



Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT**

**Inquiry into the proposed nomination of the ACT as a
UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**

ISSUES PAPER

JULY 2006

Inquiry into the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

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The ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Environment invites feedback on the matters raised in this Issues Paper.

If you are interested in responding, please send your comments by email or post to the Committee no later than **31 August 2006**.

Electronic lodgement is preferred.

The e-mail address is <committees@parliament.act.gov.au>

The address for correspondence is

The Secretary

Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

GPO Box 1020, CANBERRA ACT 2601

Submissions must include your full name, postal address and telephone number.

Further information about making submissions is available from the Committee Office ph: 02 6205 0127, or via the Committee Office web page <www.parliament.act.gov.au>.

Inquiry terms of reference

On 23 March 2006 the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Environment adopted the following terms of reference for its inquiry into the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve –

Recognising community interest and the ACT Government's public statement to initiate the process of having the ACT declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the Committee will inquire into, and report on, issues related to an ACT nomination, including:

- a) the content of the proposed nomination document, including issues arising from the *Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves*,¹ such as –
 - i) management of the nomination process
 - ii) the status and possible boundaries of the core, transition and buffer zones
 - iii) funding needs and sources
 - iv) how local stakeholders should be engaged in (a) planning, (b) education and training programs, and (c) research and monitoring activities
 - v) communication strategies and activities
 - vi) the timeframe and viability of the proposed nomination
 - vii) other relevant matters

¹ Accessible at < <http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/Strategy.pdf> >

Committee membership

Chair Mr Mick Gentleman MLA

Deputy Chair Mr Zed Seselja MLA
 Ms Mary Porter AM MLA

Secretary: Dr Hanna Jaireth

Administration: Ms Lydia Chung

Research assistance: Ms Catherine O'Connor & Ms Kathy Dempsey, ACT
 Government and Assembly Library

Resolution of appointment

On 7 December 2004 the ACT Legislative Assembly agreed to establish general purpose standing committees –

- (1) ... to inquire into and report on matters referred to it by the Assembly or matters that are considered by the committee to be of concern to the community: ...
- (e) a Standing Committee on Planning and Environment to examine matters related to planning, public works and land management, conservation and heritage, transport services, and environment and ecological sustainability.² ...

² Legislative Assembly of the ACT, *Minutes of Proceedings*, No 2–7 December 2004, 12–16

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SUMMARY OF ISSUES FOR COMMENT

The Committee invites feedback from stakeholders on the matters raised in this Issues Paper. In particular, it would appreciate responses to the issues raised below. Explanatory information is provided in the paper.

- **Should the Committee advise the Assembly that ‘by December 2008’ should be the timeframe for the lodgement of the nomination form for the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve with UNESCO?**
- **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 and programs?**
- **Should the proposed Biosphere Reserve include negotiations with NSW about possible cross-border zonation?**
- **If there is broad community support for the proposed nomination, should the ACT Place Names Committee invite stakeholders to participate in the process of selecting a name for the proposed Biosphere Reserve?**
- **Should the issue of a Biosphere Reserve nomination be raised with the City of Nara, Japan, with a view to forming a thematic sub-network relationship with the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve?**
- **Should the Committee recommend to the Assembly that a Biosphere Reserve nomination is viable?**
- **Which stakeholder groups and/or range of expertise should be represented in an organisation established to progress the nomination of, and/or to manage the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve?**
- **Should stakeholder groups establish an incorporated association to progress the proposed nomination?**
- **Should governments and the private sector be asked to support the holding of a national meeting of volunteers supporting Biosphere Reserves in Canberra before July 2007?**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Biosphere Reserves are areas designated by the International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).³

Biosphere Reserve designations are flexible and proactive declarations of a commitment to sustainable development, and are one of the few international environmental mechanisms that can be applied in urban areas.⁴ There are 482 Biosphere Reserves worldwide in 102 countries,⁵ including 13 in Australia. One of the more recently designated Australian Biosphere Reserves – Mornington Peninsular and Western Port – includes an urban component, as is proposed for the ACT.

UNESCO's aims in designating Biosphere Reserves are to:

- foster sustainable economic and human development
- preserve landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic resources, and
- support demonstration projects, environmental education and training, and research and monitoring related to local, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development.

The nomination process for Biosphere Reserves does not require that the entire area nominated has already achieved sustainability. Biosphere Reserves are managed as core, buffer and transition areas. Core areas are protected for long-term conservation purposes. Buffer areas include activities compatible with conservation objectives. Sustainable resource management practices are promoted and developed in transition areas, but it is not a precondition for nomination that the area is already sustainable.

Nature and Society Forum Inc has been advocating the nomination of the ACT as a Biosphere Reserve for several years.⁶ In September 2004 the ACT Labor Party included the proposed nomination in its sustainability election platform.⁷ The Chief

³ section 337, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

⁴ Christine Alfsen-Norodom, 'Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities: Introduction', in C. Alfsen-Norodom, Benjamin D. Lane, and Melody Corry (eds) (2004), *Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities*, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences Vol. 1023, New York, 1-9 at 8

⁵ UNESCO (2005), 'This is the complete list of Biosphere Reserves',
<<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/BRlist.shtml?>, accessed 29 June 2006

⁶ Australian National Commission for UNESCO (2003), 'New Biosphere Reserve proposed', *UNESCO News*, June, 12

⁷ Australian Labor Party, ACT Branch (2004), *Sustainability*, Canberra, 4-5

Minister affirmed that the ACT Government was committed to pursuing the nomination in his opening address to the *Making Canberra Sustainable* forum in October 2005.⁸ The 2006 Report of the Centenary of Canberra Task Force favoured a 'Green Centenary' theme in 2013, and recommended that 'Canberra should bid to establish World Biosphere Reserve status for the national capital in 2013'.⁹

This Issues Paper responds to various stakeholders'¹⁰ concerns that they needed more information before they could form a view on the proposed nomination. It includes the consultation and research findings of the Committee as at mid-July 2006. The paper includes

- a background section providing an introduction to UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program and urban Biosphere Reserves
- a discussion of relevant legislation
- a summary of stakeholders' views submitted on the proposed nomination
- the content requirements of UNESCO's nomination document
- the timeframe and viability of the proposed nomination, and
- how the nomination process and proposed Biosphere Reserve might be managed

The Committee encourages stakeholders to express their views on the proposed nomination to the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment.

The Committee will report to the Legislative Assembly at the conclusion of its inquiry.

⁸ Jon Stanhope, 'Making Canberra sustainable', B. Furnass, S. Clark and P. Ramsay (eds) (2005) *Making Canberra Sustainable: Papers presented at the forum 'Making Canberra Sustainable' in October 2005*, Ginninderra Press, Canberra, 13-29 at 15

⁹ Centenary of Canberra Task Force (2006), *Canberra 100: Celebration of a Century: The Canberra Centenary Blueprint*, Canberra, 16

¹⁰ A stakeholder is a person with a financial, moral, legal, personal, community-based direct or indirect interest in an issue: H.J. Aslin and V.A. Brown (2004), *Towards Whole of Community Engagement: A Practical Toolkit*, Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra, 4

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Biosphere Reserves are areas designated for inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves by the International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).¹¹ Biosphere Reserve designations are flexible and proactive declarations of a commitment to sustainable development, and one of the few international environmental mechanisms that can be applied in urban areas.¹²

1.2 The vision for Canberra in one of the ACT Government's sustainability policy frameworks – *The Canberra Plan*¹³ – is that

Canberra will be recognised throughout the world – not only as a beautiful city, uniquely designed in harmony with its environment, the seat of Australia's government and home of its pre-eminent national institutions, but also as a place that represents the best in Australian creativity, community living and sustainable development.¹⁴

1.3 One of the aims of the proposal to nominate the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is 'to create a model for a sustainable city-state that can inspire the world'.¹⁵ The ACT Government has been committed to promoting sustainable development since at least 1992 when it adopted the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development in the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment. Today the ACT Government expresses its commitment to sustainability principles in other policy documents such as *People, Place, Prosperity*. It sees sustainability as comprising:

- recognition of the interdependence of social, economic and environmental well-being
- a focus on equity and fairness and the global interdependence of people
- recognition that meeting the needs of today must not be at the expense of future generations being able to meet their needs.¹⁶

¹¹ section 337, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

¹² Christine Alfsen-Norodom, 'Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities: Introduction', in C. Alfsen-Norodom, Benjamin D. Lane, and Melody Corry (eds) (2004), *Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities*, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences Vol. 1023, New York, 1-9 at 8

¹³ including the *Social Plan*, the *Economic White Paper* and the *Sustainable Transport Plan*

¹⁴ ACT Government (2004), *Measuring our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, Vol. 1: Our Story, Canberra, quoting from *The Canberra Plan*, 7

¹⁵ Stanhope, 'Making Canberra sustainable', 14

¹⁶ ACT Government (2003), *People, Place, Prosperity: A policy of Sustainability for the ACT*, Chief Minister's Department, Canberra, 11

1.4 The Committee appreciates that the ACT does not yet demonstrate sustainability, but progress is being made.¹⁷ On many economic, social and environmental indicators, Canberra is performing well, or improving.¹⁸ We have abundant expert, skilled and willing human resources in the ACT which have the potential to progress sustainability initiatives here very effectively. Numerous policies are in place which are intended to promote sustainability,¹⁹ but behavioural change is needed.

1.5 We consume relatively large amounts of energy and other resources, have a predominantly car-dependent culture, and generate relatively high levels of waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Our ecological footprint falls as heavily as other high-level consuming countries such as Canada and the United States.²⁰ We should do better on children's wellbeing, housing affordability, and resource efficiency.²¹ Whilst Indigenous Australians in the ACT are doing better than in many other parts of Australia (particularly in the areas of school education for younger children, employment, service delivery and home ownership rates), the need for better progress in educational outcomes for older indigenous children and in health and longevity is recognised.²²

1.6 Many parts of the ACT are recovering well from the devastating impacts of the 2003 bushfires, but the health of our freshwater resources and sub-catchment lands has been declining, impacting on local biodiversity such as woodland birds and

¹⁷ ACT Government (2004), *Measuring our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, Vol. 1: Our Story, Canberra

¹⁸ ACT Government (2004), *Measuring our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, 14–20; Office of the Commissioner for the Environment (2003), *Progress Towards Sustainability: State of the Environment Report 2003*, Canberra, 3; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006), *Environmental Issues in the ACT: Behaviour of ACT Households*, 1344.8.55.001 - ACT Stats, 2006, 2 February, accessible at <<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/7d12b0f6763c78caca257061001cc588/146CD38767574BBCCA2571310000F7AF?opendocument>>

¹⁹ listed at Appendix E and F

²⁰ 'Ecological footprint' is the area of land required per person to supply the goods and services providing food, housing, transport, and consumer goods and services: CSIRO Wildlife & Ecology, Resource Futures Program (1998), Population-Development-Environment Project, *Canberra's Ecological Footprint (Parts 1&2)*, Working Document 98-12-1, 1. See also - Working Document 98-12-2, <<http://www.cse.csiro.au/publications/reports.htm>>, accessed 19 April 2006, and ACT Government, *Measuring Our Progress*, 22–23

²¹ Peter Ottesen (2005), 'Communication, integration and caring for Canberra', in Bryan Furnass, Sebastian Clark and Penny Ramsay (eds) (2005), *Making Canberra Sustainable*, Ginninderra Press, Canberra, 30–38, 33

²² Jon Stanhope (2006), 'Flag raising for NAIDOC Week', *Media release*, 3 July

native fish.²³ Policies have been developed to address this, but restoring ecosystems is a complex challenge.²⁴

1.7 The ACT *Natural Resource Management Plan 2004–2014* is a key document promoting ecologically sustainable development in the region. It includes as a target that a minimum of 30% of the pre-European extent of each vegetation community occurring in the ACT be managed for biodiversity conservation by 2012. The Plan also includes a range of management actions relevant to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. These include:

- management to protect and improve the biodiversity value of threatened and endangered native species and ecological communities
- aquatic ecosystems managed to enhance and protect natural integrity
- ecologically significant invasive species managed to minimise threats to biodiversity

1.8 Targets for urban biodiversity and integrated urban ecological function targets are also to be developed and progressively implemented.²⁵

1.9 The nomination process for Biosphere Reserves does not require that the entire area nominated has already achieved sustainability. As will be explained below, Biosphere Reserves are managed as core, buffer and transition areas. Core areas are protected for long-term conservation purposes. Buffer areas include activities compatible with conservation objectives. Sustainable resource management practices are promoted and developed in transition areas, but it is not a precondition for nomination that the area is already sustainable.

1.10 Various aspects of the proposed nomination of the ACT as a Biosphere Reserve are the subject of this inquiry by the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Environment. Not all the terms of reference are addressed in this discussion paper. The Committee recognises the need for stakeholders to become familiar with the Biosphere Reserve concept, and provides this Issues Paper to assist stakeholders to understand relevant issues. This paper

²³ Office of the Commissioner for the Environment (2003), *Progress Towards Sustainability: State of the Environment Report 2003*, Canberra, 3

²⁴ ACT Government (2005), *A Vision Splendid of the Grassy Plains Extended – ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy*, Action Plan No. 28, Canberra; ACT Government (2006), *Ribbons of Life – Draft Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy*, Action Plan No. 29, Canberra; ACT Government (2004), *Woodlands for Wildlife: The Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy* Action Plan 27, Canberra

²⁵ ACT Government (2004), *ACT Natural Resource Management Plan 2004–2014–Summary*, Canberra, 16, accessible at
<<http://www.environment.act.gov.au/yourenvironmenthwp/landcareandcatchmentmanagement/actnaturalresourcemanagementplan>>

focuses on issues raised in submissions to the Committee to July 2006.²⁶ The paper also reflects the Committee's broader research and consideration.

1.11 Before the Committee comes to a considered view, it invites feedback on important issues it has identified as warranting discussion.

1.12 The Committee has taken into account one of the most contentious local sustainability issue in recent years – the Gungahlin Drive Extension (GDE) – and invites comment on the suggestion that the nomination be lodged in December 2008. By this time the first stage of the GDE, including revegetation, is expected to be completed. The Committee makes no comment on the proposed Dragway, as environmental assessments are continuing.

1.13 This Issues Paper is an interim document, and the Committee looks forward to hearing stakeholders' responses to the issues raised here. Comment is invited in further submissions to the Committee, and/or during public hearings, which will begin in August 2006.

1.14 The Committee will report to the ACT Legislative Assembly at the conclusion of its inquiry.

Background

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves

1.15 Biosphere reserves are areas of land and/or sea, which are internationally recognized by the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program.²⁷ Designated Biosphere Reserves become members of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.²⁸ This network facilitates comparative research, monitoring and reporting. This is important for science but also for tracking and responding to environment change, for education and training, and for trialling

²⁶ listed at Appendix G

²⁷ Article 5(c) – Designation Procedure: *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*, accessible at <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/offDoc.shtml>>, or <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/statframe.pdf>>, accessed 27 June 2006

²⁸ Article 2 – World Network of Biosphere Reserves, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*

initiatives for local communities seeking to develop sustainably.²⁹ As at 7 July 2005, there were 482 Biosphere Reserves worldwide in 102 countries.³⁰

1.16 Each Biosphere Reserve is intended to promote and demonstrate sustainable relationships between people and ecosystems, through their interrelated development, logistic support and conservation functions. The functions of Biosphere Reserves are to:

- foster sustainable economic and human development
- support demonstration projects, environmental education and training, and research and monitoring related to local, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development, and
- preserve genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes.³¹

1.17 There are important differences between protected areas, such as national parks, and Biosphere Reserves. Protected areas are usually declared for a defined area of land or sea, and restrict commercial development because the conservation of natural and associated cultural resources is the paramount objective for that area.³² The management objectives for protected areas in Australia usually draw on the management categories and guidelines produced by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).³³ Protected areas tend to have one management plan, and simple zonation. There is usually one manager for the area. Biosphere Reserves, on the other hand, include mosaics of land under a variety of tenures and uses; have three objectives (sustainable development, logistic support for science and education, and conservation); have complex zonation; and usually have coordinated management or several managers. Only the 'core' zones in Biosphere Reserves are usually protected areas managed in accordance with IUCN

²⁹ UK Biosphere Reserves Review, *Biosphere Reserves in the UK: Sites of Excellence for Conservation and Sustainable Development*, <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ukmab/BRReport/brs_in_the_uk.htm>, accessed 20 April 2006

³⁰ UNESCO (2005), 'This is the complete list of Biosphere Reserves', <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/BRlist.shtml?>>, accessed 29 June 2006

³¹ Article 3 – Functions, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*

³² Protected areas of IUCN Category 1–IV tend to be strictly protected but categories V and VI can be lived-in, bioregional scale, multiple use landscapes and seascapes: Adrian Phillips, 'Turning ideas on their head: the new paradigm for protected areas', in H. Jaireth, H. and D. Smyth (eds)(2003), *Innovative Governance: Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Protected Area*, 1–27

³³ See generally Graeme Worboys, Michael Lockwood, and Terry De Lacy (2001), *Protected Area Management: Principles and Practice*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne. Commonwealth Reserves are required to have IUCN categories and management principles applied in the reserve, or its zones under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

guidelines.³⁴

1.18 The inappropriate association of the term 'reserve' with 'protected area' or 'exclusion area' led project partners involved in a case-study of Cape Town, South Africa, to suggest that urban areas within Biosphere Reserves should be called 'Man and the Biosphere cities' or 'MAB cities'. UNESCO has not yet agreed to this, however.³⁵

1.19 The criteria against which areas are assessed for suitability for designation as a Biosphere Reserve are prescribed in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which was adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly in November 1995.

