as short as possible and not to exceed 20m in length;

- where the trail passes through areas of soft soil (and no stone), the use of an elevated boardwalk to protect the trail from trenching and erosion will be considered;

- timber boardwalks are to be provided over soft, delicate, moist or boggy soils or ground that is prone to erosion and trenching, and where no other alignment options exist;

- steel mesh boardwalks are to be provided over soft, delicate, moist or boggy soils or ground that is prone to erosion and trenching in remote locations where access is limited and maintenance and repairs difficult to undertake;

- short bridges will be used to cross small rivers and creeks. In a few locations, longer bridges will be required to cross rivers and creeks, such as the Wannon River and Fyans Creek;

- vehicles, equipment and footwear must be cleaned before entering work sites; and- externally sourced material must be obtained from a clean source. In this regard imported soil, gravel and other materials are to be certified as “PC” (Cinnamon fungus) clear.

Additionally, Parks Victoria have compiled a guide (Attachment 8) to aid in the identification of EPBC species which will be provided to all contractors in the field during construction.

Where a EPBC listed species is identified the track will be realigned to avoid impacting the hydrology and shading of the plant.

A “*Phytophthora* Threat Abatement Plan for the GPT” (Attachment 3) has been prepared and contains actions to minimise the risk of spread of PC during construction of the GPT. These actions include:

- mapping of disease symptoms with soil/plant testing where required, in EVCs containing highly susceptible target species along the proposed GPT alignment;protecting disease free areas into the future;

- prescribing protocols for construction contractors to follow;

- taking hygiene measures before entering disease free areas via the provision of machinery, equipment, vehicle and footwear washdown facilities;

- scheduling works in high risk areas, to periods of dry weather;

- listing PC hygiene requirements in tender and contract documents;

- elevating hiker camps in sensitive areas to elevated platforms;- installation of signage indicating status of presence of PC;

- differing procedures for areas known to be either infested or uninfested with PC, (refer to Attachment 3 for more detail);

- a list of appropriate communication tools including organisational standard operating procedures, codes of practice, conditions of contract, management and work plans for specific sites, training for on-ground workers, appropriate signage, extension material and programs and consultation processes;

- establishing a training program to promote and encourage hygiene implementation and disease risk mitigation to staff, contractors and other authorised persons and agencies during construction and operation of the GPT.

- hikers and staff will be required to remove any soil from footwear/equipment using a stiff brush or a spray bottle before moving into an uninfested area. A barrier/fence either side of the footbath will be installed if required, to ensure use of the hygiene facilities, particularly during events. Monitoring cameras at a couple of hygiene treatment facilities will be installed to monitor usage patterns;

- visitor education and awareness programs on the impacts of PC on native fauna and flora will be developed.

- an annual monitoring program of the GPT for disease by trained Parks Victoria staff or contractors will be undertaken to provide an early warning for any potential breakdown in hygiene that could result in further spread of the pathogen. Early detection of new disease areas may result in the installation of further washdown stations, and/or implementation of control procedures. The monitoring will rely on both aerial and ground surveillance methods to produce maps of the location of healthy and diseased vegetation combined with sampling of diseased plants to confirm the presence of the pathogen.

A program to monitor use of the track by Feral Cats and Foxes, to inform management responses such as increased predator control activities will be developed and will include installation of 10 remote cameras on new sections. The monitoring program will be designed to complement current monitoring projects undertaken within the Grampians National Park which include:-

- *Fire and Fauna Project* - Small mammals are trapped at 36 sites across the Grampians annually.

- *Smokey Mice Surveys* - A Smokey Mice survey has been underway since 2013 and is due for completion in 2018.- *Wannon heath pre and post-burn mammal survey:* A remote camera small mammal survey and habitat structure monitoring is being undertaken within long-unburnt heath prior to an experimental planned burning regime (patches). Potoroos and bandicoots have previously been detected in these heaths. The survey will attempt to determine if these species persist and which vegetation communities they utilise.- Post planned burn monitoring aims to ensure the experimental burning regime does not adversely affect resident populations and build knowledge of how they utilise recently burnt patches.

