



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Ed Cocks MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT's heritage arrangements

Submission Number: 009

Date Authorised for Publication: 14 March 2023

LACommitteeECCB@parliament.act.gov.au.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Dr Marisa Paterson, MLA

Committee Chair

Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Legislative Assembly of the ACT

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr Ed Cocks MLA

I write to you to submit, firstly the book I published in 2007-2008

Huts and Homesteads of Namadgi National Park Australian Capital Territory

I enclose a copy for your interest.

I am the editor of the quarterly Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA) newsletter, a past President and author of four books about the history of the pioneers and their huts and homesteads. I am also a caretaker of a hut in Kosciuszko National Park, Daveys Hut, and have worked for two years on Westermans Cottage in Namadgi National Park, travelling long distances without reimbursement for time or travel. I have been a volunteer for KHA for over 30 years.

Who we are

The Kosciuszko Huts Association is a volunteer association dedicated to the conservation of huts and homesteads in the Australian Alps national parks and reserves of NSW and ACT. The Association provides volunteer labour assistance to both the NPWS and ACT PCS; maintains traditional skills and knowledge; undertakes research and documents history; raises public awareness and advocates to governments for hut protection and conservation.

The Association is responsible for the maintenance, restoration and reconstruction of many of the huts and homesteads within Namadgi National Park. Our activities commenced in NSW in 1971 and in the ACT circa 1990. To the best of our knowledge KHA is the only volunteer association in the ACT that does the physical work, whereas other bodies, such as the National Trust, raise money to engage commercial enterprises. More information can be found at www.khuts.org.

My intention in this submission is to highlight several homesteads and some stockmans' huts that have been destroyed by fire or in some cases by persons unknown.

One Namadgi hut was described by an employee of the Park Service as a 'sacrificial hut' when asked if it was to be replaced. I didn't realise that in this day and age the history of the working classes of this country was sacrificial.

Apart from the listing of huts destroyed by fire, the refusal by authorities to replace them or allow KHA to replace them is disheartening.

As an example, the homestead called Gregorys Homestead (below) was taken down leaving just the brick foundations. Although not as old as some of the homesteads in Namadgi it would be approaching 80+ years and showed the progression from Orroral Homestead (still standing and cared for by KHA).

Gregorys Homestead built in the late 1940s

Below is an extract from <https://www.johnevans.id.au/wp/other-resources/points-of-interest/orroral-homestead-new-gregorys/>

- Signage: Gregory's House. 1950s House – After the Second World War, the Orroral Run was purchased by the Gregorys. They built this weatherboard house to accommodate people working on the property. After the construction of this house the original homestead ceased to be used for accommodation. The house was removed in 1991 after being badly damaged by vandals.

The homestead was occupied until the early 1960s and only a few bricks remain of the more recent house.



KHA Namadgi database (private source). Site 871. The last 'homestead' built in the Orroral Valley (soon after the end of WWII), this house was used by NNP staff during the late 1980s, but then suffered vandalism when it became vacant. It was removed in 1991 leaving just foundations and chimney.

- *Gudgenby: A register of archaeological sites in the proposed Gudgenby National Park*, J H Winston-Gregson MA thesis, ANU, 1978. Site OR6 1-10. New Orroral Homestead. Weatherboard on brick foundations; two external brick chimneys, two internal chimneys; corrugated metal roof. Site OR6 OR6 4-10. Animal pen. Droplog with shelter made of a ship's tank. The ship's tank is unique in the park. See extracts of the relevant pages in the photos above.

• *Sites of Significance in the ACT*. A 9 volume set, pre-cursor to the ACT Heritage Register. Published in 1988 (Vols 1-7), 1989 (Vol 8) and 1990 (Vol 9); pp38-43. Site G5. ... A newer weatherboard house (circa 1960's) stands higher up the slope 150 metres south of the old homestead. There is an orchard behind the house. Other remnants of the occupation and use of the site as a grazing property include the woolshed, and cattle yards. See extracts of the relevant pages in the photos above.

Cultural heritage at Namadgi

Members who volunteered to work on the old Orroral homestead were concerned to see the 1950s Gregory homestead being demolished. The Namadgi National Park Management Plan of 1986 states as an objective:

to ensure that all developments and works undertaken within the park comply with the plan of management.

In response to our letter, the Director of the Environment and Conservation Bureau, Greg Fraser, wrote:

Thank you for your letter of 22 December 1991 concerning the 1950s homestead at the Orroral Valley in Namadgi National Park.

I regret that the work you described at the Gregory homestead at the Orroral Valley was undertaken without full Heritage consultation. I have put an immediate stop to the project and instructed that no further work at the site be undertaken until a proper Heritage assessment has been made and advice received on what action should now be taken.

Relevant staff at Namadgi National Park have been instructed that in future any modification or removal of structures or historic sites will not take place without reference to the Heritage Unit and appropriate community consultation.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.



Photo: Olaf Moon 1990

Rowleys Rendezvous Creek Hut [https://khuts.org/index.php/huts/namadgi-national-park-](https://khuts.org/index.php/huts/namadgi-national-park-huts/rowleys-rendezvous-creek-hut)

[huts/rowleys-rendezvous-creek-hut](https://khuts.org/index.php/huts/namadgi-national-park-huts/rowleys-rendezvous-creek-hut)

The hut was accessible by a walking track of about five kilometres, commencing 500m before the narrow concrete bridge (to the old Bobeyan Rd) on the Adaminaby Road. The path crosses open fields and is hot in summer but shaded at the hut. It is shown on the Rendezvous Ck map. This hut was burnt down in 2003, by persons unknown. Circumstances indicate that it may have been done deliberately by pig shooters, however police investigations were inconclusive. **Namadgi NP management have refused point-blank to allow KHA to rebuild the hut at our (KHA's volunteers) expense.**

I submit these reasons to ensure our pioneers history is restored. Unfortunately, the ability to restore huts to as built is not possible, but their replacement will commemorate them. The KHA President has listed the primary examples in his letter representing KHA.

- ***Loss from disaster (namely the 2019-2020 bushfires)***
- ***Routine conservation work within the scope of a CMP***
- ***Conservation work requiring a statement of heritage effect (SHE)***
- ***Conservation work supported by a grant***

Pauline Downing

5th March 2021

Email: [REDACTED]