1.20 The Seville Strategy, which had been adopted by the International Conference on Biosphere Reserves organised by UNESCO, in Seville, Spain in March 1995,³⁶ identified ten key directions for strengthening the contribution that Biosphere Reserves can make to sustainable development. These included, in summary:

- contributing to the implementation of international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity which has three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources³⁷
- designating Biosphere Reserves in a wide variety of ecosystems, including those close to urban areas
- strengthening regional, inter-regional and thematic networks within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves
- reinforcing scientific research, monitoring, training and education in Biosphere Reserves
- ensuring that Biosphere Reserve zones contribute to conservation,

³⁴ Frédéric Bioret (2001), 'Biosphere Reserve manager or coordinator', *Parks* 11(1): 26–29 at 27. The IUCN categories for Australia's national parks are accessible on the textual and spatial Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database (CAPAD) <<http://www.deh.gov.au/parks/nrs/capad/index.html>>

³⁵ R. Stanvliet, J. Jackson, G. Davis, C. De Swardt, J. Mokhoele, Q. Thom and B.D. Lane, 'The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Concept as a Tool for Urban Sustainability: The CUBES Cape Town Case Study', in C. Alfsen-Norodom *et al* (eds), *Urban Biosphere and Society*, 80–104 at 100–101

³⁶ Also accessible at <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/offDoc.shtml>>, accessed 27 June 2006

³⁷ The Man and the Biosphere Program is recognised as a partner program by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its Program of Work on Protected Areas: Decision VII/28: COP 7 – Seventh Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (9 – 20 February 2004), accessible at <<http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx>>

sustainable development and scientific understanding

- extending Biosphere Reserve transition areas to include large areas capable of being managed as an ecosystem to demonstrate sustainable development at the regional scale
- reflecting the human dimensions of Biosphere Reserves
- promoting adaptive management of Biosphere Reserves as a pact between the local community and broader society
- promoting partnerships and information flows amongst stakeholders and sectors at site and network level
- using Biosphere Reserves to raise public awareness and understanding about humanity's relationship with nature based on a long-term, intergenerational perspective.³⁸

1.21 The Seville Strategy provides recommendations for developing effective Biosphere Reserves. These are guidelines only. Indicators to assist with monitoring and evaluation are also provided.

The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program

1.22 UNESCO has played an important role in supporting global sustainability initiatives since at least the 1960s. UNESCO's 1968 Biosphere Conference, for example, was one of the first intergovernmental conferences aiming to reconcile the conservation and use of natural resources (now recognised as sustainable development).³⁹ That conference provided impetus for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), which led to a major expansion of international activity on environmental issues.⁴⁰ UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program was officially launched in 1970 and was initially intended to establish representative examples of terrestrial and coastal areas in a range of biogeographical regions, where a broad range of human interactions with ecosystems could be studied, genetic resources could be preserved, and research and training could be undertaken.⁴¹ The first Biosphere Reserves were named in 1976.⁴² Since the mid-1980s the focus of the program has moved to ecologically sustainable development and associated research and monitoring, as exemplified in the Statutory

³⁸ UNESCO (1996). *The Seville Strategy For Biosphere Reserves*, UNESCO, Paris, 3-4

³⁹ Michel Batisse, 'World Heritage and Biosphere Reserves: complementary instruments', *Parks* 11(1): 38-43

⁴⁰ R. Boardman (1981), *International Organization and the Conservation of Nature*, MacMillan Press, London, 65

⁴¹ Batisse, 'World Heritage and Biosphere Reserves: complementary instruments', 40

⁴² L. Tangle (1988), 'A new era for Biosphere Reserves', *BioScience*, vol.38: 148-155

Framework for Biosphere Reserves and the Seville Strategy, noted above.⁴³

Urban Biosphere Reserves

1.23 In 2000 UNESCO established the Working Group to Explore the Application of the Biosphere Reserve Concept to Urban Areas and their Hinterlands,⁴⁴ and several international conferences have further stimulated international interest in this issue.⁴⁵ The aims of the UNESCO working group are:

- to identify contributions that the Biosphere Reserve idea has or could make in urban planning and management, taking account of the ecosystem approach under the Convention on Biological Diversity
- whether there is or should be a place for urban areas and cities in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves beyond transition areas
- to explore alternative ways and means of recognising selected cities, or parts thereof, as sites that exemplify the Biosphere Reserve model
- to stimulate discussion within the Man and the Biosphere Program, and relevant partner institutions and organisations, on the development of an agenda for possible program activities in this field.⁴⁶

1.24 In June 2003, the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council discussed whether urban Biosphere Reserves could be compatible with the Seville Framework and World Network membership, as favoured by the Working Group. Since unanimity was not achieved, the Bureau Chair invited the Working Group to continue working on the issues, and to develop criteria for determining whether nominated cities should be designated as Biosphere Reserves and admitted to the

⁴³ Kate A. Matysek, E. Stratford, L.K. Kriwoken (2006), 'The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program in Australia: constraints and opportunities for localized sustainable development', *The Canadian Geographer*, 50(1): 85–100, 87

⁴⁴ International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, UNESCO (2000), 'The role of MAB with regard to urban and peri-urban issues', Sixteenth Session, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris 6–10 November 2000, UN Doc SC-00/CONF.208/5, 26 September

⁴⁵ These include 'Urban Nature 2006: Local Governments and Biodiversity Conservation', Cape Town, South Africa, 23–24 February 2006, refer: <<http://www.iclei-europe.org/index.php?id=1716>>; the International Conference for Integrating Urban Knowledge and Practice: Life in the Urban Landscape, Gothenburg, Sweden (30 May - 3 June 2005), refer <<http://www.urbanlife2005.com/proceedings/main.asp>> 'Biodiversity: Science and Governance', UNESCO Paris, 24–28 January 2005 (summary of urban workshop attached; and 'Urban Biosphere & Society: Partnership of Cities', New York Academy of Sciences, 29–30 October, 2003, refer: <<http://www.annalsnyas.org/cgi/content/abstract/1023/1/80>>; Peter Dogsé, Programme Specialist, Secretariat, Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, UNESCO, email communication dated 9 April 2006

⁴⁶ Information about this group, including some related documents are available at <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/ecosyst/urban.shtml#>>

World Network.⁴⁷ In June 2005 urban sustainability was proposed as the focus for a series of policy research hubs (knowledge networks, community of practices) hosted by a research institution or university, and the development of closer linkages with UNESCO's Decade for Education for Sustainable Development was recommended.⁴⁸

1.25 In 2006 Professor Thomas Elmqvist, at the University of Stockholm, and a member of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere International Coordinating Council (which makes decisions on biosphere nominations) had funding approved from MISTRA, a Swedish foundation, the Stockholm Environment Institute and the Beijer Institute, for their joint proposal to establish an interdisciplinary research centre on sustainable governance and management of linked ecological and social systems. Professor Elmqvist was also responsible for the urban Biosphere Reserve session at the May 2005 Gothenburg Conference: Life in the Urban Landscape, which made various recommendations on the applicability of the Biosphere concept.

1.26 Designated or nominated Biosphere Reserves, following the adoption of the Seville Strategy, are increasingly located close to urban areas, and development functions are recognised. Biosphere Reserves with urban components include:

- Kristiandstad, Sweden, nominated in 2005⁴⁹
- Mornington Peninsula and Western Port, near Melbourne, Victoria, designated in 2002⁵⁰
- Pays de Fontainebleau, near Paris, France, designated in 1998⁵¹
- Arganeraie, near Agadir in Morocco, designated in 1998⁵²
- Cerrado, near Brasilia in Brazil, designated in 1993 and extended in 2001⁵³

⁴⁷ Peter Dogsé (2004), 'Toward Urban Biosphere Reserves', in Christine Alfsen-Norodom, Benjamin D. Lane, and Melody Corry (eds) (2004), *Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities*, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences Vol. 1023, New York, 10–48, 22

⁴⁸ Christine Alfsen-Norodom (2005), 'Report and recommendations from the Round table discussion on the applicability of the biosphere reserve concept to urban areas, Gothenburg, Sweden, June 1st 2005', (UNESCO/CUBES, NYC June 13, 2005)

⁴⁹ See <www.vattenriket.kristianstad.se>, accessed 26 June 2006

⁵⁰ Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Dr David Kemp (2002), 'Mornington Peninsula Biosphere Reserve Officially Inaugurated: Media Release', <<http://www.deh.gov.au/minister/env/2002/mr19dec202.html>>, accessed 29 June 2006

⁵¹ Including 69,000ha with an uninhabited biological reserve, 13,500ha buffer zone and a transition area including Fontainebleau, Avon and more than 30 other townships: Nadia Khouri-Dagher (1999), 'Fontainebleau: hounds, horns and motorways', *UNESCO Sources*, Issue 109, 5

⁵² Including an intramontane plain of more than 2,560,000 hectares, bordered by the High Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains and the Atlantic in the west. The core area comprises the Souss-Massa National Park. The area supports approximately 2,374,000 inhabitants, including the town of Agadir (~899,000 inhabitants, 1994). See: <<http://www2.unesco.org/mab/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?code=MOR+01&mode=all>>, accessed 26 June 2006

- Lanzarote, on northernmost island of the Canary Archipelago, Spain, designated in 1993⁵⁴
- Mata Atlantica (including the green belts of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo), designated in 1992⁵⁵
- Niagara Escarpment, Ontario, Canada, designated in 1990⁵⁶
- Golden Gate, adjacent to the San Francisco Bay metropolitan area, United States, designated in 1988,⁵⁷ and
- Cordillera Volcanica Centre near San José in Costa Rica, designated in 1988.⁵⁸

Biosphere reserves in Australia

1.27 As at June 2006, Australia had 13 Biosphere Reserves, ten of which were essentially protected national parks or nature reserves. Government authorities managed nine and one was managed under contract to the Australian Government's Director of National Parks. Three more recently designated Biosphere Reserves (Mornington Peninsula and Westernport Bay, Riverland, and Barkindji) include a

⁵³ This Biosphere Reserve focuses on restoration of altered areas and building of ecological corridors through dense savanna woodlands and grasslands. Over 200,000 people (2001) live in the Biosphere Reserve, engaged in ecotourism, production and commerce of native fruit pulps: see <
<http://www2.unesco.org/mab/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?mode=all&Code=BRA+02>>, accessed 30 June 2006

⁵⁴ This volcanic island Biosphere Reserve includes a population of over 110,000 (2002), and tourism restrictions have been imposed: see <
<http://www2.unesco.org/mab/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?code=SPA+12&mode=all>> accessed 3 July 2006

⁵⁵ Almost 100 million people (2002) lived in the urban and industrial areas of 3,000 out of the 5,507 municipalities within this Biosphere Reserve. In 1993, the São Paulo City's Green Belt Biosphere Reserve was added as an integrate part of the Mata Atlántica Biosphere Reserve, covering another 72 municipalities, according to information at <
<http://www2.unesco.org/mab/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?code=BRA+01&mode=all>>, accessed 26 June 2006. The reserve has reportedly raised public awareness, stakeholder involvement, and employment in the 'ecological job market': J. Brener (2001), 'São Paulo: green belt blues', UNESCO Sources, Issue 136, 14

⁵⁶ 725 km from Lake Ontario (near Niagara Falls) to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula (between Georgian Bay and Lake Huron). The transition/urban zone has a population of about 120,000
<http://www.escarpment.org/biosphere/about_nebr.htm>, accessed 26 June 2006

⁵⁷ A partnership of 13 protected areas in the greater San Francisco Bay area. See <
<http://www2.unesco.org/mab/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?code=USA+42&mode=all>> accessed 3 July 2006

⁵⁸ about 60 km north-west to the city of San José, including four national parks, two forest reserves, six protected zones, a national monument and more than 300,000 inhabitants. See <
<http://www2.unesco.org/mab/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?code=COS+02&mode=all>>, accessed 26 June 2006

range of land tenures and land uses.

1.28 Most of Australia's Biosphere Reserves were listed between 1977 and 1982 under the pre-Seville Strategy approach.⁵⁹ According to Matysek *et al*, Australia's early Biosphere Reserves were well chosen for 'identifying the mechanisms for a network for global environmental monitoring, the preservation of key examples of the world's distinctive ecosystems and the conservation of genetic diversity.'⁶⁰ These reserves, as Biosphere Reserves, according to these authors, are currently 'moribund', with little information available in policy domains, resulting in them not being taken seriously. These authors suggest that the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve in Victoria represents the sustainable development/landscape scale/Mark II approach to Biosphere Reserve designation, with stakeholder partnerships and a regional sustainability vision providing promising lessons for the future of the Australian Biosphere Reserve Program.⁶¹

1.29 The Australian Government established a UNESCO Working Group on Biosphere Reserves in the early 1990s, comprising the managers of Australian Biosphere Reserves. The Working Group has not met as such since 2001,⁶² when Australian Government funding for convening the meetings was discontinued, and states and territories were asked to pay officials' costs. Biosphere reserve issues are said to be discussed at other meetings with the same membership. The Australian Government has also not given a high priority to implementing the non-binding recommendations for national governments enunciated in the 1995 Seville Strategy.

1.30 Since 2003 an organisation for volunteers supporting Biosphere Reserves has operated from the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve. A spokesman for the organisations suggested that since the ACT was discussing a proposed Biosphere Reserve nomination it would be timely to hold a national meeting of the volunteers in Canberra before July 2007.⁶³

Issue for comment – Should governments and the private sector be asked to support the holding of a national meeting of volunteers supporting Biosphere Reserves in Canberra before July 2007?

⁵⁹ Submission No 14

⁶⁰ Matysek *et al*, 'The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program in Australia', 89

⁶¹ Matysek *et al*, 'The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program in Australia', 89, 98–99

⁶² Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage, 'UNESCO Working Group on Biosphere Reserves Records of Meetings',

<<http://www.deh.gov.au/parks/biosphere/working/records.html>>, accessed 26 June 2006

⁶³ Email communication, Mr Craig Forster, dated 9 July 2006

1.31 UNESCO periodically reviews Biosphere Reserves that have been designated for more than 10 years. In 2003 UNESCO released its review of Australia's Biosphere Reserves. It noted that the 11 sites then listed had been designated when the focus was on conservation and scientific research, and not sustainable development as mandated by the Seville Strategy. UNESCO recommended that authorities in Australia consider, within the context of an overall review of how best it can participate in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves:

- attaining representativeness in its Biosphere Reserve designations for species, landscapes and cultural diversity (including Indigenous communities and settlers)
- applying the principles of the ecosystem approach of the Convention on Biological Diversity in considering the enlargement of existing sites, seeking an optimum size with regard to both ecological and governance issues
- the advantages of applying the Biosphere Reserve concept as a framework to help planning and coordination at a bioregional scale
- evaluating how Biosphere Reserves can serve in Australian efforts to implement its international obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals, and
- the positive dimension of withdrawal of non-functional sites, taking the example of the experience in the UK ⁶⁴

1.32 The Committee notes that the UNESCO review also recommended that Australian authorities consider enlarging the boundaries of Kosciusko National Park. UNESCO reported:

The Advisory Committee noted that this was an excellent National Park containing a tourist village for winter sports, with an outstanding history of scientific research and monitoring. However, it was not functional as a Biosphere Reserve due, in particular, to the lack of a true development function.

The Advisory Committee recommended the Australian authorities to:

⁶⁴ UNESCO, Man and the Biosphere Program (2003), *Periodic review of Biosphere Reserves designated more than ten years ago*, UN Doc SC-03/CONF.217/3 Add, Paris 4 July

- explore the appropriateness of applying the Biosphere Reserve concept to the Australian Alps bioregion, adding other protected areas as a core area and adding non-government owned land (including towns) as a transition area. This larger bioregional Biosphere Reserve would aim at providing a framework for improving coordination of planning efforts on reconciling environment and sustainable development.⁶⁵

1.33 Other areas and communities in Australia that are considering nominating for Biosphere Reserve status include 'Wollumbin' (northern NSW), Noosa (Qld), Pilliga (NSW), Cape York (Qld), Blackall Ranges (QLD) and Denmark (WA).⁶⁶

Management plans for Australian Biosphere Reserves

1.34 Both Australian Government and ACT laws and policies govern land management in the ACT. On self-government, the ACT assumed responsibility for all Territory land that was not national land.