- *Grampians Ark Predator Monitoring Project* – This program is ongoing and aims to improve our ability to monitor cats and foxes, while successfully evaluating the effectiveness of management activities. Camera-traps are used, in addition to a paired survey design (i.e. one on-road and one off-road camera, corresponding to sites where long-term mammal monitoring has occurred) to estimate the occupancy and abundance of cats and foxes in the GNP.

- *Opportunistic Camera Trapping:* PV undertakes opportunistic camera trapping across the Grampians NP when resources (staff and equipment) permit. These surveys target habitat suited to CWR mammals with the aim to improve our understanding of current population trends (occupancy and abundance). Information gathered helps to inform land management actions

such as planned burning or predator control.

- *Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby:* Permanent camera traps have been established at the colony to monitor recruitment and mortality and evaluate the overall success of a translocation program.

Fires will not be permitted at the GPT hiker camps and thus the GPT will not lead to a significant increase in fire risk or loss of micro-habitat from firewood collection.

4.2 For matters protected by the EPBC Act that may be affected by the proposed action, describe the proposed environmental outcomes to be achieved.

All the threatened flora species addressed in Section 2.4.1 (Downy Star-bush, Grampians Bitter-pea, Grampians Rice-flower and Willisamson Bush Pea) are conspicuous shrubs that can be avoided by micro siting of the trail alignment during detailed design. This will be a component of construction environmental management plans for each trail section. Parks Victoria have compiled a guide to aid in the identification of these species in the field (Attachment 8).

The risk of spreading the soil-borne plant pathogen Phytophthora cinnamomic (PC) will be minimised through the implementation of the Phytophthora Threat Abatement Plan for the GPT, refer to Section 4.1 and Attachment 3.

The outcome to be achieved is avoidance of any direct damage to individuals of these species.

Section 5 – Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

A checkbox tick identifies each of the matters of National Environmental Significance you identified in section 2 of this application as likely to be a significant impact.

Review the matters you have identified below. If a matter ticked below has been incorrectly identified you will need to return to Section 2 to edit.

5.1.1 World Heritage Properties

No

5.1.2 National Heritage Places

No

5.1.3 Wetlands of International Importance (declared Ramsar Wetlands)

No

5.1.4 Listed threatened species or any threatened ecological community

No

5.1.5 Listed migratory species

No

5.1.6 Commonwealth marine environment

No

5.1.7 Protection of the environment from actions involving Commonwealth land

No

5.1.8 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park

No

5.1.9 A water resource, in relation to coal/gas/mining

No

5.1.10 Protection of the environment from nuclear actions

No

5.1.11 Protection of the environment from Commonwealth actions

No

5.1.12 Commonwealth Heritage places overseas

No

5.2 If no significant matters are identified, provide the key reasons why you think the proposed action is not likely to have a significant impact on a matter protected under the EPBC Act and therefore not a controlled action.

The project will not significantly impact upon any matters protected under the EPBC Act for the following reasons:

- The project footprint is limited to 14.4 ha. Within a 167,000-hectare conservation reserve, this represents a very small direct impact to native vegetation and habitat for significant species.

- Direct impacts to threatened flora can be avoided by micro siting of the trail alignment.

- Direct loss of habitat for threatened fauna is negligible, and the track is of insufficient width to fragment populations.

- Indirect impacts to Matters of National Environmental Significance through erosion, PC infestation, weed spread and introduced predators can be avoided and minimised through selection of an appropriate trail alignment, hygiene measures, appropriate trail design specifications, and compliance with the *Phytophthora* Threat Abatement Plan for the GPT (Attachment 3).

- Outbreaks of *Phytophthora* will be managed through on ground responses with fungicide treatment and/or temporary track closures and/or redirections, for details see the *Phytophthora* Threat Abatement Plan for the GPT (Attachment 3).

An assessment of significant impact criteria relevant to vulnerable and endangered threatened species is present below.

Endangered species

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a critically endangered or endangered species

if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

1. lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a population

2. reduce the area of occupancy of the species

3. fragment an existing population into two or more populations

4. adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

5. disrupt the breeding cycle of a population

6. modify, destroy, remove, isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

7. result in invasive species that are harmful to a critically endangered or endangered species becoming established in the endangered or critically endangered species' habitat

8. introduce disease that may cause the species to decline, or

9. interfere with the recovery of the species.

