

Dr James Fitzsimons
School of Life & Environmental Sciences
Deakin University
221 Burwood Highway
Burwood VIC 3125
Email fitzsimo@deakin.edu.au

30 April 2006

Dr Hanna Jaireth
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Dear Dr Jaireth

I am writing to provide a submission to the inquiry into the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. I have a background in conservation planning and have recently completed a PhD on the contribution of multi-tenure reserve networks to biodiversity conservation. Specifically, this research looked at the biosphere reserve and conservation management network models in Australia.

The Standing Committee must consider the following points in deciding whether to nominate the whole of the ACT as a biosphere reserve:

- 1) What are the supposed gains to the environment and society that will be achieved through Biosphere Reserve accreditation that could not be achieved through any other existing or new programs?
- 2) What are the **real measurable benefits** that have been demonstrated in the Mornington Peninsular and Western Port Biosphere Reserve?
- 3) Would the ACT be better funding more a more targeted conservation program such as a Conservation Management Network which is proposed under the ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy?
- 4) Is the ACT really an appropriate boundary for a single biosphere reserve considering bioregional principles should be underpinning their design? Would incorporating parts of surrounding NSW or, alternatively, confining the boundaries of the biosphere reserve, be more in keeping with the concept?
- 5) Who would fund the set-up and operation of the biosphere reserve? Funding for conservation is particularly stretched at present and any expectation of Federal funding could draw funds away from more worthy projects elsewhere.

My PhD research raises a number of issues in relation to the Biosphere Reserve and Conservation Management Network concepts in Australia. Attached is a copy for you information. It can also be accessed at:

<http://tux.lib.deakin.edu.au/adt-VDU/public/adt-VDU20050817.103606/>

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Fitzsimons', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Fitzsimons