1.35 ACT legislation does not currently provide for the designation of a Biosphere Reserve. However such a designation should be possible in the exercise of the ACT Government's executive powers recognised by the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1998* (Cwlth).⁶⁷

1.36 The *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* (Cwlth) (PALM Act) gives the Australian Government potentially overriding powers with respect to planning and development decisions in the ACT however.⁶⁸ That Act establishes the National Capital Authority, which prepares and administers the National Capital Plan. The object of the National Capital Plan is to ensure that Canberra and the ACT are developed in accordance with their national significance, including the role of the national capital, preservation and enhancement of landscape features, the key elements of Water Burley Griffin's design, and city development reflecting environmental values and national concerns with the sustainability of

⁶⁵ UN Doc SC-03/CONF.217/3 Add, Paris 4 July, 2

⁶⁶ Information provided by Dr David Slip, Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage, 29 June 2006

⁶⁷ Section 37 and Schedule 4 (Territory Land as defined in the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*; environment protection and conservation (including parks, reserves and gardens and preservation of historical objects etc)

⁶⁸ accessible at <<http://scale.law.gov.au/html/pasteact/0/160/top.htm>>

Canberra's urban areas.⁶⁹

1.37 The PALM Act also provides for the establishment of an ACT statutory planning authority – now the ACT Planning and Land Authority – to develop and implement the Territory Plan. The *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991* (ACT)⁷⁰ (the Act) requires the Territory Plan to set out the planning principles and policies for giving effect to its object,⁷¹ which is:

to ensure, in a manner *not inconsistent with the national capital plan*, that the planning and development of the ACT provides the people of the ACT with an ecologically sustainable, healthy, attractive, safe and efficient environment in which to live, work and have their recreation. (emphasis added)⁷²

1.38 Australian Government legislation provides that each Biosphere Reserve in Australia should have a management plan. The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth) (EPBC Act) provides that the management plan can be developed and implemented cooperatively by the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and the State or self-governing Territory.⁷³

1.39 The plan must not be inconsistent with the Australian Biosphere reserve management principles prescribed in Schedule 7 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations*.⁷⁴ These are that –

1.01 A management plan should be prepared for each Biosphere reserve.

1.02 A management plan for a Biosphere reserve should state:

(a) the values for which the reserve is established; and

(b) the extent of the reserve; and

(c) any zoning that provides for the following functions:

(i) conserving genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes;

(ii) fostering sustainable economic and human development;

⁶⁹ National Capital Plan, <<http://downloads.nationalcapital.gov.au/plan/ncp/seca.pdf>>, accessed 3 July 2006

⁷⁰ Accessible at <<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1991-100/current/pdf/1991-100.pdf>>

⁷¹ Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, sub-section 7(2))

⁷² Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991, sub-section 7(1)

⁷³ subsection 338(2). The Minister may also make and implement a written plan for managing a Biosphere Reserve, or part of a Biosphere Reserve, entirely within one or more 'Commonwealth areas': subsection 338(1). Territory land that is not leased by a Commonwealth agency or the Commonwealth is not a Commonwealth area for the purposes of the EPBC Act: sub-section 525(2) *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

⁷⁴ Refer section 340 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth) and Reg 10.03 and Schedule 7 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* (Cwlth)

- (iii) supporting demonstration projects, environmental education and training, and research and monitoring related to local, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development; and
- (d) the role of the reserve in contributing to a national coverage of ecological systems representative of major bioregions;
- (e) the strategies for biodiversity conservation in the reserve, including those that:
 - (i) protect it from disturbance and threatening processes; and
 - (ii) minimise potential adverse effects on its natural, cultural and social environment and surrounding communities; and
- (f) how the plan will provide for:
 - (i) exploring and demonstrating approaches to sustainable development on a regional scale; and
 - (ii) ensuring that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment in the Biosphere Reserve are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations; and
 - (iii) ensuring that decision-making is consistent with the precautionary principle; and
 - (iv) setting out an appropriate policy and management framework; and
 - (v) programs for research, monitoring, education and training.

1.03 A management plan for a Biosphere reserve should provide for public consultation about planning for, and proposed actions in, the Biosphere Reserve.

1.40 The EPBC Act requires that the Australian Government take all reasonable steps to ensure that it exercises its powers and performs its functions in relation to a Biosphere Reserve consistent with the Australian Biosphere Reserve management principles or a written plan made by the Minister.⁷⁵ The Act also provides that the Commonwealth may give financial or other assistance for the protection or conservation of a Biosphere Reserve to the State or self-governing Territory in which the Biosphere reserve is situated, or any other person, subject to such conditions as the Minister sees fit.⁷⁶

1.41 The EPBC Act can also apply in other ways to areas listed as Biosphere Reserves. Its provisions concerning Commonwealth assessments and approvals for

⁷⁵ section 339 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

⁷⁶ section 341 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

actions that are likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance, for example, apply to Ramsar wetlands,⁷⁷ listed migratory species, and nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities.⁷⁸ They can also apply to areas listed on the National Heritage List. These provisions can apply irrespective of whether or not an area is designated a Biosphere Reserve.

1.42 Commonwealth regulations require that a management plan be developed for each Biosphere Reserve. Such plans do not have a prescribed format, but as noted above, must include information on the values of the proposed reserve, its size and zonation, its significance in terms of bioregional representation, biodiversity conservation strategies, regional scale sustainable development initiatives, environmental protection measures for future generations, application of the precautionary principle, and the policy and management framework and programs for research, monitoring, education and training.

1.43 Existing management plans such as that the National Capital Plan, the Territory Plan, the Canberra Plan, Namadgi National Park Management Plan, and others as required, may be able to be incorporated by reference and textual linkage. The management plan does not have to be highly detailed and prescriptive, but it should be developed consultatively.⁷⁹

Drivers for this inquiry

1.44 Nature and Society Forum Inc has been advocating the nomination of the ACT as a Biosphere Reserve for several years, and held a series of meetings and a public consultation in 2003.⁸⁰ In February 2006 it co-hosted with the UNESCO Centre at the Australian National University a presentation on the Riverland Biosphere Reserve in South Australia.

1.45 In September 2004 the ACT Labor Party included the proposed nomination in its sustainability election platform.⁸¹ The Chief Minister affirmed that the ACT Government was committed to pursuing the nomination in his opening address to

⁷⁷The Act and Regulations provide principles for managing wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (under which wetlands are listed in both Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks – Lake Ginnini in Namadgi and Blue Lake in Kosciuszko National Park)

⁷⁸ such as the White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland critically endangered ecological community noted below

⁷⁹ Lee Thomas and Julie Middleton (2003), *Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas*, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, 67

⁸⁰ Australian National Commission for UNESCO (2003), 'New Biosphere Reserve proposed', *UNESCO News*, June, 12

⁸¹ Australian Labor Party, ACT Branch (2004), *Sustainability*, Canberra, 4–5

the *Making Canberra Sustainable* forum in October 2005.⁸²

1.46 The 2006 Report of the Centenary of Canberra Task Force favoured a 'Green Centenary' theme in 2013, and recommended that 'Canberra should bid to establish World Biosphere Reserve status for the national capital in 2013'.⁸³

1.47 The ACT Office of Sustainability provided briefings on Biosphere Reserves to the Environment Taskforce of the Canberra Business Council on 4 May 2006, the ACT Rural Landholders' Association on 11 May 2006 and the Property Council's Sustainable Development Committee on 18 April 2006. The Office also discussed the proposal at several meetings of the Sustainability Expert Reference Group.⁸⁴

1.48 There has been intermittent discussion of the proposal in the print media.⁸⁵

1.49 The Committee is also aware that a House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage report on *Sustainable Cities*, had recommended the establishment of an Australian Sustainability Commission and an Australian Sustainability Charter. One suggested role for the Commission was to explore the concept of incentive payments to the States and Territories for sustainability outcomes benchmarked against indicators in the national State of the Environment reporting framework, drawing on the National Competition Council model. One of the overarching targets recommended may be a reduction in the ecological footprint of Australia's major cities.⁸⁶ As at July 2006 the inquiry was continuing into a Sustainability Charter for Australia that could be proposed for ratification at a meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The proposed Charter may include targets in relation to the built environment, water, energy, transport, and, ecological footprint. The Committee has not pursued this issue in this Issues Paper, nor considers the outcome of that inquiry as likely to be inconsistent with the proposed ACT Biosphere Nomination.

⁸² B. Furnass, S. Clark and P. Ramsay (eds) (2005) *Making Canberra Sustainable: Papers presented at the forum 'Making Canberra Sustainable' in October 2005*, Ginninderra Press, Canberra, 15

⁸³ Centenary of Canberra Task Force (2006), *Canberra 100: Celebration of a Century: The Canberra Centenary Blueprint*, Canberra, 16

⁸⁴ Letter from the Minister for the Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, to the Committee Chair dated 30 June 2006

⁸⁵ B. Doherty (2004), 'And now, ACT the biosphere', *The Canberra Times*, 1 December; D. Eastman (2005), 'A bush capital Biosphere Reserve could be a world's first', *The Canberra Times*, 18 June, 11; R. Beeby (2006), 'New Gungahlin extension to cost \$11m a kilometre', *The Canberra Times*, 12 June, 11

⁸⁶ Australian Parliament, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage (2006), *Discussion Paper: Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter* <<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/envIRON/charter/discussionpaper.pdf>>, accessed May 2006

Committee consultations

1.50 The Committee has endeavoured to elicit stakeholders' views on the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, but invites further engagement from industry and the research and education sectors particularly. On 14 March 2006 the Committee resolved to undertake the inquiry. On 23 March 2006 the Executive Director of the then A.C.T. Office of Sustainability, Mr Peter Ottesen, and Mr Andrew Lloyd, briefed the Committee on the nomination proposal, and responded to members' questions. On 24 March 2006 the terms of reference for the inquiry were publicly released and invitations for submissions were sent to stakeholders. Advertisements inviting submissions by 2 June 2006 appeared in *The Canberra Times* and *The Chronicle* on 1 April 2006 and 4 April 2006 respectively.

2 STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS ON PROPOSED NOMINATION

Australian Government view

2.1 The Australian Government Minister for Local Government, Territories and Road, the Hon. Jim Lloyd MP, advised the Committee, on behalf of the National Capital Authority and the Department of the Environment and Heritage, that the Australian Government supports the principle of sustainable development. However, further information was required before a comprehensive submission could be made. Mr Lloyd noted the role of Australian Government legislation, requested information on the area of the ACT that the ACT Government intended to nominate, the core area proposed, the legal protection and governance system proposed, and any possible funding implications for the Commonwealth.⁸⁷

2.2 The Australian Government Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, advised that although the Department of Environment and Heritage was the lead agency responsible for UNESCO Biosphere Reserve policy matters, the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, through its Secretary-General, actively assists in the establishment and development of Biosphere Reserves.⁸⁸

Other stakeholders' views

2.3 All but four of the other 20 submissions lodged with the inquiry by mid-June 2006 supported the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere

⁸⁷ Submission No 20

⁸⁸ Letter from the Australian Government Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, to the Chair of the Planning and Environment Committee, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, dated 26 April 2006

Reserve.⁸⁹ Stakeholders advised the Committee that the main advantages of the proposed nomination and listing would be to:

- enable the ACT Government to demonstrate international leadership, and generate international recognition,⁹⁰ by showcasing the national capital as an ecologically-sensitive, well-planned city, in a Biosphere Reserve seeking long-term sustainability⁹¹
- raise public awareness about the environment and sustainability principles⁹² and generate momentum for change,⁹³ enabling the challenges of achieving sustainability to be better met in the ACT⁹⁴
- identify and promote the natural, cultural and human assets of the region,⁹⁵ including the ACT's cultural landscapes⁹⁶
- provide an opportunity for the ACT to become a centre of sustainable scientific endeavour, and business opportunities⁹⁷
- augur well for collaborative research by CSIRO and the ACT Government on studies of Canberra as a 'living laboratory for understanding urban ecosystems and related issues of sustainability'⁹⁸
- strengthen networks amongst stakeholders already dedicated to protecting environmental interests and land management⁹⁹
- generate regional and national pride, investment in sustainability, and promote tourism and the marketing of local products¹⁰⁰
- demonstrate a commitment to global environmental standards, responsibilities and enhanced environmental values¹⁰¹
- enable more research and monitoring of the environment to be undertaken, enabling progress towards long-term sustainability to be measured¹⁰²
- reaffirm Canberra's commitment to conservation and research of

⁸⁹ Submissions No 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

⁹⁰ Submissions No 16, 21

⁹¹ Submissions No 9, 13, 14, 18

⁹² Submissions No 2, 4, 5, 11, 15, 18

⁹³ Submission No 13

⁹⁴ Submissions No 4, 11

⁹⁵ Submission No 9

⁹⁶ Submission No 17

⁹⁷ Submissions No 11, 15

⁹⁸ Submission No 14

⁹⁹ Submissions No 15, 16

¹⁰⁰ Submissions No 9, 13, 15, 16, 21

¹⁰¹ Submissions No 2, 4

¹⁰² Submissions No 4, 9

landscapes,¹⁰³ ecosystems, species and genetic variation¹⁰⁴

- encourage transformation of cultural, spiritual and economic attitudes towards the environment, fellow consumers and future generations. This would require fundamental changes in personal attitudes so that a new spiritual relationship is fostered with the environment and between people¹⁰⁵
- provide support for the proposed Australian National Sustainability Complex (undefined)¹⁰⁶
- provide more incentives for sustainability¹⁰⁷ and reduce the availability of perverse incentives encouraging people to pursue behaviours harmful to the environment and others¹⁰⁸
- enable Canberra's sustainability gains to be compared with other outstanding cities meeting sustainability criteria¹⁰⁹
- provide a framework that recognises the need for all facets of government and the public to work towards a common goal¹¹⁰

2.4 Several submissions expressed reservations about the proposed nomination, or suggested alternative mechanisms to promote sustainability. One submission preferred the nomination of Canberra as a UNESCO World Heritage site.¹¹¹ In April 2006 the National Trust of Australia also called for Lake George, 30km north-east of Canberra, to be listed as a World Heritage site.¹¹²

2.5 Several submissions queried whether the nomination of the ACT as a Biosphere Reserve, and its listing, would have any regulatory or beneficial impacts. The ACT Rural Landholders' Association asked whether the nomination and listing would impact on the statutory planning framework applicable to the ACT, non-urban land use such as rural villages and hobby farms, and bushfire prevention measures.¹¹³ The Association also questioned the need for the nomination given that the integrity of the ACT was guaranteed by the National Capital Plan, the Territory Plan, the Canberra Plan and the Spatial Plan.¹¹⁴ The Housing Industry Association

¹⁰³ Submission No 5

¹⁰⁴ Submission No 4

¹⁰⁵ Submissions No 5, 9, 11

¹⁰⁶ Submission No 2

¹⁰⁷ Submission No 4

¹⁰⁸ Submission No 5

¹⁰⁹ Submission No 4

¹¹⁰ Submission No 11

¹¹¹ Submission No 7

¹¹² Rosslyn Beeby, (2006), 'Heritage listing sought for lake', *The Canberra Times*, 17 April 2006, 1, 2

¹¹³ Submissions No 6, 8

¹¹⁴ Submission No 8

argued similarly that current regulations and planning systems more than adequately regulate and protect the ACT's environment and private sector initiatives are in place.¹¹⁵

2.6 Dr James Fitzsimons urged the Committee to consider whether the gains to the environment and society that may be achieved through Biosphere Reserve accreditation could be better achieved through other existing or new programs, including Conservation Management Networks.¹¹⁶ An honours thesis case study of the formation and early operation of the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve was sceptical about the extent of stakeholder support for the initiative beyond activist groups, and the outcomes flowing from the designation. The thesis noted that its nomination and early implementation had been impeded by political conflict and lack of awareness of Biosphere Reserve issues in the broader community. This thesis emphasised that regional natural resource management organisations should be fully integrated into Biosphere Reserve management.¹¹⁷

2.7 The Chief Minister's Sustainability Expert Reference Group suggested that opponents of particular developments might use the designation of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve as the reason the development should not proceed.¹¹⁸ Another submission warned against the proposed nomination being misused to stifle sustainable urban development.¹¹⁹

2.8 CSIRO urged the Committee to ensure that discussions on boundaries and zoning were accompanied by public consultation and education, emphasising their voluntary and non-legal nature.¹²⁰

Committee's preliminary views

2.9 The Committee notes the views expressed in submissions to date. The Committee agrees that the proposed nomination would raise awareness about sustainability issues in the broader community, and may stimulate behavioural change and the sustainability sector in the region.

2.10 Elsewhere, the designation of other Biosphere Reserves has provided a positive incentive for the diversification and strengthening of local economies and promotion of sustainability, particularly in the areas of tourism, ecotourism, and

¹¹⁵ Submission No 19

¹¹⁶ Submission No 3

¹¹⁷ Glen Hyman (2004), 'La Peninsule de Mornington et la Baie de Port Western: L'expérience d'une réserve de biosphère en Australie', Ch 4

¹¹⁸ Submission No 15

¹¹⁹ Submission No 18

¹²⁰ Submission No 14

branding of quality regional products and services. Examples of Biosphere Reserves promoting these benefits include Riverland in South Australia, the Fitzgerald River in Western Australia,¹²¹ the West Estonian Archipelago,¹²² the Rhöne in Germany¹²³ and Niagara Escarpment and Clayoquot Sound in Canada.¹²⁴ Australia's regional food groups' movement is consistent with these initiatives,¹²⁵ but that would not preclude the pursuit of these benefits.

2.11 If local businesses were to support the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve nomination they may wish to pursue the development and adoption of a trademark or logo for products produced and services provided within the Biosphere.

