



Legislative Assembly for the ACT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT

The Proposed Nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

OCTOBER 2007

Report 30

Committee membership

Mr Mick Gentleman MLA	Chair
Mr Zed Seselja MLA	Deputy Chair
Ms Mary Porter AM MLA	

Secretariat

Dr Hanna Jaireth	Secretary
Ms Lydia Chung	Administration
Ms Mary Goring	Assistance with field trip administration

Acknowledgements

The Committee thanks the many stakeholders who participated in this inquiry and contributed to the report. The valuable views and insights that stakeholders shared are noted throughout. The Committee also thanks ACT Government staff who provided assistance, including Ms Catherine O'Connor, Ms Kathy Dempsey, Ms Siew Chin Scholar, Ms Chiew Yee Lim, Ms Deborah Ford and Ms Maria Mangeruca.

Contact Information

Telephone	(02) 6205 0137
Facsimile	(02) 6205 0432
Post	GPO Box 1020
Email	committees@parliament.act.gov.au
Website	www.parliament.act.gov.au

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*, 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

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. ...

**IV THE PROPOSED NOMINATION OF THE ACT AS A UNESCO BIOSPHERE
RESERVE**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Committee membership	ii
Secretariat	ii
Acknowledgements	ii
Contact Information	ii
Terms of reference	iii
Resolution of appointment.....	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	IX
RECOMMENDATIONS	XI
1 INTRODUCTION	1
What is a UNESCO biosphere reserve?.....	1
Biosphere reserves in Australia.....	5
UNESCO's review of Australia's biosphere reserves in 2003	5
Urban biosphere reserves	7
3rd International Congress of Biosphere Reserves.....	9
Australia's participation in the congress.....	11
2 STAKEHOLDERS' COMMENTS ON PROPOSED NOMINATION	13
Background to the proposed ACT nomination.....	13
Australian Government view.....	14
Other stakeholders' comments	17
Stakeholders supporting the proposal.....	17
Stakeholders not supporting the proposal.....	24
Committee comments.....	26
Promoting sustainability	26
Growing a sustainable economy	26
Tourism in the proposed biosphere.....	27
3 MANAGEMENT OF THE NOMINATION PROCESS AND LISTED BIOSPHERE.....	31
Community engagement in developing the ACT nomination.....	32
Committee comments.....	34
Stakeholders' comments.....	35
Committee comments.....	38
Management plans for Australian biosphere reserves	45

Governance arrangements for Australian biosphere reserves	50
Australian Government	51
State and site-specific governance arrangements.....	52
Regulatory impacts.....	52
Committee comments.....	55
A national review of biosphere reserves.....	58
Who should conduct the national review?	62
Funding needs and sources	64
Committee comments.....	68
Timeframe for the proposed nomination.....	68
Stakeholders' comments.....	68
Committee comments.....	70
4 CONTENT OF PROPOSED NOMINATION DOCUMENT	71
The nomination template	71
Criteria for designation as a biosphere reserve	71
Stakeholders' comments.....	72
Zones – possible boundaries of the core, transition and buffer zones	73
Stakeholders' comments.....	76
Committee comments.....	77
Core areas	79
Buffer areas	84
Transition areas.....	85
Cross-border issues	86
Committee comments.....	87
The logistic support function of biosphere reserves	91
Thematic sub-networks of biosphere reserves.....	91
Stakeholders' comments.....	91
Sister-city relationships.....	93
Name of the proposed biosphere reserve	94
Viability of the proposed nomination.....	96
5 CONCLUSIONS	101
APPENDIX A: PROTECTED SPECIES LIST	103
APPENDIX B: COMMITTEE CONSULTATIONS	107
APPENDIX C: MAP OF AUSTRALIAN ALPS NATIONAL PARKS	115
APPENDIX D: SOUTH-EAST AUSTRALIAN BIOREGIONS.	117

THE PROPOSED NOMINATION OF THE ACT AS A UNESCO
BIOSPHERE RESERVE VII

APPENDIX E: SOUTH-EAST AUSTRALIAN SUB- BIOREGIONS	119
APPENDIX F: PROPOSED CORE ZONES	121
APPENDIX G: PLANS AND POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ACT	123
APPENDIX H: ABBREVIATIONS.....	127
APPENDIX I: MAP OF THE CAPITAL REGION AREA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION	129
APPENDIX J: MAP OF THE CAPITAL REGION.....	131

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines a range of issues arising from the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO¹ Biosphere Reserve. Biosphere Reserves are areas of land and/or sea that have been recognised as such by the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program. The background to this program, and its review in 2008 at the 3rd International Congress of Biosphere Reserves, are discussed in the Introduction.

