

# Hill Cove Mountains National Park Consultation Report



**Falkland Islands Government**

Environment Department

Directorate of Policy, Economic & Corporate Services

**August 2024**



## Overview

The FIG Environment Department held a public consultation on the proposed designation of a national park in the Hill Cove Mountains, from February to April 2024.

The consultation asked the public and key stakeholders to examine the draft policy and management plan for the park, and to consider the proposals for location, attributes, access, off-road driving, grazing, managing fire risk, visitor safety and infrastructure.

A total of 138 digital and paper surveys were returned, and further comments were collected through a series of information drop-in sessions held in Stanley, Port Howard, Hill Cove and Fox Bay. A total of 23 people attended the drop-in sessions. The results of the public consultation and a summary of responses received are presented in this report. The comments and considerations raised by stakeholders and the public are being used to improve the policy and management plan, which will be finalised and taken to ExCo.

## Key findings from the public survey

- 67% of respondents agreed with the concept of designating a national park in the Falklands Islands.
- 54% agreed with the proposed location of the national park and its boundaries.
- There were divided opinions about proposals for providing access:
  - 48% of respondents agreed with the proposed arrangements for how access to the national park by foot is provided for.
  - 54% agreed with the proposal to restrict the use of vehicles within the proposed park.
- 55% of respondents agreed with the proposed approach for managing grazing within the national park.
- 65% agreed with the proposed approach to managing fire in the national park.
- 51% agreed with the proposal to restrict additional infrastructure and facilities in the park.
- Main topics arising from the public information sessions were access, fire risk, health and safety, impacts of visitors, and infrastructure and facilities.



**Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents**

		n	%
Respondent category	Member of the public	103	94%
	Owner or representative of a business/organisation	6	6%
Age group	16-18	0	0%
	19-25	3	3%
	26-35	11	10%
	36-45	16	15%
	46-55	38	34%
	56-65	23	21%
	Over 65	19	17%
Length of time living in the Islands	Less than 1 year	2	2%
	1-5 years	13	12%
	6-10 years	8	7%
	11-20 years	9	9%
	More than 20 Years	74	70%
Location	Stanley	72	65%
	East Falkland	13	12%
	West Falkland	15	13%
	An Outer Island	7	6%
	MPC	0	0%
	Other	4	4%

Note: not all respondents completed the demographic questions. Percent totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



**Level of agreement with the concept of designating a national park in the Falkland Islands**

	n	%
Agree	91	67%
Disagree	38	28%
Unsure	7	5%

Answered: 136; Skipped: 2

In total, 45 respondents provided comments relating to the concept of designating a national park in the Islands. Figure 1 shows the frequency that different themes were mentioned. Table 2 overleaf shows the themes and subthemes that emerged, broken down by respondents’ level of agreement.

Figure 1: Themes arising from comments on the concept of designating a national park in the Falkland Islands

