



NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Kosciuszko Offset Project annual park management report 2023–24



Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency – Boss Lady Creative Designs, created the People and Community symbol.

Cover photo: Coolamine Homestead new interpretation shelter, funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project. Jake Shoard/DCCEEW

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Introduction

Kosciuszko Offset Project – park management

This report provides detail on the implementation by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of park management actions funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project for the 2023–24 financial year.

NPWS developed the Kosciuszko Offset Project to manage offset funds received due to Snowy 2.0 activities (exploratory works, main works and transmission connection) in Kosciuszko National Park.

Snowy 2.0 planning approvals require NPWS to develop a detailed offset program and report on its progress in implementing this program.

Park management actions include spending offset funding on:

- feral animal and weed management in Kosciuszko National Park (land management)
- improving park visitor facilities (recreation and park heritage values)
- natural and cultural values (park values).

This report does not include information on conservation actions and expenditure towards biodiversity gains for Kosciuszko National Park. A separate biodiversity annual report has been prepared and published for 2023–24.

Report structure

This report reflects the structure of the Kosciuszko Offset Project (excluding biodiversity) and the types of offsets received. It comprises the following chapters:

- financial summary
- land management
- recreation
- heritage
- park values.

Financial summary

Overview – park management offsets

NPWS will receive \$11,957,777 in park management offsets over the life of the project.

As of 30 June 2024 (Table 1):

- NPWS has received \$8.96 million in park management offset payments, including \$1 million received in 2023–24
- \$1.56 million in interest has been earned on the investment of all offset funds (including biodiversity offsets), pending allocation to offset actions to benefit Kosciuszko National Park (interest earned in 2023–24 is still to be calculated)
- total overall park management offset expenditure to 30 June 2024 is \$1.27 million, with \$0.35 million spent in 2023–24.

Table 1 Kosciuszko Offset Project park management financial summary 2023–24

Offsets and interest	2023–24	Total to 30 June 2024
Offsets received	\$1,000,000	\$8,957,777
Interest earned	To be determined	\$1,558,422
Offset expenditure	\$345,751	\$1,266,637
Balance remaining		\$9,249,562

Note: In relation to interest earned, funds are kept in a departmental-wide interest earning account. Interest will be calculated by departmental financial controllers and apportioned relative to the Kosciuszko Offset Project funds invested in this account (including biodiversity offsets). Interest for 3 months in the 2021–22 financial year and interest earned in 2023–24 is still to be determined. Interest will be allocated to both park management and biodiversity actions as required.

Offset payments received

Table 2 summarises park management offset payments NPWS received by payment type for 2023–24. It also includes total payments received to 30 June 2024.

Table 2 Park management offset payments received by payment type 2023–24 and total to 30 June 2024

Payment type	Received 2023–24	Total received to 30 June 2024
Exploratory works offsets (includes land management, recreation, heritage and park values)	\$0	\$4,962,777
Main works – recreation	\$0	\$1,995,000
Transmission connection – park values	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000
Total	\$1,000,000	\$8,957,777

The NPWS will receive an additional \$3 million in park values offsets under the transmission connection project. This will be paid in \$1 million instalments over the next 3 years.

Offset expenditure

Table 3 summaries park management offset expenditure by NPWS to benefit Kosciuszko National Park for 2023–24. It also includes total park management expenditure to 30 June 2024.

Table 3 Park management offset expenditure by offset category 2023–24 and total to 30 June 2024

Offset category	Expenditure type	Expenditure 2023–24	Total spent to 30 June 2024
Land management	Enhanced weed management program – Riverina Highlands area	\$37,821	\$204,662
Recreation	Campground upgrade planning and improvements to park recreation facilities	\$45,855	\$148,025
Heritage	Nil	\$0	\$0
Park values	Campground upgrades, Currango and Yarrangobilly Caves precinct upgrades, snow gum dieback research and management, stocky galaxias management, oxeye daisy management	\$262,075	\$913,950
Total		\$345,751	\$1,266,637

Land management

Exploratory works offsets provide for a 20-year enhanced weed and exotic tree management program totalling \$1 million. This will focus on the Yarrangobilly and Kiandra catchments.

Exploratory works offsets also include a 20-year enhanced vertebrate feral animal management program totalling \$300,000. This includes culling deer, foxes and cats in the Yarrangobilly catchment and Goobragandra valley.

