

NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

# Submissions report

Draft Cycling Policy, Strategy and Guidelines  
for Implementation



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## Executive summary

The New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is directly or jointly responsible for managing more than 880 parks in New South Wales, covering more than 9% of the State. We manage protected areas for the conservation of natural and cultural values and the provision of visitor experiences in these natural settings. Over the last 10 years, increasing numbers of people are realising the physical and mental health benefits of cycling and connecting with nature. Cycling in natural areas is also becoming a significant economic driver in many regional communities

Unfortunately, not all tracks used for cycling in parks have been constructed with a thorough consideration of environmental and cultural values. Many of these unauthorised tracks have caused significant damage, and poses an ongoing risk to native vegetation, soil and cultural objects.

The new NPWS Cycling Policy, Strategy and Guidelines for Implementation will guide the establishment of a carefully planned network of cycling opportunities in selected parks. This will ensure that the societal and economic benefits of cycling in parks are realised while also addressing environmental risks.

The NPWS Cycling Policy, Strategy and Guidelines for Implementation were developed after:

- consultation with key stakeholders, cycling peak bodies, local mountain biking community groups, conservation groups, cross tenure land managers, trail construction and services through to recreational user groups
- an online forum for stakeholders and interested community
- promotion of the project through emails, phone calls, project webpage, social media and local media
- consultation with NPWS Regional Advisory Committees and the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council
- exhibition of the draft strategy, guidelines for implementation and the policy from 20 November 2021 to 30 January 2022.

A total of 1094 submissions on the draft policy, strategy, and guidelines for implementation were received from individuals cycling peak bodies, local mountain biking community groups, business operators, community groups, other NSW Government agencies, local government and non-government organisations.

## How have we responded to your feedback?

Feedback included numerous editorial suggestions, which have resulted in further refinement of the policy, strategy and guidelines for implementation. Some of the key themes raised in submissions and the NPWS response to these is summarised below.

Theme	What points were raised in the submissions?	NPWS response
<b>Park values should be protected and conserved</b>	<p>Submissions raised concerns about the environmental and cultural heritage impacts of cycling, including the impacts associated with the unauthorised construction of cycling tracks and structures.</p> <p>Submissions also highlighted that there are many parks, and many areas within parks, that are not suitable for cycling.</p> <p>Submissions also highlighted the need to reiterate that the construction and use of unauthorised tracks is an offence.</p>	<p>The final policy and strategy maintain a strong commitment to protecting natural and cultural values.</p> <p>The strategy has been revised to reiterate that it is an offence to create cycling tracks without consent.</p> <p>The strategy has been revised to ensure that decisions about cycling consider park status under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i>, and to reiterate that cycling will not be appropriate in all parks.</p> <p>The strategy has been revised to acknowledge that increasing demand, combined with the proliferation of unauthorised tracks, has caused significant damage, and poses an ongoing risk to native vegetation, soil and cultural objects.</p> <p>The strategy has been revised to highlight that unauthorised tracks will be to closed and rehabilitated.</p>
<b>The policy and strategy should help to improve community wellbeing and connection to nature</b>	<p>Submissions promoted the physical and mental health benefits of cycling in parks and connecting to nature.</p>	<p>The final strategy has been revised to further highlight the mental and physical health benefits of cycling in parks. The strategy promotes opportunities for visitors to enjoy and contribute to fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of nature and cultural heritage and their conservation.</p>
<b>Parks should provide opportunities for cycling and be accessible to all</b>	<p>Submissions highlighted that cycling on properly designed tracks is an appropriate and sustainable activity in parks. They also recommended improvements to the communication of information that supports cycling in parks and the consideration of the needs of all cyclists, including those with a disability.</p>	<p>The strategy seeks to create an increased number and variety of inclusive cycling experiences.</p> <p>Information about track locations, accessibility and level of difficulty will be provided through the NPWS website, on-park signage, and in-park visitor centres.</p>
<b>Planning for cycling needs to be coordinated and collaborative</b>	<p>Submissions highlighted the need for coordinated planning between state, regional and local agencies and for collaboration with between adjacent land managers.</p>	<p>The strategy acknowledges the need for on-park and off-park cycling opportunities, coordination between agencies and collaboration with the managers of public land adjoining parks.</p>

Theme	What points were raised in the submissions?	NPWS response
<b>The community must be engaged</b>	<p>Submissions highlighted the need for effective community engagement during the development of new cycling experiences. They also highlighted the need to collaborate with local communities to ensure compliance and raise awareness of the appropriate pathway for the consideration, development and authorisation of cycling tracks.</p>	<p>The strategy acknowledges that our focus is to engage early with our communities. We will provide stakeholders with opportunities to assist with the design, construction and maintenance of tracks, as well as the rehabilitation of unauthorised tracks.</p>
<b>Effective on-ground management of cycling is required</b>	<p>Submissions raised the need for consistent signage, education and compliance programs to prevent the creation and use of unauthorised tracks.</p> <p>Submissions supported the multi-criteria assessment and made suggestions for its improvement.</p> <p>Submissions suggested that actions in the strategy should be effective in the preventing illegal track creation, encouraging compliance, addressing safety and reducing conflicts with other forms of recreation.</p> <p>Submissions also highlighted several management issues requiring further clarification, including conditions for the use of e-bikes and bikes with combustion engines in parks.</p>	<p>The policy, strategy and guidelines for implementation have been developed to assist in the effective management of cycling. As guided by the strategy, NPWS will develop and deliver a range of on-ground actions throughout the State on a priority basis to support the promotion and effective management cycling in parks.</p> <p>The strategy acknowledges that NPWS will seek to prevent the creation and use of unauthorised tracks through consistent signage, community engagement, education and compliance programs. NPWS will also seek to work with user groups to promote a culture of self-regulation and stewardship among cyclists.</p> <p>The assessment processes outlined in the guidelines for implementation will ensure that cycling experiences are environmentally sustainable, and viable in the long term.</p> <p>The cycling policy clarifies conditions for the use of e-bikes and bikes with combustion engines in parks and other matters as raised in submissions.</p>