

IUCN Resolution # 64 - Progress Report (by operative statement) - January/February 2019

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

Co-sponsor (organisation): Parks Victoria

Operative Statement

- **REQUESTS the Director General to work in collaboration with the World Health Organisation to develop global and regional programmes that advance the value of nature, including parks and protected areas, for health and wellbeing benefits;**

Co-sponsor implementation activity

Provided extensive feedback on the “vital importance and high value of the natural environment and green infrastructure – in particular, protected areas – as an accessible resource to help increase physical activity levels” to World Health Organisation on the second draft of their Global Action Plan for Physical Activity. Working with the IUCN WCPA Health and Well-being Specialist Group Advisory Committee, we developed a high-quality submission with best practice demonstrated case studies from around the world to emphasize that better recognition of the contribution of nature to human (physical) health and well-being is required.

- **URGES the Director General to establish suitable mechanisms to bring together Members, Commissions and the Secretariat to develop policies, programmes and cross-sectoral partnerships on the connection between healthy ecosystems and natural heritage and community health and wellbeing, including economic, social and cultural well-being;**

Facilitated the development and signing of a Statement of Collaboration between WCPA and World Urban Parks Organisation at the 2018 International Parks and Leisure Congress in Melbourne, Australia. This agreement identifies how the two organisations might wish to collaborate to advance areas of mutual interest including in the following ways;

- Sharing knowledge and best practices;
- Engaging in specific activities and programmes such as #NatureForAll, IUCN World Conservation Congress, International World Urban Parks Congress, and World Parks Week;
- Participating in each other’s specialist groups, such as the WCPA Health and Well-being Specialist Group, WCPA Urban Conservation Strategies Specialist Group, and the World Urban Parks National Park City Group.

Hosted the Deputy Chair of WCPA, Ms. Julia Miranda Londoño in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia where she delivered a keynote address on Healthy Parks Healthy People in Colombia at the 2018 International Parks and Leisure Congress and launched the #NatureForAll movement in Australia. <https://www.iplc2018.com/>

In November 2018 *Home to Us All: How Connecting with Nature Helps Us Care for Ourselves and the Earth* was published under #NatureForAll which presents the growing body of evidence that people’s relationship with nature profoundly influences their behaviours toward the Earth. The project was a joint effort by many members of the IUCN .

- **CALLS ON Members to consider further recognising and quantifying the extent of benefits for human health and well-being provided by nature and apply this information to inform cost-benefit assessments for increased investment in the management of ecosystems and natural heritage, including parks, protected areas and natural spaces within urban areas;**

Note July 2018 publication ‘The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes’ [_https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29982151](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29982151). This systematic review noted that greenspace exposure is associated with numerous health benefits in intervention and observational studies. These results are indicative of a beneficial influence of greenspace on a wide range of health outcomes but that several meta-analyses results were limited by poor study quality.

- **ALSO CALLS ON Members to contribute to improving methods for quantifying the benefits of nature (more specifically parks, protected areas and natural spaces within urban areas) for human health and well-being, including the development of more consistent global accounting standards for this purpose;**

The Australian Government published an Environmental Economic Accounting Strategy and action plan in April 2018 to develop a common approach to EEA. Each of the state Ministers has agreed to endorse this common approach, ‘Valuing Victoria’s Parks’ which was the first example of a parks and protected areas system applying EEAC standards (including social and health benefits) was highlighted as a case study in the strategy. <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/f36c2525-fb63-4148-8f3c-82411ab11034/files/environmental-economic-accounting-strategy.pdf>.

- **RECOMMENDS that Members actively seek interdisciplinary partnerships and alliances with the health sector and local and regional communities to develop programmes of nature-based solutions to prevent and treat noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental illness and dementia, as well as to encourage the appropriate use of parks and protected areas for improving cultural and spiritual well-being and social connection;**

The Victorian Memorandum for Health and Nature Health (2017), continued to enable interdisciplinary partnerships and alliances across the Victorian Government. An Interdepartmental working group agreed to 'walking for health' as joint priority for 2019-20. Parks Victoria's direct contribution has included the establishment and delivery of a new 'Welcome Walks' initiative to attract new visitors to parks and a 'Nature Walks' program to encourage families to walk in nature. Both initiatives involve a wide range of partners from the health and community sectors.

Parks Victoria, DHHS, Department of Transport and other organisations lead the establishment of inaugural Victorian Physical Activity Alliance in 2019 (name to be confirmed) with key partners that includes cross sectoral engagement between the state & local government peak agencies, non-government organisations, built environment sector, health system/sector, natural environment sector, university & research sectors, transport sector, regional partnerships to implement collaborative strategies and programs around common risk factors for non-communicable, metabolic syndrome diseases including CVD, diabetes, mental health & illness, dementia, decreasing social isolation and loneliness and increasing social connection.

Hosted the inaugural Nature is Good Medicine (NIGM) Summit, in August 2018. Senior representatives from over 80 diverse health, community and environment sector organisations participated in the summit to discuss strategic priorities for connecting people to parks for health outcomes. Key themes emerged as focus areas for collaborations and joined-up work to be pursued into short, medium and longer-term actions and included the role of parks and nature in prevention of disease as well as rehabilitation. Parks Victoria currently finalising a Parks for Community Health Plan. A number of new partnerships are currently forming to implement health programs in parks.

Updated its Healthy Choices in Parks Guidelines to encourage healthy eating choices in parks as part of promoting health active lifestyles in nature.

Parks Victoria and the South-eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network signed a memorandum of understanding to develop increased opportunities for the community to use of parks for health in including addressing chronic health issues (diabetes, heart disease, mental illness, social isolation).

Parks Victoria has been successfully working with a wide variety of community groups including Disability groups and Migrant Resource centres to encourage such groups to get out into nature. In some parks such as Lysterfield park, there has been excellent outcomes focusing on older migrant women using parks for the first time.

- **CALLS ON Members to continue to build the evidence base for quantifying the benefits of nature for human health and well-being and encourages Members to build cross-sector partnerships to measure the effectiveness of nature-based health programmes; and**

Working to improve alignment of evaluation measures around its relevant 'health and nature' program offers with internal market visitor segmentation research & measurement.

Working with Monash University to plan and implement 'nudge trials' in two regional parks to further implement Healthy Choices Guidelines in 2019.

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- **WELCOMES IUCN's leadership in recognising and communicating the initiatives and co-benefits from connecting nature and human health and well-being, and integrating these initiatives as part of national and international policies regarding public health and 'nature based solutions'.**

Implementing an 'Active and Healthy Digital project as part of re-building its web site. This project will enable professionals and the community to plan and implement park visits for health outcomes.