

# Parks Victoria *Healthy Parks Healthy People*

Nature is Good Medicine Presentation

Alfred Hospital Population Health Seminar

Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018

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#NatureIsHealth





# Health through Nature

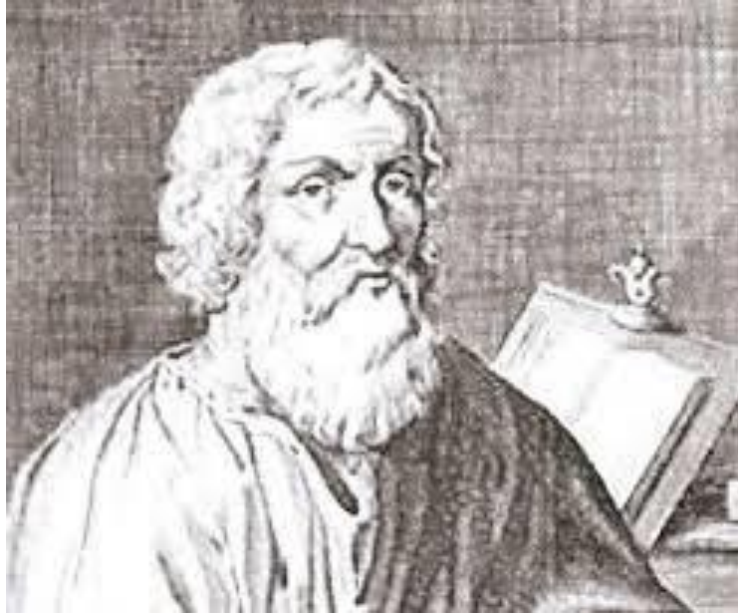
## The Journey so far....



