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THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT (REPORT 34)

INQUIRY INTO THE NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK [REVISED] DRAFT PLAN
OF MANAGEMENT

Presented by
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**ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
INQUIRY INTO THE NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT (JULY 2008)**

As required under the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 (repealed) the *Namadgi National Park Revised Draft Plan of Management 2007* was referred to the ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Planning and Environment in December 2007. The Committee conducted an inquiry into the revised draft plan and released their report *Inquiry into the Namadgi National Park Draft Plan of Management* (Report 34) in July 2008.

The Standing Committee recommendations and the ACT Government response are as follows:

	Recommendation	Government response
1.	The Committee recommends that the Namadgi National Park Draft Plan of Management be adopted, taking into account the recommendations below.	
2.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services comply with the ACT Government Community Engagement Manual. (In particular, the requirement to respond to each individual submission providing information about how their submission influenced or otherwise, the final draft plan.)	Recommendation is noted. Organisations and individuals who made a submission on the draft plan received a letter or email of acknowledgement including information on the legislative actions required to finalise the plan. A report providing a summary of the key issues raised (<i>Namadgi National Park Draft Plan of Management – Report on Submissions</i>) was provided to the Standing Committee and is available on the Committee website. The report will be promoted, including on the TAMS website, when the final plan of management is approved for release. While the Community Engagement Manual provides options for providing feedback (pages 10-11), it is acknowledged that ongoing communication is required during such a long and detailed planning process.
3.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services finalise the future role, if any, of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board.	Recommendation is agreed. Options for Aboriginal involvement in land management will be canvassed as part of the review of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1980</i> and associated committees that may be established under, or separate to, legislation. Discussion: The Interim Namadgi Advisory Board was established under the <i>Agreement between the Australian Capital Territory and the ACT Native Title Claim Groups</i> as an interim arrangement for the involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of Namadgi National Park. The Agreement specifies Board members will be nominated for a period of 3 years. In August 2006, the then Minister for Territory and Municipal

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		Services, the Hon John Hargreaves MLA, wrote to Board members thanking them for their contribution and advising of the process to re-nominate to the Board. The signatories to the Agreement subsequently raised a number of issues relating to the agreement. These issues will need to be addressed before a new, effective Namadgi management board can be established. Parks Conservation and Lands, the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and the Department for the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water are continuing discussions on the most appropriate way forward.
4.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services update members of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board on the status of the Board and thank members for their participation.	Recommendation is noted. As outlined in our response to Recommendation 3, options for Aboriginal involvement in land management will be canvassed as part of the review of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1980</i> and associated committees that may be established under, or separate to, legislation.
5.	If the Interim Board ceases to function, the Committee recommends that a joint management board be established for permanent cooperative management, taking into account the experiences and knowledge of the former Interim Namadgi Advisory Board members.	Recommendation is noted. As outlined in our response to Recommendation 3, options for Aboriginal involvement in land management will be canvassed as part of the review of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1980</i> and associated committees that may be established under, or separate to, legislation.
6.	The Committee recommends that any future advisory board is appropriately resourced and supported, including suitable remuneration arrangements for board members.	Recommendation is noted. As outlined in our response to Recommendation 3, options for Aboriginal involvement in land management will be canvassed as part of the review of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1980</i> and associated committees that may be established under, or separate to, legislation.
7.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services' outdoor recreation strategy should include	Recommendation is agreed.

	Recommendation	Government response
	an educative component to develop an understanding in the community on why certain activities are not permitted in national parks.	

	Recommendation	Government response
8.	The Committee Recommends that Schedule 3 from the 2005 Namadgi National Park Draft Plan of Management 'indicative guide to events in Namadgi' be reinstated in the final plan of management.	Recommendation is agreed in principle. An amended Schedule 3 which does not include caps on the size or number of events per year will be included in the final plan of management. Discussion: The decision to remove the caps on the size and number of events followed representations from the rogaining and orienteering community and reflects the view of the Interim Namadgi Advisory Board that impacts would be limited provided the policies outlined in the plan of management under section 8.9 <i>Group and special events: objectives, policies and actions</i> are implemented. The plan has been amended to include the development of a policy document to guide the assessment of applications for events of different types and sizes within the park, including large events. This is to be achieved within 12 months of the plan's gazettal.
9.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services evaluate the cost and environmental impact of creating a horse riding track parallel to Boboyan Road as an alternative to the realigned Grassy Creek fire trail, prior to allowing access to the Grassy Creek trail for the trial period.	Recommendation is not agreed. Recently constructed fire trails provide horse riders with a safe alternative to riding along the Boboyan Road, therefore evaluation of a parallel track is unnecessary. Discussion: As identified in the <i>Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the ACT</i>, Burnt Hill and Potters fire trails have been constructed from Mt Clear Horse Pound to the ACT/NSW border (at the Boboyan Road) and the Grassy Creek fire trail has been realigned along the ACT/NSW border (see map below). These new fire trails provide horse riders with a safe and pleasant alternative to the Boboyan Road. Construction of a riding trail parallel to Boboyan Road is not needed and therefore an evaluation is unnecessary. Legend New Fire Trail National Bicentennial Trail Southern section Namadgi National Park, ACT

