

# Great Forest National Park

## An Economic Boon



**The Great Forest National Park would be a huge tourism drawcard, creating hundreds of jobs and adding millions of dollars to the local economy.**

# The Great Forest National Park would attract an extra 400,000 visitors annually, add more than \$71 million to the local economy every year and create 750 new, full-time jobs

**F**or an investment of just \$45million, Victoria's proposed Great Forest National Park would draw almost 380,000 extra visitors a year to the Central Highlands, add \$71 million annually to the local economy and generate 750 jobs with a little private investment, according to a new report by the Nous Group.

Even without private investment, government simply declaring the national park, improving park infrastructure and visitor management, and establishing the Healesville-to-Eildon hiking trail could generate 520 jobs, attract an extra 242,000 visitors a year and add \$48 million annually to the economy in 10 years' time and growing.

Increased visitation by domestic and international tourists and investment by governments would drive opportunities in ecotourism, hospitality and accommodation, and forest and park management. Additional spending by visitors would go to local goods and service providers in towns around and on the way to the new park.

The results of this analysis are conservative as it did not take into account the proposed park's close proximity to Melbourne.

After the Grampians was declared a national park in 1985, average annual visitor days increased 30 per cent from 1.12 million to 1.5 million. After the Murray-Sunset National Park was declared in 1991, annual visits more than doubled, from 12,000 to 27,200.

## Tree-top walks, trails, and zip-lines

Just creating the national park could boost visitation 16 per cent or 24,000 extra visitors annually, create 80 jobs and add another \$7.5 million to the economy annually in 10 years' time.

But if the government created the park, upgraded facilities and visitor management and established the proposed hiking trail from Healesville through Marysville to Eildon, the park would add another \$48.6 million a year to the local economy in a decade on the back of just \$26 million in investment, attract another 218,000 visitors and create 520 new jobs.

The report looked at various scenarios including private enterprise building facilities adjacent to the new park, including the already proposed tree-top walk at Cambarville and zip-line at Toolangi as well as an eco-lodge at a cost of \$19.2 million. This with the major upgrades including the hiking trail from Healesville through Marysville to Eildon would add another \$71.1 million a year to the local economy in a decade, generate 760 jobs and attract another 379,000 visitors annually, including 277,000 day trippers and 102,000 overnight visitors.

## Conservative figures

**The report estimates that a tree-top walk and zip-line would attract an additional 132,000 people to the Great Forest National Park even though the Otway Fly zip-line in the Otway Ranges attracted about 220,000 visitors in its first year of operation.**

The analysis takes into account people may visit the park anyway even if they take in such attractions. It does not include local visitors' spending and importantly does not take into account the proposed park's close proximity to Melbourne.

The Great Forest National Park would also help save Victoria's rapidly disappearing Mountain Ash forests, the tallest flowering trees in the world, and the state's animal emblem that calls them home, the Leadbeater's Possum, which is teetering on the brink of extinction. It would help keep secure Melbourne's vital drinking water supplies.

Photo: Jason Edwards Photography



PROJECTS	ESTABLISHMENT COST ESTIMATES	ADDED ANNUAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT	ADDED JOBS	ADDED ANNUAL VISITORS
Establish national park, boundaries and management board, and conservation management	\$8.1 million	\$7.5 million	80 new jobs	24,000 extra
Improved facilities and visitor management, establish Healesville-to-Eildon hiking trail	\$17.9 million	\$31.1 million	440 new jobs	218,000 extra
Tree-top walk, zip-line and eco-lodge	\$19.2 million	\$22.5 million	240 new jobs	137,000 extra
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$45.2 million</b>	<b>\$71.1 million</b>	<b>760 new jobs</b>	<b>379,000 extra</b>

## THE GREAT FOREST NATIONAL PARK

- PROPOSED NEW PARKS
- EXISTING PARKS



Victoria, Australia.



The Great Forest National Park would be a boon for the region. Investment in nature tourism is the next big thing for growing centres such as Healesville and Warburton, and will invigorate smaller towns such as Toolangi, Noojee and Rawson.

# Great Forest National Park to Melbourne what Blue Mountains are to Sydney

**J**ust an hour's drive from Melbourne in the Central Highlands, the Great Forest National Park could grow to rival Sydney's neighbouring Blue Mountains National Park. While the Blue Mountains attracts 14 per cent of NSW's national park visitors, the existing Yarra Ranges, Kinglake, Lake Eildon and Baw Baw national parks attract just 5 per cent of Victoria's national park visitors.

The Great Forest National Park could also improve Victoria's poor reputation as a nature destination. While 56 per cent of visitors pick Australia to visit natural areas, the report says only 8 per cent of surveyed individuals believed Victoria had world-class natural attractions.

The Central Highlands are dominated by an ancient 30-kilometre wide volcano, the Cerberian Caldera, creating a spectacular setting for waterfalls and mountains, such as the impressive Cathedral Ranges. Throw in the tallest flowering trees in the world, the Mountain Ash, and you have a majestic destination right on Melbourne's doorstep.

## About the report

The report, 'Great Forest National Park: economic contribution of park establishment, park management, and visitor expenditure', was commissioned by The Wilderness Society, Friends of Leadbeater's Possum and the Victorian National Parks Association, with input from MyEnvironment. It can be downloaded at: [bit.ly/gf-economics](http://bit.ly/gf-economics)