*If you care for your  
Country your Country cares  
for you*







*“...Nature itself is the  
best physician...”*

*Hippocrates*





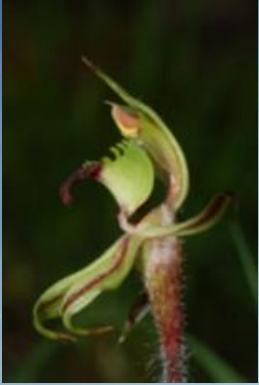
Dandenong Ranges National Park



Wilsons Promontory National Park







# National and State Parks



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# Marine parks



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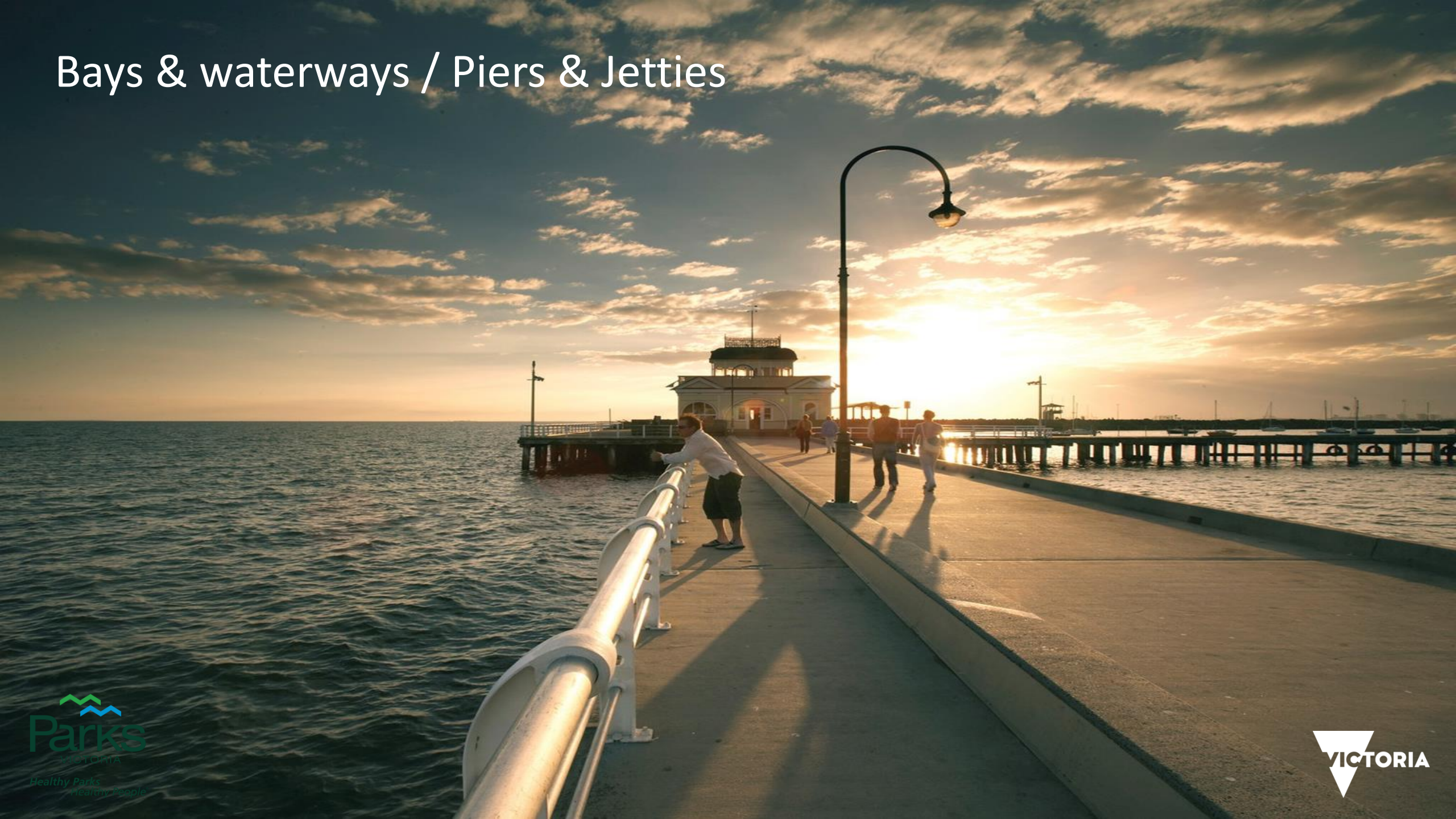


