NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

# Kosciuszko Offset Project annual park management report 2024–25

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## 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.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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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: New toilet and improved gravel road at Cooleman Mountain Campground funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project. Jake Shoard/DCCEEW

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# Introduction

## Kosciuszko Offset Project – park management

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) developed the Kosciuszko Offset Project to manage offset funds (both biodiversity and various streams collectively called park management) received due to Snowy 2.0 activities (exploratory works, main works and transmission connection) in Kosciuszko National Park. The development of a detailed offset program by NPWS and public reporting on progress in implementing this program are requirements under the Snowy 2.0 planning approvals.

This report summarises the implementation by NPWS of **park management actions** funded under the Kosciuszko Offset Project for the 2024–25 financial year.

Park management actions include land management (specific enhanced feral animal and weed management), recreation (improvements to park visitor facilities), heritage (actions related to heritage values), and park values (broad actions that recognise the natural and cultural values of operating in a national park).

## Report structure

This report is divided into the following chapters to reflect the structure of the Kosciuszko Offset Project (excluding biodiversity) and the various offsets received as they relate to park management:

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

This report does not include information on conservation actions and expenditure towards biodiversity offsets for Kosciuszko National Park. A separate biodiversity annual report has been prepared and published for 2024–25. Interest earned for the entire offset program is reported in this park management report.

# Financial summary

## Overview – park management offsets

A total of $11,957,777 in park management offsets will be received by NPWS due to Snowy 2.0 activities in Kosciuszko National Park over the life of the project. As of 30 June 2025 (Table 1):

- NPWS has received $9.96 (of the $11.96) million in park management offset payments, including $1 million received in 2024–25
- $2.71 million in interest has been earned on the investment of all offset funds (including biodiversity offsets) in an interest-bearing account, pending allocation to offset actions to benefit Kosciuszko National Park (interest earned in 2024–25 has not been advised)
- Total overall park management offset expenditure to 30 June 2025 is $2.33 million, with $1.09 million spent in 2024–25.

**Table 1 Kosciuszko Offset Project; park management financial summary 2024–25**

| Offsets and interest | 2024–25 | Total to 30 June 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Offsets received | $1,000,000 | $9,957,777 |
| Interest earned | To be determined[1] | $2,712,415[2] |
| Offset expenditure | $1,088,462 | $2,328,383[3] |
| **Balance remaining** | | **$10,341,809** |

[1] Funds are kept in a department-wide interest-earning account with interest to be calculated by departmental financial controllers and apportioned relative to the Kosciuszko Offset Project funds invested in this account (including biodiversity offsets).

[2] As interest earned in 2024–25 is still unknown this figure represents interest earned to 30 June 2024.

[3] Adjustment made to previously reported figure.

- In 2020–21 $27,569 was costed to land management offset funds in error. An accounting adjustment was made in 2021–22 but it has not been reported in the annual report.
- In 2021–22 overtime costs for land management offset funds of $853 were not reported in the annual report.
- Total adjustment required for offset expenditure (for land management funds) to 30 June 2025 for above 2 items is -$26,716. This has been included in the figure above.

# Offset payments received

Table 2 summarises park management offset payments received by NPWS by payment type for 2024–25, and the total payments received to 30 June 2025.

**Table 2 Park management offset payments received by payment type 2024–25 and total to 30 June 2025**

| Payment type | Received 2024–25 | Total received to 30 June 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Exploratory works offsets (includes land management, recreation, heritage and park values) | $0 | $4,962,777 |
| Main works recreation | $0 | $1,995,000 |
| Transmission connection (includes park values and heritage) | $1,000,000 | $3,000,000 |
| **Total** | **$1,000,000** | **$9,957,777** |

An additional $2 million in park values offsets under the transmission connection project is still to be paid to NPWS. This will be paid in $1 million instalments over the next 2 years.

# Offset expenditure

Table 3 summarises park management offset expenditure by NPWS for 2024–25, and total park management expenditure to 30 June 2025.

**Table 3 Park management offset expenditure by offset category 2024–25 and total to 30 June 2025**

| Offset category | Expenditure type | Expenditure 2024–25 | Total spent to 30 June 2025 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Land management | Enhanced pest and weed management program – Yarrangobilly catchment and surrounds | $51,982 | $229,927[1] |
| Recreation | Campground upgrade planning and improvements to park recreation facilities | $442,853 | $590,878 |
| 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 | $593,627 | $1,507,577 |
| **Total** | | **$1,088,462** | **$2,328,382** |

[1] Adjustments made to previously reported figures.

- In 2020–21 $27,569 was costed to land management offset funds in error. An accounting adjustment was made in 2020–21 to move this cost but it has not been reported in the annual report.
- In 2021–22 overtime costs for land management offset funds of $853 were not reported in the annual report.
- Total adjustment required for offset expenditure (for land management funds) to 30 June 2025 for above 2 items is -$26,716. This has been included in the figure above.

# Land management

Exploratory works offsets are funding both a 20-year enhanced weed and exotic tree management program totalling $1 million, focussing on the Yarrangobilly and Kiandra catchments, and a 20-year enhanced vertebrate feral animal management program in the Yarrangobilly catchment and Goobarragandra valley of $300,000, with a focus on the culling of deer, foxes and cats.

The Yarrangobilly and Kiandra catchments are the most directly impacted by Snowy 2.0 activities, with the enhanced weed and feral animal control programs building on existing NPWS programs already operating in these catchments.

Expenditure of land management offset funds to 30 June 2025 is listed in Table 4.

