



The Hon Jim Lloyd MP
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, TERRITORIES AND ROADS

Reference: 04630-2006

Dr Hanna Jaireth
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Dr Jaireth

I refer to your letter of 24 March 2006 inviting me to participate in the *Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Planning and Environment* (the Committee) inquiry into the proposed nomination of the Australian Capital Territory as a UNESCO biosphere reserve.

As I indicated in my initial response to your letter my Department has sought the views of the National Capital Authority (NCA) and the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) on the proposed nomination.

The Australian Government supports the principle of sustainable development, as demonstrated in the implementation of the National Capital Plan. The Plan is the responsibility of the NCA under the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management Act) 1988* (the PALM Act).

Therefore, nomination of the ACT as a biosphere reserve would need to be considered in light of any potential impact on Designated Areas and National Land under the Plan, given its national significance for the ACT.

For the Government to make a comprehensive submission on a biosphere reserve, the Committee will need to provide me with further details. The additional information would need to include:

- the area of the ACT that the Committee intends to nominate;
- the core area proposed;
- the legal protection and governance systems proposed; and
- any possible funding implications for the Government.

It is also important to note that United Nations programmes and conventions cannot override Australian law. A biosphere reserve would need to be consistent with the PALM Act and the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988*, to be considered for implementation.

In summary, at this stage I am unable to provide a detailed response on behalf of the Government. Once your proposal is fully developed, my Department, the NCA and DEH will be able to provide me with further analysis. I invite the Committee to seek further comment at that time.

Should you have any queries please contact Ms Claire Pitham of my Department on 6274 6192, or email Claire.Pitham@dotars.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Lloyd', written in a cursive style.

JIM LLOYD

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