

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**

Minister for Early Childhood & Pre-Prep  
Minister for Environment



Sunday, 11 June 2023

## HELPING MORE VICTORIANS GET OUT IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The Andrews Labor Government is making sure Victorian families can get out and discover the state's beautiful natural environment, making sure cost of living pressures aren't a barrier to outdoor recreation.

Since 2018, the Labor Government has halved the price of Parks Victoria's 143 bookable campsites across the state, thanks to \$106.6 million *Victoria's Great Outdoors* investment.

In addition to continuing half-price camping fees, the *2023/24 Victorian Budget* invests \$10.2 million to keep it free for kids under 16 years of age to visit Victoria's world-class zoos on weekends, public holidays and school holidays.

This includes entry to Melbourne Zoo, Werribee Open Range Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary and the newest addition to Zoos Victoria's offerings Kyabram Fauna Park in the state's northeast.

The slashed camping prices has seen interest in exploring Victoria surge, with more than 50,000 camping bookings made last summer - a 20 per cent increase compared to the summer before the program began.

Over the past four years, *Victoria's Great Outdoors* has delivered 62 new and upgraded campgrounds for people to explore - with even more to be delivered in 2023. This includes a range of new free camp grounds in state forests.

Recent free camping upgrades have been completed at Jack Swasbrick campground near the Mitta Mitta River, Thomson River Campground in Gippsland, and Berrock Campground near the South Australian border.

The Poplars Campground in Loch Valley – just over an hour from Melbourne – has also recently reopened to visitors this autumn, with upgraded facilities and amenities.

Camping and recreation in Victoria's national parks contribute \$2.1 billion towards the state's tourism industry each year and supports more than 20,000 jobs.

The Government is also improving access to nature closer to home – that's why the *2023/24 Victorian Budget* invested \$10 million towards the Green Links fund, protecting Melbourne's urban waterways and helping communities revegetate them so our wildlife can thrive, so Melbournians can better enjoy their local creek or river.

To book your next camping adventure visit [parks.vic.gov.au/where-to-stay/camping](https://parks.vic.gov.au/where-to-stay/camping).

### Quote attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

*"Investment in parks and state forests not only benefit visitors and the environment, they provide an important economic boost to local economies and the tourism industry."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Environment Ingrid Stitt

*"Being in nature not only brings a range of physical and mental health benefits, but it also gives people the opportunity to understand how important nature is and to advocate to protect it."*