

# Healthy Parks Healthy People :

## *Global solutions for a healthy future*

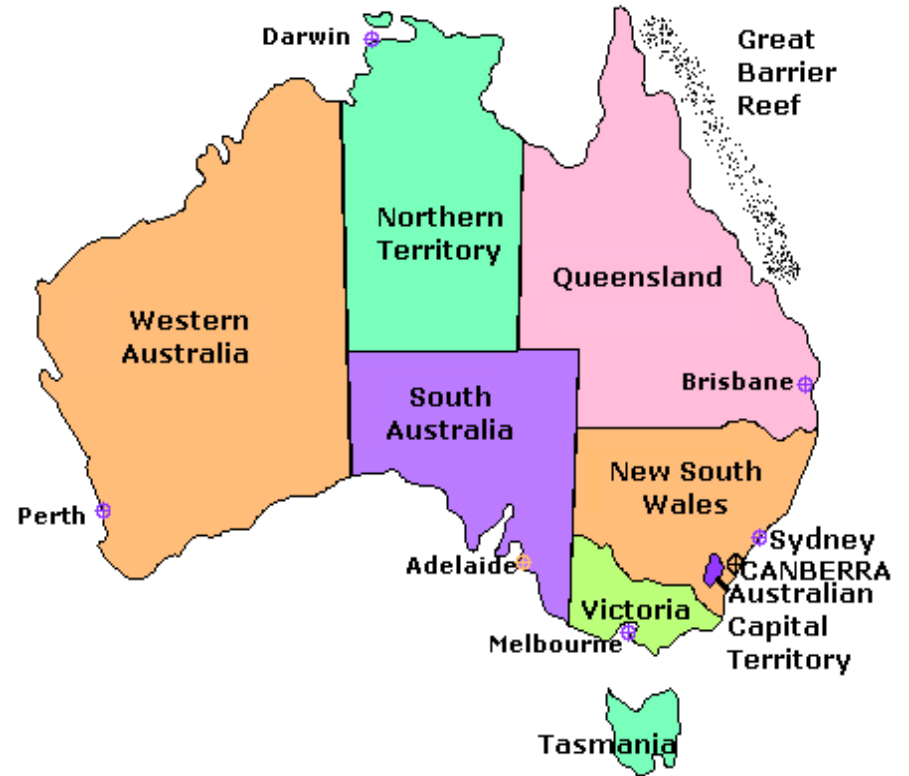
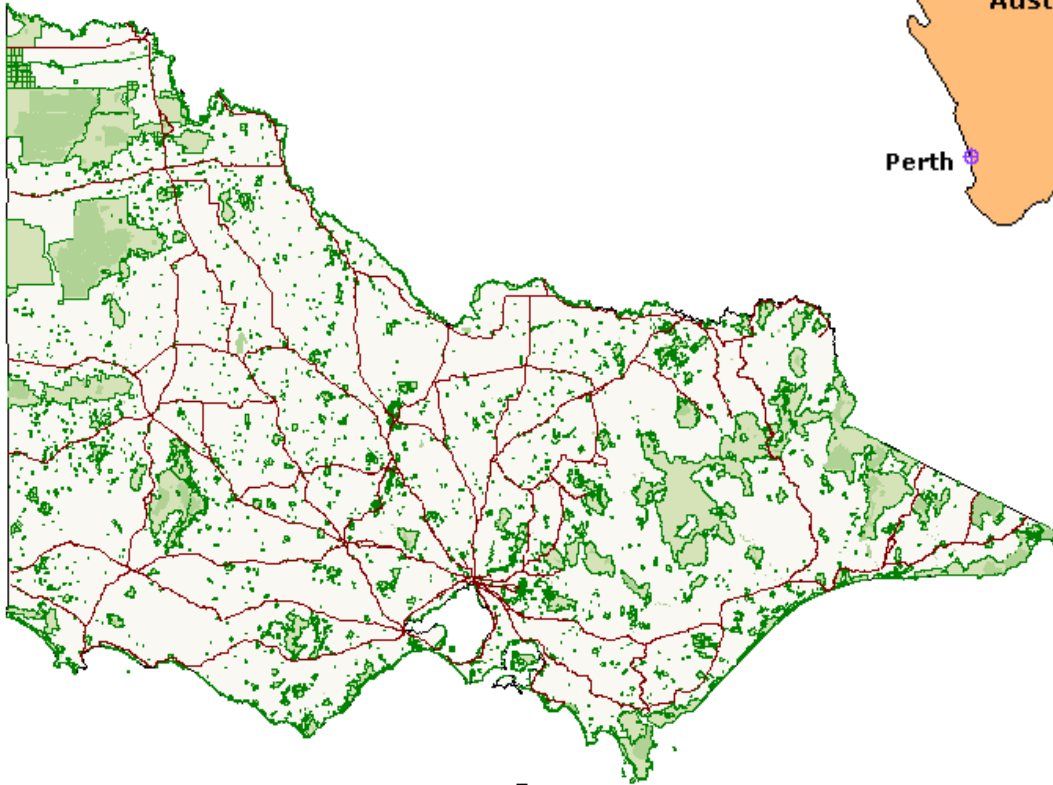
The First Asia Parks Congress, Sendai, Japan