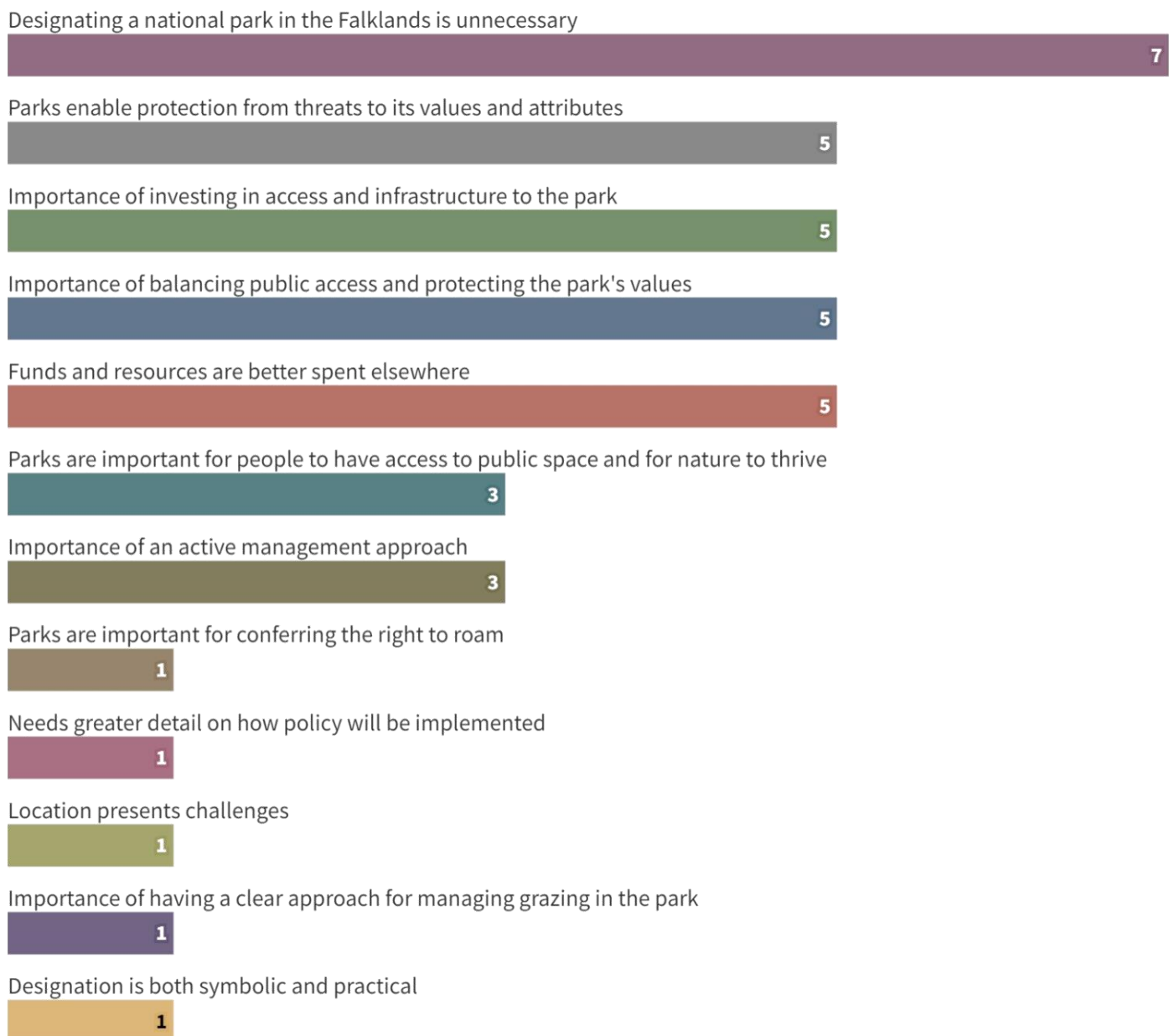




Table 2: Agreement with the concept of designating a national park in the Falkland Islands – frequency of themes arising in respondent comments, by level of agreement

Agreement	Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
Agree	Scope of the policy	Needs greater detail on how policy will be implemented	1
	Implementation factors and considerations	Importance of investing in access and infrastructure to the park	4
		Parks enable protection from threats to its values and attributes	5
		Importance of an active management approach	2
		Parks are important for people to have access to public space and for nature to thrive	3
		Importance of balancing public access and protecting the park's values	1
		Designation is both symbolic and practical	1
		Location presents challenges	1
		Parks are important for conferring the right to roam	1
Unsure/ no response	Implementation factors and considerations	Importance of investing in access and infrastructure to the park	1
		Importance of balancing public access and protecting the park's values	1
Disagree	Scope of the policy	Designating a national park in the Falklands is unnecessary	7
		Funds and resources are better spent elsewhere	5
		Importance of balancing public access and protecting the park's values	3
	Implementation factors and considerations	Importance of an active management approach	1
		Importance of having a clear approach for managing grazing in the park	1

**Level of agreement with the proposed location of the national park and its boundaries**

	n	%
Agree	71	54%
Disagree	45	34%
Unsure	16	12%

Answered: 132; Skipped: 6

In total, 43 respondents provided comments relating to the proposed location of the national park and its boundaries. Figure 2 shows the frequency that different themes were mentioned. Table 3 shows the themes and subthemes that emerged, broken down by respondents' level of agreement.



Figure 2: Themes arising from comments on the proposed location of the national park and its boundaries



Table 3: Agreement with the proposed location of the national park and its boundaries – frequency of themes arising in respondent comments, by level of agreement

Agreement	Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
Agree	Scope of policy	Park area should be bigger	1
	Implementation factors and considerations	Importance of respecting neighbouring landowners' rights of access	3
		Park should be accessible to the public	2
		Importance of having a clearly marked boundary fence	2
Unsure/ no response	Scope of policy	Park area should be bigger	1
	Implementation factors and considerations	Park should be accessible to the public	2
		Importance of respecting neighbouring landowners' rights of access	1
Disagree	Scope of policy	Park area should be bigger	2
		Park area should be smaller	1
	Implementation factors and considerations	Park should be accessible to the public	5
		Importance of considering health and safety risks	1



**Level of agreement that the identified attributes and values are adequately considered in the policy and management plan**

	n	%
Agree	64	53%
Disagree	32	26%
Unsure	26	21%

Answered: 122; Skipped: 16

In total, 40 respondents provided a wide range of comments relating to whether the identified attributes and values are adequately considered in the policy and management plan. Themes included access, off-road driving, grazing, health and safety, recreation and tourism, environmental protection, plants and wildlife and historical uses.

The question also asked respondents if there were any other attributes and values that had not been considered. Comments included the importance of the mountains as a water catchment area, the importance of the area for invertebrate fauna, and the MoD facility on Mt Adam. At the information drop-in sessions participants shared stories and memories about their experiences in the mountains.

**Level of agreement with how it's proposed that access is arranged and provided for**

	n	%
Agree	56	48%
Disagree	47	41%
Unsure	13	11%

Answered: 116; Skipped: 22

In total, 55 respondents provided comments relating to how it's proposed that access is arranged and provided for. Figure 3 shows the frequency that different themes were mentioned. Table 4 overleaf shows the themes and subthemes that emerged, broken down by respondents' level of agreement.



