

RESTORATION OF THE LOWER COTTER CATCHMENT

Audit Report 3 of 2015 (tabled 20 May 2015)



The 2003 fires extensively damaged the Cotter Catchment and severely burnt 90% of Namadgi National Park.

This audit examined –

The management of the Lower Cotter Catchment and the implementation of the Lower Cotter Catchment Strategic Management Plan 2007

Why is the LCC important?



Clean water, healthy landscapes



Lower Cotter Catchment Strategic Management Plan (final)

January 2007



The Cotter Catchment

Canberra's main water supply. Includes 3 sub-catchments:

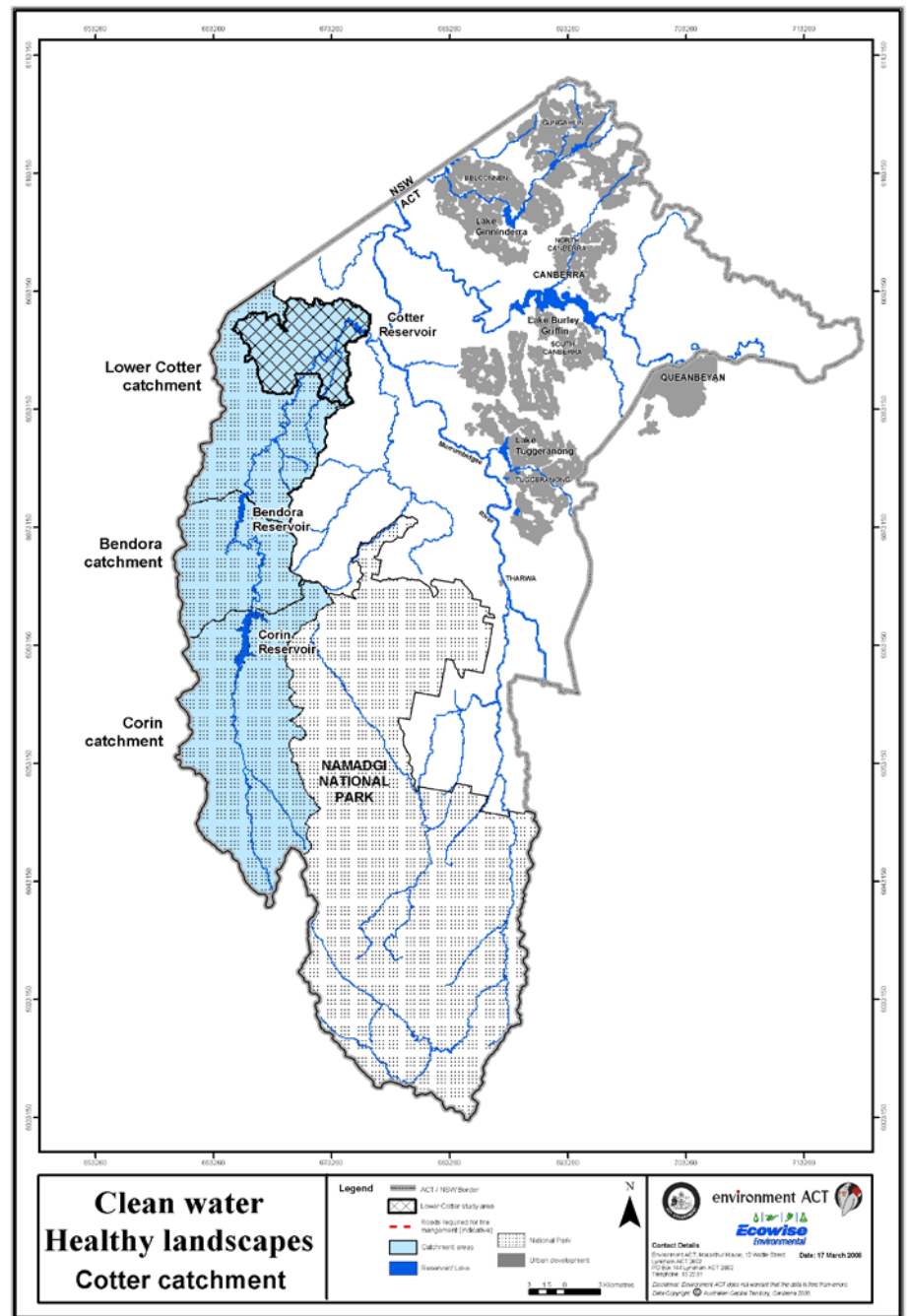
- Upper (Corin Dam)
- Middle (Bendora Dam)
- **LCC (Cotter Dam)**