# Urban parks





# Bays & waterways / Piers & Jetties







Obesity

Diabetes

Loss of culture

Screen-time

Disconnection

Immune disorders

Indoors

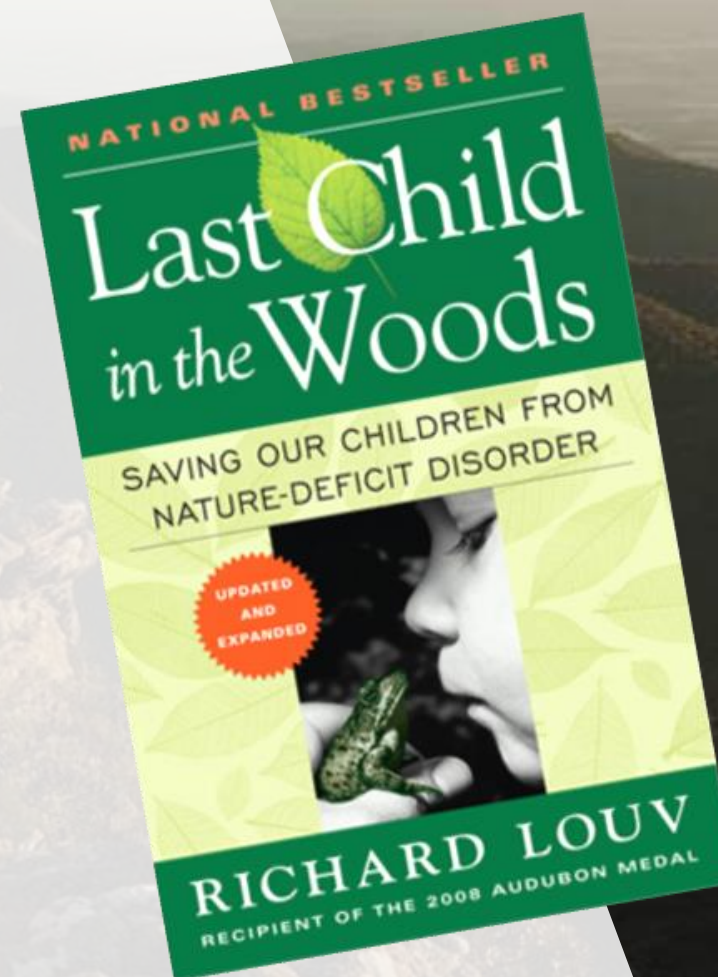
Depression

Back pain

Social isolation

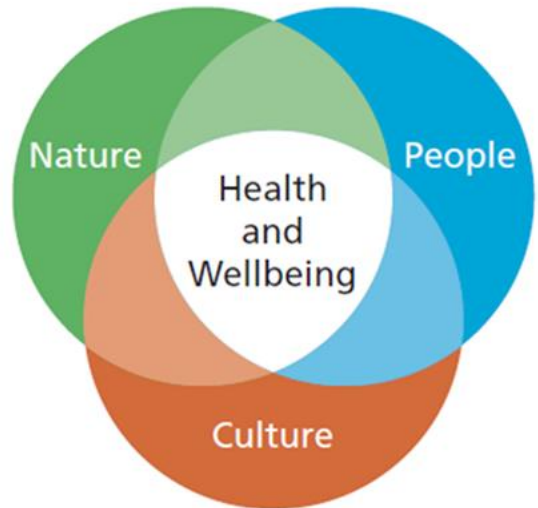
Nature deficit







# *Healthy Parks Healthy People*





# *Healthy Parks Healthy People*

Four key principles:

1. The wellbeing of all societies depends on healthy ecosystems
2. Parks nurture healthy ecosystems
3. Contact with nature is essential for improving emotional, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing
4. Parks are fundamental to economic growth and to vibrant and healthy communities





# Building evidence

## Viewing nature:

- stress ↓
- headaches ↓
- cognitive performance ↑
- concentration ↑

## Participating in nature and outdoors:

- blood pressure ↓
- stress hormones ↓
- heart rate ↓
- mental health ↑
- cognitive function ↑
- quality of life ↑
- physical recovery ↑
- immune system ↑





# A park management philosophy

Connection, advocacy,  
behaviour



*Healthy Parks  
Healthy People*

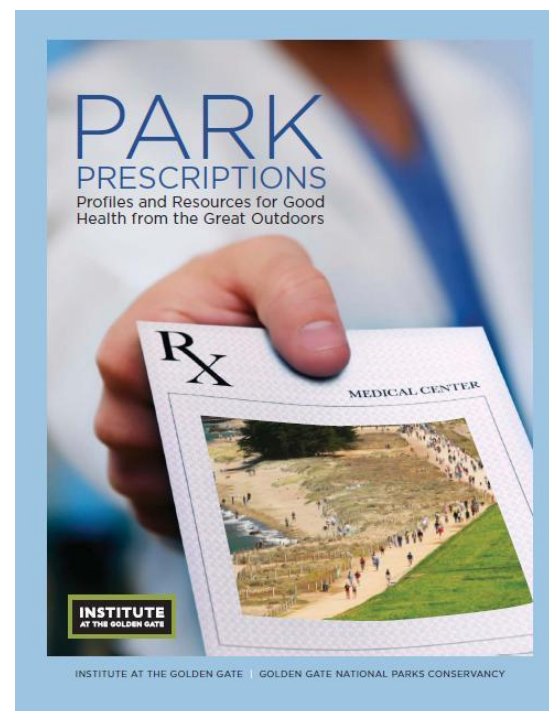


Park settings and  
'ecosystem services'









## NHS Greenspace

The **Green Exercise Partnership (GEP)** is a joint venture between Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and Health Scotland (the health improvement board of the NHS in Scotland). The GEP aims to build links between the health and environment sectors, following growing evidence that public health can be improved by getting people engaged with the natural environment.