Figure 3: Themes arising from comments on how it's proposed that access is provided for

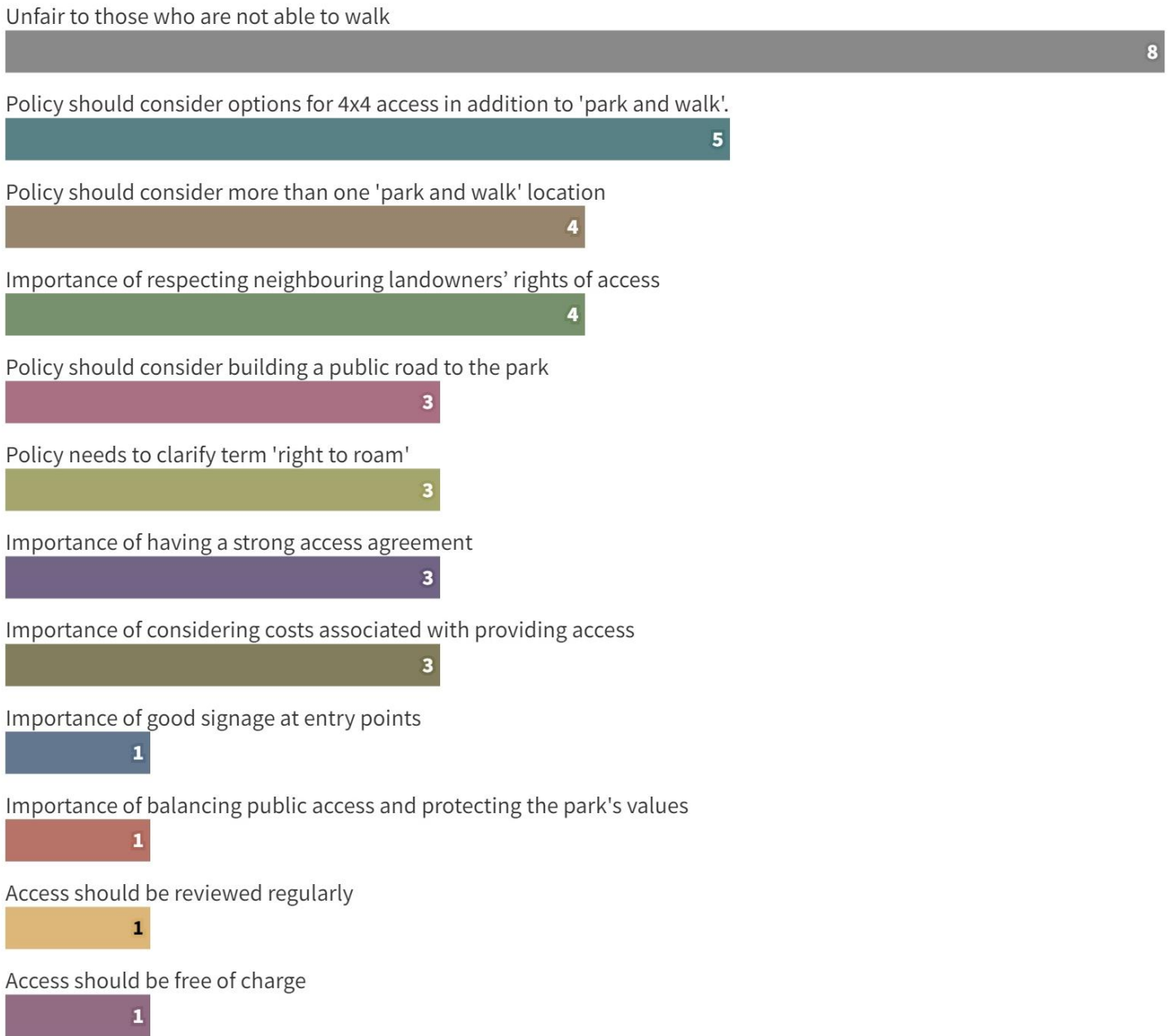






Table 4: Agreement with how it's proposed that access is arranged and provided for – frequency of themes arising in respondent comments, by level of agreement

Agreement	Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
Agree	Scope of policy	Policy should consider options for 4x4 access in addition to 'park and walk'	2
		Unfair to those who are not able to walk	2
		Access should be reviewed regularly	1
		Policy should consider more than one 'park and walk' location	1
	Implementation factors and considerations	Importance of considering costs associated with providing access	2
		Access should be free of charge	1
		Importance of balancing public access and protecting the park's values	1
		Importance of good signage at entry points	1
		Importance of respecting neighbouring landowners' rights of access	1
	Unsure/ no response	Scope of policy	Policy needs to clarify term 'right to roam'
Unfair to those who are not able to walk			2
Implementation factors and considerations		Importance of having a strong access agreement	1
		Importance of considering costs associated with providing access	1
Disagree	Scope of policy	Unfair to those who are not able to walk	4
		Policy should consider building a public road to the park	3
		Policy should consider more than one 'park and walk' location	3
		Policy should consider options for 4x4 access in addition to 'park and walk'.	3
		Policy needs to clarify term 'right to roam'	1
	Implementation factors and considerations	Importance of respecting neighbouring landowners' rights of access	3
		Importance of having a strong access agreement	2



Level of agreement with the proposal to manage the use of vehicles in the proposed park

	n	%
Agree	63	54%
Disagree	41	35%
Unsure	12	10%

Answered: 116; Skipped: 22

In total, 56 respondents provided comments relating to the proposal to manage the use of vehicles in the proposed park. Figure 4 shows the frequency that different themes were mentioned. Table 5 overleaf shows the themes and subthemes that emerged, broken down by respondents' level of agreement.