Trademarks are registrable under the *Trade Marks Act 1995* (Cwlth). Given the status of the national capital, Commonwealth legislative protection for such a trademark might possibly be sought, similar to the protection provided by the *Olympic Insignia Protection Act 1987* (Cwlth).

2.12 The Committee is aware of the environmental impacts of unsustainable tourism,¹²⁶ but considers that this is a manageable issue with the development and/or application of appropriate policies.¹²⁷ Tourism projections and impacts are required

¹²¹ The Fitzgerald Biosphere established a Fitzgerald Biosphere Marketing Association (FBMA) and brand logo, developed a business plan and a tourism planning and development strategy, drawing on funding under the Great Southern Area Consultative Committee's Regional Solutions program and shire funding: Great Southern Development Commission, 'Further Boost for Fitzgerald Biosphere', <http://www.gsdc.wa.gov.au/News/2005/25_February_2005/default.asp/-/pid/5269/pid/5776/pid/5791/name/News>, accessed 10 July 2006. See also Giles West (2001), 'Biosphere Reserves for developing quality economies: the Fitzgerald River Biosphere Reserve, Australia', *Parks* 11(1): 10–17

¹²² Rachel Wieting (n.d.), *Sustainable Land Use in European Protected Areas*, IUCN Regional Office for Europe, 9–11, <http://www.iucn.org/places/europe/rofe/documents/sustainable_land_use_report.pdf> accessed 28 June 2006

¹²³ Doris Pokorny (2001), 'Biosphere Reserves for developing quality economies: examples from the Rhöne Biosphere Reserve, Germany', *Parks* 11(1): 16–17

¹²⁴ Jim Birtch, 'Clayoquot Sound, Canada – new economic opportunities for different social groups', *Parks* 11(1): 9; Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (2003), *A Cooperation Plan for Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve*, accessible at <http://www.escarpment.org/biosphere/nebr_cooperation.htm>, 16

¹²⁵ Australian Government (2004), 'Getting a Taste for Regional Food', *Food News Bulletin*, June, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, accessible at <http://www.affa.gov.au/corporate_docs/publications/pdf/food/june_foodnewsbulletin_2004.pdf>

¹²⁶ Barbie Nadeau (2006), 'The Curse of Approval: If UNESCO designates it, they will come. Does identifying world heritage sites do more harm than good?', *Newsweek International*, <<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/12113213/site/newsweek/>>, accessed 29 June 2006

¹²⁷ See for example the Paul F. J. Eagles, Stephen F. McCool and Christopher D. Haynes (2002), *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management*, IUCN Gland, Switzerland; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity*

to be addressed in the Biosphere Reserve nomination document when addressing the development function of the proposed reserve.¹²⁸

2.13 There is considerable scope for the development of environmental education initiatives within Biosphere Reserves. Barkindji Biosphere Reserve, for example, has identified this as an area for promoting sustainable development, using its Education Strategy. The privately run Australian Inland Botanic Gardens was cited as a site for a hub for education, research, tourism and support for conservation volunteers. Barkindji provides an Interpretative Centre, a Kids Teaching Kids Program, an Aboriginal Youth Training Program and a Virtual Biosphere.¹²⁹

2.14 The nomination and designation process need not lead directly to more monitoring, data-collection and evaluation than is already undertaken under a range of legislation,¹³⁰ intergovernmental agreements¹³¹ and policy documents.¹³² However new lines of research may emerge from networking amongst stakeholders within the proposed Biosphere Reserve and with other stakeholders in the World Network. CSIRO has welcomed this possibility.¹³³ Urban sustainability is a growth area of research and Biosphere Reserve designation may stimulate research and collaboration in this area.

2.15 The Committee does not express a view on the proposed nomination of the ACT as a World Heritage site, as UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage nominations and designations are not mutually exclusive. For the ACT to be recognised as a World Heritage site it would need to establish that it has the requisite characteristics of outstanding universal value, and would presumably be nominated

and Tourism Development, <<http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/socio-eco/tourism/guidelines.asp>> accessed 20 April 2006; Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (2003), *Pursuing Common Goals – Opportunities for Tourism and Conservation*, Canberra; Tony Griffin and Megan Vacaflores (2004), *A Natural Partnership: Making National Parks a Tourism Priority*, CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd. A previous ACT Government policy was reflected in: Canberra Tourism, ACT Parks and Conservation (1997), *Promoting the Natural Capital: a Nature Based Tourism Strategy for the ACT*, Canberra

¹²⁸ Section 14, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form

¹²⁹ Catherine Brown and Associates Pty Ltd for Barkindji Biosphere Ltd (2005), Barkindji Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form, Mildura, 81–83

¹³⁰ e.g. *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993 (ACT)*, *Environment Protection Act 1997 (ACT)*, *Financial Management Act 1996 (ACT)*

¹³¹ e.g. *Natural Heritage Trust Agreement*, Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and the ACT, (March 2003)

¹³² e.g. Annual Reports produced in accordance with Annual Reports Directions and Monitoring Indicator Base Data Status Report produced using indicators in the *Canberra Spatial Plan: ACT Auditor-General's Office* (2005), *Performance Audit Report: Reporting on Ecologically Sustainable Development*, Canberra, 16–17, 39

¹³³ Submission No 14

for both its natural heritage and as a cultural landscape (combined work of nature and humankind).

2.16 Conservation Management Networks can also be compatible with Biosphere Reserve designations.¹³⁴ These networks link up relevant landholders and other stakeholders to increase knowledge, interest and effective management of targeted remnant vegetation or ecological communities, such as endangered Red Box/Yellow Gum woodlands (discussed below). The promotion of such cooperative environmental management arrangements across different land tenures is a benefit that can be achieved in both Biosphere Reserves and Conservation Management Networks.

2.17 The Committee recognises that the conferral of Biosphere Reserve status on an area does not diminish the national sovereignty of the Australian Government over that area, or the operation of ACT or Commonwealth law. As noted above, the Australian Government prescribes management principles for Biosphere Reserves in its *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth). All other Commonwealth and Territory legislation would continue to operate within its Constitutional and legislative parameters.

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 and programs?

3 CONTENT OF PROPOSED NOMINATION DOCUMENT

3.1 UNESCO provides a pro-forma nomination document for Biosphere Reserves. This comprises:

- a summary section indicating how the nominated area responds to the functions and criteria for Biosphere Reserves set out in the Statutory Framework, and presents the signatures of endorsements for the nomination from the authorities concerned. Information is required about the name of the reserve (discussed below), how the three functions of Biosphere Reserves are to be fulfilled, how Biosphere Reserve criteria are met, zonation, organisational arrangements, implementation mechanisms

¹³⁴ James A. Fitzsimons (2004), 'The Contribution of Multi-tenure Reserve Networks to Biodiversity Conservation', PhD Thesis, School of Ecology and Environment, Deakin University, accessible at <<http://tux.lib.deakin.edu.au/adt-VDU/public/adt-VDU20050817.103606/>>

and endorsements.

- a second more descriptive and detailed section, requires biophysical information, and information on the means for ensuring that the aims and functions of Biosphere Reserves can be realised in the proposed area, and institutional arrangements
- an annexure for updating the Directory of Biosphere Reserves on the MABnet, once the site has been approved as a Biosphere Reserve.¹³⁵

3.2 Only the requirements of the summary section are discussed here.

Criteria for designation as a Biosphere Reserve

3.3 The key attributes of designated Biosphere Reserves are that they should –

- encompass a mosaic¹³⁶ of ecological systems representative of major biogeographic regions,¹³⁷ including a gradation of human interventions
- be of significance for biodiversity conservation
- provide an opportunity to explore and demonstrate approaches to sustainable development on a regional scale
- have an appropriate size to serve the three functions of Biosphere Reserves, recognised through appropriate zonation, i.e.
 - a legally constituted core area or areas devoted to long term protection
 - a buffer zone or zones clearly identified and surrounding or contiguous to the core area or areas, where only activities compatible with the conservation objectives can take place
 - an outer transition area where sustainable resource management practices are promoted and developed
- provide for the involvement and participation of a suitable range of stakeholders, including public authorities, local communities and private interests
- provide for:
 - (a) mechanisms to manage human use and activities in the buffer zone or zones
 - (b) a management policy or plan for the area as a Biosphere Reserve

¹³⁵ UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program (2004), *Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form*, accessible at <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/offDoc.shtml>>

¹³⁶ Defined as ‘a diversity of natural habitats and land cover types derived from human uses such as fields, managed forests, etc.’: s.4.1 UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program (2004), *Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form*

¹³⁷ UNESCO does not define ‘major biogeographic region’ but refers to the map of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves’ which presents 12 major ecosystem types at a global scale

- (c) a designated authority or mechanism to implement this policy or plan
- (d) programmes for research, monitoring, education and training¹³⁸

Stakeholder views

3.4 Professor Ken Taylor said in his submission that the landscape setting of Canberra and the National Capital Open Space system should provide the basis for the nomination because 'landscape idealism was the *raison d'être* for the concept of a federal capital'.¹³⁹ Urban ACT and its surrounds constitutes a unique and evolving cultural landscape that has changed through Aboriginal and more recent human occupation.¹⁴⁰ The nomination should also recognise the contribution of Scrivener, the Griffin plan and the work of Charles Weston and Lindsay Pryor.¹⁴¹ Mr Anderson expressed a similar view that the ACT was 'eminently suited' for nominating and listing as a Biosphere Reserve because of its outstanding flora and fauna, Aboriginal heritage, educational and research facilities, national institutions, and its urban population in a landscape setting.¹⁴²

3.5 Mr Anderson suggested that the nomination document could use the same approach as the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port nomination since UNESCO had commended that document.¹⁴³

3.6 The ACT Division of the Institute of Foresters of Australia emphasised the importance of a range of forest, woodland and fire management issues within the nomination document and subsequent management of the proposed Biosphere Reserve.¹⁴⁴

3.7 The ACT Rural Landholders Association queried whether an ACT population policy would be an element of the biosphere proposal.¹⁴⁵

3.8 Submissions also referred to sustainability policies such as the ACT's *Canberra Plan* and its components, and noted that issues of governance, policy integration and implementation should be addressed.¹⁴⁶

Zones – possible boundaries of the core, transition and buffer

¹³⁸ Article 4 – Criteria, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*

¹³⁹ Submission No 7

¹⁴⁰ Submission No 7

¹⁴¹ Submission No 7

¹⁴² Submission No 13

¹⁴³ Submission No 13

¹⁴⁴ Submission No 18

¹⁴⁵ Submission No 8

¹⁴⁶ Submission No 4

zones

3.9 Biosphere reserves have traditionally adopted a concentric structure but need not necessarily. Core zones should be legally constituted, have long-term protection, and be of sufficient size to meet its conservation objectives. Core areas can occur in urban areas provided these requirements are met. They can also be dispersed within a larger area of buffer and transition zones.¹⁴⁷ Dispersed core areas should be linked with buffer areas to ensure habitat connectivity for species.

3.10 Buffer zones around or next to core areas can be used for activities compatible with the objectives of the core zone. Outer transition areas, or zones of co-operation should include activities that demonstrate and promote sustainable development.¹⁴⁸

3.11 The ACT Labor sustainability policy refers to Canberra's protected water catchments and Namadgi National Park as a core protected area with little human activity; ACT rural lands, forest, Canberra Nature Park, the Murrumbidgee Corridor and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve as a buffer zone; and the Canberra urban area and village and farm areas as a zone of economic and social cooperation.¹⁴⁹

3.12 An important consideration in this context is that Namadgi National Park sits alongside Kosciuszko National Park. The Australian Alps bioregion, which includes both Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks, is recognised by the World Conservation Union as one of the 167 world centres of biodiversity,¹⁵⁰ and can be considered a transboundary cooperative partnership.¹⁵¹ The entire Kosciuszko National Park was designated as a Biosphere Reserve in 1977, but as noted above, it is not currently fulfilling Seville Strategy objectives. The Australian Alps bioregion extends into the ACT, as indicated by the map at [Appendix A](#).

3.13 The 2006 *Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management* notes the NSW Government's intention to explore the concept of an expanded Biosphere Reserve across various land tenures. The aim is to deliver environmental, social, utilitarian and economic benefits across the region, to achieve landscape-wide conservation outcomes, and to strengthen social and economic linkages between the park and local communities. The need for general community support for the proposal is recognised, and the priority ranking for the implementation of this commitment is

¹⁴⁷ Peter Dogsé (2004), 'Toward Urban Biosphere Reserves', in Christine Alfsen-Norodom *et al* (eds) (2004), *Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities*, at 11-13, 19

¹⁴⁸ Matysek *et al*, 'The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program in Australia', 87

¹⁴⁹ Australian Labor Party ACT Branch (2004), *Sustainability*, 4

¹⁵⁰ International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN): Department of Environment and Conservation NSW (2006), *Plan of Management – Kosciuszko National Park*, 7

¹⁵¹ Worboys *et al*, *Protected Area Management*, 240.

‘medium’.¹⁵²

Stakeholders' views

3.14 Various boundaries have been recommended for the Biosphere Reserve:

- Several submissions said the boundary should be the ACT.¹⁵³ The Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra suggested that while there could be merit in nominating the National Capital Region (as assessed in the regional State of the Environment reports) initially the nomination should be confined to the ACT for practical, achievability reasons.
- The Conservation Council also suggested that the core area ought to embrace high quality ecosystems, natural landscapes (including riparian and wetland areas), Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Reserve, and grasslands and woodlands identified in the ACT's grasslands and woodland strategies. Buffer and transition zones would include hills, ridges, drainage lines, grazing leases, open spaces etc., and corridors identified in the grassland, woodland and riparian strategies, with the higher quality areas being assigned to 'buffer' and lower quality areas to 'transition'.¹⁵⁴
- Other submissions suggested similarly, that the core area be Namadgi National Park; the buffer zone the Murrumbidgee Corridor, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Nature Parks, forests (plantations), and grazing farmland; and the transition area be the built-up area (residential, commercial, industrial, cropping farmland etc. and the associated ecological resources including corridors, vegetation, hydrology and micro-climates).¹⁵⁵
- Mr Ian Anderson, of the ANU Centre for UNESCO, suggested that Namadgi could be the core; rural leases, river corridors and Canberra Nature Park could be the buffer areas; and the rest of the ACT could be the transition zone.¹⁵⁶
- Expressing a contrary view similar to CSIRO's concerning urban Canberra, Professor Taylor suggested that the core area could correspond with the city

¹⁵² NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (2006), *Plan of Management – Kosciuszko National Park*, Sydney <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/PDFs/KNP_POM.pdf> accessed 29 June 2006, xviii, 24, 226, 312

¹⁵³ Submission No 4, 13, 15

¹⁵⁴ Submission No 16. Submission No 21 expressed a similar view

¹⁵⁵ Submissions No 9, 18. Submission 15 suggested that National Capital Plan areas which were wildlife corridors could be core or transition areas and this would need to be negotiated with the Commonwealth

¹⁵⁶ Submission No 13

area and inner open space system, the transition zone with part of the outer hills, ridges and valleys, and the buffer zone with the rest of the outer hills and fringing mountains and bushland.¹⁵⁷

Cross-border issues

3.15 Several submissions noted that as the ACT is an enclave of NSW, the resource management, development and conservation policies of both jurisdictions were interdependent, requiring inter-sectoral and inter-jurisdictional cooperation. A biosphere listing could facilitate this.¹⁵⁸

- CSIRO suggested that the boundaries of the proposed Biosphere Reserve should be ecological and not administrative, with the Upper Murrumbidgee Basin providing the logical landscape boundary for water as the integrator of land use and management decisions in the region. The National Capital Region boundaries could be used to address Canberra's urban ecological footprint.¹⁵⁹ CSIRO also suggested that urban Canberra should be the core of what could be known as the National Capital Urban Biosphere Region.¹⁶⁰
- The Chief Minister's Sustainability Expert Reference Group agreed that the proposed nomination should extend beyond the ACT, with the ACT Government consulting with the NSW Government on the merits of incorporating parts of NSW in the proposed nomination.¹⁶¹

3.16 The NSW Government expressed a willingness to discuss a joint approach to the management of Kosciuszko National Park and the ACT as a major biosphere. The cooperative approach already taken by NSW and ACT agencies in the Australian Alps Liaison Committee could be applied to the biosphere proposal.¹⁶²

Committee's preliminary views

3.17 The ACT includes part of the Australian Alps sub-bioregion and most of the South-Eastern Highlands sub-bioregion. These are recognised within the Interim Bioregionalisation of Australia (Version 6.1) developed by government departments in Australia with responsibilities for the environment.¹⁶³ These bioregions are

¹⁵⁷ Submission No 7

¹⁵⁸ Email communication, Mr Glen Hyman, 6 April 2006; see also Submission No 3

¹⁵⁹ Submission No 14. See Figure 1, ACT Commissioner for the Environment (2005), *Annual Report 2004–05*, ACT Government, Canberra, 7, for a map of the National Capital Region

¹⁶⁰ Submission No 14

¹⁶¹ Submission No 15

¹⁶² Submission No 12

¹⁶³ Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, Australia's Biogeographical Regions, <<http://eriss.erin.gov.au/parks/nrs/ibra/index.html>>, accessed 4 July 2006

indicated on the maps at Appendix B and C. It may be worth considering whether a cooperative transboundary, or cross-border Biosphere Reserve should be designated for all or part of Kosciuszko National Park and the ACT, and possibly Brindabella National Park. Some might argue that the entire Australian Alps bioregion should be assessed for incorporation in the proposed Biosphere Reserve. This would be politically and logistically difficult to achieve, however, given the Victorian Government's policy of not providing funding or in-kind support for Biosphere Reserve nominations.¹⁶⁴

3.18 It could be considered that high quality Yellow Box/Red Gum woodlands in the region should be included in the core zone of the proposed Biosphere Reserve as these are recognised as critically endangered.¹⁶⁵ The largest and best surviving stands of these woodlands occur primarily in the ACT/Queanbeyan/Goulburn region. Similarly, surviving patches of the endangered natural temperate grasslands of south-eastern Australia,¹⁶⁶ and their associated flora and fauna, could be included in the proposed biosphere, even if they are located in NSW. The grassland biodiversity of the Lake George area, towards Goulbourn has been cited as worthy of nomination for World Heritage listing.¹⁶⁷ The Committee has not pursued world heritage issues for the purposes of this inquiry.