With the proposed *Phytophthora* precautions and processes in place, outlined within the *Phytophthora* Threat Abatement Plan for the GPT (Attachment 3), the GPT project is unlikely to trigger any of these significant impact criteria in relation to the critically endangered or endangered species listed in Section 2.4.1.

Vulnerable species

An action is likely to have a significant impact on a vulnerable species if there is a real chance or possibility that it will:

1. lead to a long-term decrease in the size of an important population of a species

2. reduce the area of occupancy of an important population

3. fragment an existing important population into two or more populations

4. adversely affect habitat critical to the survival of a species

5. disrupt the breeding cycle of an important population

6. modify, destroy, remove or isolate or decrease the availability or quality of habitat to the extent that the species is likely to decline

7. result in invasive species that are harmful to a vulnerable species becoming established in the vulnerable species' habitat

8. introduce disease that may cause the species to decline

9. interfere substantially with the recovery of the species.

With the proposed *Phytophthora* precautions and processes in place, outlined within the *Phytophthora* Threat Abatement Plan for the GPT (Attachment 3), the GPT project is unlikely to trigger any of these significant impact criteria in relation to the vulnerable flora species addressed in Section 2.4.1.

Section 6 – Environmental record of the person proposing to take the action

Provide details of any proceedings under Commonwealth, State or Territory law against the person proposing to take the action that pertain to the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

6.1 Does the person taking the action have a satisfactory record of responsible environmental management? Please explain in further detail.

Yes.

Parks Victoria is a statutory authority who is responsible for managing an expanding and diverse estate covering more than 4 million hectares, (approx. 17% of Victoria) including 45 national parks, 26 state parks, 13 marine national parks, 11 marine sanctuaries, 3 wilderness parks and 30 metropolitan parks.

6.2 Provide details of any past or present proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against either (a) the person proposing to take the action or, (b) if a permit has been applied for in relation to the action – the person making the application.

We are not aware of any proceedings against PV that would meet this criteria

6.3 If it is a corporation undertaking the action will the action be taken in accordance with the corporation's environmental policy and framework?

Yes

6.3.1 If the person taking the action is a corporation, please provide details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework.

Parks Victoria abides by State and Commonwealth statutes and laws. A copy of Parks Victoria Environmental sustainability policy is attached (Attachment 11) as is a copy of the Parks Victoria 2017 - 2020 Corporate and Business Plan (Attachment 12)

6.4 Has the person taking the action previously referred an action under the EPBC Act, or been responsible for undertaking an action referred under the EPBC Act?

Yes

6.4.1 EPBC Act No and/or Name of Proposal.

Plenty River Trail (Stage 6 & Part Stage 7) within Plenty Gorge Parklands

Development of Werribee River Regional Park

2012/6325 Macleod Morass Over-Abundant Vegetation Management

2012/6247 Cardinia Creek (North) Parklands Master Plan, Stage 1

2010/5437 Barwon River Parkland Initiative, Taits Point, Stages 1 and 2

2010/5312 Galada Tamboore Parklands Infrastructure and Formed Trail Construction

2010/5294 Tooler Creek Park Development

2009/5246 The Development of Werribee River Regional Park

2008/4331 Upgrade and Repairs to Flinders Pier

2008/4112 Construct multi-use walking track

2008/4023 Point Cook Coastal Park Bay Trail Construction (Stage 3, nth part)

2004/1352 Queenscliff Harbour Redeveopment

2002/793 Track construction - Great Ocean Walk

2002/593 Point Cook recreational trail Stage 2

2001/324 Point Cook Coastal Trail

Section 7 – Information sources

You are required to provide the references used in preparing the referral including the reliability of the source.

7.1 List references used in preparing the referral (please provide the reference source reliability and any uncertainties of source).