Figure 4: Themes arising from comments on the proposal to manage the use of vehicles in the proposed park

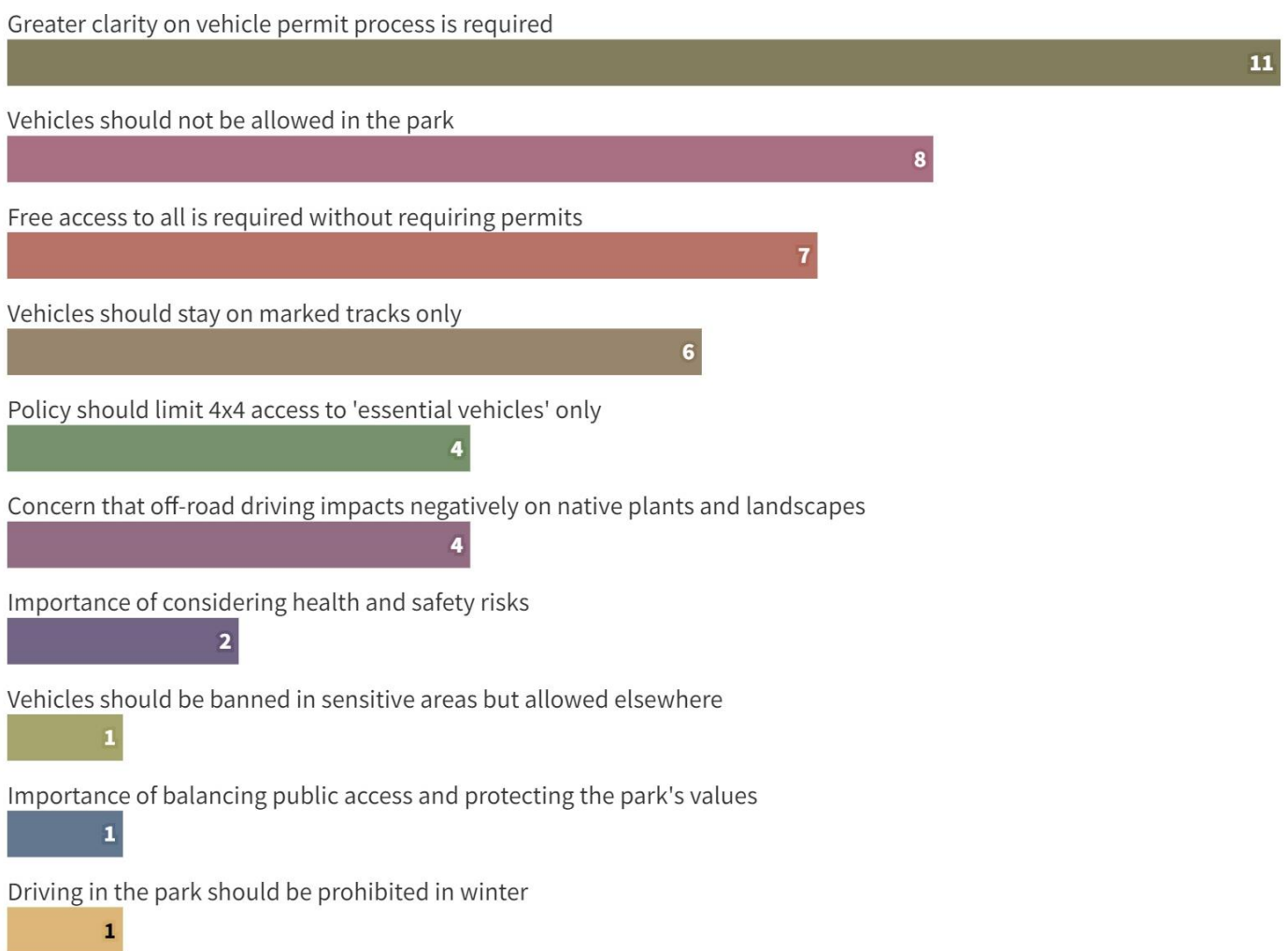




Table 5: Agreement with the proposal to manage the use of vehicles in the proposed park – frequency of themes arising in respondent comments, by level of agreement

Agreement	Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
Agree	Scope of policy	Policy should limit 4x4 access to 'essential vehicles' only	3
	Implementation factors and considerations	Vehicles should not be allowed in the park	7
		Concern that off-road driving impacts negatively on native plants and landscapes	4
		Greater clarity on vehicle permit process is required	4
		Importance of balancing public access and protecting the park's values	1
		Driving in the park should be prohibited in winter	1
Unsure/ no response	Implementation factors and considerations	Greater clarity on vehicle permit process is required	3
		Importance of considering health and safety risks	1
		Vehicles should stay on marked tracks only	1
Disagree	Scope of policy	Policy should limit 4x4 access to 'essential vehicles' only.	1
	Implementation factors and considerations	Vehicles should stay on marked tracks only	5
		Greater clarity on vehicle permit process is required	4
		Free access to all is required without requiring permits	7
		Importance of considering health and safety risks	1
		Vehicles should be banned in sensitive areas but allowed elsewhere	1
		Vehicles should not be allowed in the park	1



**Level of agreement with the proposed approach to managing grazing in the park**

	n	%
Agree	63	55%
Disagree	35	30%
Unsure	17	15%

Answered: 115; Skipped: 23

In total, 43 respondents provided comments relating to the proposed approach to managing grazing in the park. Figure 5 shows the frequency that different themes were mentioned. Table 6 overleaf shows the themes and subthemes that emerged, broken down by respondents’ level of agreement.