Chapter 2 presents stakeholders' views on the proposed ACT nomination, including Australian Government, academic and community views. Most of the stakeholders who participated in the inquiry supported the proposed nomination, and the Committee has recommended that it proceed in 2008.

The Committee explains why it supports the proposed nomination in Chapter 2 and throughout the report. The Committee agrees that the Griffins' vision for a sustainable Canberra² and Canberra's modern urban planning warrant international recognition.³ The proposed nomination should also raise awareness about sustainability issues in the broader community and stimulate behavioural change. It should also help to grow the institutions, agencies and companies working on sustainability in the region. The Committee suggests that champions may emerge to promote biosphere initiatives, that strategic partnerships may be formed, and that a wide range of current activities already underway in the ACT could be branded as biosphere activities. Elsewhere, the designation of biosphere reserves has provided a positive incentive for the diversification and strengthening of local economies and

¹ the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

² See generally: S. Mackenzie, I. Wood-Bradley, D. Headon and C. Vernon, *The Griffin Legacy: Canberra: the Nation's Capital in the 21st Century*, National Capital Authority, Canberra, 2004; submission no 34

³ S. Corbell MLA, (Minister for Planning), Authority wins awards for planning, design excellence, Media Release, 9 November 2006

sustainable development, particularly in the areas of tourism, ecotourism, and branding of quality regional products and services.

Chapter 3 discusses the management of the nomination process, and notes the roles of the Australian and ACT Governments. It reviews relevant legislation, and recommends various amendments. This chapter also assesses the argument that a regulatory impact statement should be produced in relation to the proposed nomination, and explains why this would not be necessary.

In relation to the management of biosphere reserves that have already been designated in Australia, the Committee recommends in Chapter 3 that a national review be undertaken. This chapter also discusses funding needs and sources, and the timeframe for the proposed nomination.

Chapter 4 notes the criteria that UNESCO applies when considering nominations of biosphere reserves, and identifies which core, buffer and transition areas the Committee considers should be nominated in the ACT and NSW. It also examines the research and monitoring activities that may be stimulated by the proposed biosphere reserve, and recommends a participatory process for its naming.

This inquiry has found that biosphere reserves are a relatively low profile, even neglected component of Australia's suite of policy responses to the sustainability challenge. The Committee has made a range of recommendations which suggest that this situation should be redressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

1.24 The Committee recommends that the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO biosphere reserve proceed, but that the ACT Government first pursue effective consultations with key stakeholder sectors such as traditional owners, young people and the broader community and endeavour to ensure that those stakeholders support the proposed nomination.

RECOMMENDATION 2

1.25 The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change ensure that a representative of the ACT Government attends the 3rd International Congress of Biosphere Reserves as an observer, and as host of a side-event promoting the ACT as a future biosphere reserve.

RECOMMENDATION 3

2.39 The Committee recommends that the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation engage the ACT Ministerial Tourism Advisory Council on the proposal to nominate the ACT as a biosphere reserve and particularly concerning ecotourism and its marketing for the ACT and region.

RECOMMENDATION 4

2.40 The Committee recommends that the proposed national review of biosphere reserves include a proposal advocating the development of a national UNESCO biosphere reserve trade mark and accreditation scheme for quality products and services produced within Australian biosphere reserves.

RECOMMENDATION 5

2.41 The Committee recommends that if a national UNESCO biosphere reserve trade mark is unlikely to be developed, the ACT Government commission a consultancy for the development of a UNESCO biosphere reserve trademark for the ACT, and licensing arrangements for ACT and regional stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 6

2.42 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review and update the ACT Nature Based Tourism Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 7

3.15 The Committee recommends that before the nomination document for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve is lodged with UNESCO, the ACT Government

ensure that culturally-appropriate consultations occur about the proposed nomination with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council.

RECOMMENDATION 8

3.28 The Committee recommends that a broad range of stakeholders be invited to participate in the development of the nomination document and a cooperation plan for the ACT biosphere reserve. Once the biosphere reserve has been listed, interested stakeholders should be invited to become ACT biosphere reserve partners willing to further the objectives of the biosphere reserve. A steering committee should be elected from amongst the partnership, chaired by the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

RECOMMENDATION 9

3.44 The Committee recommends that a consultation and communications strategy be developed for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve and national review of biosphere reserves.