3.19 If Kosciuszko National Park and other areas contiguous with the ACT were to be included in a cross-border Biosphere Reserve, the ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework could be applied. In March 2006 an *Agreement for the ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework* was concluded between the ACT Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, and the NSW Premier, the Hon. Mr Morris Iemma MP. A Senior Officials Group led by the Chief Executive of the ACT Chief Minister's Department and the Director General of the NSW Premier's Department, and

¹⁶⁴ Victorian Government (2002), *State Government Policy on Biosphere Reserve Proposals*, <
[http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/nrenpr.nsf/9e58661e880ba9e44a256c640023eb2e/34bcdfb0fb1b07794a256dea00229ee5/\\$FILE/state%20govt%20policy.pdf](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/nrenpr.nsf/9e58661e880ba9e44a256c640023eb2e/34bcdfb0fb1b07794a256dea00229ee5/$FILE/state%20govt%20policy.pdf)>, accessed 3 July 2006

¹⁶⁵ Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* (ACT) these woodlands are recognised as an endangered ecological community. The *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1980* (NSW) lists similar woodland as the endangered ecological community of White Box/Yellow Box/Blakeley's Red Gum. The *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth) lists White Box-Yellow Box-Blakeley's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland as critically endangered.

¹⁶⁶ These grasslands include wet *Themeda*, *Poa Labillardieri*, *Austrodanthonia*, and dry *Themeda* grasslands: see generally ACT Government (2005), *A Vision Splendid of the Grassy Plains Extended – ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy*, Action Plan 28, Canberra, 15–16. Natural Temperate Grasslands are an endangered ecological community under the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* (ACT); some grassland species are protected under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1980* (NSW) and the 'Natural Temperate Grassland of the Southern Tablelands of NSW and the ACT' are listed under the EPBC Act 1999 (Cwlth)

¹⁶⁷ Rosslyn Beeby, 'Heritage listing sought for lake', *The Canberra Times*, 17 April 2006

supported by relevant agency senior officials, is to meet at least twice per year, usually in April and November. Other key stakeholders such as local governments and the Australian Government would become involved as required. Strategic themes and work plans are to be agreed through inter-governmental consultation. First Ministers are to meet annually, usually early in the year.¹⁶⁸ Other Memoranda of Understanding concerning cross-border issues are also in place or close to finalisation.¹⁶⁹

3.20 The ACT is also a party to the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperative Management of the Alps Parks and participates actively in the Alps Cooperative Management Program.¹⁷⁰ The ACT *Natural Resource Management Plan* addresses regional issues through its targets for the NSW *Murrumbidgee Blueprint*. Cross-border issues are also recognised in the report of the 1999 Natural Heritage Trust-funded project 'Corridors for Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation in the ACT with Links to the Region' and the 2002 *Planning Framework for Natural Ecosystems—NSW Southern Tablelands and ACT*.¹⁷¹

3.21 In the Committee's view, the Senior Officials Group under the ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework would be an appropriate mechanism for initially pursuing negotiations concerning possible cross-border issues raised by the zonation of the proposed Biosphere Reserve, including issues concerning Kosciuszko National Park, possible designation of high quality riparian areas, and possible inclusion of any high quality woodlands and grasslands towards Lake George.¹⁷²

Issue for comment – Should the proposed Biosphere Reserve include negotiations with NSW about possible cross-border zonation?

¹⁶⁸ ACT Government and NSW Government, *ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework*, 2006

¹⁶⁹ Both NSW and ACT have signed the memoranda of understanding between the ACT and NSW on Cross Border Region Settlement and on Cross Border Water Supply. In early July 2006 the Commonwealth had yet to sign the tripartite Water Resources Memorandum as negotiations were continuing.

¹⁷⁰ Submission No 6. See also Submission No 9

¹⁷¹ M. Fallding (2002), *Planning Framework for Natural Ecosystems—NSW Southern Tablelands and ACT*, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

¹⁷² concerning possible implications for the *Memorandum of Understanding between the ACT, NSW and the Commonwealth on ACT and NSW Cross Border Water Resources*, 2006 and the *Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the ACT Government and NSW Government on Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales Cross Border Region Settlement*.

Zonation and fulfilment of Biosphere Reserve functions

Core areas

3.22 In summary, the Committee considers that the core areas of the proposed Biosphere Reserve could include:

- parts of Namadgi National Park (Zones 1 & 2), parts of Kosciuszko National Park, and Brindabella National Park
- parts of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve
- the Australian National Botanic Gardens
- parts of Canberra Nature Park
- high quality sections of riparian corridors, and
- remnant protected high quality endangered woodlands on public and private lands in local council areas surrounding the ACT

3.23 It may also be feasible to nominate Canberra's arboreta – the Canberra International Arboretum and Gardens, Westbourne Woods and the Lindsay Pryor Arboretum – as core areas.

3.24 This proposed core zone would encompass significant components of the ACT's biodiversity that are representative of the Australian Alps and Southern Tablelands bioregions. This furthers the aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its ecosystem approach. These are also important sites for research, education and training.¹⁷³ Appendix D includes maps depicting ACT areas and their linkages as wildlife corridors.

3.25 The values of protected areas are inevitably diverse and subjective as discussed in park management plans. Namadgi National Park is especially important for nature conservation and water supply and quality in the ACT, and as an important component of the Australian Alps parks system. It is also significant for its geomorphological features (landform, geological, hydrological) and the high level of integrity of its ecological communities and processes.¹⁷⁴ Kosciuszko National Park is similarly significant for its core values of natural and cultural heritage, and its social,

¹⁷³ See for example National Parks Association of the ACT Inc, *Caring Namadgi: Science and People: NPA ACT Symposium Canberra 5–7 May 2006*, conference proceedings CD

¹⁷⁴ For a detailed statement of significance see ACT Government, Environment ACT (2005), *Namadgi National Park Draft Management Plan*, Arts, Heritage and Environment, Canberra, accessible at <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/bushparksandreserves/strategiesandplans/namadginationalparkmanagementplan>, accessed 29 June 2006, 9–10

recreational, tourism, utilitarian and economic values.¹⁷⁵ Both parks have important values for Aboriginal people and a rich heritage value for the broader community.

3.26 Parts of Tidbinbilla may also warrant inclusion in the core zone. Tidbinbilla borders Namadgi National Park, which also links to the Kosciuszko National Park and the Australian Alps. There has been minimal development in Tidbinbilla's national park zone, with activities restricted to walking trails and fire trails.¹⁷⁶ The Reserve is also home to breeding programs for threatened species, including the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby and the Northern Corroboree Frog. Notwithstanding the devastating impact of the 2003 bushfires, the conservation intent of the national park zone remains, and the area is recovering. Indigenous heritage is also significant in the area.

3.27 The Australian National Botanic Gardens is a major national scientific and educational collection of Australian flora, and an award-winning ecotourism destination. It has an invaluable living collection of about one-third of all flowering plants, and half of the known eucalypt species that occur in Australia. It is an IUCN Category IV Australian Government protected area. Administered by the Department of the Environment and Heritage, it contributes to meeting Australia's international obligations under various international environmental conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, maintains stakeholder partnerships, and manages internationally significant biodiversity research, education and communication activities.¹⁷⁷

3.28 Canberra Nature Park protects significant components of the ACT's biodiversity. It includes the following nature reserves which have long-term protection and which form wildlife corridors which are intended to protect much of their biodiversity. High quality areas from those listed below, protected primarily for their conservation values, could be included in the proposed Biosphere Reserve.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| • Mt Ainslie | • Aranda Bushland |
| • Black Mountain | • Bruce Ridge |
| • Cooleman Ridge | • Crace Grasslands |
| • Dunlop Grasslands | • Farrer Ridge |
| • Goorooyaroo | • Gossan Hill |
| • Gungaharra | • Issacs Ridge |
| • Jerrabomberra Wetlands | • Mt Majura |

¹⁷⁵ Department of Environment and Conservation NSW (2006), *Plan of Management – Kosciuszko National Park*, 7–10

¹⁷⁶ ACT Government (1999), *Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Management Plan*, Environment ACT, Canberra

¹⁷⁷ Director of National Parks (2005), 'Australian National Botanic Gardens' in State of the Parks Report, Canberra, <<http://www.anbg.gov.au/anbg/annual-report/anbg-dnp-report-0405.pdf>> accessed 3 July 2006, 45

- McQuoids Hill
- Mullangarri Grasslands
- O'Connor Ridge
- Percival Hill
- Mt Pleasant
- Oakey Hill
- Mt Taylor
- Urambi Hills
- Mt Mugga Mugga
- Mulligans Flat
- Mt Painter
- The Pinnacle
- Red Hill
- Rob Roy
- Tuggeranong Hill
- Wanniasa Hills

3.29 There are various rivers and riparian zones in the ACT that may warrant nomination as core areas for the proposed Biosphere Reserve. These include the Molonglo River Corridor, Murrumbidgee River Corridor and some of the catchment of the Gudgenby and Naas rivers.¹⁷⁸ Gorge areas along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor could be included in the core zone, for example. These include areas downstream of Guises Creek, Red Rocks, Bullen Range, downstream of Casuarina Sands and on the northern ACT border.¹⁷⁹

3.30 Canberra's existing and proposed arboreta are sites for tree conservation, but also provide species for scientific study and education, including taxonomic research and training. The Canberra International Aboretum and Gardens, west of the Tuggeranong Parkway and Lake Burley Griffin, will eventually include 100 forests and gardens, of primarily endangered species, planted across the site. In anticipation of its completion, this area may also warrant listing as a core area for the proposed Biosphere Reserve.

Buffer areas

3.31 The Committee considers that the buffer areas could include Urban Open Space land under the Territory Plan that is not in Canberra Nature Park (including pedestrian ways, sports grounds, parks and other landscaped spaces used for recreation, environmental protection and amenity, storm water drainage and minor public utilities), parts of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve that is not national park zone, some rural leases which are not used for intensive agriculture, and Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshores.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ ACT Government (2006), *Ribbons of Life – Draft Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy*, Action Plan No. 29, Canberra, 106

¹⁷⁹ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan*, <http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/planning_and_urban_design/national_capital_plan/>, accessed 3 July 2006, 67

¹⁸⁰ This land is also within the National Capital Open Space System under the National Capital Plan, <http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/planning_and_urban_design/national_capital_plan/consolidated_download.asp#download_2>, 71

3.32 The Tidbinbilla valley floor may be suitable for inclusion in the buffer area. It provides a variety of nature-based facilities and recreation experiences with a Visitors Information Centre, barbecue and picnic areas and large wildlife enclosures.

3.33 Such buffer areas are already managed in accordance with the Territory Plan land use policies, site-specific management plans, or Land Management Agreements with rural lessees.

Transition areas

3.34 As noted above, transition areas are where sustainable resource management practices are promoted and developed. This could include some rural leasehold land in the ACT, private landholdings in NSW that are included in the Biosphere Reserve, and urban Canberra.

3.35 There are numerous sustainability initiatives being pursued in urban Canberra, in addition to current laws and policies such as the Canberra Plan, which are worthy of international recognition. These include proposed reforms of the planning system, water sensitive urban design guidelines, leadership of the sustainability working group for the Australian Building Codes Board on national performance measures for sustainability in building codes and planning systems, post-bushfire rural village development, and the Causeway redevelopment.

3.36 Other initiatives that demonstrate sustainability include the Yarralumla Creek Community Restoration Project, Graffiti Management Strategy and Art Workshops, Theodore and Hawker Primary School's Wastewise program, Farrer Primary School's environment centre, Gilmore Primary School's Improvement Friendship Teams, amongst many others.

The logistic support function of Biosphere Reserves

3.37 UNESCO invites information to be submitted in its nomination document on current and planned research and monitoring programs, the number of scientists working in the Biosphere Reserve, research facilities, environmental education and public awareness activities, specialist training, and collaboration with Biosphere Reserves at all levels (international, national, regional or subregional and thematic).

3.38 The ACT has world-class teaching and research centres and a very active commitment to environmental education, both at ACT and Australian Government levels. Information on this would be included in the nomination document. The ACT also has extensive data collection, monitoring and evaluation activities. This is required under the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* (ACT) and the *ACT Natural Resource Management Plan*, amongst other laws and policies.

Thematic Sub-Networks of Biosphere Reserves

Stakeholders' views

3.39 Mr Anderson noted a view that the ACT biosphere has 'tremendous potential to find or create a sister biosphere in an undeveloped country and provide assistance by drawing on the strengths of the ACT (e.g. research, education)'.¹⁸¹

3.40 CSIRO suggested that an organisation outside of government would be best placed to coordinate education, training, research and monitoring activities relating to the Biosphere Reserve, and that comparable international experience in other cities examining Biosphere Reserve listing such as New York, Cape Town, Rome and São Paulo be considered.¹⁸² CSIRO also suggested that the Long Term Ecological Research network of research sites in the United States could be considered as a partner for the proposed Biosphere Reserve. That network currently includes two urban sites – Phoenix and Baltimore.¹⁸³

Name of the proposed Biosphere Reserve

3.41 UNESCO advises that a locally accepted geographic, descriptive or symbolic name, which allows people to identify themselves with the site concerned, should be proposed in the nomination document. Except in unusual circumstances, according to UNESCO, Biosphere Reserves should not be named after existing national parks or similar administrative areas (such as the ACT).¹⁸⁴

3.42 The ACT Place Names Committee has advised the Committee¹⁸⁵ that it can propose a name for a proposed designation before the nomination has been assessed and listed. The Committee would prefer, however, that an approved acceptable name be submitted on the nomination document. The Committee advised that the *Public Place Names Act 1989* (ACT) applies to the naming of unleased Territory land only. As such the name of the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve would not be gazetted under that Act, but would become official when UNESCO officially designated the Biosphere Reserve.

3.43 The Place Names Committee advised further that the process to name a public place in the ACT is not generally a public one. The Committee Secretariat would

¹⁸¹ Submission No 13

¹⁸² Submission No 14

¹⁸³ Submission No 14

¹⁸⁴ UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program (2004), Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form, section 1.

¹⁸⁵ Correspondence dated 30 June 2006 from Lorraine Bayliss, Secretariat ACT Place Names Committee, ACT Land Information Centre

undertake appropriate research and collaborate with the National Capital Authority and the Department of the Territory and Municipal Services. If the nominated area concerned includes NSW land (such as Kosciuszko National Park) consultation and collaboration would also include the NSW Geographical Names Board, and the Kosciuszko National Park Authority.

3.44 However if requested by the ACT Government, consultation and collaboration would be undertaken with relevant agencies and stakeholders and could include the community.

3.45 The timeframe within which the Place Names Committee could propose a name for the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve would be in the order of three months. This would allow for appropriate research, consultation and clearance through the Minister for Planning to be undertaken.

Issue for comment – If there is broad community support for the proposed nomination, should the ACT Place Names Committee invite stakeholders to participate in the process of selecting a name for the proposed Biosphere Reserve?

Committee's preliminary views

Name of the proposed Biosphere Reserve

3.46 The Committee considers that the process for naming the proposed Biosphere Reserve should be open and participatory, and be part of a broader ACT Government community engagement and communications strategy for the proposed nomination. It may assist such an initiative if the Minister for Planning were to request the Place Names Committee to undertake preliminary research and consultation with relevant government stakeholders to identify a range of possible names, including appropriate names of indigenous origin.

Thematic Sub-Networks of Biosphere Reserves

3.47 A sister-city agreement was formalised between Canberra and Nara, Japan, in 1993. Friendly stakeholder relationships have since flourished amongst schools, cultural and sporting organisations, Rotary clubs, professional organisations, business and government.

3.48 In the Committee's view, it would be appropriate for the possibility of an investigation into the merits of a partnering Biosphere Reserve nomination to be raised with the government of the Nara Prefecture and the Government of Japan. Potential synergies, which might form the basis of a thematic sub-network relationship with the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve, could also be explored. The Committee is aware that Biosphere Reserve sub-networks exist in Africa, the Middle

East, Europe,¹⁸⁶ for example, but not yet in Asia or Oceania. The Committee sees potential in such a regional network being encouraged.

Issue for comment – Should the issue of a Biosphere Reserve nomination be raised with the City of Nara, Japan, with a view to forming a thematic sub-network relationship with the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve?