**Figure 5: Themes arising from comments on the proposed approach to managing grazing in the park**

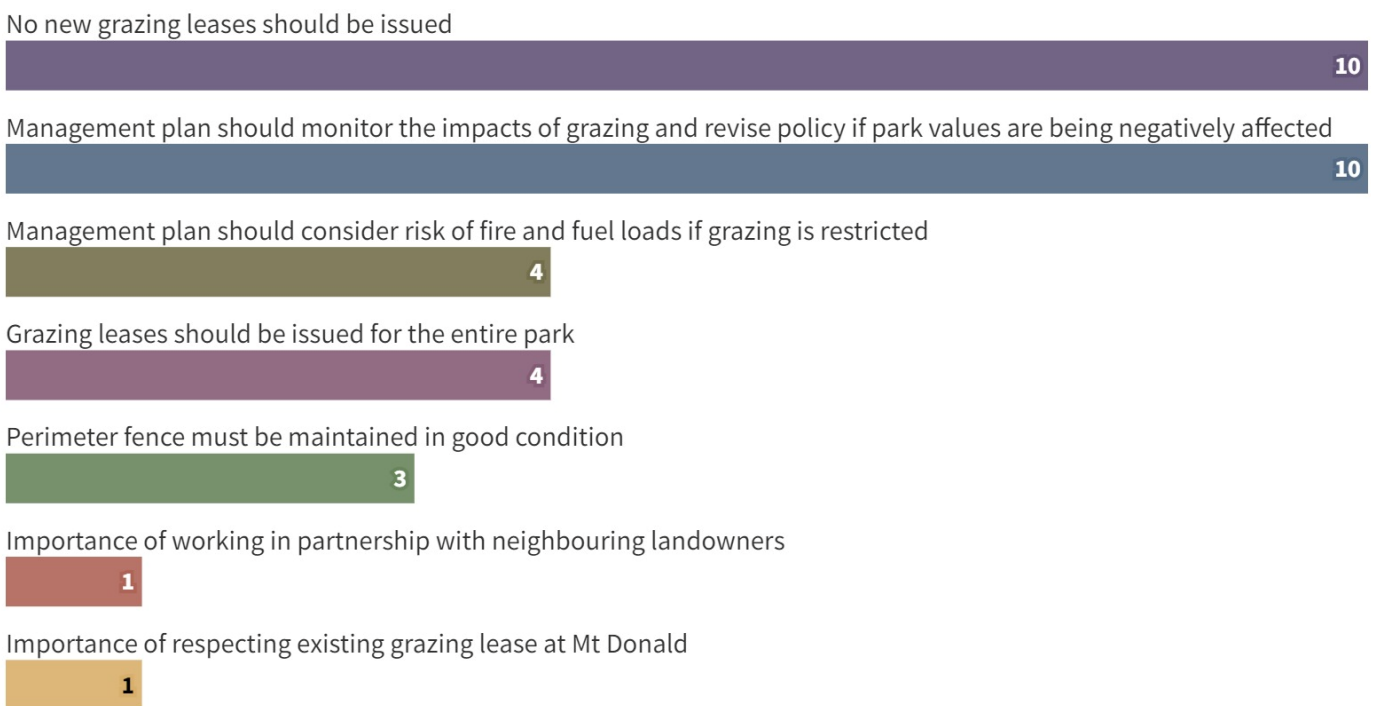




Table 6: Agreement with the proposed approach to managing grazing in the park – frequency of themes arising in respondent comments, by level of agreement

Agreement	Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
Agree	Scope of policy	No new grazing leases should be issued	4
	Implementation factors and considerations	Management plan should monitor the impacts of grazing and revise policy if park values are being negatively affected	6
		Perimeter fence must be maintained in good condition	2
		Management plan should consider risk of fire and fuel loads if grazing is restricted	1
		Importance of working in partnership with neighbouring landowners	1
Unsure/ no response	Scope of policy	No new grazing leases should be issued	2
	Implementation factors and considerations	Management plan should monitor the impacts of grazing and revise policy if park values are being negatively affected	1
		Management plan should consider risk of fire and fuel loads if grazing is restricted	1
		Importance of respecting existing grazing lease at Mt Donald	1
Disagree	Scope of policy	No new grazing leases should be issued	4
		Grazing leases should be issued for the entire park	4
	Implementation factors and considerations	Management plan should monitor the impacts of grazing and revise policy if park values are being negatively affected	3
		Management plan should consider risk of fire and fuel loads if grazing is restricted	2
		Perimeter fence must be maintained in good condition	1



**Level of agreement with the proposed approach to managing fire in the park**

	n	%
Agree	73	65%
Disagree	23	20%
Unsure	17	15%

Answered: 113; Skipped: 25

In total, 39 respondents provided comments relating to the proposed approach to managing fire in the park. Figure 6 shows the frequency that different themes were mentioned. Table 7 overleaf shows the themes and subthemes that emerged, broken down by respondents’ level of agreement.