Through its *Greening the NHS Estate* programme, the GEP aims to establish at least one greenspace demonstration project in each of the 11 mainland Area Health Boards. The projects aim to show the health benefits that flow from positive investments in, and management of, the NHS estate – the greenspace around hospitals and healthcare centres.

The design of healthcare buildings, and the



Creative and informative design around green sites plays a key role in engaging and changing attitudes. It is important to raise awareness of the benefits of the outdoors as a 'natural health service'.

In order to achieve fresh thinking and behavioural

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[Food, activity and sleep](#)
[Green Prescriptions](#)

## Green Prescriptions

Sometimes the best medicine is a dose of physical activity!

### What is a Green Prescription?

A Green Prescription is written advice from a health professional (usually your doctor or practice nurse) to be ACTIVE and improve your diet. It's a support service that helps you to improve your health and feel better at the same time.

If you need help to get more active and make healthy food choices, speak to your doctor or practice nurse. Your doctor or nurse may refer you because you are overweight, or have a medical condition which is stable, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure or depression, and you would benefit from being more active.

### How a Green Prescription can help

Being physically active has many benefits. Not only does it make you feel good, it can also help you to:

- Feel more confident, happy and relaxed
- Have more energy
- Improve cholesterol levels
- Improve blood sugar levels
- Maintain a healthy weight when combined with healthy food choices
- Reduce stress, feelings of anxiety and depression
- Lower blood pressure
- Improve sleeping habits
- Keep your bones strong
- Cope better with asthma and breathing problems
- Increase flexibility, mobility and reduce the pain of arthritis
- Reduce the risk of some types of cancer
- Reduce the risk of falling

### How to get a Green Prescription

Ask your doctor or practice nurse about a Green Prescription or phone 0800 ACTIVE (22 84 83).

Once you receive your Green Prescription, a trained support person will get in touch and help you get started with a physical activity programme that's right for you and talk with you about improving your nutrition.

You'll get help with planning regular physical activity to help you stay active. There's also the chance to meet and join other people in your community who are choosing to be more active just like you.