Kate Millar, Parks Victoria

15 November 2013



# Parks Victoria



- ~ 4 million hectares, 17% of state
- National, State and urban parks
- Marine Protected Areas
- 73 million visits per year



*Healthy Parks  
Healthy People®*



# Principles of *Healthy Parks Healthy People*

- The wellbeing of all societies depends on healthy ecosystems
- Parks conserve healthy ecosystems
- Contact with nature is essential for improving emotional, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing
- Parks are fundamental to economic growth and to vibrant and healthy communities

Reference: Faculty of Health & Behavioural Sciences, Deakin University “The Health Benefits of Contact with Nature in a Park Context” (revised 2008)



## Defining Health

*“A state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing ..... and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”*

World Health Organisation 1946



# Biodiversity and Health Benefits

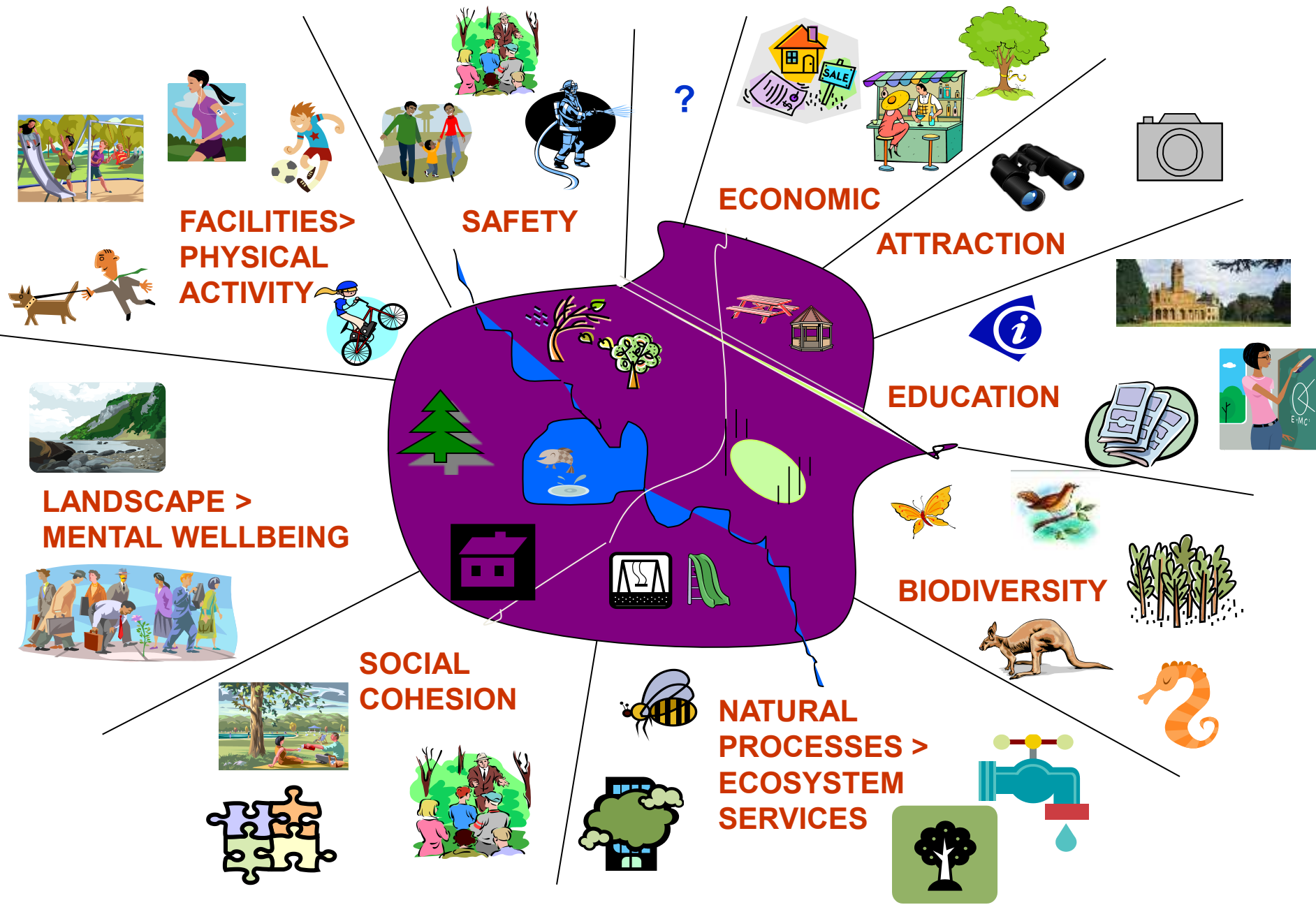
- ➔ Physical, mental, cultural well-being
- ➔ Food security and nutrition
- ➔ Clean water
- ➔ Disease regulation
- ➔ Medicines