**Figure 6: Themes arising from comments on the proposed approach to managing fire in the park**

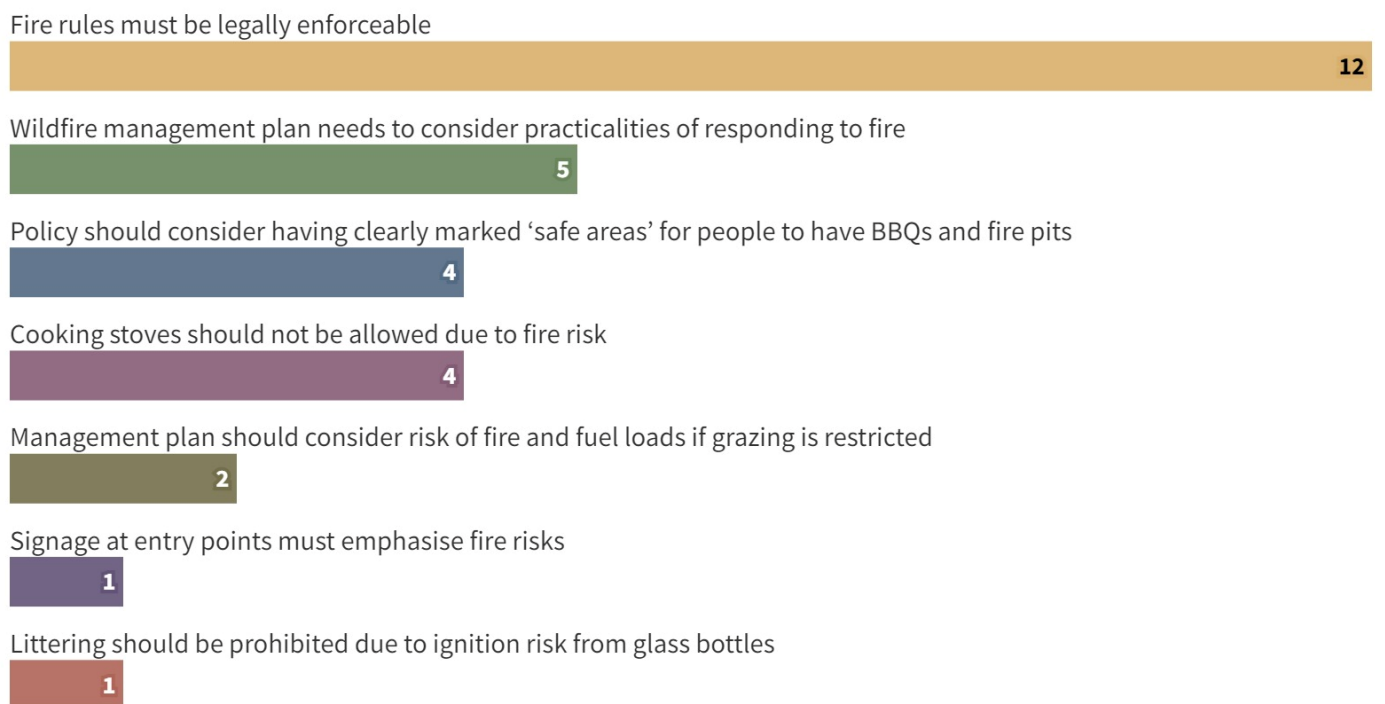




Table 7: Agreement with the proposed approach to managing fire in the park – frequency of themes arising in respondent comments, by level of agreement

Agreement	Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
Agree	Scope of policy	Policy should consider having clearly marked 'safe areas' for people to have BBQs and fire pits	2
	Implementation factors and considerations	Fire rules must be legally enforceable	4
		Wildfire management plan needs to consider practicalities of responding to fire	2
		Management plan should consider risk of fire and fuel loads if grazing is restricted	1
		Littering should be prohibited due to ignition risk from glass bottles	1
Unsure/ no response	Scope of policy	Policy should consider having clearly marked 'safe areas' for people to have BBQs and fire pits	2
	Implementation factors and considerations	Fire rules must be legally enforceable	4
		Cooking stoves should not be allowed due to fire risk	2
		Management plan should consider risk of fire and fuel loads if grazing is restricted	1
		Wildfire management plan needs to consider practicalities of responding to fire	1
Disagree	Implementation factors and considerations	Fire rules must be legally enforceable	4
		Wildfire management plan needs to consider practicalities of responding to fire	2
		Cooking stoves should not be allowed due to fire risk	2
		Signage at entry points must emphasise fire risks	1



Level of agreement that the proposed approach for providing a safer and more enjoyable experience for park users is sufficient

	n	%
Agree	62	55%
Disagree	32	28%
Unsure	19	17%

Answered: 113; Skipped: 25

In total, 41 respondents provided comments relating to the proposed approach for providing a safer and more enjoyable experience for park users. Figure 7 shows the frequency that different themes were mentioned. Table 8 overleaf shows the themes and subthemes that emerged, broken down by respondents' level of agreement.

Figure 7: Themes arising from the proposed approach for providing a safer and more enjoyable experience for park users