Reference Source	Reliability	Uncertainties
Victorian Biodiversity Atlas – records of significant flora and fauna species.	Data source managed by the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning. Based on field observations submitted by professional and amateur ecologists over many years.	Not a systematic data source. Survey sites not randomly selected. Absence of a record does not imply absence of the species from the area, and positive records are only reliable at the time of survey. Locational accuracy of records varies.
Ecological Vegetation Class Mapping Layer, NV2005_EVCBCS GIS Layer.	High resolution mapping within the Grampians National Park, based on extensive field survey and aerial photo interpretation.	n/a
Protected matters search tool	Based on records and expert opinion regarding the distribution of listed species, listed communities and migratory species.	n/a
Native Vegetation Assessment Biosis (Aug, 2017) (Attachment 4)	Field surveys were undertaken by a qualified ecologist. The surveys were undertaken within a year of compiling the report dated August 2017,with the surveys undertaken Oct/Nov/Dec 2016 and January 2017. Limited to Hiker Camps, Trailheads and random locations along the GPT.	Not a comprehensive survey of the trail alignment.
Grampians National Park Management Plan (2003) (Attachment 5)	Clause 17-2(d) of the National Parks Act 1975 requires a “Plan of Management” to be prepared for each National Park and State Park in Victoria Consultation with Parks Victoria staff who manage the park was	Since the inception of the GNPMP plan, 12 years ago, no partial or complete review of the plan has been undertaken. Consequently the GNPMP predates the concept of the GPT.

Reference Source	Reliability	Uncertainties
	also undertaken as part of the background research, reporting and subsequent development of this referral.	
Centre for Environmental Management, University of Ballarat, Gibson, M., Milne, R., Cahill, D. and Wilson, B. (2002). Preliminary review of the actual and potential distribution of Phytophthora cinnamomi dieback in parks and reserves across Victoria.	Unpublished report for Parks Victoria.	Review of desktop information.
Department of Sustainability and Environment (2008). Victoria's Public Land Phytophthora cinnamomi Management Strategy.	Prepared by Department of Sustainability and Environment and thus is considered to be reliable	Not specific to the Grampians National Park
Department of the Environment (2014). Threat abatement plan for disease in natural ecosystems caused by Phytophthora cinnamomi.	Prepared by the Department of the Environment and thus is considered to have a high level of reliability.	Not specific to the Grampians National Park and thus a Threat Abatement Plan specific to the proposed Grampians Peaks Trail development was prepared by a leading expert in the field namely Ian Smith, refer to Attachment 3.

Section 8 – Proposed alternatives

You are required to complete this section if you have any feasible alternatives to taking the proposed action (including not taking the action) that were considered but not proposed.

8.0 Provide a description of the feasible alternative?

The GPT is intended to provide a world-class long distance walking experience showcasing the spectacular natural and cultural landscapes of the GNP, extending from the northern extremity to the southern extremity of the Park.

The proposed alignment uses the existing walking track network where possible, but also requires the construction new tracks where existing tracks are not available. In the design process, the GPT team considered utilising existing fire management 4WD tracks and other roads, however there are few locations where this could be done, and this option has been ruled out for the following reasons:

- Utilisation of existing management tracks and roads would still involve creation of linkage tracks to move from walking trails to the roads.

- It is not desirable, from a safety perspective, for walkers to share roads with vehicles.

- The route philosophy listed in the GPT Master Plan 2014 (Attachment 2) is to avoid existing roads and other infrastructure that may detract from the creation of a remote walking experience, and to maximise the variety of walking experiences.

8.1 Select the relevant alternatives related to your proposed action.

Locations

8.3 What is the extent and location of your proposed alternative action?

Area	Point	Latitude	Longitude
Grampians National Park	1	-36.878939797144	142.37365201078
Grampians National Park	2	-36.878939797144	142.37365201078

Area	Point	Latitude	Longitude
Grampians National Park	3	-36.870151269424	142.39013150296
Grampians National Park	4	-36.878939797144	142.41759732328
Grampians National Park	5	-36.900906691975	142.43956997953
Grampians National Park	6	-36.920671492227	142.46291592679
Grampians National Park	7	-36.938235903911	142.46703579984
Grampians National Park	8	-37.035864049671	142.51922085843
Grampians National Park	9	-37.0610734163	142.53295376859
Grampians National Park	10	-37.102705326342	142.5343270596
Grampians National Park	11	-37.181524120143	142.57689908109
Grampians National Park	12	-37.241677572741	142.61535122953
Grampians National Park	13	-37.278839352091	142.63320401273
Grampians National Park	14	-37.402215826546	142.56316617093
Grampians National Park	15	-37.483990910945	142.47527554593
Grampians National Park	16	-37.548257815881	142.43682339749
Grampians National Park	17	-37.565676587955	142.39287808499
Grampians National Park	18	-37.598325809409	142.3846383389
Grampians National Park	19	-37.623347181318	142.35991910062
Grampians National Park	20	-37.640748387644	142.32421353421
Grampians National Park	21	-37.629873111183	142.31048062406
Grampians National Park	22	-37.605941900693	142.3228402432
Grampians National Park	23	-37.501424693303	142.36403897367
Grampians National Park	24	-37.397851978679	142.44231656156
Grampians National Park	25	-37.362932048732	142.45055630765