**Table 4 Land management actions and expenditure 2024–25 and total expenditure to 30 June 2025**

| Conservation action | Expenditure 2024–25 | Total spent to 30 June 2025 | Total funds available | Balance remaining |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enhanced weed management, northern Kosciuszko National Park | $51,039 | $185,212 | $1,000,000 | $814,788 |
| Enhanced feral animal management, northern Kosciuszko National Park | $943 | $44,715[1] | $300,000 | $255,285 |
| **Total** | **$51,982** | **$229,927** | **$1,300,000** | **$1,070,073** |

[1] Adjustments made to previously reported figures.

- In 2020–21, $27,569 was costed to feral animal offset funds in error. An accounting adjustment was made in 2021–22 to move this cost but it has not been reported in the annual report.
- In 2021–22 overtime costs for feral animal offset funds of $853 were not reported in the annual report.
- Total adjustment required for feral animal offset expenditure to 30 June 2025 for the above 2 items is -$26,716. This has been included in the figure above.

# Recreation

NPWS has received $2.405 million in recreation offsets (a combination of exploratory works offsets and main works recreation). These funds will be spent on improving the amenity of Kosciuszko National Park for park visitors, including campground upgrades, improved amenity access, upgraded walking trails, new day use facilities, and major upgrades at Yarrangobilly and Currango precincts in the park.

A total of $590,878 in recreation offsets have been spent to 30 June 2025 with $442,853 spent in 2024–25 (Table 5).

**Table 5 Recreation actions and expenditure 2024–25 and total expenditure to 30 June 2025**

| Action | Expenditure 2024–25 | Total to 30 June 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Murrumbidgee River Picnic Area – accessible picnic table, bridge handrail upgrade, signage, drainage and rehab works | $85,142 | $85,142 |
| Four Mile Trail – materials to rehab areas of the trail along the Eucumbene River and campground, including bollards to formalise the campground and rice straw to rehab degraded areas of trail | $17,624 | $17,624 |
| Yarrangobilly Village campground upgrade – new picnic tables and fire pits, 2 new toilets, access roads realigned and gravelled, drainage improved and formalisation of campground | $340,087 | $353,934 |
| **Completed projects** | | |
| Three Mile Dam campground upgrade – planning phase | $0 | $13,847 |
| O'Hares campground upgrade – planning phase | $0 | $661 |
| Ghost Gully campground improved access – Port Phillip Trail bridge replacement and trail realignment contribution | $0 | $21,000 |
| Bullocks Hill campground upgrade, including new horse yards | $0 | $28,007 |
| Denison campground upgrade – new toilet block | $0 | $70,663 |
| **Total** | **$442,853** | **$590,878** |

**Figure 1** Installation of handrails to old vehicle bridge to give it a new life as a pedestrian bridge, Murrumbidgee River Picnic Area. Photo: Thom Khan/DCCEEW

**Figure 2** New picnic table at riverside location, Murrumbidgee River Picnic Area. Photo: Thom Khan/DCCEEW

**Figure 3** New toilet block at Yarrangobilly Village campground. Photo: Miranda Ripper/DCCEEW

# Heritage

The Snowy 2.0 planning approvals do not require the payment of heritage-specific offsets to NPWS. However, offset payments under exploratory works offsets and transmission connection park values will be used to support projects to benefit Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage within Kosciuszko National Park.

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

# Park values

The planning approvals for exploratory works and transmission connections requires Snowy Hydro Limited to pay NPWS park values offsets of $3,092,777 and $5,000,000, respectively. These payments are in recognition that the Snowy 2.0 project is taking place in a national park.

Park values funds will be broadly used 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 funds were also designated to enhance land management, recreation and heritage values (as per sections above). The transmission connection park values offset also allocates funds to heritage values (will be reported in the Heritage section, above).

Total expenditure of exploratory works park values offsets to 30 June 2025 is $1.43 million, with $0.52 million spent in 2024–25 (Table 6).

Total expenditure of transmission connections park values offsets to 30 June 2025 and spent in full in 2024–25 is $78,460 (Table 7).

**Table 6 Exploratory works park values actions and expenditure 2024–25 and total expenditure to 30 June 2025**

| Action | Expenditure 2024-25 | Total spent to 30 June 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Blue Waterholes and Coolamine Homestead precinct upgrades (including Cooleman Mountain campground) | $135,459 | $252,556 |
| Snow gum dieback research and management | $25,000 | $75,000 |
| Currango precinct plan implementation – planning | $14,993 | $24,013 |
| Yarrangobilly Caves precinct plan implementation – purchase of new lithium battery bank and power inverters and initial design work for Stage 1 of precinct plan implementation | $339,715 | $420,525 |
| Stocky galaxias restocking – solar pumps | $0 | $25,496 |
| Oxeye daisy management – spray units | $0 | $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** | **$515,167** | **$1,429,117** |

**Table 7 Transmission connections park values actions and expenditure 2024–25 and total expenditure to 30 June 2025**

| Action | Expenditure 2024–25 | Total spent to 30 June 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Yarrangobilly Caves precinct upgrade – switchboard upgrade | $78,460 | $78,460 |
| **Total** | **$78,460** | **$78,460** |

**Table 8 Total park values actions and expenditure by payment type 2024–25 and total expenditure to 30 June 2025**

| Action | Expenditure 2024–25 | Total spent to 30 June 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Exploratory works park values projects | $515,167 | $1,429,117 |
| Transmission connection park values projects | $78,460 | $78,460 |
| **Total** | **$593,627** | **$1,507,577** |

**Figure 4 Construction of new internal campground roading, Cooleman Mountain campground. Photo: Jake Shoard/DCCEEW**

**Figure 5** New toilet and improved gravel road, Cooleman Mountain Campground. Photo: Jake Shoard/DCCEEW

**Figure 6** Construction of 37 new stone steps on Nichols Gorge walking track, Blue Waterholes. Photo: Jake Shoard/DCCEEW

# More information

Kosciuszko Offset Project