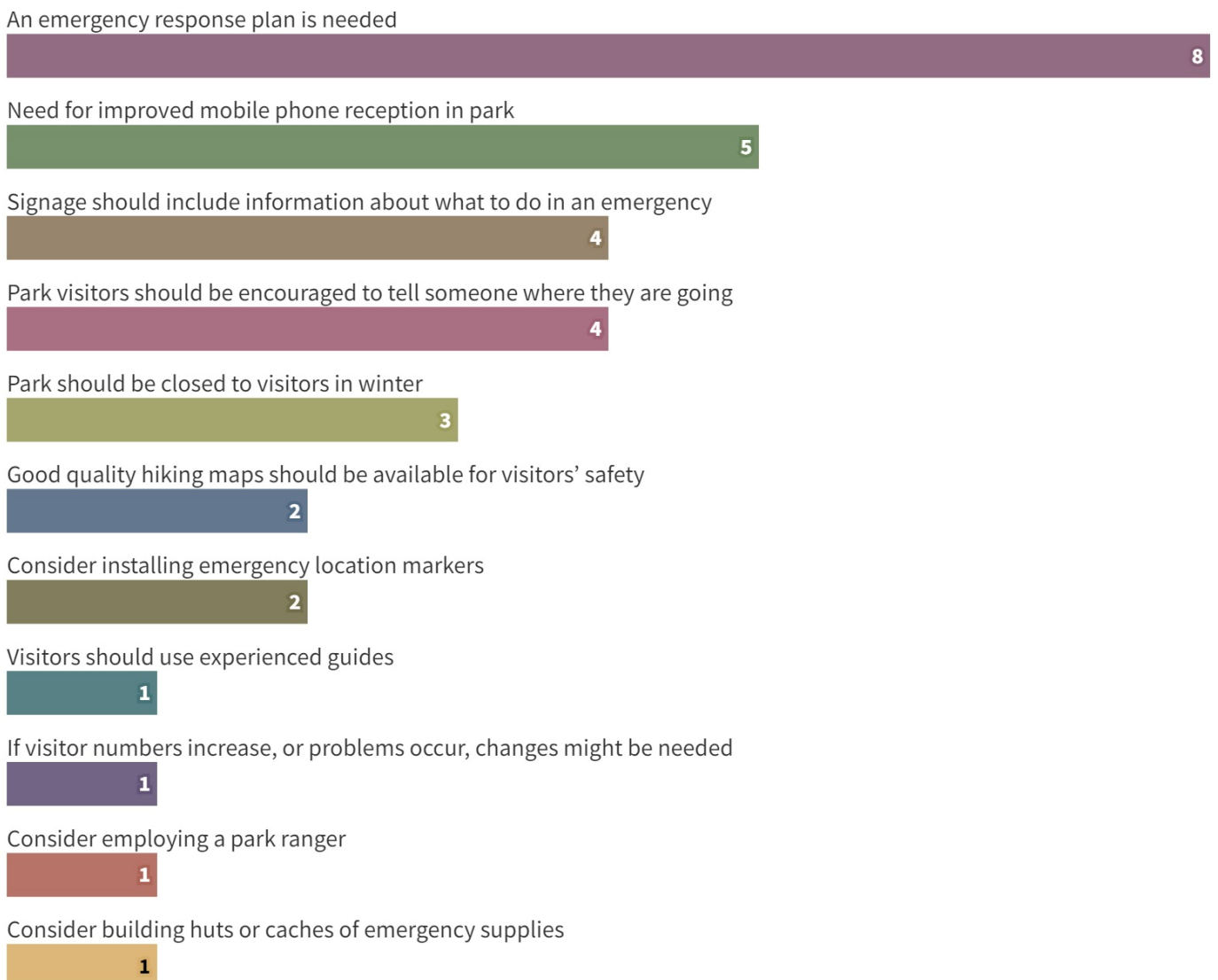






Table 8: Agreement that the proposed approach for providing a safer and more enjoyable experience for park users is sufficient – frequency of themes arising in respondent comments, by level of agreement

Agreement	Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
Agree	Scope of policy	An emergency response plan is needed	1
	Implementation factors and considerations	Park should be closed to visitors in winter	2
		Consider installing emergency location markers	2
		Need for improved mobile phone reception in park	2
		Park visitors should be encouraged to tell someone where they are going	1
		Signage should include information about what to do in an emergency	1
		If visitor numbers increase, or problems occur, changes might be needed	1
		Good quality hiking maps should be available for visitors' safety	1
		Consider employing a park ranger	1
		Consider building huts or caches of emergency supplies	1
		Need for improved mobile phone reception in park	1
Unsure/ no response	Scope of policy	An emergency response plan is needed	2
	Implementation factors and considerations	Need for improved mobile phone reception in park	1
		Park visitors should be encouraged to tell someone where they are going	1
Disagree	Scope of policy	An emergency response plan is needed	5
	Implementation factors and considerations	Signage should include information about what to do in an emergency	3
		Park visitors should be encouraged to tell someone where they are going	2
		Park should be closed to visitors in winter	1
		need for improved mobile phone reception in park	1
		Visitors should use experienced guides	1
		Good quality hiking maps should be available for visitors' safety	1



### Level of agreement that the proposal to restrict additional infrastructure and facilities in the park

	n	%
Agree	58	51%
Disagree	37	33%
Unsure	18	16%

Answered: 113; Skipped: 25

In total, 44 respondents provided comments relating to the proposal to restrict additional infrastructure and facilities in the park. Figure 8 shows the frequency that different themes were mentioned. Table 9 overleaf shows the themes and subthemes that emerged, broken down by respondents’ level of agreement.

Figure 8: Themes arising from the proposal to restrict additional infrastructure and facilities in the park