Lower Cotter Catchment

65% in Namadgi
National Park

6% in NSW

30% (5,800 ha) ex-forestry
estate



The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines

- the catchment management plan

Policy states **the highest goal is protection of water quality**

A risk management approach

A strong framework of planning legislation

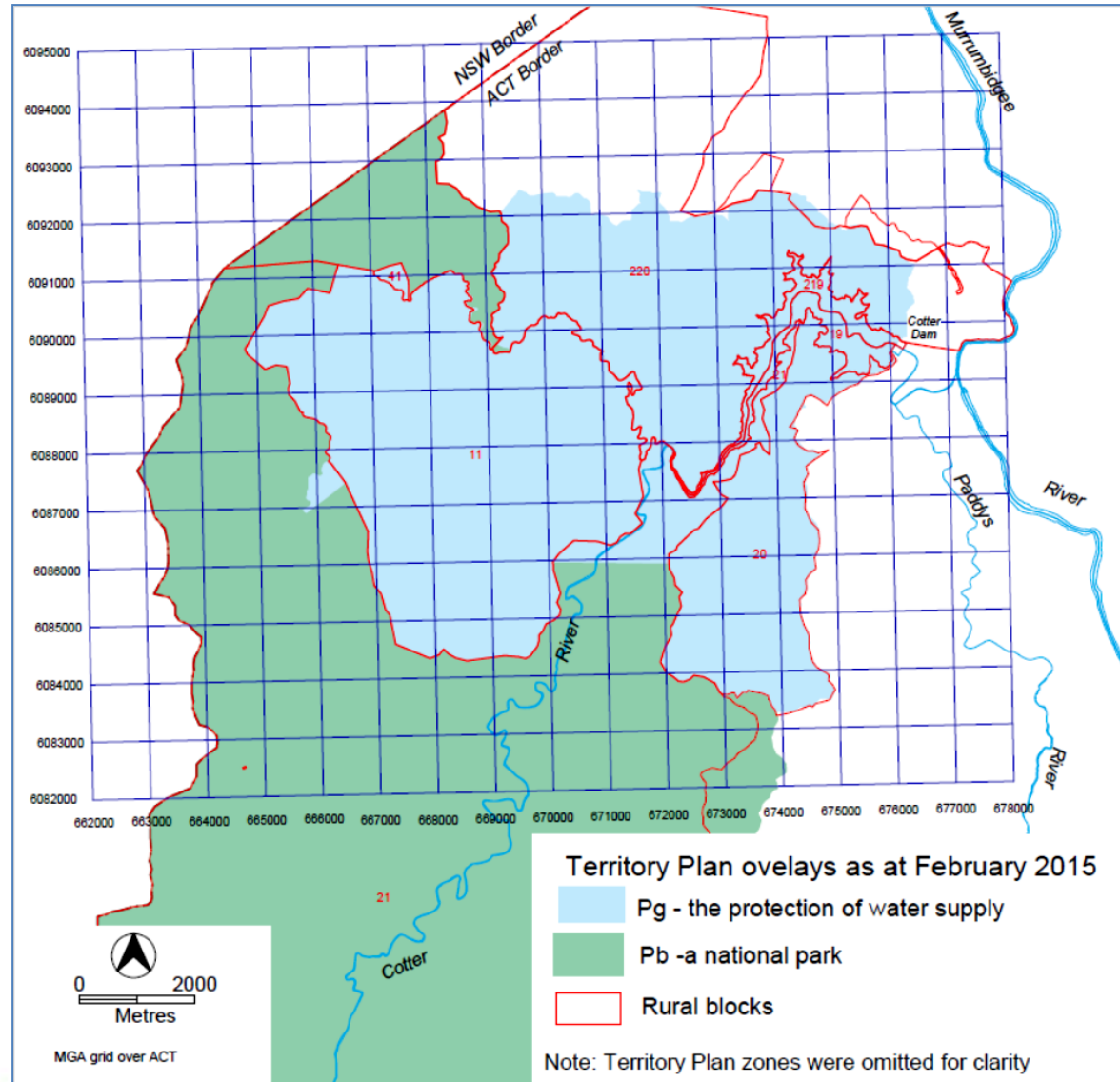


Figure 2-1 Management objectives for public land – Schedule 3

Category	Management objectives
Protection of water supply	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="386 492 1342 564">1. To protect existing and future domestic water supply.<li data-bbox="386 606 1091 678">2. To conserve the natural environment.<li data-bbox="386 721 1719 878">3. To provide for public use of the area for education, research and low-impact recreation.

Source: *Planning and Development Act 2007*, Schedule 3, Item 7.

Figure 2-2 Lower Cotter Catchment – Reserved area ‘Pg’– water supply



Clean water – healthy landscapes

Turbidity – a measure of success

Landscape recovery and diversity

Native revegetation





Integrated catchment management

the coordinated planning, use and management of water, land, vegetation and other resources on a river or groundwater catchment

Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) for LCC - 4 auditees

- TAMS - land manager
- Icon Water - potable water supply
- EPA - environment protection & water policy
- EPD - land planning, water policy, Conservator of Flora and Fauna