### Find out more

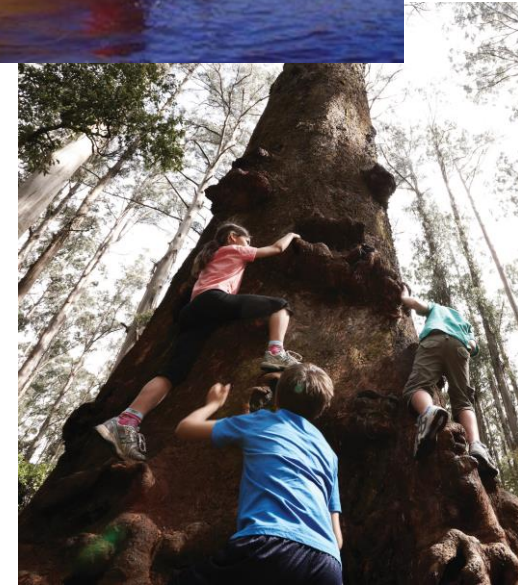
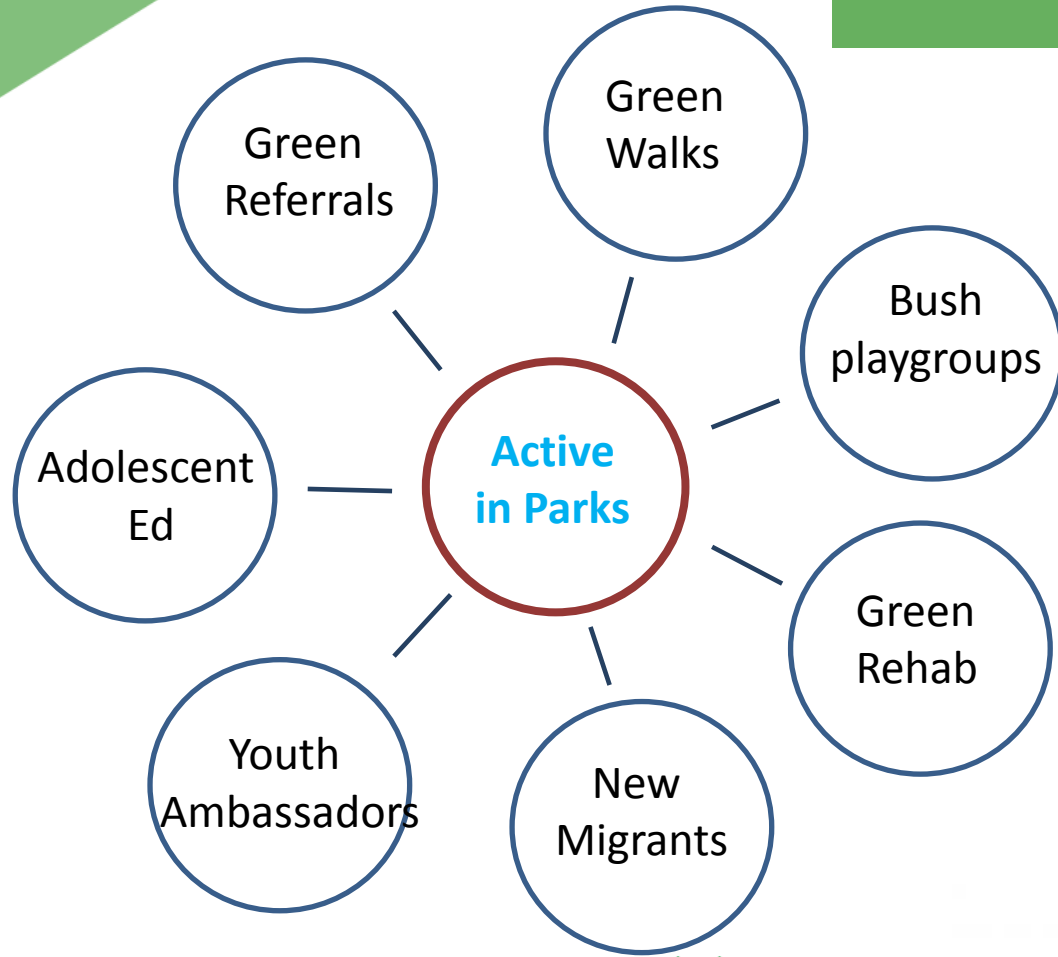
#### Green Prescription success stories

Cassandra Carter makes a lifestyle change for good  
Cassandra shares how the Green Prescription helped her flourish and thrive. [Find out more.](#)

Getting involved  
Izzy Munro's parents have loved the support of the Active Families programme. [Find out more.](#)



# Pilot programs – ‘Active in Parks’







IUCN  
WORLD PARKS  
CONGRESS  
SYDNEY 2014

## *Improving Health and Wellbeing: Healthy Parks Healthy People Stream*

Recommendation:

*Unlock the value of parks for our health  
and wellbeing, while conserving  
biodiversity*







**IUCN  
World  
Conservation  
Congress**  
Hawai'i 2016

## IUCN Resolution #64

“Strengthening cross-sector partnerships to recognise the contributions of nature to health, well-being and quality of life.”