Area	Point	Latitude	Longitude
Grampians National Park	26	-37.352016236309	142.42171719632
Grampians National Park	27	-37.154165791294	142.35442593656
Grampians National Park	28	-37.047921747918	142.40523770413
Grampians National Park	29	-37.021611573822	142.35991910062
Grampians National Park	30	-36.981032199231	142.37227871976
Grampians National Park	31	-36.934942885002	142.37227871976
Grampians National Park	32	-36.878939797144	142.37365201078

8.4 Provide a brief physical description of the property on which the alternative proposed action will take place and the project location (e.g. Proximity to major towns, or for off-shore projects, shortest distance to mainland.

As per previous description.

8.5 What is the size of the development footprint or work area of the alternative?

Same

8.6 Is the alternative proposal a street address or lot?

Lot

8.6.2 Describe the lot number associated with the alternative proposal.

The same as the proposed alignment

8.7 Is there a different local government area and council contact for the alternative?

No

8.8 Provide details of the context, planning framework and State/Local Government requirements.

Refer to 1.12

8.9 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken (including with Indigenous stakeholders).

No consultation has been undertaken for an alternative alignment that links existing roads and tracks.

8.10 Describe any environmental impact assessments that have been, is being or will be carried out under Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation including relevant impacts of the project for the alternative.

A field verification study would be required.

Phytophthora cinnamomi, listed in 2000 as a ‘key threatening process’ under Section 183 of the EPBC Act 1999, and currently subject to a National Threat Abatement Plan, would continiue to be an issue.

8.11 Is the alternative activity part of a staged development or a component of a larger project?

No

8.12 Nominate any matters of National Environmental Significance that are likely to be impacted by this alternative proposal by ticking the relevant checkboxes.

8.13 Describe any impacts on the flora and fauna relevant to the alternative proposal.

No change

8.14 Describe the hydrology relevant to the alternative proposal (including water flows).

Refer to section 3.2

8.15 Describe the soil and vegetation characteristics relevant to the alternative proposal.

Refer to section 3.3

8.16 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or unique values relevant to the

alternative proposal.

Refer to section 3.4

8.17 Describe the remnant native vegetation relevant to the alternative proposal.

The vegetation would similar to that described in section 3.5

8.18 Describe the gradient (or depth range if action is to be taken in a marine area) relevant to the alternative proposal.

Similar to that described in 3.6

8.19 Describe the current state of the environment relevant to the alternative proposal.

The same as that described in 3.7

8.20 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage Places or other places recognised as having heritage values relevant to the alternative proposal.

The same as that described in 3.8

8.21 Describe any Indigenous heritage values relevant to the alternative proposal.

The same as that described in 3.9

8.22 Describe any other important or unique values relevant to the alternative proposal.

None

8.23 Describe the tenure of the action area (e.g. freehold, leasehold) relevant to the alternative proposal.

The same as that described in 3.10

8.24 Describe the existing uses of the area relevant to the alternative proposal.

The same as that described in 3.11

8.25 Identify any proposed uses of the area relevant to the alternative proposal.

The same as that described in 3.11

8.26 What are the proposed measures for any alternative action to avoid or reduce impact?

The same as that described in 4.1

8.27 Do you have another alternative?

No

Section 9 – Contacts, signatures and declarations

Where applicable, you must provide the contact details of each of the following entities: Person Proposing the Action; Proposed Designated Proponent and; Person Preparing the Referral. You will also be required to provide signed declarations from each of the identified entities.