## Emerging Global Health Challenges

- Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have surpassed infectious diseases as the leading cause of death (63% of all deaths, 36 million people).
- 31% of adults aged 15 years or older are insufficiently active.
- Physical inactivity is responsible for 1 in 10 deaths each year and estimated to cost \$24 billion each year.
- The leading NCD deaths are cardiovascular diseases, cancers, respiratory diseases, and diabetes.

# Values of Parks





## Advancing *HPHP* over the next decade

- Linking health and biodiversity policy, planning, programs and funding models.
- Ensuring community health objectives are part of park conservation targets.
- Influencing the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011/2020.
- Influencing the new global Sustainable Development goals.
- Addressing knowledge gaps and building scientific evidence.



## **Parks & Health Industries: the barriers & opportunities**

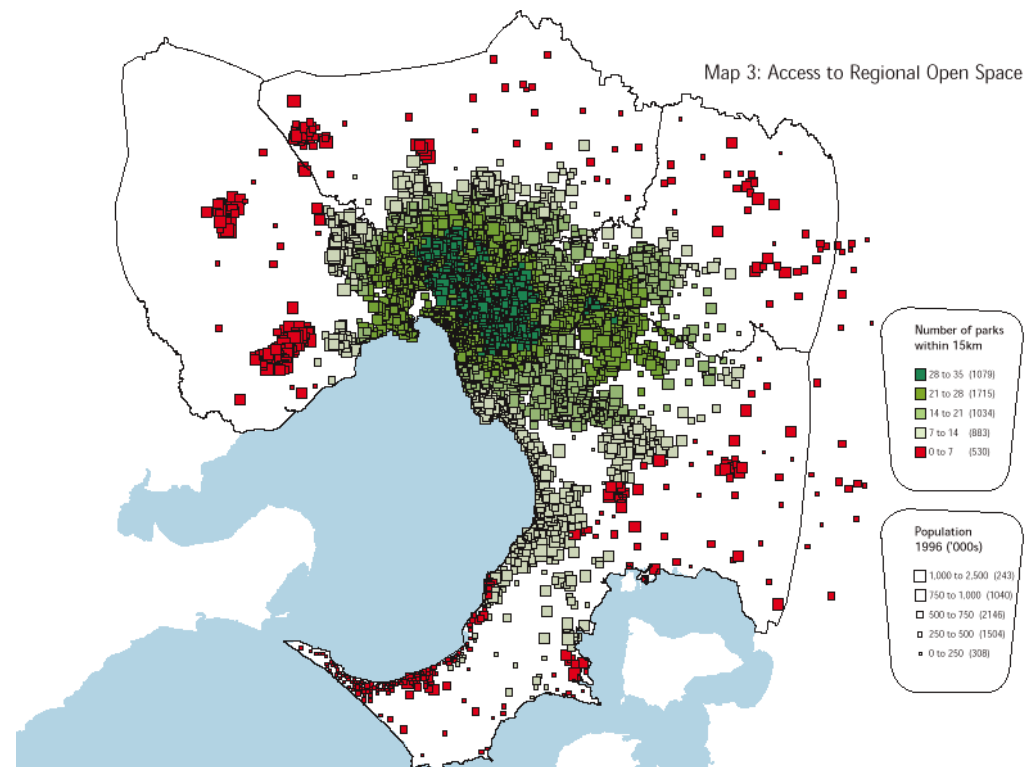
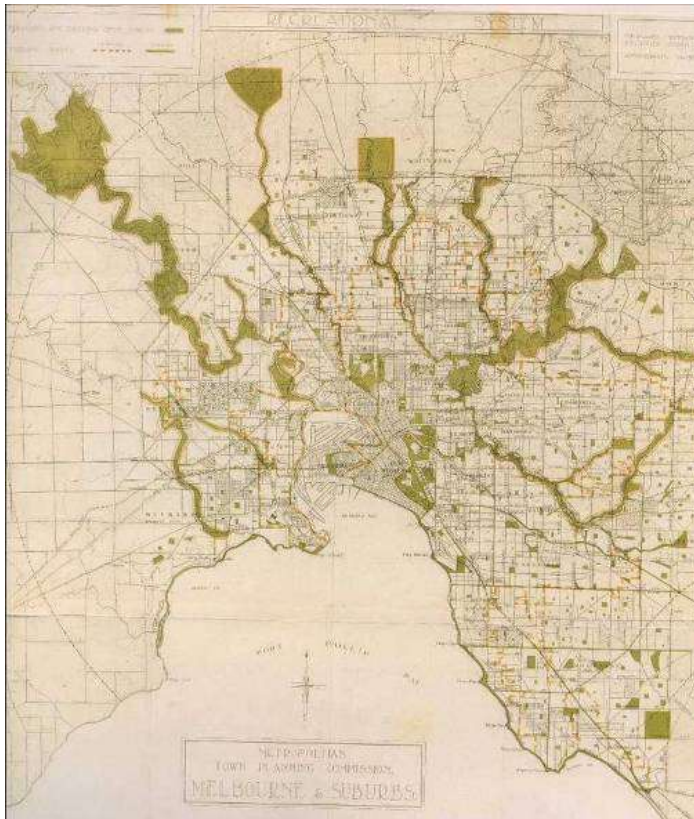
- We speak different languages.
- Health industries need hard evidence and facts.
- Uptake can be slow and difficult on both sides.
- Both focused on health outcomes
- Both accept biodiversity and human health are linked (e.g. medicinal plants).
- Both recognise benefits of partnerships.