## Parks for the Planet

Explore and **promote** parks and protected areas as **natural solutions** to global challenges such as climate change, food and water security, **health** and the global economy  
**Salzburg Challenge**

• **Salzburg Global Forum: Nature Health and a New Urban Generation**



Healthy Parks  
Healthy People®



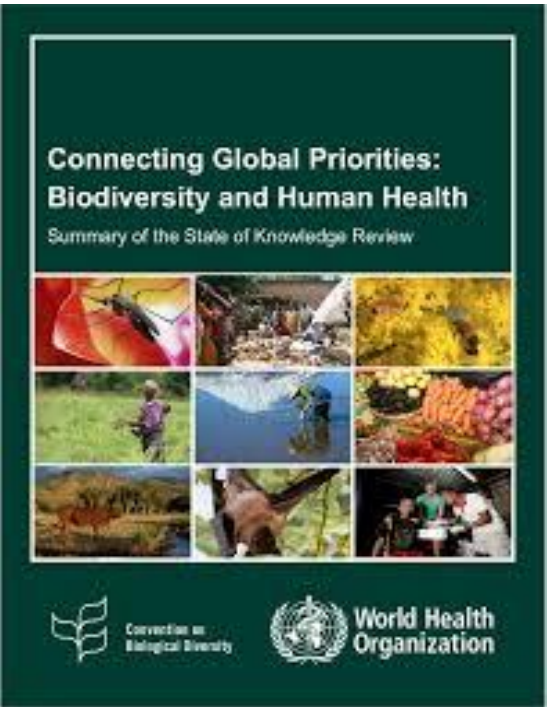


*The evidence connecting parks and health is substantial, offering strong justification for the **promotion of, and investment in,** parks as settings that enhance the health and wellbeing of community members across their **lifespan***

Deakin University 2015



The summary below presents the research evidence on outdoor adventure learning in the Australasian context.

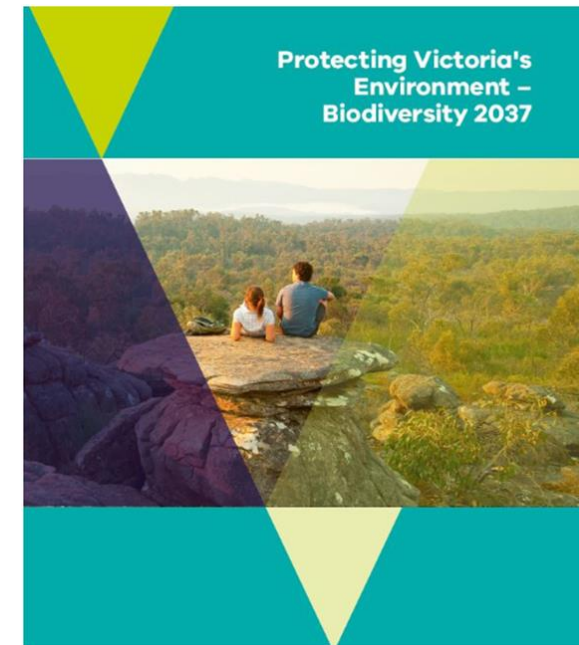




## Victorian Memorandum for Health and Nature April 2017

- ☐ *“Ensure that we can maximise the physical and mental health benefits to all Victorians of spending time in, enjoying and actively caring for the environment.”*

- ☐ Integration of policy, strategy and planning
- ☐ Building knowledge and evidence through joint research
- ☐ Developing and activating nature-based health programs





# Where are we now?

Volunteering

Connection  
to Country

Learning in  
Nature

Health and wellbeing  
benefits from nature

Structured  
programs for  
physical and  
mental health

Accessibility  
and Inclusion

Connection  
to historic  
heritage

Wellbeing  
tourism



# To do list

- Policy settings ✓✓✓
- Evidence ✓✓
- Industry awareness ✓
- Pilot and small scale in-park programs ✓✓
- Infrastructure and settings ✓✓
- Parks and health sector partnerships ✓✓
- Agreed delivery model(s) ✓
- Sustainable funding models ✓