Committee's preliminary views

3.49 The Committee has examined the nomination document lodged for Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve and considers that it would be a useful aid to the person(s) or organisations preparing the nomination document for the ACT. The content of any nomination document cannot be indicated, however, until the boundaries of the proposed reserve have been settled.

3.50 The Committee considers that the themes and priorities identified in the nomination document could deliver environmental, social and economic benefits beyond existing programs.

3.51 UNESCO considers the extent of community engagement and support for a proposed nomination.¹⁸⁷ The Committee would not be surprised, however, if anti-United Nations sentiment is expressed during community debate about the possible nomination of the ACT as a Biosphere Reserves.¹⁸⁸ Such debate has occurred in the United States where nationalist legislation proposing to require the re-authorisation of all World Heritage and Biosphere Reserve designations has been introduced to Congress but has failed at least twice to pass the Senate.¹⁸⁹

Timeframe for the proposed nomination

3.52 As noted above, the progress of nominations lodged with UNESCO depends on the schedule of meetings of the Biosphere Reserves Advisory Committee and the Man and the Biosphere International Coordinating Council. Dates for these meetings are not settled more than twelve months ahead. A UNESCO program officer advised

¹⁸⁶ James D. Brown (2002), 'The integration of Man and the Biosphere', *Georgetown International Environmental Law Review*, 741–765, at Section D

¹⁸⁷ UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program (2004), *Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form*, accessible at <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/offDoc.shtml>>, 17.6.1, 17.6.5

¹⁸⁸ See for example Michael Catanzaro (1997), 'Alaska's Young calls for abolishing UN 'biospheres' on US Territory', *Human Events* 53(34): 6

¹⁸⁹ EagleForum.Org, (2001), 'A Conservative Agenda for the 107th Congress', *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, 34(6) January, <<http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/2001/jan01/psrjan01.shtml>> accessed 29 June 2006; James D. Brown (2002), 'The integration of Man and the Biosphere', *Georgetown International Environmental Law Review*, 741–765, at Section B

that as a general rule, nominations should be lodged by the end of a calendar year for consideration the following year.¹⁹⁰

Stakeholders' views

3.53 Stakeholders suggested various dates for the proposed nomination in submissions:

- Nature and Society Forum suggested that the nomination document should be submitted by June 2007 with the aim of having the ACT Biosphere Reserve declared in 2008, and fully operational and celebrated during Canberra's 2013 centenary.¹⁹¹ Other submissions also suggested that 2008 might be appropriate for the listing, as in 1908 the Yass-Canberra area was selected as a finalist for the site for the national capital.¹⁹² 2009 could also be appropriate, as 1909 was when Charles Scrivener reported that the Limestone Plains would be the best site for the capital.¹⁹³
- CSIRO suggested that listing should be sought for 2013 as coordinating frameworks and community partnerships needed to be developed, and the Canadian experience suggested that it took, on average, nearly ten years to move from stakeholder acceptance of the idea to UNESCO designation of Biosphere Reserve status.¹⁹⁴

Committee's preliminary views

3.54 The Committee considers that much consultation and awareness raising remains to be done about this proposal. The Committee considers, therefore, that the ACT Government should give the proposed nomination more attention, with a view to lodging the nomination by December 2008.

Issue for comment – Should the Committee advise the Assembly that 'by December 2008' should be the timeframe for the lodgement of the nomination form for the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve with UNESCO?

Viability of the proposed nomination

¹⁹⁰ Email communication from Dr Thomas Scaaf, UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program, 29 June 2006.

¹⁹¹ Submission No 9

¹⁹² Submissions No 7, 13, 16, 21

¹⁹³ Submission No 7

¹⁹⁴ Submission No 14, citing M.M. Ravindra (2004). 'A Road to Tomorrow: Local organizing for a Biosphere Reserve' *Environments* 32(3), 43–59

3.55 The criteria applied by UNESCO for the designation of Biosphere Reserves, prescribed in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly in November 1995, have been noted above.

Committee's preliminary views

3.56 In the Committee's view these criteria could be satisfied on current practices in the ACT, but it invites stakeholder feedback before recommending as such to the Legislative Assembly. The Australian Alps and South-east Highlands bioregions, and the core areas tentatively identified in this paper, are highly significant for biodiversity conservation. Sustainable development on a regional scale can be explored and demonstrated. Zonation on a bioregional scale is possible, and the three functions of Biosphere Reserves (conservation, development and logistics) can be demonstrated. Legally constituted, highly protected core areas exist. Buffer zones surrounding or contiguous to the core areas are fairly readily identifiable, but further assessment and negotiation would be required.

3.57 Mechanisms to manage activities in these zones are already in place. The regional, territory and local scale land use, laws and policies that apply for the conservation of biodiversity in the ACT are detailed and substantial. ACT planning law and policy currently recognises the importance of the ecosystem approach and wildlife corridors for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Relevant laws and policies are listed at [Appendices E and F](#). There are many examples of sustainable resource management practices being promoted and developed in urban Canberra, the proposed transition zone. A wide range of stakeholders is already engaged in natural resource management in the ACT. A management plan could be developed for the proposed Biosphere Reserve drawing on readily accessible information. A designated implementing body, if not the Department of the Territory and Municipal Services, has yet to be identified. ACT and the region are also very well endowed with programs and institutions dedicated to research, monitoring, education and training.

3.58 In the Committee's preliminary view, the biodiversity values of the ACT and the sustainable development laws and policies in place, and current and possible future initiatives pursued to promote sustainable development, warrant recognition through a Biosphere Reserve nomination.

Issue for comment – Should the Committee recommend to the Assembly that a Biosphere Reserve nomination is viable?

4 MANAGEMENT OF THE NOMINATION

PROCESS AND LISTED BIOSPHERE

4.1 National Governments, through their official UNESCO channels – in Australia’s case the Australian National Commission for UNESCO and/or the Australian Permanent Delegation to UNESCO – are responsible for lodging Biosphere Reserve nominations with the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program Secretariat. The Secretariat verifies the completeness of the nomination document and supporting information, and when complete, refers these to the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves. That Committee makes recommendations to the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Program. The latter makes decisions on nominations, which are communicated back to States by the Director-General of UNESCO.¹⁹⁵ The Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage assists with information and assesses completed nomination documents before these are lodged with Australian UNESCO officials.

4.2 UNESCO also uses the information provided in nomination documents when the Advisory Committee on Biosphere Reserves and the Bureau of the Man and the Biosphere International Coordinating Council examines the site. The information is also uploaded for use in a worldwide accessible information system – the UNESCO-MABnet – that facilitates communications and interaction amongst people interested in Biosphere Reserves.¹⁹⁶

4.3 Which management bodies and structures should be allocated the responsibility of managing a designated Biosphere Reserve would depend on its boundaries and zonation.

Stakeholders’ views

4.4 Stakeholders have suggested various models for the bodies that could manage the nomination process. The Conservation Council noted the importance of having broad support across political parties and from a wide range of stakeholders.¹⁹⁷

- The Chief Minister’s Sustainability Expert Reference Group suggested that following consultation with UNESCO, a Memorandum of Understanding should be agreed between the Commonwealth and ACT Governments, committing the parties to the process and resource sharing arrangements. A Steering Committee of the ACT and Commonwealth Governments should then be convened, with representation from

¹⁹⁵ Article 5 – Designation Procedure, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*

¹⁹⁶ Email communication from Dr Thomas Schaaf, Man and the Biosphere Program, UNESCO, dated 27 June 2006

¹⁹⁷ Submission No 16

professional, education and public interest groups. This committee should consult with the Victorian and Mornington Peninsula authorities, and City of Rome authorities, seeking advice and information on the listing process.¹⁹⁸

- Nature and Society Forum suggested that a suitably qualified project officer be engaged by the ACT Government to prepare the nomination; that an expert advisory panel be established¹⁹⁹ to oversee the nomination process; and that the reports of the ACT Commissioner for the Environment, work previously done by the Nature and Society Forum, and other successful Australian Biosphere Reserve nomination documents (such as the Mornington Peninsula nomination) be drawn on for the nomination document.²⁰⁰
- Professor Taylor suggested that an honorary advisory group consisting of community and professional representatives working with public servants could manage the nomination and management of the proposed Biosphere Reserve.²⁰¹
- Ms Fiona Spier said that on-ground environmental groups and sub-catchment groups have expert knowledge of Canberra's environment and need to be consulted at all stages of the proposed nomination and implementation of the biosphere if approved.²⁰²
- Mr Anderson said that which management model is adopted depends on the outcomes sought from the nomination, whether international status and recognition, or using the nomination and possible listing as a vehicle for encouraging greater community commitments to conservation and sustainable development. He also suggested that while the nomination process could be managed by Commonwealth and ACT Government agencies, it may be preferable to use consultants to prepare the nomination document.²⁰³
- The Conservation Council of Canberra and the South East Region suggested that it would support the nomination if, as a minimum, a committee was established, which would meet once or twice a year on a range of biosphere issues. The committee should be representative of a wide range of stakeholders, including Australian and ACT government agencies, business, education, community and environmental groups,

¹⁹⁸ Submission No 15

¹⁹⁹ comprising representatives of government, educational and research institutions, community groups, business sector, and professional organisations (e.g. architects, engineers)

²⁰⁰ Submission No 9

²⁰¹ Submission No 7

²⁰² Submission No 11

²⁰³ Submission No 13

and would:

- o examine progress made by the UNESCO biosphere program and the ACT's contribution within that,
- o decide how the ACT can promote the concept of the ACT as a Biosphere Reserve internationally, nationally, regionally and locally,
- o examine ways the ACT might reduce the city's ecological footprint and greenhouse gases, and promote a more sustainable city, and
- o make recommendations to government and other stakeholders on how to foster the aims under the *Seville Strategy*.²⁰⁴

4.5 CSIRO suggested that there were three common models to consider for the nomination and management of the ACT as a Biosphere Reserve. Administration could be undertaken by:

- an existing organisation with responsibilities for certain functions or areas of the Biosphere Reserve, drawing on existing staff and other resources, but risking Biosphere Reserve activities being accorded low priority
- a steering committee representing stakeholder organisations, which risks delays if representatives needed to obtain approval for decisions from their organisation
- an incorporated non-profit association with charitable status which creates an organisation arms length from government, but which can lead to the organisation becoming preoccupied with fundraising. This is the most common model used in Canada.²⁰⁵

4.6 Mr Anderson recommended that a network of interested parties be established, with community organisations and the Commonwealth and ACT Governments nominating a representative, with the chairperson of the group to be a government appointee, or (his preference) to be elected by the network. Local councils could have observer status. He also suggested, however, that the people involved, rather than the organisational structure, were of primary importance to the successful implementation of the biosphere concept.²⁰⁶

4.7 Community roundtables, as have been established in the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve, were not recommended for the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Submission No 16

²⁰⁵ Submission No 14

²⁰⁶ Submission No 13

²⁰⁷ Submission No 13

Committee's preliminary views

4.8 On the issue of who should manage the nomination process, various models are available, as noted in submissions. The Committee's preliminary view is stakeholders may wish to establish or extend an incorporated association, such as a Friends Group, to manage the nomination process, supported by government officials and government secretariat services. An existing body could assume this role provided it had a sufficiently broad range of stakeholders as members.

4.9 Concerning ACT Government participation or representation in such an organisation, the Minister for the Territory and Municipal Services and his Department are responsible for environmental management and sustainability programs. The Committee has been advised that the portfolio also includes responsibility for the proposed nomination.²⁰⁸ The Committee considers that the management of the nomination process and the Biosphere Reserve, if and when designated, would need to have substantial input from the Department, as the land manager for the ACT. The Chief Minister and his Department are responsible for strategic priorities and projects, inter-governmental relations and regional policy, including cross-border issues and sister-city relations, as are raised by this issue. Given the centrality of planning to the designation and management of the proposed Biosphere Reserve, it would also be appropriate for the Minister for Planning and the ACT Planning and Land Authority to be represented in the nominating body.

4.10 The Committee suggests that the process of compiling the nomination document need not be expensive, nor contracted to consultants, as much of the information required for the nomination is already held by ACT Government agencies, and independent statutory offices such as the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment. For private sector and community-held information, stakeholders could be invited to contribute data using on-line templates,²⁰⁹ which could be edited and followed-up by departmental staff as part of the secretariat services provided to the nomination process. The Committee does not support a nomination process progressed entirely independent of government, as community processes slowed and rendered more conflictual than necessary the realisation of the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve.²¹⁰ But neither would a government-driven nomination be likely to be regarded by UNESCO as demonstrating community support and commitment to sustainability outcomes and

²⁰⁸ Letter from the Minister for the Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA, dated 1 June 2006

²⁰⁹ See for example the website managed by the Department of Housing and Community Services, accessible at <<http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/engagement/submit.htm>>

²¹⁰ G. Hyman, Hyman (2004), 'La Peninsule de Mornington et la Baie de Port Western: L'expérience d'une réserve de biosphère en Australie', 88–91

the nomination process.²¹¹

4.11 Whatever the nature of the organisation established or engaged in the nomination process, the Committee considers it important to ensure that an effective Chair is appointed or elected.

4.12 The composition of the organisation would depend partly on whether the proposed biosphere includes parts of NSW. Following the ACT Government's functional review, all advisory groups are being reviewed. Representation on a Biosphere Reserve organisation could be drawn from the ACT Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee, the ACT Natural Resource Management Council, the Sustainability Expert Reference Group, the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, the Planning and Development Forum and the Australian Alps Liaison Committee. Representation could also be included from the sub-catchment community organisations – the Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG), the Ginninderra Catchment Group and the Molonglo Catchment Group.²¹² Depending on the extent of the proposed Biosphere, representation might also be invited from the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Coordinating Committee, Upper Murrumbidgee Landcare Committee, and the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority, amongst others.

4.13 In relation to the management of the Biosphere Reserve, if designated, again there are various models. In Victoria, a company – Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Ltd – manages the Mornington Peninsula Biosphere Reserve. Each of the roundtables established for one of the six designated local government divisions (not ecological subregions) within the reserve are entitled to nominate one Director to the Biosphere Reserve's Foundation Board of Directors. Foundation members are entitled to choose a roundtable to be attached to when they join the Foundation. Other directors are nominated by Foundation Council members, the Victorian Minister responsible for the environment, Parks Victoria, industry or commerce, and the Board (following consultation with the Victorian Minister responsible for the environment).²¹³ Glen Hyman has reviewed this structure and concluded that it seriously restricts the ability of the Biosphere Reserve to address regional issues and implement an ecosystem approach, with

²¹¹ Informal advice provided by Ms Helen Halliday, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, 10 July 2006

²¹² Environment ACT, 'Sub-catchment planning in the ACT', <<http://www.environment.act.gov.au/yourenvironmenthwp/subcatchplan.html>>, accessed 8 November 2005.

²¹³ Constitution of Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Ltd, sub-clause 22.3

roundtables likely to compete for resources against each other.²¹⁴ The alternative of having an incorporated association formed under state law was considered there, but not adopted.

4.14 In Canada a statutory commission was established, supported by community groups, to manage the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve. In South Australia a statutory trust was established to manage the former Bookmark Biosphere Reserve but was subsequently dissolved.²¹⁵

Issue for comment – Which stakeholder groups and/or range of expertise should be represented in an organisation established to progress the nomination of, and/or to manage the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve?

Issue for comment – Should stakeholder groups establish an incorporated association to progress the proposed nomination?

Funding needs and sources

Funding under the national Natural Resource Management Framework

4.15 The Australian Government may provide future funding for the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve through the regional component of the national Natural Resource Management framework, local Natural Heritage Trust programs such as the Australian Government Envirofund. For the former, nominations need to be supported by the accredited regional body, and be a priority in the accredited Natural Resource Management Investment Strategy. Only legally constituted organisations, such as incorporated associations, can receive such funding.²¹⁶ A range of other Australian Government regional assistance programs managed by other departments may also be accessible.

4.16 The Australian Government has already provided environmental funding for existing Biosphere Reserves in Australia from the Natural Heritage Trust – \$1.2 mil

²¹⁴ Hyman (2004), 'La Peninsule de Mornington et la Baie de Port Western: L'expérience d'une réserve de biosphère en Australie', 94–95

²¹⁵ J. Fitzsimons, (2004), 'The Contribution of Multi-tenure Reserve Networks to Biodiversity Conservation', PhD Thesis, School of Ecology and Environment, Deakin University, accessible at < <http://tux.lib.deakin.edu.au/adt-VDU/public/adt-VDU20050817.103606/>>, 153

²¹⁶ Dr David Slip, oral advice to Secretary, 26 May 2006. National level Natural Heritage Trust funding that had been provided for the Barkindji Biosphere Reserve was exceptional as it preceded the operation of the NRM regional framework.

from NHT1 (1996/7–2001/2002) and \$3.4 mil from NHT2 (2002/3–2007/08). Biosphere Reserves now known as Fitzgerald, Bookmark, Barkindji and Riverland were the main beneficiaries.²¹⁷ Funding has also been available under the local funding program, the Australian Government Envirofund.

