



Committee Update – Feb 2020

Greetings!

Declaration Crag Update

Parks Victoria representatives held an information session in Natimuk on 29 January 2020 regarding the closure of Declaration Crag at Arapiles. Michael Stewart, CEO of Barenji Gadjin, was also in attendance. Over 100 people attended despite the heat and scorching sun. The highly contrived PV information session allowed only 30 people to enter the venue at any one time. This resulted in many community members leaving or trying to find shade under nearby trees.

Inside, the community was split amongst various tables and areas where different issues were discussed. This upset many people in the community who wanted to hear all of what was being said at the event regarding the closure. Further, the sentiment from Natimuk residents, the majority of whom were not climbers, was that they weren't being heard or listened to by Parks Victoria and that "closures at Mount Arapiles would destroy the community".

In response to Parks Victoria's poor handling of the consultation process, Natimuk Hotel publican Bill Lovel called a town meeting which was held on 12 February at the Soldier's Memorial Hall, Natimuk. Again around 100 people attended the meeting. It was a positive meeting. Parks Victoria and Local and State government representatives were invited but did not attend.

The anxiety of the community was apparent, caused by uncertainty regarding what the initial closure of Declaration Crag might mean for the future of access to the Mount. Bill noted that there were 47 houses in Natimuk owned by climbers. Any exodus of climbers from Natimuk would have a significant effect on the local economy in general, primary school, loss of members from the local CFA brigade and SES, and loss of climbing related businesses.

There was a sense expressed by some that Parks Victoria had been actively discouraging and thwarting efforts by locals to establish direct lines of conversation between locals and traditional elders. Locals were keen to establish those connections.

Wotjobaluk man and Natimuk resident Laurie Norman attended. He said Traditional Owners did not want to take away the rights of other users of the mountain. The opinion was voiced, and strongly endorsed by those attending the meeting, that locals also wanted to ensure protection and celebration of the cultural heritage of the Mount and its surroundings.

A group of residents at the meeting agreed to form group to advocate for appropriate approaches to Park Management that provide robust protection of cultural heritage, the environment and embrace low-impact recreational pursuits, including climbing, at the Mount and surrounds.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Over the holiday break, the ACAV Committee developed the following statement in relation Aboriginal cultural heritage:

“Aboriginal people have lived throughout Victoria for more than a thousand generations and have a rich culture that is evident in the landscape and spiritual stories. We feel privileged to share their country and stunning landscape.

ACAV encourages members to become familiar with Aboriginal cultural heritage so that when climbing, members can identify and care for these important links for Aboriginal people to their Ancestors and country. For guidance in identifying Aboriginal heritage we recommend members review the Aboriginal [Heritage Identification Guide](#) developed by Traditional Owners and Parks Victoria.”

This now appears on our homepage.

Roundtable 4

Roundtable 4 is scheduled for 5 March 2020. Aaron Lowndes will represent the ACAV at this forum. Roundtable 3 communications can be [found here](#). Aaron Lowndes can be contacted at operations.vic@climb.org.au should you have any queries, concerns or suggestions about this forum.

Save the date – upcoming AGM

The Committee has set the date for the Annual General Meeting. It's on at 7pm on 6 August 2020. Please save the date. Venue to be advised. It will be in Melbourne.

Please check the box!

On first joining ACAV members needed to 'opt in' to receive communications from ACAV. A number of members have let the Secretary know they haven't received ACAV communications. We need your consent. [Login to your account](#) so you can select to receive emails from ACAV.

Committee News

Current ACAV Secretary Leanne Lindorff has indicated to the committee that she wishes to resign pending finding a suitable replacement. If you think you may be able to fill this role (or would like to find out what is required), please contact secretary.vic@climb.org.au as soon as possible.

At the Special General Meeting held on Thursday 19 December 2019 the members voted as follows in relation to these special resolutions:

- 59% of members voted that Mr Mike Tomkins be removed from office as ACAV President and the ACAV Committee; but well short of the 75% required to pass the motion.
- 2% voted that the ACAV Committee is dissolved in its entirety

The SGM minutes can be [found here](#).

A number of Committee members have resigned prior to and following the SGM. Vale Hahn Le, Steve Wilson, Mike Rockell, and Jackie Bernadi. Leane Lindorff will be resigning shortly, allowing enough time for the Committee to reach out to find a Secretary. We thank them for their commitment to the cause and service to the Committee.

The Committee, however, is working together to move ACAV forward to achieve its strategic objectives.

Legal Action

We are continuing to receive legal advice will bring you a comprehensive update shortly.