# Nature is Good Medicine Summit





# Participants





# Parks as health settings

Prevention




Risk Management

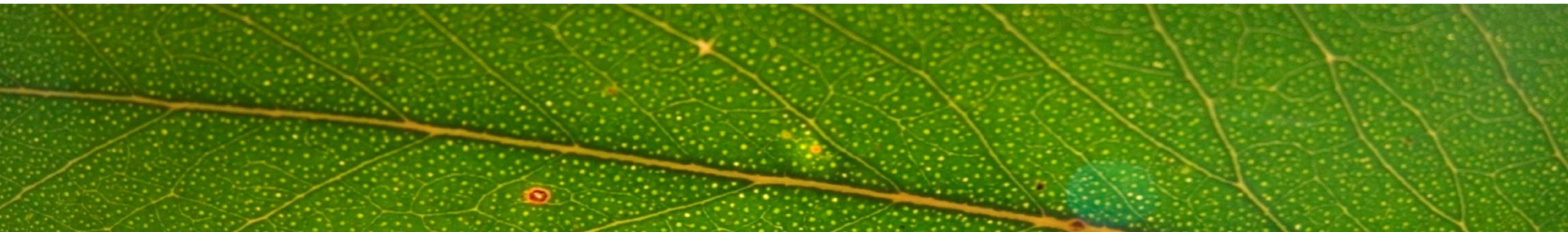
Therapy and rehabilitation








## Purpose of the NIGM Summit

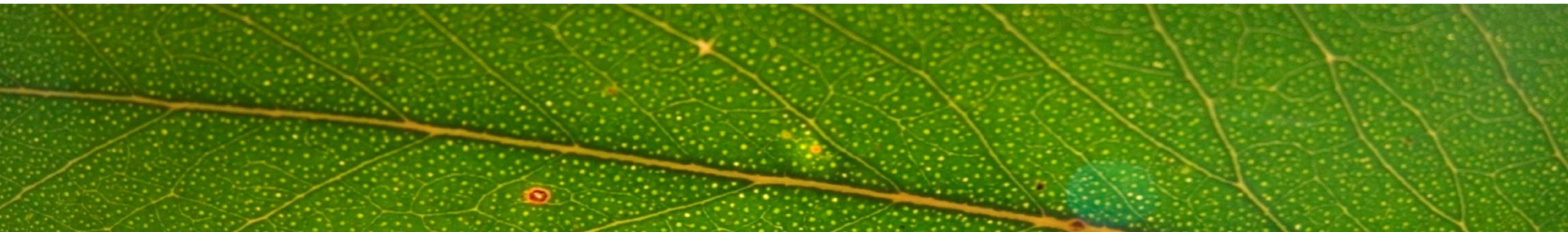
-  Develop an agreed vision for how Victoria's parks can be further activated through cross sector collaboration to provide restorative and preventative health benefits to the Victorian community
-  Identify focus areas and priorities to initiate health programs in parks for targeted populations
-  Propel Victoria forward as an international leader in evidence-based health and therapy programs that use parks as settings for improving health outcomes: staying healthy, clinical therapy, rehabilitation and maintenance across the life span





## Pathways from the NIGM Summit – solutions included nature-based health delivery models

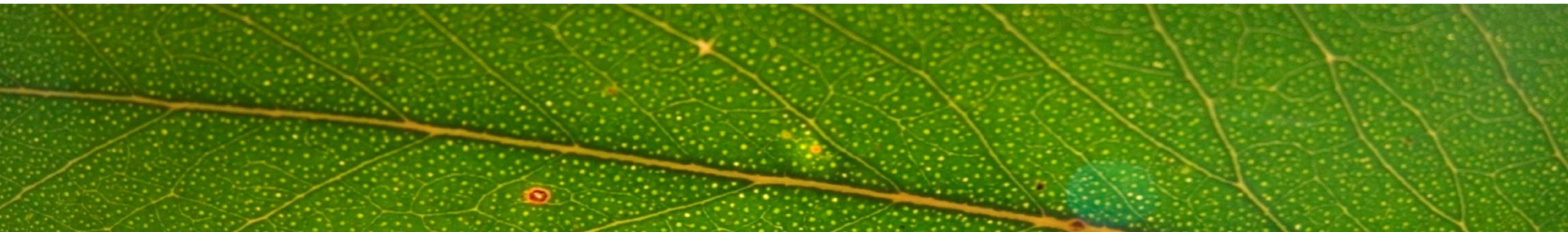
-  Enabling more active recreation in parks (Health Promotion)
-  Activating more targeted and structured models, including clinical referrals (green prescriptions) and other programs that reduce risk and target hospital avoidance
-  Better use of parks and nature as settings for post-hospital therapy services





