



Environment,  
Climate Change & Water  
National Parks & Wildlife Service



## Events, Functions and Venues Policy

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## Introduction

Parks provide unique locations and opportunities for community events and private functions. Events and functions have the potential to increase visitation to parks and to help raise awareness and appreciation of parks and their conservation. However, not all types of events and functions are appropriate in parks. Note that "events" covers a very broad range of activities, from concerts to endurance-style sporting events, and various other park management policies exist that cover specific aspects of some of these activities.

## Objectives

To:

- facilitate and enhance visitor use, enjoyment and appreciation of parks and their natural and cultural values by providing for a range of opportunities for events and functions to occur in parks;
- ensure events, functions and venues are appropriate to the natural and cultural settings;
- ensure that events, functions and venues meet high environmental and sustainability standards; and
- ensure that events, functions and venues are managed to minimise conflict with other park users and neighbours.

## Scope and application

The policy applies to all lands acquired or reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* ("parks") with the exception of the alpine resorts areas in Kosciuszko National Park.

Although no consent or licence is required where DECCW is the proponent, this policy also applies to events, functions and venues provided and managed by DECCW.

## Definitions

'**CRA**' means Conservation Risk Assessment, which is the assessment of environmental impacts conducted when no REF or EIS is required.

'**Event**' is an organised group activity open to the general public, which generally involves the use of land. Types of events include:

- recreational or sporting activities;
- educational activities;

- cultural activities;
- Aboriginal cultural activities;
- concerts, public meetings or demonstrations; and
- conferences.

[Note: A commercial tour group is not a 'use of land' and is therefore not an 'event'.]

**'Function'** is an organised group activity that is not open to the general public, which generally involves the use of land (e.g. a wedding).

**'Minor activities and uses'** are those involving no more participants than would normally access the area for casual or informal use (the common base-load of park visitation), up to a maximum of 400 people on a single day or in cumulative total over consecutive days.

**'Not-for-profit'** means an event or function where no profit is being made or additional reward (financial or otherwise) over direct costs recovery is received.

**'Park authority'** means the body responsible for care control and management of a park, as defined in the National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009.

**'Part 4A park'** means lands leased and reserved under Part 4A of the Act

**'POM'** means a plan of management in relation to land reserved under the Act that is prepared under s72 of the Act.

**'REF'** means Review of Environmental Factors, which is an assessment of environmental impacts under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

**'SIMI'** means Statement of Interim Management Intent, which may be prepared in accordance with the Managing Parks Prior to a POM Policy as an interim park management plan when a POM is yet to be developed.

**'Sustainability Assessment Criteria'** refers to the criteria adopted by the Director-General under s.151B(3) of the NPW Act which the Minister must have regard to prior to granting a lease or licence for events, functions and venues.

**'Sustainability Guidelines'** means the Sustainability Guidelines 2010.

**'the NPW Act'** means the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*

**'Venue'** is a location or facility identified for holding events or functions. These typically include buildings but may also include outdoor areas. A venue may be temporary or permanent.

## Relevant legislation or other mandating instruments

*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

*National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*

National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009

*Wilderness Act 1987*

## Policy

### Permissibility

1. Events, functions and venues are generally permissible in parks where consistent with the objects of the NPW Act and the management principles for the relevant park category. Events, functions and venues are not permitted in wilderness areas as they are not consistent with the management principles for wilderness.
2. In accordance with s.151A(1)(b) of the NPW Act, a lease or licence of land to provide a facility to host conferences and functions may only be granted where the facility is ancillary to accommodation facilities or to general facilities and amenities for visitors and tourists. This does not limit the establishment of a venue through:
  - the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and structures
  - use of a modified natural area identified in a plan of management (s.151A(1)(c)),
  - use of an outdoor location requiring no new facilities,
  - provision of facilities to enable activities of a recreational, educational or cultural nature to be carried out (s.151A(1)(a)(iii)), or
  - provision of facilities to enable Aboriginal cultural activities (s.151A(1)(a)(vi)).