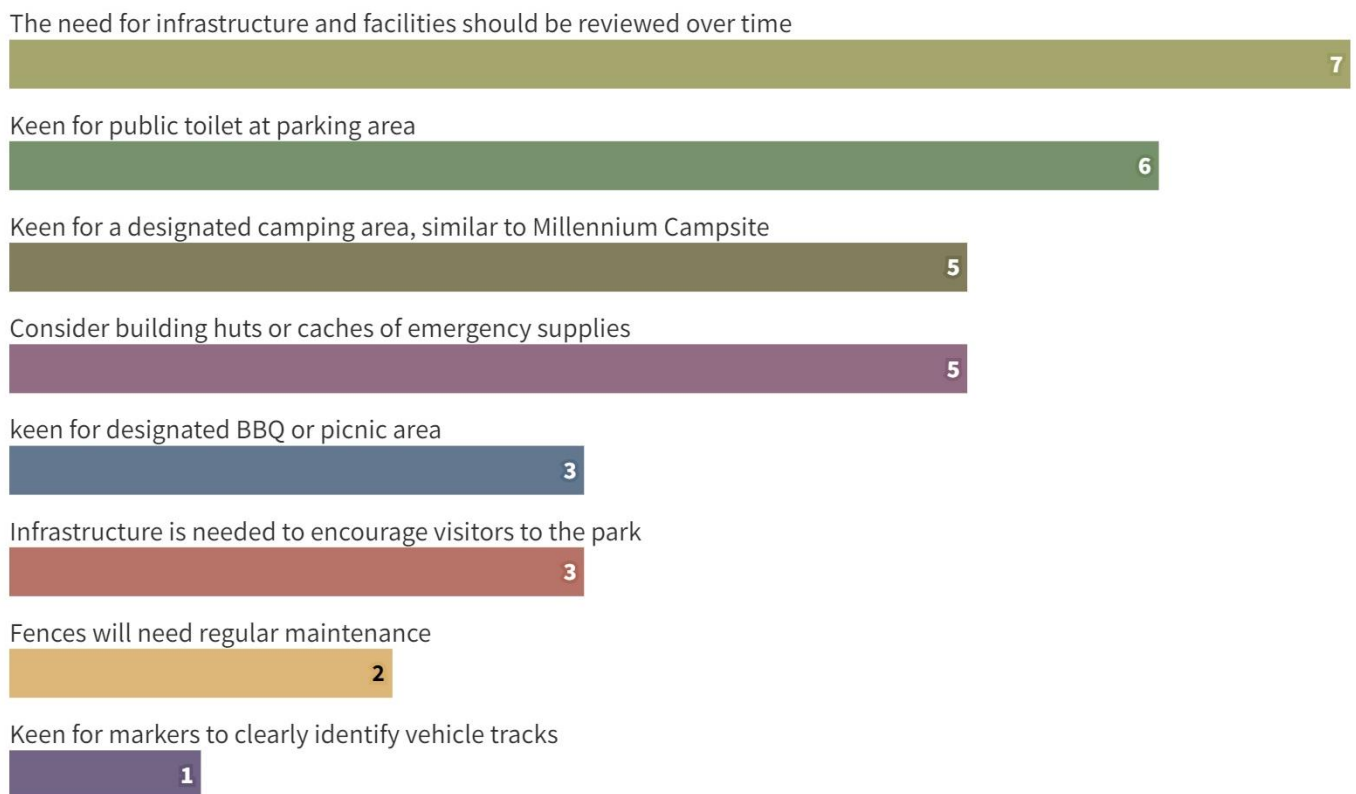




Table 9: Agreement that the proposal to restrict additional infrastructure and facilities in the park – frequency of themes arising in respondent comments, by level of agreement

Agreement	Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
Agree	Implementation factors and considerations	Fences will need regular maintenance	2
		Consider building huts or caches of emergency supplies	1
		Keen for a designated camping area, similar to Millennium Campsite	1
		Keen for markers to clearly identify vehicle tracks	1
Unsure/ no response	Implementation factors and considerations	The need for infrastructure and facilities should be reviewed over time	4
		Keen for a designated camping area, similar to Millennium Campsite	2
		Keen for designated BBQ or picnic area	1
		Keen for public toilet at parking area	1
		Keen for rubbish bins at parking area	1
		Consider building huts or caches of emergency supplies	1
Disagree	Implementation factors and considerations	The need for infrastructure and facilities should be reviewed over time	3
		Infrastructure is needed to encourage visitors to the park	3
		Keen for public toilet at parking area	3
		Keen for a designated camping area, similar to Millennium Campsite	2
		Consider building huts or caches of emergency supplies	2
		Keen for designated BBQ or picnic area	2
		Keen for rubbish bins at parking area	1
		Consider building huts or caches of emergency supplies	1



**Feedback from information drop-in sessions in Stanley, Port Howard, Hill Cove and Fox Bay**

Table 10: Themes and frequency of themes raised at the drop-in sessions.

Theme	Subtheme	Frequency
<b>Access</b>	Park should be accessible by vehicle	4
	People should have to ask permission to access park	2
	Access will be self-limiting because very few people are likely to drive or walk	1
	Greater clarity on vehicle permit process is required	1
	Importance of having a strong access agreement	1
	Policy needs to clarify term 'right to roam'	1
<b>Fire risk</b>	Concerns about fire risks	4
	All fires should be banned, even camping stoves	1
<b>Health and Safety</b>	Concerns about responding to park visitors getting into 'trouble'	6
	An emergency response plan is needed	4
	Park should be closed to visitors in winter	2
	Consider building huts or caches of emergency supplies	1
	Park should be able to be closed any time for health and safety reasons	1
<b>Recreation</b>	Concerns about impacts of off-road driving on the environment	2
	Concerns about waste from camping	1
	Concerns of gates being left open	1
<b>Infrastructure and facilities</b>	Perimeter fence must be maintained in good condition	5
	Park will benefit locals	2
	Keen for signage at entry points	2
	Keen for picnic areas	1
	Keen for public toilet at carpark	1
	Keen for suggested walking routes, with average walking times	1
	Keen for topographical maps to be developed for visitors	1
<b>Other</b>	Park will provide positive benefits to locals	2