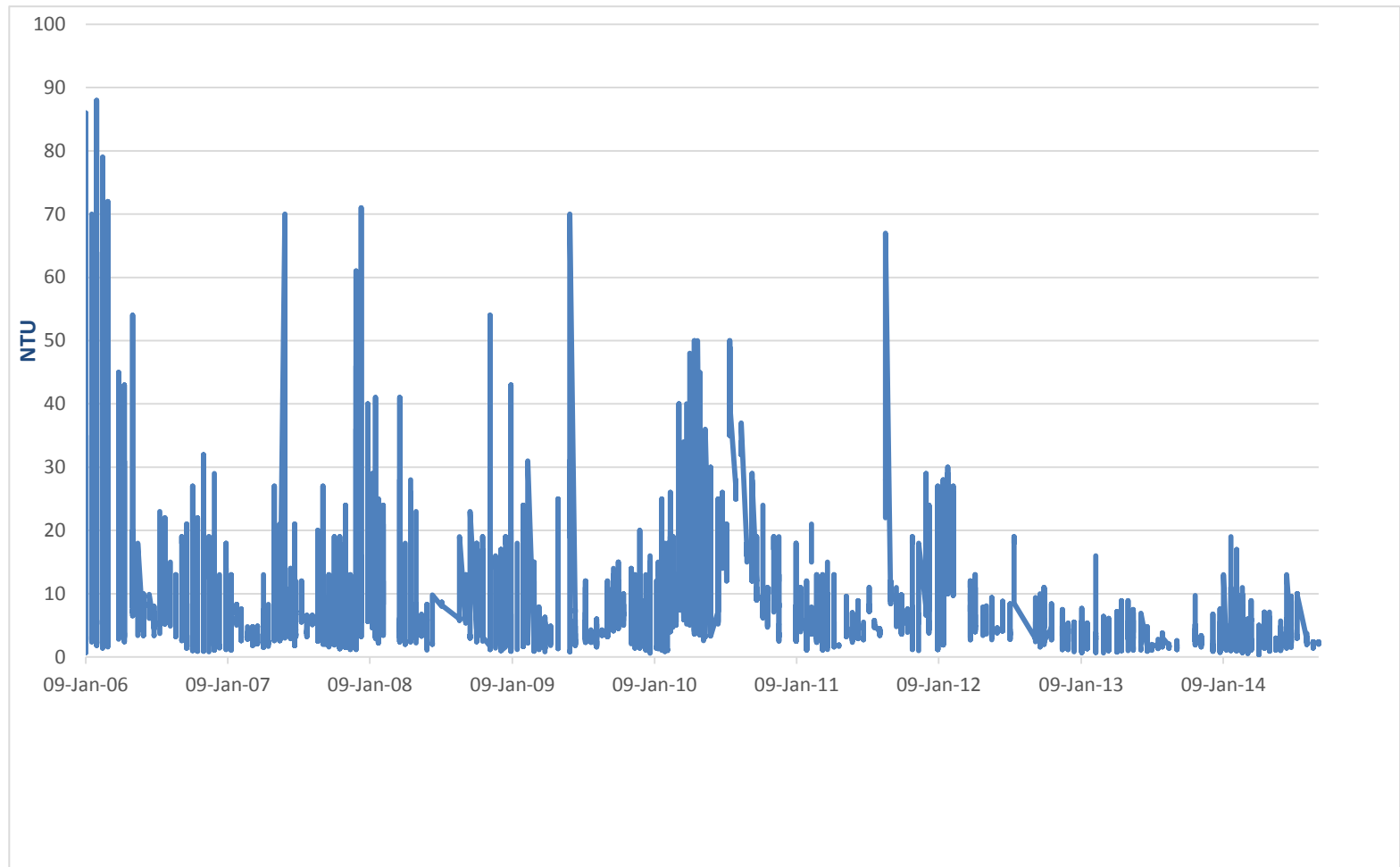
Additional

- ESA & Rural Fire Service - importance of LCC fire management

Outcomes

the Audit opinion

Figure 3–1 Cotter turbidity levels from January 2006 to January 2014




Source: Dr Falconer's report, citing ACTEW: Cotter reservoir turbidity, all depths superimposed.



Lower Cotter Catchment - now

Audit opinion

The Strategic Management Plan set out 29 management actions

- **Achieved - 17 management actions (58.5 %)**
 - **Partly Achieved - 8 (27.5 %)**
 - **Not Achieved - 4 (14 %)**
- 

LCC risks - conclusion

the LCC is exposed to significant risks

Figure 3–2 Deep gully erosion in the LCC



Source: Photograph by Dr Falconer



Tall pine wildlings interspersed with eucalypt regrowth
- upper region of Blue Range

12 Recommendations

3 High Priority Recommendations-

- Review management and coordination arrangements
- Develop a cross-agency risk plan
- Assess and remediate sediment control structures

4 Recommendations - Review of coordination policy documents

Align practice with legislation – *Water Resources Act 2007*

Finalise LCC Plan of Management

Plan for treatment / management of 3 regrowth pine forest areas

Review the LCC fire roads network


2017 review of LCC Strategic Management Plan 2007



The ACT Government's response

Government agreed to implement all 12 recommendations

\$7.7 million over 4 years for the LCC



To read the report:

www.audit.act.gov.au/auditreports/reports2015



Questions and thank you