### General principles

3. A range of opportunities for events and functions will be provided across the park system, including the establishment of venues.
4. Events, functions and venues must:
  - a. be consistent with the POM (or SIMI) and relevant park management policies;
  - b. minimise environmental impacts at the site and on the surrounding area;
  - c. be culturally appropriate;

- d. meet high sustainability standards (refer to the Sustainability Guidelines);
  - e. be appropriately low-key and suitable for the location (refer to the Sustainability Guidelines);
  - f. take measures to mitigate impacts on other park users and neighbours; and
  - g. create opportunities to raise visitor awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of the values of parks and their conservation.
5. Events and functions may provide exclusive access to parts of a park for their duration for the purposes of safety, security or operational requirements. The impacts on other users of the park will be considered prior to granting approval where exclusive access is required.
  6. Proposals will be considered on the merits of each case based on a commercial assessment of each proposal (where relevant) including, but not limited to, financial viability, financial return to government and benefits to the park and the community. Note that some or all of these factors may not be relevant depending upon the nature and scale of an event or function (e.g. a commercial assessment is not likely to be necessary for Aboriginal cultural events, minor functions such as weddings, or small-scale sporting events).

### **Environmental and sustainability assessment**

7. A lease or licence for events, functions and venues under s.151 of the Act requires:
  - a. an appropriate level of environmental assessment (e.g. CRA, REF or EIS); and
  - b. sustainability assessment to address the Sustainability Assessment Criteria.
8. Although not required by the NPW Act, the Park Authority will apply the Sustainability Guidelines when it manages an event or function, or where it provides and operates a venue in parks.

### **Venues**

9. Temporary or permanent venues may be provided, either by the Park Authority or a private party, in order to meet the objectives of this policy.

#### **Venues operated by a private party**

10. Where a venue is operated by a private party under a lease or licence (including where a lease or licence of land is granted within a Part 4A park), in accordance with cl.3(3)-(4) of the NPW Regulation additional approval (e.g. lease, licence or consent) will not be

required from the Park Authority to hold events and functions in the venue where:

- a. the types of events and functions appropriate for the venue are identified and approved as part of the lease or licence (e.g. weddings, concerts, conferences, etc); and
- b. any conditions and limits applicable for each type of approved event and function are complied with.

### **Venues operated by the Park Authority**

- 11.** The Park Authority will undertake a sustainability assessment when it establishes and operates a venue (whether it is in a building or an outdoor precinct). This process will be used to identify:
  - a. the range of permitted activities and uses that is suitable for the venue;
  - b. the environmental and cultural values of the site and any specific conditions or limits to mitigate impacts on these values; and
  - c. any specific sustainability measures required when using the venue (e.g. waste management, water use, transport).

### **Events and functions**

- 12.** Where a lease or licence is required for an event or function, a streamlined sustainability and environmental assessment will apply for minor activities and uses.
- 13.** For event or function proposals that require consent under cl.21 or 22 of the NPW Regulation, the Park Authority will advise the proponent of any required information, fees, the approval process and standard conditions. This may include a requirement to apply the Sustainability Guidelines where warranted by the nature, scale and potential impact of an activity.
- 14.** Where an event or function is proposed to occur on lands leased to a private party but the activity is not covered by the terms of the lease, lessees must seek approval from the Park Authority in the same manner as any other proponent.
- 15.** If a third party wishes to hold an event or function on land leased to a private party (other than in an approved venue – see paragraph 10) they must seek the permission of the lessee in addition to the approvals required from the Park Authority. Permission so granted must not be inconsistent with any conditions of the approval granted by the Park Authority.



## Fees

16. Fees and charges will seek to recover costs and reflect fair market value.
17. Other fees which apply to the general public (e.g. park entry fees, camping fees, etc) will continue to apply.
18. Additional fees may be imposed based on the number of participants.
19. The Park Authority may waive or reduce fees for events or functions which:
  - a. provide significant benefits to parks and their conservation e.g. by providing infrastructure or contributing funds for restoration works; or by increasing awareness of the natural and cultural values of parks and their conservation;
  - b. provide significant cultural benefits to park users and local Aboriginal communities; and
  - c. are being held by a not-for-profit or charitable organisation or as a community service, and do not require resources from the Park Authority.