9.0 Is the person proposing to take the action an Organisation or an Individual?

Organisation

9.2 Organisation

9.2.1 Job Title

Distric Manager

9.2.2 First Name

Gavan

9.2.3 Last Name

Mathieson

9.2.4 E-mail

gavan.mathieson@parks.vic.gov.au

9.2.5 Postal Address

PO Box 18,
Halls Gap VIC 3381
Australia

9.2.6 ABN/ACN

ABN

95337637697 - PARKS VICTORIA

9.2.7 Organisation Telephone

8427 2058

9.2.8 Organisation E-mail

gavan.mathieson@parks.vic.gov.au

9.2.9 I qualify for exemption from fees under section 520(4C)(e)(v) of the EPBC Act because I am:

Not applicable

Small Business Declaration

I have read the Department of the Environment and Energy's guidance in the online form concerning the definition of a small a business entity and confirm that I qualify for a small business exemption.

Signature:..... Date: .....

9.2.9.2 I would like to apply for a waiver of full or partial fees under Schedule 1, 5.21A of the EPBC Regulations

No

9.2.9.3 Under sub regulation 5.21A(5), you must include information about the applicant (if not you) the grounds on which the waiver is sought and the reasons why it should be made

Person proposing the action - Declaration

I, Gavan Mathieson, District Manager SW, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to the EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. I declare that I am not taking the action on behalf of or for the benefit of any other person or entity.

Signature:..... Date: 19/10/17

I, _____, the person proposing the action, consent to the designation of _____ as the proponent of the purposes of the action describe in this EPBC Act Referral.

Signature:..... Date: .....

9.3 Is the Proposed Designated Proponent an Organisation or Individual?

Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Energy

Organisation

9.5 Organisation

9.5.1 Job Title

District Manager

9.5.2 First Name

Gavan

9.5.3 Last Name

Mathieson

9.5.4 E-mail

gavan.mathieson@parks.vic.gov.au

9.5.5 Postal Address

PO Box 18,
Halls Gap VIC 3381
Australia

9.5.6 ABN/ACN

ABN

95337637697 - PARKS VICTORIA

9.5.7 Organisation Telephone

8427 2058

9.5.8 Organisation E-mail

gavan.mathieson@parks.vic.gov.au

Proposed designated proponent - Declaration

I, Gavan Mathieson, the proposed designated proponent, consent to the designation of myself as the proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral.

Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Energy

Signature:..... Date: 19/10/17

9.6 Is the Referring Party an Organisation or Individual?

Organisation

9.8 Organisation

9.8.1 Job Title

Project Coordinator - Planning

9.8.2 First Name

Anne

9.8.3 Last Name

Wilson

9.8.4 E-mail

anne.wilson@parks.vic.gov.au

9.8.5 Postal Address

PO Box 18,
Halls Gap VIC 3381
Australia

9.8.6 ABN/ACN

ABN

95337637697 - PARKS VICTORIA

9.8.7 Organisation Telephone

8427 29 57

9.8.8 Organisation E-mail

anne.wilson@parks.vic.gov.au

Referring Party - Declaration

Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Energy

I, ANNE WILSON, I declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to this EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence.

Signature: ..... Date: 19/10/2017

Appendix A - Attachments

The following attachments have been supplied with this EPBC Act Referral:

1. att4_nat_veg_assessment.pdf
2. att_1_project_area_map.pdf
3. att_2_gpt-master-plan.pdf
4. att_3_phytophthora_tap.pdf
5. att_4_nat_veg_assessment.pdf
6. att_5_gnp_mp_appendices.pdf
7. att_5_gnp_mp_no_appendix.pdf
8. att_6_gpt_design_manual.pdf
9. att_7_gpt_construction_specification_16_11_15_rev_e.pdf
10. att_8_gpt_plant_id_guide.pdf
11. att_9_hiker_camps_pgs1-20.pdf
12. att_9_hiker_camps_pgs21_end.pdf
13. att_10_trailhead_plans.pdf
14. att_11_environmental_policy.docx
15. att_12_pv_corporate_plan.pdf
16. gpt_17oct2017.dbf
17. gpt_17oct2017.shp
18. hiker_camps_11oct2017.dbf
19. hiker_camps_11oct2017.shp
20. trailhead111oct2017.dbf
21. trailhead111oct2017.shp