RECOMMENDATION 10

3.45 The Committee recommends that particular attention be placed on engaging with young people in the ACT about the proposed ACT nomination.

RECOMMENDATION 11

3.46 The Committee recommends that the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* (ACT) be amended, and that additional resources be provided to the Office of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, so as to enable the Commissioner to chair the proposed ACT biosphere reserve steering committee and broader biosphere partners' association.

RECOMMENDATION 12

3.47 Pending the commencement of the proposed amendments of the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* (ACT), the Committee recommends that the ACT Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change ask the Department of Territory and Municipal Services to continue consulting with stakeholders and begin negotiations concerning the proposed nomination.

RECOMMENDATION 13

3.61 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government suggest to the Australian Government, in the context of the proposed national review of UNESCO biosphere reserves recommended in this report, that consideration be given to replacing the provisions concerning management plans for biosphere reserves in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth) with provisions concerning cooperation plans for biosphere reserves.

RECOMMENDATION 14

3.62 The Committee recommends that the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainability be asked to develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a cooperation plan for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve, having considered Canadian precedents, and with provisions for regular review and amendment as needs arise.

RECOMMENDATION 15

3.91 The Committee recommends that the ACT Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change write to his Australian Government counterpart to suggest that consideration be given to conferring focal point status for UNESCO biosphere reserves in Australia on the national Sustainability Commission once established. If the Commission is not established, consideration should be given to relocating the focal point to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

RECOMMENDATION 16

3.95 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government seek Australian Government and private sector financial support for the convening of a national conference on biosphere reserves in Canberra.

RECOMMENDATION 17

3.102 The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change write to the Australian Government Ministers for the Environment and Water Resources, and Foreign Affairs, requesting that a broad-ranging review of UNESCO biosphere reserves in Australia be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION 18

3.117 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the provision of about \$400 000 for the proposed nomination and implementation of the ACT biosphere reserve, to cover salary and project costs, with financial and in-kind contributions sought from the Commonwealth and NSW Governments and private sector sources.

RECOMMENDATION 19

3.123 The Committee recommends that the nomination document for the proposed ACT UNESCO biosphere reserve be lodged with UNESCO by December 2008.

RECOMMENDATION 20

4.58 The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change ask the Department of Territory and Municipal Services in the

first instance, and following amendments to the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* (ACT), the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, to pursue negotiations with local governments in the Capital Region, the Capital Region Development Board and the Capital Region Area Consultative Committee about a possible biosphere reserve for the Capital Region.

RECOMMENDATION 21

4.59 The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister consider the desirability of consulting with the Australian Government about the consolidation and rationalisation of regional development bodies such as the Capital Region Development Board and Capital Region Area Consultative Committee.

4.69 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider whether the Office of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, and/or the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, should be the repository of new collaborative research platforms and databases for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve.

RECOMMENDATION 22

4.73 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government support the pursuit of funding for the development of collaborative research platforms for research relevant to the proposed ACT biosphere reserve.

RECOMMENDATION 23

4.81 The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister and/or the Minister for Planning initiate a participatory process by which the ACT Place Names Committee would recommend a name for the proposed biosphere reserve.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This chapter explains the concept of 'biosphere reserve' and refers to other biosphere reserves in Australia. It introduces UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program and discusses its proposed international review in early 2008. It also discusses UNESCO's 2003 review of Australian biosphere reserves and suggests that a national review is now overdue.

What is a UNESCO biosphere reserve?

- 1.2 Biosphere reserves are areas of land and/or sea that have been recognised as such by UNESCO,⁴ the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Designated areas are significant for biodiversity conservation, are representative of a biogeographical region, and are of sufficient size to demonstrate approaches to sustainable development at a regional scale.⁵ They are areas that demonstrate sustainable relationships between people and nature. Their three main functions are to:

- foster sustainable economic and human development;
- support demonstration projects, environmental education and training, as well as scientific research and monitoring; and
- contribute to the conservation of genetic resources, species, ecosystems and landscapes.⁶

The status of being a biosphere Reserve is conferred by the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB).