## Procedures

### Approvals

20. Use of land or a facility for an event, function or venue should be approved under s.151 of the NPW Act by:
  - a. **a licence** where the proponent requires exclusive rights to occupy and use the land or the facility for a cumulative period of less than three months in a twelve month period; or
  - b. **a lease** where the proponent requires exclusive rights to occupy and use the land or the facility beyond those described in (a).
21. **Consent** of the Park Authority under the NPW Regulation should be issued where:
  - exclusive rights to occupy and use land are not required, i.e. the general public is not excluded from the precinct where the activity will occur; and
  - the event or function is of a one-off nature or of short duration; and
  - the event or function involves no new permanent physical works or permanent erection of new structures, and any temporary works are limited and reversible (e.g. marquees, portable toilets, portable offices, etc).

## Specific conditions of consent

- 22.** In addition to the standard conditions of consent, the following specific conditions may be imposed for events and functions:
- a. Payment of a security/environmental bond.
  - b. The specified date/s and time/s an event or function may occupy the site, including time:
    - (i) to set up the event or function, including undertaking any works required;
    - (ii) to hold the event or function; and
    - (iii) to pack up, clean up and restore the site (if necessary) after the event or function.
  - c. The date by which fees are payable.
  - d. Waste management and toilet facility requirements.
  - e. Whether any temporary signs, banners, advertising or merchandise are permitted.
  - f. Whether amplified sound is permitted.
  - g. Food and beverage arrangements (e.g. is alcohol permitted?).
  - h. Transport and access management requirements.
  - i. Risk, security and emergency management requirements.
  - j. Provision of first aid facilities.
  - k. Water and power requirements.

Note that only some of the above conditions may be applicable depending upon the nature, scale and potential impact of an event or function (e.g. many of these conditions would not generally apply to a small wedding).

- 23.** If approval is granted on the condition that a security/environmental management bond will be paid:
- a. the amount of the bond will be specified in the conditions of the consent;
  - b. the bond will be payable either when the application is lodged or upon obtaining approval;
  - c. details of the bond should be retained by the relevant Regional office;
  - d. the Park Authority is to ensure that the timely inspection of the site or venue takes place before the event/function commences and upon completion; and
  - e. if any portion of the bond is to be forfeited the reasons for this should be given in writing.

## Acknowledgements

24. The Park Authority may require acknowledgement in brochures and/or advertising for events or functions:
  - a. that event or function is in a park;
  - b. DECCW's role in the event or function;
  - c. conditions of operation;
  - d. an acknowledgement of Country.
25. Event and function operators should be encouraged to undertake an acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of the event or function.

## Related policies and other documents

Refer to the Park Management Policy Manual for relevant policies for the activity proposed.

Commercial Recreation and Tour Operator 'ParksEcoPass' Operating Manual

DECCW Waste Wise Events Guide

Lease and Licence Referral Policy and Procedures

Review of Environmental Factors Guidelines

Sustainability Assessment Criteria and Sustainability Guidelines

## Accountabilities

Accountabilities under this policy are in accordance with the delegation of Director-General functions under the *NPW Act 1974* and *NPW Regulation 2009*. Instruments of delegation can be accessed on the Legal and Investigations page on DECCWnet.

## Policy review

The Park Management Policy Unit is responsible for coordinating the review of this policy. Reviews will be undertaken every five years, and more frequently if changes in legislation, policies or other areas require the amendment of this policy. The next scheduled review is due on 2015.

## Contacts for further advice

Manager, Park Management Policy Unit  
Ph 9585 6542

## Attachments

### Matters the Minister must consider

The Minister is required to consider the following matters under s.151B(1) of the NPW Act:

- a. the purpose for which the lease or licence is granted is suitable having regard to the natural and cultural values of:
  - (i) the land to be leased or licensed, and
  - (ii) land reserved under the Act in the vicinity of that land, and
- b. the lease or licence provides for the sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, energy and water, and
- c. in relation to any lease or licence that authorises the erection of a new building or structure on the land or the modification of an existing building or structure on the land – the authorised development or activity is appropriate in relation to the built form and scale of the building or structure including its bulk, height, footprint, setbacks and density.

The Sustainability Assessment Criteria are based upon the above statutory matters as the means to ensure they are fully considered as required by the Act.