## Nature-based health program suggestions:

- Activate a new Victorian 'nature prescriptions' model
- Support and build capability in nature assisted therapies for at-risk children and young people (including Bush Therapy)
- Promote mental wellbeing and mindfulness practice through Forest Bathing programs
- Promote Indigenous health and wellbeing (physical, social, cultural) through programs that encourage connection to Country
- Connect healthcare patients (hospitals) to parks for nature-based recovery and rehabilitation
- Support development of trails and services for sensory modulation in nature (occupational therapy for dementia and autism, etc)
- Create health hubs at selected parks that might provide an additional tailored level of facilities and services to promote health benefits including people with disability
- Implementation of pilot program of 'Health Rangers' to support and deliver healthy activities and health based partnerships with service providers, volunteers and other groups

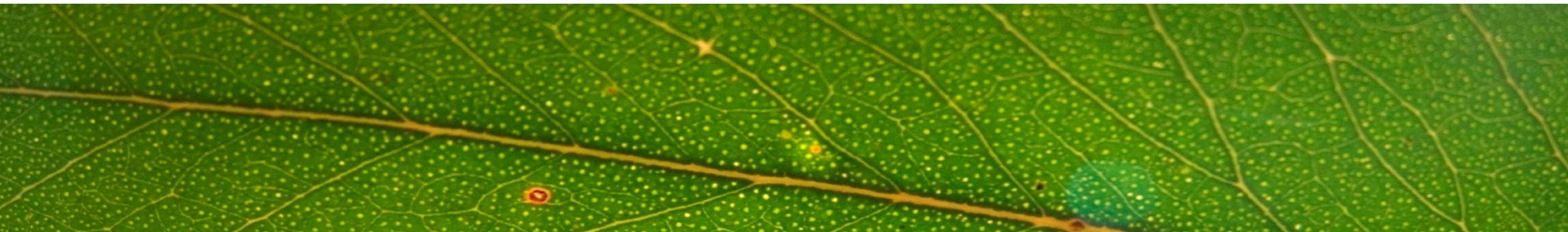




## Target Populations

Summit participants highlighted the broad range of opportunities across different target groups:

- Increasing opportunities for nature play for children and health through adventure for youth, and youth at risk
- Disadvantaged communities with large populations of inactive adults
- Growing the opportunities to attract seniors to build musculoskeletal strength, improve balance as well as increase activity and social connection
- Enable Aboriginal communities to connect to nature, particularly youth and seniors
- Improve opportunities for mostly sedentary and inactive adults to become more active
- Increase perceptions of safety and encourage women to engage in parks with more confidence
- Encourage participation from community members from CALD backgrounds, new migrants, people from refugee backgrounds





# Connecting to advocate & activate

## Park/nature setting providers

Parks Vic  
DELWP  
RBG  
Local Gov  
MW

## Peak health bodies

Standards  
Education  
Advocacy

## Health service Providers

Primary  
Secondary  
Tertiary  
Gov  
Non-Gov

## Support organisations

Volunteers  
Recreation groups  
Scouts  
Environment orgs

## Individuals

## Program Funders

Gov't  
Non-govt

## Other Green/Wellness providers

## Researchers and evaluators

## Policy and program leads



A scenic photograph of three hikers walking away from the camera on a dirt trail. The hiker on the left is a woman with long brown hair wearing a pink shirt and black leggings, carrying a black backpack. The hiker in the middle is a man in a light blue shirt and khaki pants, carrying a tan backpack. The hiker on the right is a man in a red and white striped tank top and dark pants, carrying a red and white backpack. They are walking on a path that winds through coastal vegetation, including tall grasses and low-lying shrubs. In the background, the ocean stretches to the horizon under a warm, golden sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water. The overall mood is peaceful and adventurous.

# THANK YOU

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