	Recommendation	Government response
10.	The Committee recommends that, for consistency and clarity, the reference to horse feed in section 13.4 of the Plan should make reference to section 39.32 for more detail on horse feed requirements both prior to and during travel through the national park.	Recommendation is agreed. Draft plan amended.
11.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services use a visitor log book at one of the combination locked gates along the Grassy Creek fire trail section of the realigned Bicentennial National Trail to assist in monitoring track usage by different user groups.	Recommendation is agreed. Draft plan amended.
12.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services erect signs at the combination locked gates along the Grassy Creek fire trail section of the realigned Bicentennial National Trail to reinforce the need for riders to remain on-track.	Recommendation is agreed. Draft plan amended.

	Recommendation	Government response
13.	The Committee recommends that the requirement for horses to be tethered at least 30 meters from lakes, streams, huts and camping areas be included in the plan of management to reinforce the importance of protecting the huts and surrounding areas as important cultural and environmental assets.	Recommendation is agreed. Draft plan amended.
14.	The Committee recommends that signs be erected at huts indicating the above tethering requirements.	Recommendation is agreed. Draft plan amended.
15.	The Committee recommends that the plan of management should include details of the monitoring and reporting arrangements that will be implemented to assess the trial use of the realigned Grassy Creek fire trail by recreational horse riders as an alternative to Boboyan Road on the Bicentennial National Trail.	Recommendation is not agreed. It is not appropriate to include detailed monitoring and reporting in the plan, however, the methodology and reporting will be available on the Department of Territories and Municipal Services website. <i>Discussion:</i> The plan of management calls for a range of monitoring programs and it would be inappropriate for the detail of each program to be included in the plan. The methodology for monitoring the trial usage of the Grassy Creek fire trail which has been developed by Parks Conservation and Lands will be provided on the Department of Territories and Municipal Services website together with reports.
16.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services require commercial recreational providers operating in Namadgi National Park to prepare environmental management plans for their operations in the park.	Recommendation is agreed. Draft Plan amended.

	Recommendation	Government response
17.	The Committee recommends that the Department of Territory and Municipal Services adopt a one-year trial period for new operators as required under the Kosciuszko Plan of Management, or a similar arrangement, to ensure satisfactory performance of commercial operations, in keeping with the primary management objectives of the park.	Recommendation is agreed. Draft plan amended.
18.	The Committee recommends that, the Department of Territory and Municipal Services take into account the value of current community activities in the Gudgenby Homestead precinct when assessing the opportunities for re-use of the precinct for accommodation.	Recommendation is agreed. Draft plan amended.
19.	The Committee recommends that the development of the subregional fire plans and bushfire operation plans for Namadgi National Park are developed in accordance with the policies set out in the plan of management, and ensure that the measures for ecological processes, catchment and biodiversity protection are integrated into park fire management practices.	Recommendation is agreed. The Department of Territories and Municipal Services is working closely with the Emergency Services Authority to achieve this outcome.

	Recommendation	Government response
20.	The Committee recommends that the Emergency Services Authority develop version 2 of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan in consultation with the Department of Territory and Municipal Services and with reference to the policies set out in the Namadgi plan of management.	Recommendation is agreed. Consultation with TAMS was undertaken in the development of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the ACT – Version 2.
21.	The Committee recommends that the fire trails and access roads not be widened to float standard without further environmental assessment, taking into consideration the precautionary principle and current scientific research.	Recommendation is agreed. An environmental assessment is always undertaken for proposed developments of this type and may require the mandatory preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement under the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i> (Schedule 4 Part 4.3).
22.	The Committee recommends that resources already allocated for widening fire trails and access roads be redirected to support the use of remote area fire teams, small machinery and air support.	Recommendation is not agreed. The Department of Territories and Municipal Services has an obligation to undertake bushfire preparation for both fire protection and suppression purposes. Access is an important strategy for both protection (fire fuel management) and suppression. Upgrading fire trails to tanker and float standard (where needed), the establishment of helipads and training staff for remote area fire teams are all considered to be important strategies for preparing the ACT for fire events. Discussion: If a fire trail upgrade is identified as requiring an upgrade to tanker or float standard, an environmental assessment will be undertaken and may require the mandatory preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement under the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i> (Schedule 4 Part 4.3).

The Government thanks the members of the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment for their contribution to the development of the final Namadgi National Park Plan of Management.