4.17 As at 3 July 2006, the ACT Natural Resource Management Investment Strategy for 2005/06–2007/08 had been agreed at officials level between the ACT and Australian Governments, and had in principle agreement from the ACT Minister. The Strategy had been developed by the ACT Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee, which was replaced in May 2006 by the ACT Natural Resource Management Council. All projects under this Strategy must be complete by 30 June 2008.²¹⁸ It is not yet clear whether the Natural Heritage Trust and national Natural Resource Management Framework will continue after 2008. Nevertheless organisations bidding for future funding under any government program would need to be legally constituted in order to receive funds.

Stakeholders' views

4.18 Two submissions referred to the possible opportunity costs of the proposed nomination since environmental budgets are already stretched.²¹⁹ Others suggested funding would be needed for a suitably qualified coordinating officer or organisation to undertake research, coordination tasks, secretariat and communication activities.²²⁰ Volunteers, educational and research institutions, and interested community groups could provide substantial assistance.²²¹

4.19 On nomination funding and costs, the Chief Minister's Sustainability Expert Reference Group suggested that preparatory costs could range between \$100,000 and \$250,000 depending on the information UNESCO required for the nomination.²²² Mr Anderson suggested similarly that an indexed annual budget of about \$200,000 should be sufficient to run the secretariat and outreach activities, with government program and private funding being sought for other specific projects.²²³ Suggested

²¹⁷ Information provided by Michelle Evans, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, 13 July 2006. See also Australian Government (2005), *Director of National Parks Annual Report 2004–05*, Canberra, 94, 168

²¹⁸ Informal advice to Committee from Mr John Feint, Department of the Territory and Municipal Services, 3 July 2006

²¹⁹ Submission No 1, 3

²²⁰ Submission No 16

²²¹ Submission No 9

²²² Submission No 15

²²³ Submission No 13

sources of funding included philanthropic organisations, the business sector²²⁴ and Australian and ACT government agencies.²²⁵

4.20 CSIRO submitted that a national framework or model was needed to share information and assist in promoting Biosphere Reserves, and that the Australian Government should contribute to this, either financially or in kind. CSIRO submitted further that such funding was unlikely to be forthcoming for a conventional Biosphere Reserve in the ACT, and that the ACT Government should capitalise on current national interest in urban sustainability, as reflected in recent Commonwealth Parliamentary inquiries.²²⁶

Committee's preliminary views

4.21 Noting the current stringencies of the ACT Budget, the Committee appreciates the difficulties of making funding available for initiatives such as this. The Committee considers that much of the preliminary preparatory work for developing a nomination document can be achieved without the provision of significant additional resources, but funding would be necessary to implement some of the initiatives, and to realise the gains possible from a Biosphere Reserve designation.

4.22 As an initial task, the Committee considers that stakeholders should consider their support for the proposed Biosphere Reserve nomination and consider whether an incorporated association should be formed to progress the initiative. The ACT Government could contribute in kind by making available officials to support and facilitate stakeholders' efforts, and by providing secretariat services. The costs of this facilitation and the provision of ACT Government information for inclusion in the nomination document could be met from existing departmental resources. A coordinating officer or officers within an appropriate agency, such as the Department of the Territory and Municipal Services, could be allocated Biosphere Reserve tasks as recommended for individual reserves under the Seville Strategy, and to facilitate the preparation of the nomination document.

Levies and user fees

4.23 The ACT Government does not currently levy user fees for Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve or other protected areas in the ACT. The fee for Tidbinbilla was removed following the 2003 bushfires. The Draft Namadgi

²²⁴ Also Submission No 21

²²⁵ Submission No 9, 13

²²⁶ Submission No 14, referring to the Australian Parliament, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage (2005), *Sustainable Cities*, Canberra; Australia, Parliament, House of Representatives, Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage (2006), *Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter: Discussion Paper*, Canberra.

Management Plan proposes investigation of the introduction of an equitable and cost-effective user-pays system, including fees for commercial tour operators and other commercial uses, non-commercial group use, interpretation activities, visitor stays, events and possibly annual passes. Stakeholders have expressed a range of views about this proposal.²²⁷

Private sector donations

4.24 There may be interest in approaching private sector philanthropic foundations²²⁸ or in establishing a trust or foundation to receive private donations for sustainable development initiatives. High quality land available under 99-year leases might appeal as a property investment by private environmental foundations (such as Australian Bush Heritage Fund, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Earth Sanctuaries Ltd, Birds Australia etc). The comment in CSIRO's submission that organisations can become consumed with fundraising tasks should be noted however.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The ACT is a city-state like no other. Residents enjoy an amenable and aesthetically pleasing environment with highland horizons and integrated water features. Despite being a national capital, the ACT's predominantly modest urban form reflect rigorous planning controls and the Griffins' inspiration of creating a garden city in an appreciated landscape. Our public infrastructure is modern and efficient, and we have a strong research and tertiary education sector, and expanding knowledge-based industries. Our tourism sector is significant. ACT workers tend to be relatively well paid, and so can enjoy the products of many creative industries and interests. But while many residents aim for sustainability, Canberra has not yet achieved this. Debate over a proposal to nominate the ACT as a Biosphere Reserve may strengthen residents' commitment to sustainability, and help to build networks amongst stakeholders that will help grow a sustainable economy, improve equity, and deliver environmental benefits to future generations.

5.2 The Committee recognises the significant opportunity that a Biosphere

²²⁷ ACT Government, Environment ACT (2005), *Namadgi National Park Draft Management Plan*, Arts, Heritage and Environment, Canberra, accessible at <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/bushparksandreserves/strategiesandplans/namadginationalparkmanagementplan>, accessed 29 June 2006, 148–151

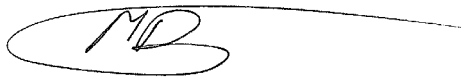
²²⁸ Some sources of funding are identified at <<http://www.molonglocatchment.com.au/funding.htm>>, accessed 4 July 2006

Reserve designation may provide for improving awareness of sustainability issues, promoting behavioural change and enhancing competitive advantage in 'green' markets. Local wine, food and tourism sectors may most readily benefit, but these are a relatively small component of the ACT economy. Through heightened awareness, stakeholder networking, and drawing on research expertise, a broader range of local businesses and research institutions, particularly in the more significant public sector, property and business services, and retail sectors, could also potentially secure sustainability advantages.

5.3 A Biosphere Reserve designation may contribute to the development of an innovative, sustainable regional economy that will support further growth in eco-efficiency.

5.4 In the Committee's view there is much consultation and discussion that has yet to occur in relation to this proposal. Community ownership and enthusiasm is needed for the potential of the proposed nomination to be realised. The formation of a coalition of scientists, government officials, non-government organisations and industry could assist in progressing the Biosphere Reserve nomination proposed. Perhaps a 'Friends of' group or similar organisation, as already exists to support other national institutions, could be established and incorporated to progress the proposed ACT Biosphere Reserve.

5.5 The Standing Committee looks forward to hearing further from a wide range of stakeholders about their views on the ACT Biosphere Reserve nomination proposal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MD', enclosed within a large, horizontal oval loop.

Mick Gentleman
Chair
13 July 2006

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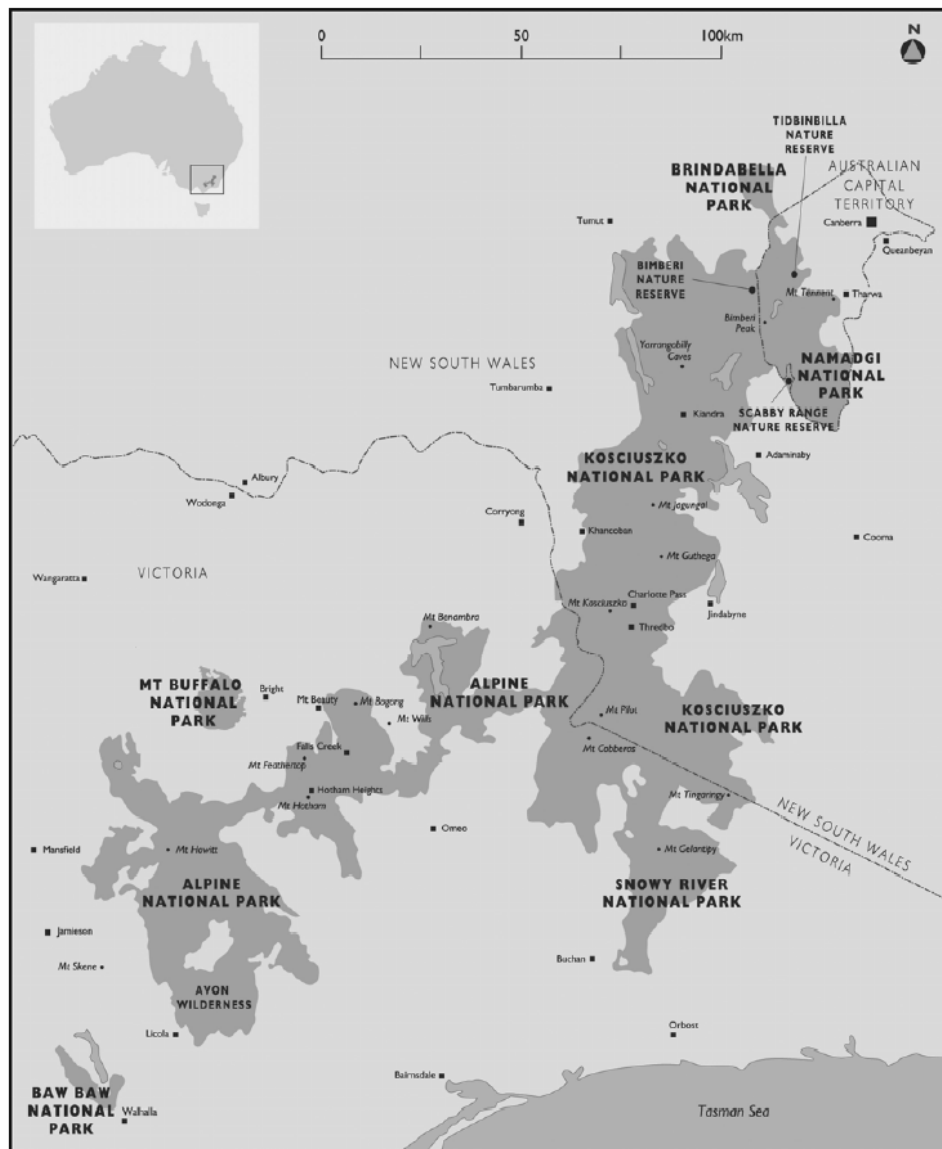
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APPENDIX A: Map of Australian Alps National Parks²²⁹

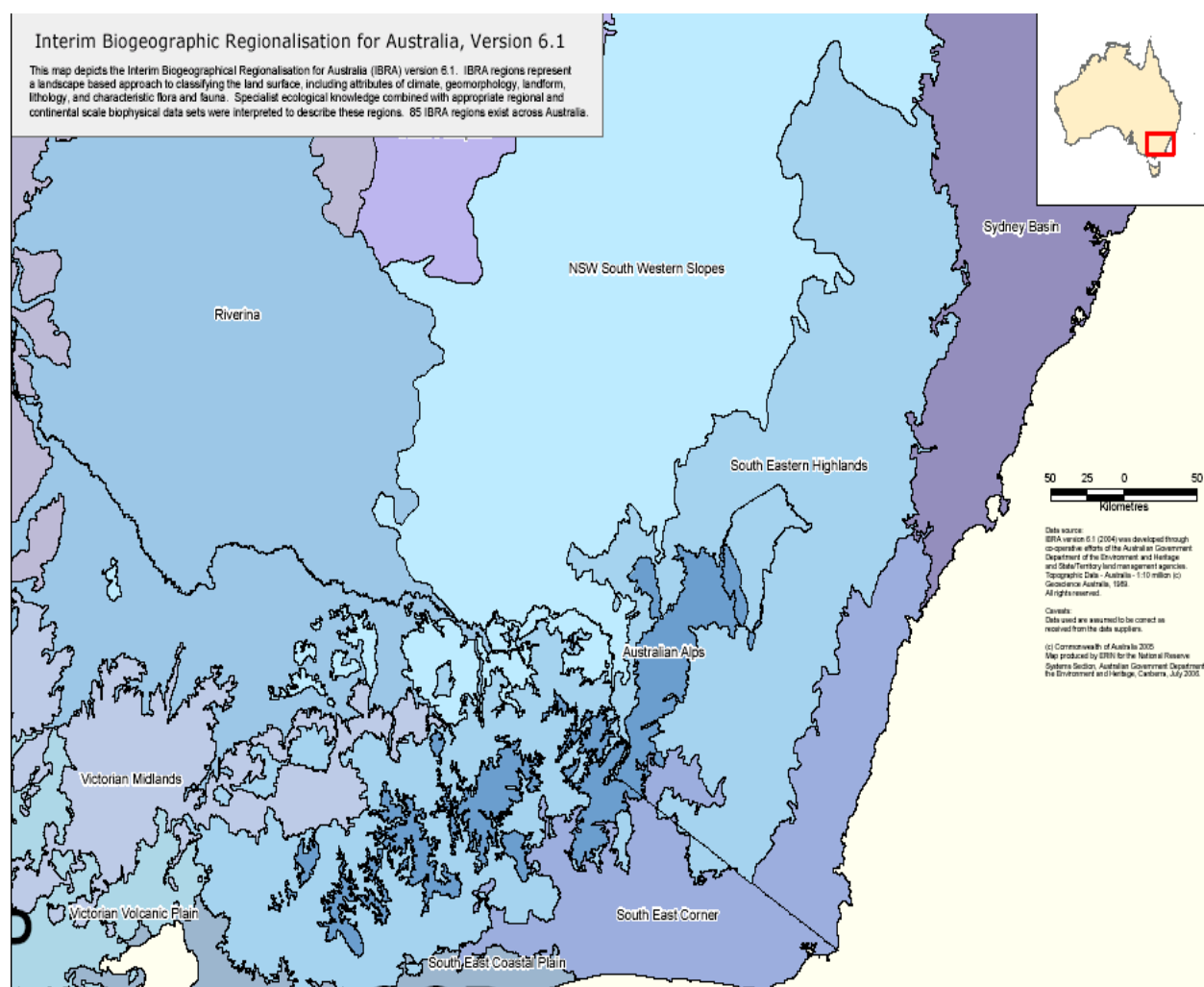
Map 1 Australian Alps national parks



²²⁹ ACT Government, Environment ACT (2005), *Namadgi National Park Draft Management Plan*, Arts, Heritage and Environment, Canberra, accessible at <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/bushparksandreserves/strategiesandplans/namadginationalparkmanagementplan>, accessed 29 June 2006, xvi

APPENDIX B: South-east Australian Bioregions²³⁰

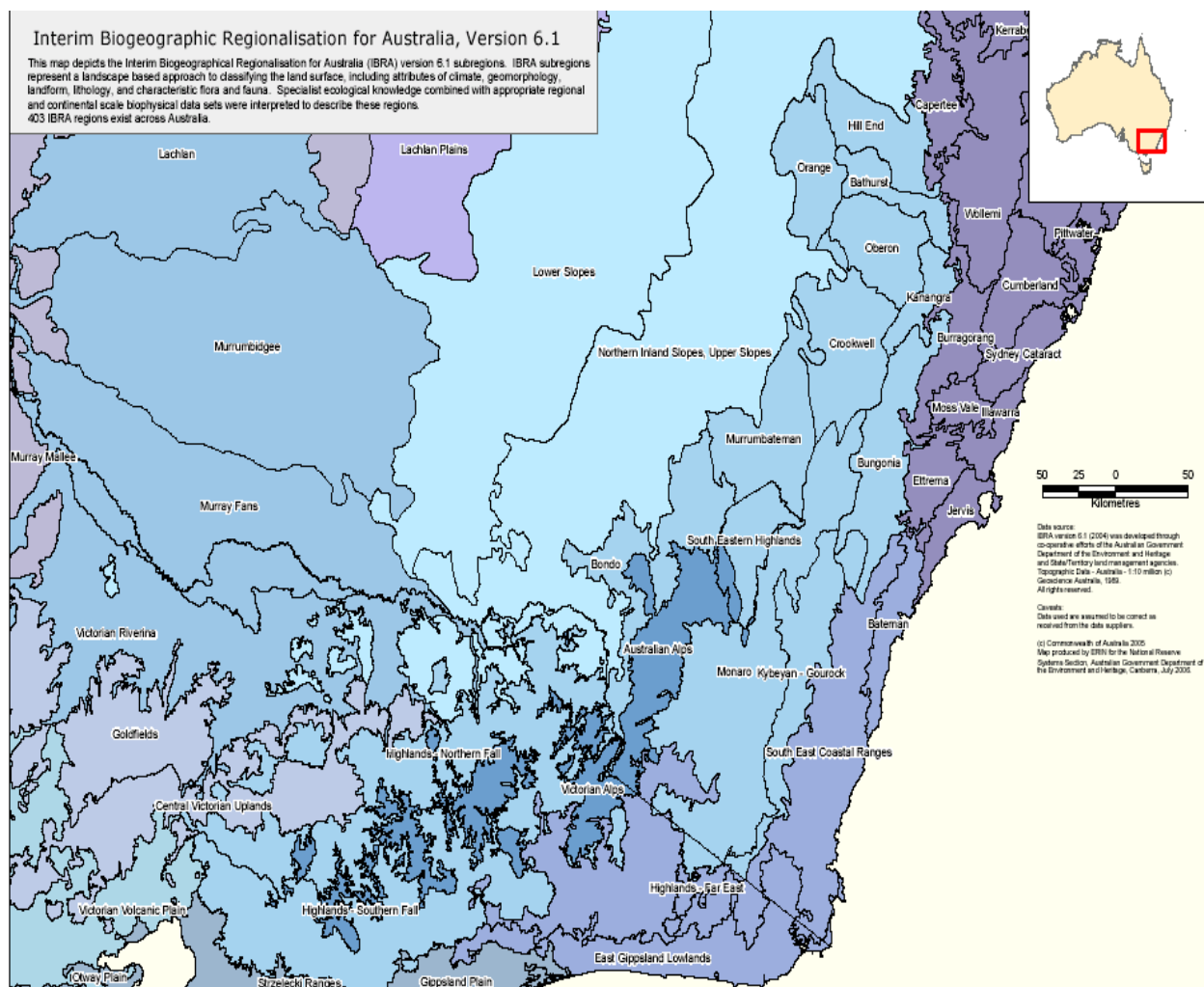
Map showing Australian Alps and South Eastern Highlands Bioregions –