# The idea is not new

In 1929 the Melbourne Metropolitan Town Planning Commission –

*‘abundant evidence is available to substantiate the views of city planners, the medical profession and psychologists that proper outdoor recreation has a most beneficial effect on the health, morals and business efficiency of communities and consequentially on national life.’*





Healthy Parks  
Healthy People®

# Imagine a life without parks....



# Case Study 1 : Active in Parks Geelong

## Aim:

To connect more people to parks and open space to improve their health and wellbeing – **get them physical**

## Strategy:

Harness the authority of health care professionals, to recruit individuals into **physical activity within their local park.**

**Geelong is a proof of concept of replicable Australia-wide model**



[www.activeinparks.org](http://www.activeinparks.org)

# Case Study 2 : Green Connections

Improving health and wellbeing of Marysville and Kinglake bushfire affected families & individuals through 'hands on' environmental fire recovery projects.



## Conservation Outcomes & People Outcomes

### Activities involve:

being with friends and family, social interaction, providing companionship, the re-establishment of a collective identity, working collaboratively with community and key stakeholders



## Case Study 3 : 'Feel Blue, Touch Green'

### Findings from in-depth interviews

- Developing skills, taking risks & confronting challenges
- Mental health, confidence & self-worth
- Stress & anxiety management
- Managing depression & depressed mood
- Improving physical health
- Building social connections/social capital
- Building natural capital



## Successes

- Engaged a strategic health advisor for parks
- Formal partnership with *beyondblue* (mental health)
- Program funding from Medibank (private health insurance)
- Support from Diabetes Australia, Arthritis Foundation, National Heart Foundation, Maternal and Child Associations
- HPHP Congress 2010 and HPHP Melbourne Communiqué
- [www.hphpcentral.com](http://www.hphpcentral.com)
- CBD and IUCN interest incl. IUCN HPHP Task Force
- HPHP motion past at 2012 IUCN WCC





## Lessons learned

- Work in collaboration with government, NGOs, business and community sectors
- Obtain endorsement from peak bodies (VicHealth)
- Imbed programs and initiatives within the health and environment government departments
- Recruit high profile champions
- Measure outcomes - imbed research into all programs
- Ensure initiatives are replicable



Networks and partners across Asia sharing knowledge & expertise:

