

Inquiry into proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
From: SAS Australia [sasaustalia@bigpond.com]
Sent: Thursday, 1 June 2006 4:27 PM
To: Jaireth, Hanna
Subject: Re: Inquiry into proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Dear Hanna,

Please excuse the lateness of this reply but clients take priority in our business.

Although this correspondence will not suffice as a written submission I would like to touch on some points we believe are not only relevant but in fact critical to your work. These are areas which we feel we can help in terms of the environment and agricultural lands. Due to the limited amount of time we have available much of the following will present in point form.

We dislike the fact that so much of our potentially productive agricultural land is being sold off in small lots to people who do not know how to manage it.

a.. As a result of unsustainable land use practices many farmers are having to sell off portions of their farms in order to keep the remainder of their properties. Subtle changes in management practices will reverse soil acidification thus improving production while improving the environment.

a.. Developers purchase the degraded land and have it re-zoned for farmlets(hobbyfarms). Why local and Territory governments continue to allow people to purchase areas of land so they can further degrade it is beyond us. The implications these decisions have on future generations cannot be overstated.

a.. People purchase these blocks because they can, and they have the funds to do so. Many people who purchase these blocks are trying to buy lifestyle. More often than not they realise it's all too hard to mow the paddocks and control the weeds, so they sell usually within 2 or 3 years.

a.. Hobby farms often purchased to run a couple of horses and some fowl. Selective grazing and mismanagement ensures an accelerated rate of land degradation. We need a licence to drive a car and yet we will allow anyone to deplete and render useless our most valuable asset.

a.. With the cooperation of landholders and correct management strategies in place, existing hobby farms could be made productive and land degradation reversed. This does not detract from the fact that land development aimed at providing farmlets in the future be given serious consideration with the longer term consequences given greater weight.

a.. Management strategies can be put in place that increase soil Organic Matter

- > improved soil moisture penetration
- > improved soil moisture retention
- > clean filtered water runoff into streams and dams after soil saturation
- > less sediment in water supplies and significant reduction in soil erosion

There are many issues we have solutions for, as for the ones we don't, then we at least have an opinion on and be able to offer critique.

Regard this correspondence as an offer of assistance from people who care and are genuinely concerned for the environment and future generations. The facts are, we have enough on our plates to keep us busy at the present time.

Once again we apologise for the lateness of our reply and for the lack of detail. We wish you and your team every success in achieving sustainable outcomes.

Good Luck !

Bruce McFarlane
(Principal)

Sustainable Agriculture Systems

Ph: (02) 6297 - 5520
Fx: (02) 6299 - 7829

P.O. Box 7091
Karabar N.S.W. 2620

----- Original Message -----

From: Jaireth, Hanna
To: Jaireth, Hanna
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2006 3:22 PM
Subject: Inquiry into proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Dear colleague(s)

I am writing to invite you to participate in the inquiry into the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

The inquiry is being conducted by the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Environment.

Biosphere reserves are internationally recognized within the framework of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB). Their aims, under the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves, include -

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

The proposed nomination of the ACT is particularly significant because the ACT includes a major urban environment. The Mornington Peninsular and Western Port Biosphere Reserve is the most comparable in Australia, as it also includes an urban component.

Please find the terms of reference for the inquiry at Attachment A.

Since the Committee wishes hear from a wide range of stakeholders would you please circulate this invitation to interested colleagues and networks, and if you produce a newsletter, would you please include an item about this inquiry.

More information about biosphere reserves can be accessed via the following web-sites.

§
<<http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/channel/channel.asp?cid=685&tid=685&sid=&spid=>>
§ <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/index.shtml>>

The Committee invites submission to be lodged no later than 2 June 2006, with the Committee Secretary, Dr Hanna Jaireth, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, ACT Legislative Assembly, GPO Box 1020, CANBERRA ACT 2601; e-mail: committees@act.gov.au <<mailto:committees@act.gov.au>>.

The Committee prefers submission to be lodged in writing and by email if possible. All submissions must include your full name, postal address and telephone number.

If you would like to attend a hearing, or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary on 6205 0137 or by email.

The Committee looks forward to hearing from you.

Best regards
Hanna

Dr Hanna Jaireth
Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

ACT Legislative Assembly Committee Office
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

PH: 02 6205 0137
MOB: 0415 144 283
FAX: 6205 0432
E-mail: hanna.jaireth@parliament.act.gov.au
Internet: www.parliament.act.gov.au

Terms of Reference

Inquiry into 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 (accessible at < <http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/Strategy.pdf>>, 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

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