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9/4/2007

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
GPO Box 1020, Canberra, ACT, 2601

Dear Dr Jaireth,

Submission to the "Inquiry into the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve"

I refer to your invitation of the 12th March 2007 to meet with Standing Committee on Planning and Environment in relation to its "Inquiry into the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve." I also refer to my acceptance of your invitation. To assist with the information presentation, I have provided a brief submission of the points I wish to make to the Committee (attached). This submission has been prepared in my capacity as Vice Chair (Mountains Biome) of IUCN (The World Conservation Union) World Commission on Protected Areas.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Worboys
Vice Chair (Mountains Biome)
IUCN WCPA

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SUBMISSION
INQUIRY INTO THE ACT AS A UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

With particular reference to *Terms of Reference* item:
(ii) "the status and possible boundaries of the core, transition and buffer zones")

and the *Issue for Comment*:

"What additional environmental, social and economic benefits could be delivered to the ACT and region following the designation of the proposed UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, beyond those being pursued or delivered under existing laws, policies or programs?"

Introduction

On behalf of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), and specifically, the Mountains Biome, I commend the ACT Government for conducting this Inquiry. This submission has been prepared in my capacity as Vice Chair for the Mountains Biome of WCPA[1].

IUCN WCPA

The IUCN WCPA is the world's leading global network of protected area specialists and one of six Commissions of the leading conservation body in the world, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) www.iucn.org. The WCPA mission is:

To promote the establishment and effective management of a world-wide representative network of terrestrial and marine protected areas, as an integral contribution to the IUCN mission.

While the members of the IUCN are bodies - governments, organisation and institutions, the Commissions are composed of individuals appointed for their expertise and their willingness to contribute that expertise to global conservation goals. The Commission's perspective is science based and entirely apolitical. Virtually all members are senior in their respective fields. WCPA is represented internationally by Vice Chairs in charge of

geographic regions of the world (Penny Figgis AO is Vice Chair for Australia-New Zealand) as well as two Vice Chairs responsible for major biomes of Earth (Marine and Mountains). The Mountains Biome has over 500 mountain protected area experts world wide (www.mountains-wcpa.org) As Mountains Biome Vice Chair, I have special accountability for facilitating connectivity conservation globally[2]. For Australia, this includes working on the A2A[3] concept.

Support for the Biosphere Reserve

The WCPA supports the concept of a Biosphere Reserve for the ACT. This includes the retention and enhancement of existing protected areas; the enhancement of biodiversity conservation for other lands; and achieving sustainable use.

This support is based on:

1. Local, regional, national and international biodiversity conservation benefits;
2. Intergenerational benefits; and
3. A tangible response to climate change.

Benefits

Local

ACT, a better place to live through:

- Enhanced biodiversity conservation supporting sustainable ecosystem services such as air and water (healthy environment, healthy people)
- Sustainable use: achieving improved amenity and providing an example of what can be achieved through sustainable living

Regional

ACT contributing to a landscape scale approach to sustainable land management and the future through:

- The internationally recognised transboundary protected area management partnerships of the Namadgi-Kosciuszko National Park-Alpine National Park being extended to a complementary World Biosphere Reserve extended from the ACT to Kosciuszko
- providing the buffer and transition lands to the Namadgi-Kosciuszko core lands of a larger Biosphere Reserve concept
- providing sustainable use leadership for lands at a landscape scale

National

The ACT, a key player in a 2800 kilometre national response to climate change and biodiversity conservation for Australia by connectivity conservation[4] through:

- Direct participation in A2A
- Providing leadership in initiatives to conserve biodiversity and the sustainable use of lands for a range of tenures
- Contributing to new research into sustainable use of benefit to A2A

International

The ACT, a key player in one of the great continental scale connectivity conservation responses to climate change of the world including recognition for:

- Leadership for sustainable use initiatives
- Leadership for research initiatives
- Leadership for biodiversity conservation initiatives including healthy environments-healthy people

Intergenerational benefits

A World Biosphere Reserve for Canberra is a positive investment with many benefits for future generations.

Climate change response

Enhanced biodiversity conservation, particularly connectivity conservation, provides a significant positive response to changes caused by climate change.

Notes

1. My personal qualifications supporting comments made to the Inquiry (including my position as a WCPA Vice Chair) include:

- The recent (March 2007) submission of my Doctoral dissertation on protected area management;
- A Masters of Applied Science Degree in protected area management;
- Thirty-four years working in protected area management, including as a ranger, park superintendent, regional manager and executive director;
- Lead author for the Australian text *Protected Area Management, Principles and Practice (Second Edition)* published by Oxford University Press (Worboys, G.L., Lockwood, M. and De Lacy, T. 2005); and
- Co-editor for IUCN's international protected area management text *Managing Protected Areas: A Global Guide* published by IUCN and Earthscan (Lockwood, M., Worboys, G.L. and Kothari, A. 2006).

2. Current WCPA Mountains Biome work on global connectivity conservation in mountains as one response to climate change (Ochoa *et al*. 2005) includes:

- The convening of an international workshop on managing continental scale connectivity conservation in mountains in Ecuador, November 2006;
- The preparation of a new IUCN WCPA book on managing connectivity conservation at the global scale; and

- Work on a potential research project on A2A in collaboration with ANU and other Australian research institutions.

3. A2A (Alps to Atherton) is an initiative to achieve continental scale connectivity conservation along 2800 kilometres of Australia's eastern forests and woodlands (Pulsford *et al*. 2004).

4. Connectivity conservation recognises two key components (Crooks and Sanjayan 2006, Hilty *et al.* 2006, Lindenmayer and Fischer 2006):

- Structural or physical connectivity (spatial arrangement in the landscape)
- Functional or behavioural component (this includes information about an organisms dispersal ability as well as actual information about an organism's dispersal)

Connectivity conservation is the conservation of habitat between protected areas. It benefits biodiversity conservation through:

- Healthy ecosystems through ongoing exchanges of energy, water and nutrients (there are many different scales for exchanges including local to continental and intercontinental)
- Species being able to move among separated pieces of suitable habitat
- Dynamic ecological processes essential for the evolution and persistence of species
- Long term ecological resilience

References

Crooks, K.R. and Sanjayan, M. (Eds). (2006). *Connectivity conservation.* Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Hilty, J.A., Lidicker Jr., W.Z. and Merenlender, A.M. (2006). *Corridor ecology.* Island Press. Washington D.C.

Lindenmayer, D.B. and Fischer, J. (2006). *Habitat fragmentation and landscape change. An ecological and conservation synthesis.* CSIRO Publishing. Melbourne.

Ochoa, G. Hoffman, J. and Tin, T. (2005). *Climate. The force that shapes our world - and the future of life on Earth.* Rodale International. London.

Pulsford. I., Worboys, G.L., Gough, J. and Shepherd, T. (2004). The Australia Alps and the Great Escarpment of Eastern Australia conservation corridors. In. Harmon, D. and Worboys, G.L. (Eds). *Managing mountain protected areas: Challenges and responses for the 21st Century.* Andromeda Editrice. Colledara.