

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Falls to Hotham
Alpine Crossing

Summer 2022-23

Welcome to the summer 2022-23 edition of the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Community Update.

The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing is a proposed 57 kilometre walk through the Alpine region of Victoria, combining and upgrading an existing track network. The final walk will be a 5-day 4-night hiking experience through the unique alpine environment, from Falls Creek to Mount Hotham.

Community consultation on the draft designs closed on 25 September 2022. A summary of the feedback received has been compiled into a report which is now available. This newsletter also provides an update on project timelines and environmental approvals.

Community consultation findings

Thank you to everybody who contributed feedback on the draft designs during community consultation. More than 6,000 people visited the Engage Victoria page on the project, more than 60 people joined conversations at pop-up sessions in local towns, and we received more than 640 responses in total via survey, submissions and email.

Parks Victoria has compiled a report summarising the feedback we received.



Community consultation at Mount Hotham

Through consultation we heard: project concerns, what people liked about the designs and ways they would improve them.

Visit [Engage Victoria](#) to read the full report or a shorter summary of the key findings.

The report has been peer-reviewed by community consultation specialist, Kismet Forward. A letter outlining the review is available on [Engage Victoria](#). Parks Victoria will also redact personal information from all submissions and proactively release the raw data from community consultation. This is planned to be released in early 2023.

What's next?

As a result of this feedback received, Parks Victoria is:

- Reducing the number of huts and tent platforms proposed at each site
- Reducing the size of the communal shelters proposed
- Considering an operational model that invites Licensed Tour Operators as well as private bookings to keep cost options for hikers as low as possible.

Parks Victoria will continue to:

- Undertake relevant environmental studies and approvals
- Work together with Traditional Owners on the project, and undertake relevant Cultural Heritage Management Plans.

Parks Victoria looks forward to sharing updated designs with you in 2023. We will also compile a document outlining key feedback with how designs have changed to reflect it. Where feedback cannot be incorporated, we will provide information about why.

Environmental approvals

As part of the community consultation we heard concerns about environmental impacts.

Parks Victoria will undertake final detailed assessments on: environment, Aboriginal cultural heritage, post-1788 heritage, and flora and fauna surveys. Including:

- Targeted flora and fauna surveys
- Historical Heritage Assessment survey
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

The environmental assessments and approvals being undertaken for the project are detailed and complex. We have created an [infographic](#) to outline what we have already done and what still needs to be done. It includes information on the legislative approvals. Regulators will advise legislative outcomes and what compliance actions are required. Parks Victoria will implement any and all compliance actions as directed by regulators.

Weather impacts

The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing project is being impacted by weather conditions in the area. As you are probably aware, there was snow on the ground and significant rain throughout spring. These conditions are impacting on-ground assessments and site access for geotechnical, cultural heritage, environmental surveys and design work.

In October, a landslide on Bogong High Plains Road between Mt Beauty and Falls Creek cut off public access to Falls Creek. The road will likely remain closed until March 2023.

Alternative access to the site is available for workers, though this adds two hours to travel time. Designers visited all overnight sites in late November and early December. Site visits will help inform design updates.

These issues have significantly reduced the amount of time available to work onsite this season. These conditions mean that the project will be completed later than scheduled.



Stay up to date

Parks Victoria will provide updates and information as the project progresses. To stay updated you can:

- [Subscribe](#) for email updates
- Phone 13 1963 or email engage@park.vic.gov.au
- Visit engage.vic.gov.au/falls-to-hotham