



ENVIRONMENT
INSTITUTE OF
AUSTRALIA AND
NEW ZEALAND

**The Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601**

INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED NOMINATION OF THE ACT AS A UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Thank you for the initiation to provide feedback on the issues paper that was released in July 2006 concerning the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) welcomes the opportunity to express its views on the proposed nomination.

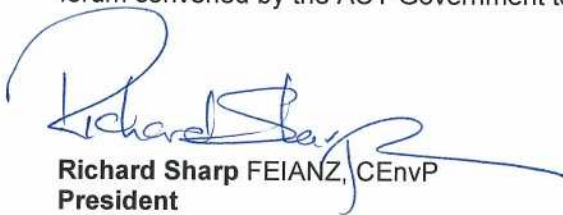
As the professional association for environmental practitioners, the EIANZ is interested in contributing to public discussions involving sustainable development and the protection of the environment. The EIANZ represents practitioners who work throughout the public and private sector in the areas of environmental policy, management, science, industry, education, consultancy and law.

The EIANZ notes that the Standing Committee requires responses to the issues raised in the paper and submits the following:

- The EIANZ believes that there is merit in proceeding with the nomination provided that environmental practitioners across the ACT are engaged in the process. The EIANZ notes that the nomination would help to advance the ACT Government's sustainability agenda which aims to have the ACT community become a sustainability society. The EIANZ also notes that the nomination would allow the ACT to take advantage of the fact that the region enjoys ready access to world class education, scientific and cultural institutions such as the ANU, CSIRO and the National Museum.
- The EIANZ believes that it would be appropriate to look at how successful the recently designated Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve has been in Victoria. The EIANZ notes that most of the current Biosphere Reserves in Australia are considered to be generally 'moribund' since they have not achieved the intent of their designation. Accordingly, the EIANZ through its members could offer an independent appraisal as a contribution to the nomination process.
- The EIANZ believes that it would be appropriate for interested organisations and individuals in the ACT including environmental practitioners to hold a meeting on Biosphere Reserve in Canberra before January 2007. The EIANZ suggests that other professional associations and non-government organisations also be involved in organising such a meeting. These associations and organisations could include but not be limited to, the Australian Committee for IUCN, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Australian Council of National Trusts, the Australian Institute of Environmental Health, Greening Australia Ltd, Landcare Australia Ltd, Sustainable Population Australia, the Planning Institute of Australia, and the Australian Association for Environmental Education.

- The EIANZ believes that there is merit in exploring the appropriateness of applying the Biosphere Reserve concept in a way that relates to Australia's biogeographical regions provided that it incorporates the developed urban zones and rural landscapes into the nominated area. The EIANZ notes that this would ensure the nomination brings together the inter-connecting functions of biodiversity conservation, economic and human / cultural development, scientific research and environmental education.
- The EIANZ believes that the nomination would need to show how Canberra is a model sustainable city. The EIANZ notes that there is world-wide interest in those jurisdictions that are truly committed to sustainability and that have good governance arrangements which provide for the proper management of a Biosphere Reserve.

The EIANZ considers that the Committee should recommend to the Assembly that the proposed nomination proceed and that the Committee note that the EIANZ is willing to participate in any forum convened by the ACT Government to advance such a nomination.



Richard Sharp FEIANZ, CEnvP
President

30 August 2006