²³⁰ Map developed cooperatively by the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and state and territory land management agencies, provided by Mr David Osborne, Department of the Environment and Heritage

APPENDIX C: South-east Australian Sub-Bioregions²³¹

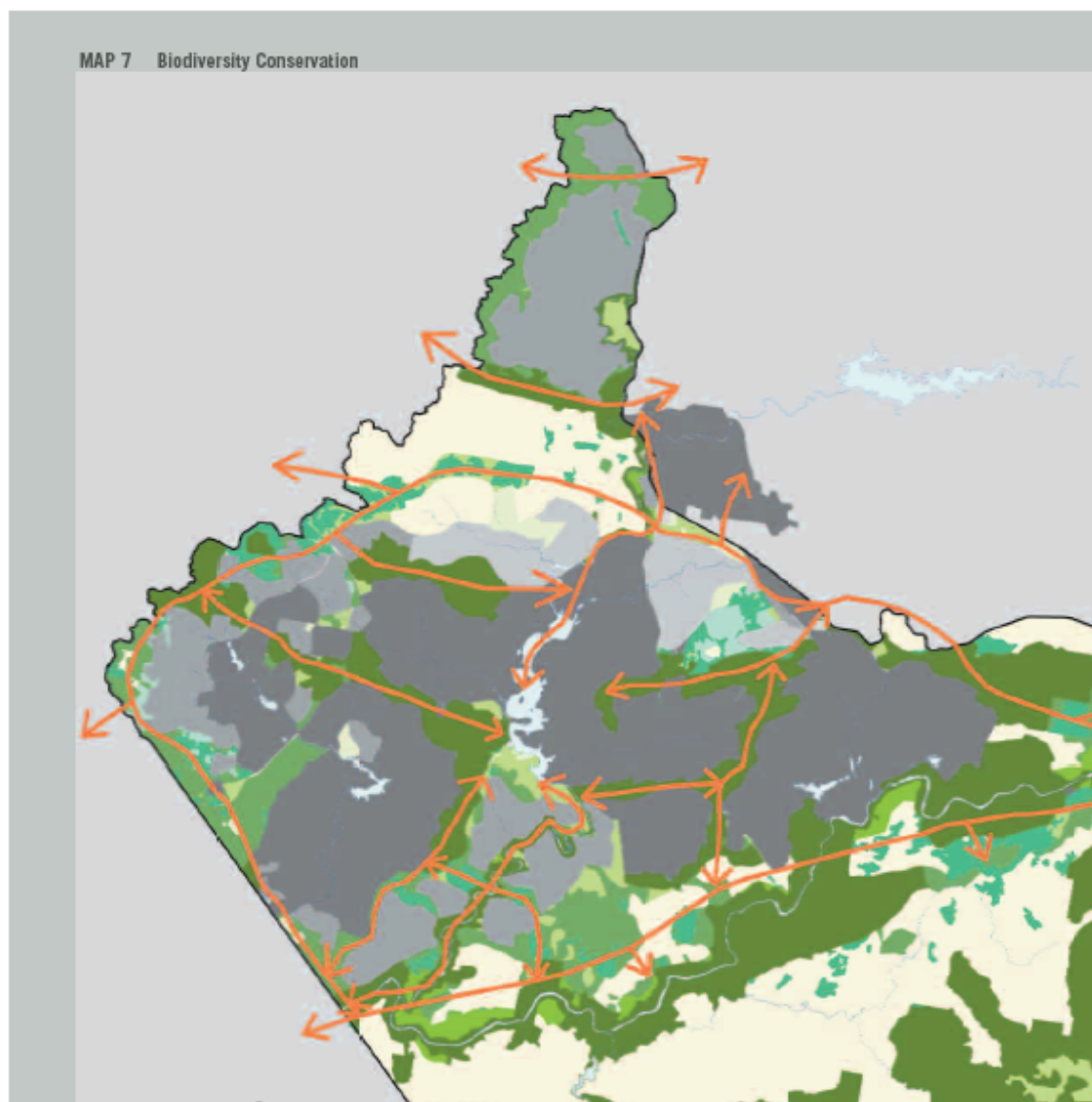
Map showing Australian Alps and South Eastern Highlands Sub-bioregions –



²³¹ Map developed cooperatively by the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage and state and territory land management agencies, provided by Mr David Osborne, Department of the Environment and Heritage.

APPENDIX D: Proposed core zones

Wildlife corridors, marked in the *Canberra Spatial Plan*, cover many of the proposed core zones for the proposed Biosphere Reserve nomination²³²



²³² ACT Government (2004), *Canberra Spatial Plan*, ACT Planning and Land Authority, Canberra, Map 7, <<http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/sp-intro/sp-pdf/spatialplan.pdf>>, accessed 30 June 2006

APPENDIX E: Plans and Policy Instruments for Sustainable Development in the ACT²³³

Policy/Plan	Legislative status
<i>A Vision Splendid of the Grassy Plains Extended – ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy: Action Plan No 28</i>	Policy taking an integrated, territory-wide approach to the protection of the remaining lowland native grasslands
<i>ACT and Sub-region Planning Strategy (1998)</i>	Developed by the Australian Government, ACT and NSW Governments and local shires/city councils. Provides a strategic framework for future growth and development. Proposes a regionally consistent approach for ecological surveys, natural resources management, and identifies indicative wildlife corridors. It includes strategies for rural land uses, and indicative future long-term development
<i>ACT Government Energy Consumption Reports</i>	First in 2001
<i>ACT Greenhouse Strategy</i>	Under development; expected end 2006
<i>ACT Natural Resource Management Plan 2004–2014</i>	A Cwlth-ACT accredited plan produced by the ACT Natural Resource Management Board, in consultation with the community, to meet the requirements of the Bilateral Agreement for the delivery of the Natural Heritage Trust. It provides a strategic framework for natural resource management activities and investment in the ACT and surrounding region.
<i>ACT Nature Conservation Strategy</i>	Policy document providing a framework of implementation of goals. Recognises importance of a regional perspective and complementary actions in NSW. Includes a map with a preliminary delineation of a nature conservation network for the ACT and sub-region.
<i>ACT Planning and Land Authority design guidelines</i>	Incl. Development Application and Design Guidelines, ACT House Energy Rating Scheme (ACTHERS), Residential Sustainability Reports
<i>ACT State of the Environment Report</i>	The ACT Commissioner of the Environment undertakes a program of state of the environment reporting
<i>ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan</i>	Prepared by the Emergency Services Authority under the <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> , providing a basis for bushfire hazard assessment and risk analysis; bushfire prevention, including hazard reduction; and agency and community preparation and response in relation to bushfires
<i>ACT Weeds Strategy (ACT 1996) and Vertebrate Pests Strategy (ACT 2001)</i>	Policy documents which provide a process for enabling effective and efficient control of weeds and feral animals. Recognises that interests extend beyond the ACT border and that the ACT Government will collaborate with regional stakeholders
<i>Australian Capital Region State of the Environment Report</i>	A program of state of the environment reporting is undertaken by the ACT Commissioner of the Environment, including a review of all the local government areas subject to the planning framework

²³³ Including discussion papers for proposed policies, mainly focussing on the environmental rather than social and economic aspects of sustainable development

<i>Avoid, Abate, Adapt: Discussion Paper for an ACT Climate Change Strategy</i> (March 2006)	This aims of the proposed strategy are to promote avoidance of measures increasing greenhouse gas emissions; reducing current emissions and promoting adapting to unavoidable climate change
<i>Canberra Nature Park Management Plan</i>	Addresses management objectives, policies, issues and actions specific to CNP and is consistent with the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan
<i>Canberra Plan</i> (2004)	Includes the Economic White Paper, the Canberra Spatial Plan, and Building our Community – the Canberra Social Plan, aiming to maximise Canberra’s creativity, community living and sustainability
<i>Government Procurement (Principles) Guideline 2002 (No 2) and Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Circular 2004/07</i>	Includes direction for the procurement of environmentally sustainable goods, services or works
<i>Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Framework for the ACT</i> (2001)	Consists of principles, processes and commitments to guide community and government natural resource related activities
<i>Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve Management Plan 1994</i>	Provides for the management of Jerrabomberra Wetlands (an area classed as Public Land (Nature Reserve) in the Territory Plan and adjacent lands), and its development and management as a wetlands education centre
<i>Land Supply Strategy 2005–2010</i>	The ACT Government’s agreed metropolitan development sequence
<i>Lower Molonglo River Corridor Management Plan 2002</i>	Addresses the management issues, objectives, management policies and procedures specific to the Corridor. It is consistent with the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan. Management of the Corridor recognises the wider system of ACT land and water planning, administration and management
Management plans for public land	Murrumbidgee River Corridor Management Plan; Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Management Plan, Belconnen Region Plan of Management, Woden/Weston Region Plan of Management
Master Plans for urban areas	E.g. City West Master Plan 2004
Minister for Planning’s Statement of Planning Intent	Issues pursuant to sub-section 14(1) of the Planning and Land Act 2002 setting out the main principles that are to govern planning and land development in the ACT (the statement of planning intent)
<i>Murrumbidgee Blueprint</i>	Policy document providing for future intergovernmental agreements
<i>Murrumbidgee River Corridor Management Plan 1998</i>	Addresses the management issues, objectives, management policies and procedures specific to the Corridor
<i>Namadgi National Park Draft Management Plan (2005)</i>	<i>Will continue the framework for protecting the significant values of the park while ensuring that opportunities for nature-based recreation, education and research are provided</i>
<i>National Capital Plan</i>	Statutory plan implemented at Federal level under the <i>Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988</i> (Cth) for the ACT
<i>National Heritage Trust and National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality</i>	Established in 1997 under the <i>Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997</i> (Cwlth), the Trust was substantially revised in 2002 with a regional focus. The NAP did not provide funding to the ACT Government as at Nov 2005
Neighbourhood Plans	Developed consultatively by ACT Planning and Land Authority, includes Forrest, Griffith, Narrabundah, Red Hill, Garren, Hughes, Yarralumla, Downer, Hackett, Watson Neighbourhood Plans
<i>New Focus for Nature Conservation in the ACT</i>	A 2002 policy statement including a program to establish strategies for priority species/ecological communities
<i>NoWaste by 2010: A waste management policy for Canberra and Turning Waste into Resources</i>	Waste management policy for sustainability
<i>People, Place, Prosperity</i> (2003)	Broad sustainability policy committing the ACT to monitoring and reporting on progress towards sustainability

<i>Planning for Bushfire Risk Mitigation Interim Guideline</i>	Adopted onto the Interim Register of Planning Guidelines on 15 January 2005 under the Territory Plan, to provides guidance to mitigate adverse impacts from bushfires in the ACT. In particular, the Guideline addresses the planning and development processes
<i>Planning Framework for Natural Ecosystems—NSW Southern Tablelands and ACT (2002)</i>	Prepared by the ACT Government, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Planning NSW and the Housing Industry Association (ACT) in cooperation with all local governments in the region.
<i>Reliable, Responsible, Renewable: A Discussion Paper for an ACT Energy Policy (2006)</i>	Aims to elicit stakeholder engagement to assist with the development of an energy policy for the ACT, leading to more efficient and effective energy use and reduced greenhouse gas emissions
Reporting requirements on Ecologically Sustainable Development in Annual Report Directions	
<i>Ribbons of Life: Draft aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy: Action Plan No 29</i>	Takes an integrated Territory-wide approach in a regional context to the protection and management of the rivers and riparian areas in the ACT
<i>Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the ACT(2005) and Bushfire Operational Plan</i>	Fire management programs address biodiversity conservation under a zoning system for different land parcels.
<i>Sustainable Transport Plan</i>	Aims to maintain accessibility of Canberra but achieving more sustainable transport over time
<i>Sydney-Canberra Corridor Strategy</i>	Policy document providing for future intergovernmental agreements.
<i>Territory Plan</i>	Statutory document. Identifies and regulates land use and development. Protects open space, conservation of ecological resources and functions
<i>Think Water, act water (2004)</i>	Provides a framework for a partnership between the ACT Government and stakeholders in managing, using and conserving the water resources of the region
<i>Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Management Plan</i>	Addresses management objectives, policies, issues and actions specific to TNR. It is consistent with the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan and includes policy statements that will guide the decision making process
<i>Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines for Sustainable Development in Canberra (2006)</i>	Aims to integrate the management of the total urban water cycle into the urban development process
<i>Woodlands for Wildlife – ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy: Action Plan 27</i>	Conservation strategy covering endangered Yellow Box- Red Gum Grassy Woodland, other lowland woodlands and associated species
<i>Working Together for the ACT's Environment – A Support Strategy (2001)</i>	Recognises the importance of the active participation of the ACT community in natural resource management.
ACT and NSW on Cross Border Region Settlement and on Agreement on Cross Border Water Supply	

APPENDIX F: ACT and Commonwealth legislation for sustainable development

Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1989 (ACT)
Animal Diseases Act 2005 (ACT)
Auditor-General Act 1996 (ACT)
Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (Cwlth)
Cooperatives Act 2002 (ACT)
Crimes Act 1990 (ACT)
Domestic Animals Act 2000 (ACT)
Emergency Services Act 2004 (ACT)
Environment Protection Act 1997 (ACT)
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)
Financial Management Act 1996 (ACT)
Firearms Act 1996 (ACT)
Fisheries Act 2000 (ACT)
Hawkers Act 2003 (ACT)
Heritage Act 2004 (ACT)
Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission Act 1997 (ACT)
*Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 (ACT)*²³⁴
Litter Act 2004 (ACT)
National Environment Protection Council Act 1994 (ACT)
Nature Conservation Act 1980 (ACT)
Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997 (Cwlth)
Pest Plants and Animals Act 2005 (ACT)
*Planning and Land Act 2002 (ACT)*²³⁵
Public Health Act 1997 (ACT)
Roads and Public Places Act 1937 (ACT)
Stock Act 2005 (ACT)
Territory-owned Corporations Act 1990 (ACT)
Tree Protection Act 2005 (ACT)
Trespass on Territory Land Act 1932 (ACT)
Utilities Act 2000 (ACT)
Waste Minimisation Act 2001 (ACT)
Water Resources Act 1998 (ACT)
National Environment Protection Measures (Implementation) Act 1998 (Cwlth)
Productivity Commission Act 1998 (Cwlth)

²³⁴ Proposed to be replaced. Refer exposure draft Planning and Development Bill 2006

²³⁵ Proposed to be replaced. Refer exposure draft Planning and Development Bill 2006

APPENDIX G: List of Submissions

- No 1 — Mr Steve Douglas, Ecological Surveys & Planning
- No 2 — Ms Wendy Rainbird
- No 3 — Dr James Fitzsimons, Deakin University
- No 4 — Mr Brett Odgers
- No 5 — Commission for the Environment of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn
- No 6 — Mr John Vassallo, Diverse Pty Ltd for Pace Farm Pty Ltd (Parkwood Eggs)
- No 7 — Professor Ken Taylor, A.N.U.
- No 8 — Mr Harold Adams, ACT Rural Landholders' Association
- No 9 — Mr Rory Eames and Ms Wendy Rainbird, Nature and Society Forum
- No 10 — Mr Bruce McFarlane, Sustainable Agriculture Systems
- No 11 — Ms Fiona Spier
- No 12 — Mr Alistair Henschman, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation
- No 13 — Mr Ian Anderson, ANU Centre for UNESCO
- No 14 — Mr A Kearns, Mr Guy Barnett, Ms Kate Matysek, Mr Michael Doherty and Dr Peter Newton, CSIRO
- No 15 — Professor Brian H Roberts, ACT Government's Sustainability Expert Reference Group
- No 16 — Ms Trish Harrup, Conservation Council of the South-east Region and Canberra
- No 17 — Mr Eric J Martin, National Trust of Australia (ACT)
- No 18 — Mr Phil Pritchard and Mr Tony Fearside, ACT Division, Institute of Foresters of Australia
- No 19 — Ms Caroline Lemezina, ACT/Southern NSW Housing Industry Association
- No 20 — Hon Jim Lloyd, Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads
- No 21 — Mr Kim Pullen, President, Friends of Grasslands