The Yarrangobilly and Kiandra catchments are the most directly affected by Snowy 2.0 activities. The enhanced weed and feral animal control programs will build on existing NPWS programs already operating in these catchments.

Table 4 shows expenditure of land management offset funds to 30 June 2024.

Table 4 Land management actions and expenditure 2023–24 and total expenditure to 30 June 2024

Conservation action	Expenditure 2023–24	Total spent to 30 June 2024	Total funds available	Balance remaining
Enhanced weed management, northern Kosciuszko National Park	\$37,821	\$134,174	\$1,000,000	\$865,826
Enhanced feral animal management, northern Kosciuszko National Park	\$0	\$70,488	\$300,000	\$229,512
Total	\$37,821	\$204,662	\$1,300,000	\$1,095,338

Recreation

NPWS received \$2.405 million in recreation offsets (a combination of exploratory works offsets and main works recreation).

This will fund actions that improve the amenity of Kosciuszko National Park for park visitors.

It includes campground upgrades, improved amenity access, upgraded walking trails, new day use facilities and major upgrades at Yarrangobilly and Currango precincts in the park.

NPWS has spent a total of \$148,025 in recreation offsets to 30 June 24, with \$45,855 spent in 2023–24 (Table 5).

Table 5 Recreation actions and expenditure 2023–24 and total expenditure to 30 June 2024

Action	Expenditure 2023–24	Total to 30 June 2024
Yarrangobilly Village campground upgrade – planning phase	\$13,847	\$13,847
Three Mile Dam campground upgrade – planning phase	\$13,847	\$13,847
O'Hares campground upgrade – planning phase	\$661	\$661
Ghost Gully campground improved access – Port Phillip Trail bridge replacement and trail realignment contribution	\$17,500	\$21,000
Bullocks Hill campground upgrade including new horse yards	\$0	\$28,007
Denison campground upgrade – new toilet block	\$0	\$70,663
Total	\$45,855	\$148,025



Figure 1 New horse yards at Bullocks Hill campground funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project. Photo: DCCEEW



Figure 2 Port Phillip Trail bridge replacement and road realignment. Funding contribution under the Kosciuszko Offset Project. Photo: DCCEEW



Figure 3 New toilet block at Denison campground funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project. Photo: DCCEEW

Heritage

Snowy 2.0 planning approvals do not require the payment of heritage-specific offsets.

However, NPWS will use offset payments under exploratory works offsets and transmission connection (park values) for projects to benefit Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage within Kosciuszko National Park.

The Kosciuszko Offset Project will include developing a heritage strategy in future years to guide expenditure of offsets toward Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage within the park.

Park values

The planning approvals for exploratory works and transmission connection requires Snowy Hydro Limited to pay NPWS park values offsets of \$3,092,777 and \$5,000,000 respectively.

These payments recognise the fact that the Snowy 2.0 project is taking place in a national park.

NPWS will use park values funds to enhance Kosciuszko National Park and offset the impacts on the natural and cultural values of the park.

The exploratory works park values offset is part of the broader exploratory works offsets of which NPWS has also allocated funds to enhance land management, recreation and heritage values in Kosciuszko National Park (as per sections above).

Total expenditure of park values offsets to 30 June 2024 is \$0.91 million, with \$0.26 million spent in 2023–24 (Table 6).

Table 6 Park values actions and expenditure 2023–24 and total expenditure to 30 June 2024

Action	Expenditure 2023–24	Total spent to 30 June 2024
Blue Waterholes and Coolamine Homestead precinct upgrades	\$83,836	\$117,097
Snow gum dieback research and management	\$25,000	\$50,000
Currango precinct plan implementation	\$9,020	\$9,020
Yarrangobilly Caves precinct plan implementation	\$80,810	\$80,810
Stocky galaxias restocking – solar pumps	\$25,496	\$25,496
Oxeye daisy management – spray units	\$37,913	\$37,913
Yarrangobilly thermal pool access upgrade	\$0	\$498,000
Soil landscape profiling – Yarrangobilly catchment	\$0	\$90,000
Yarrangobilly Rules Creek bridge replacement contribution	\$0	\$5,614
Total	\$262,075	\$913,950



Figure 4 Solar panels providing energy to water pumps for stocky galaxias ponds for species protection and restocking. The water pumps were funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project. Photo: DCCEEW



Figure 5 Nichols Gorge walk realignment, Blue Waterholes funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project. Photo: DCCEEW



Figure 6 Coolamine Homestead car park extension, funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project. Photo: DCCEEW