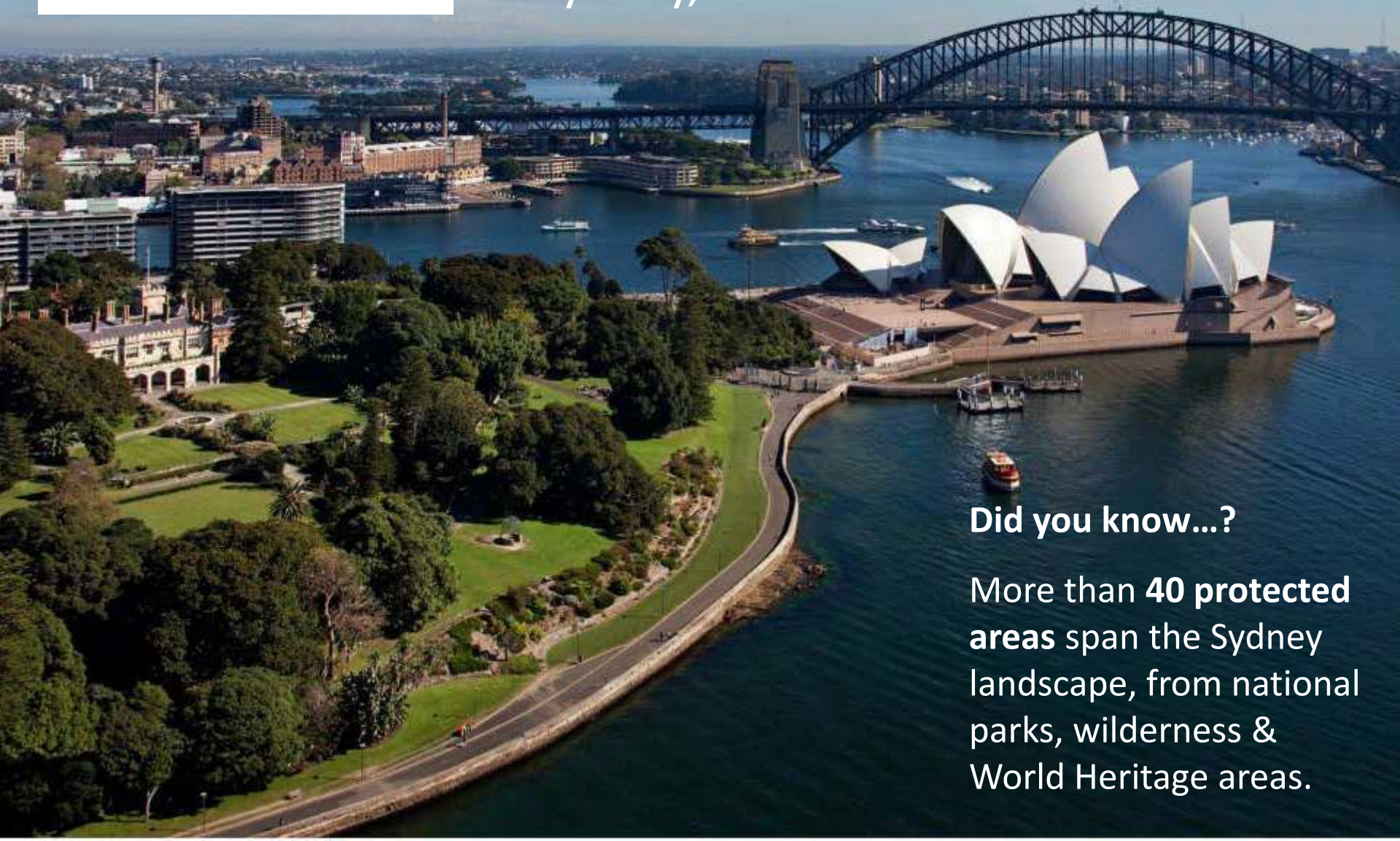
- MOU with Korean NPS;
- MOU with the Singapore National Parks Board (NParks);
- Sacred forests in India, China and Hong Kong;
- Forest bathing in Japan.

**HPHP SIDE EVENT:** Friday evening, 6.30pm, Shirakasi  
Conference Room 2





12 – 19 November 2014  
Sydney Olympic Park  
Sydney, Australia



**Did you know...?**

More than **40 protected areas** span the Sydney landscape, from national parks, wilderness & World Heritage areas.

# Thank you

Kate Millar  
A/General Manager Corporate Services  
Parks Victoria