- 1.3 UNESCO has played an important role in supporting global sustainability initiatives since at least the 1960s. UNESCO's 1968 Biosphere Conference was one of the first intergovernmental conferences aiming to reconcile the conservation and use of natural resources (now recognised as sustainable

⁴ UNESCO is a specialised agency of the United Nations. Its main aim is to promote world peace and security through education, science, culture and communication

⁵ Article 4, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*, <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/statframe.pdf>>, viewed 3 October 2007

⁶ Article 3 – functions, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*

development).⁷ 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.⁸ UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) 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.⁹

- 1.4 The first biosphere reserves were recognised in 1976.¹⁰ In September 2007 there were 529 biosphere reserves in 105 countries.¹¹ These form the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.¹² This network fosters information exchange, and comparative research and monitoring. Participation in the network does not affect national sovereignty over a designated area. Nor does the status of being a biosphere reserve have regulatory implications, as discussed further below. Nor does it preclude the conferring of other international designations in relation to an area, such as world heritage status. In Australia Macquarie Island Nature Reserve in Tasmania, and Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park in the Northern Territory, for example, are both world heritage areas and biosphere reserves.
- 1.5 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 and the Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly in November 1995.¹³ These criteria

⁷ M. Batisse, 'World Heritage and Biosphere Reserves: complementary instruments', *Parks* vol. 11 no. 1, 2001, pp 38–43

⁸ R. Boardman, *International Organization and the Conservation of Nature*, MacMillan Press, London, 1981, p 65

⁹ Batisse, 'World Heritage and Biosphere Reserves: complementary instruments', p 40

¹⁰ L. Tangle, 'A new era for Biosphere Reserves', *BioScience* vol.38 no. 3, 1988, pp 148–155 at p148

¹¹ 'Twenty-three new biosphere reserves join UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) network', <<http://www.portal.unesco.org>>, viewed 27 September 2007

¹² Article 2 – World Network of Biosphere Reserves, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*

¹³ Article 4 of the Statutory Framework. For the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network see: <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/statframe.pdf>>, and <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/doc/Strategy.pdf>>, viewed 9 August 2007

are discussed further in chapter 4. The Strategy identified ten key directions for strengthening the contribution that biosphere reserves can make to sustainable development. These include, 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 resources;¹⁴
- 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, 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; and
- using biosphere reserves to raise public awareness and understanding about humanity's relationship with nature based on a long-term, intergenerational perspective.¹⁵

1.6 The Seville Strategy provides recommendations for developing effective biosphere reserves. These are guidelines only. Indicators to assist with monitoring and evaluation are also provided. As is discussed further below, the Seville Strategy is under review and is expected to be replaced with the

¹⁴ 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: see for example 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.cbd.int/decisions/cop-07.shtml?m=cop-07>>

¹⁵ UNESCO, *The Seville Strategy For Biosphere Reserves*, UNESCO, Paris, 1996, pp 3–4

Madrid Declaration and Madrid Action Plan which are likely to be adopted at the 3rd International Congress on Biosphere Reserves, to be held in Spain in early 2008.

- 1.7 The Committee is aware that stakeholders may be confused by, or dissatisfied with the term 'biosphere reserve'. 'The word 'biosphere' means 'sphere of life'. The term 'reserve' is usually associated with 'protected area' or 'exclusion area', but it can also just mean a significant area with a recognised international status. As early as the 2001 meeting of heads of Australian parks agencies there were discussions about the need to change the term 'biosphere reserve'.¹⁶
- 1.8 This issue was raised again at the September 2007 meeting of the MAB Bureau of the Intergovernmental Coordinating Council, which was asked to consider the appropriateness of the terms 'Man and the Biosphere' and 'biosphere reserve'. It was suggested that 'Man and the Biosphere' raised gender concerns, and was outdated given the global recognition of human communities in ecosystems. Reference was made to some European countries' preference for terms such as 'biosphere areas'. Another alternative term suggested was 'biosphere places'. Some of the alternative names suggested for the MAB program included Millennial (or Millennium) Alliance for the Biosphere (MAB), Multilateral Alliance for the Biosphere (MAB), Mobilizing Alliances for the Biosphere (MAB), Movements and Alliances for the Biosphere (MAB), and Biosphere and Sustainability.¹⁷
- 1.9 The outcomes of the Council's deliberations at the September 2007 meeting were not known in early October 2007 as the report of the meeting had not then been released.

¹⁶ Extracts of minutes, Heads of Agencies Committee, provided to the Committee on request by the Australian Government Director of National Parks, Mr Peter Cochrane, May 2007

¹⁷ UNESCO, Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, Meeting of the Bureau of the International Co-ordinating Council, Paris, 18-20 September 2007, Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda: Preparations for Madrid – Working documents, Madrid Action Plan and Madrid Declaration Working methods and practices of the ICC in relation to the same of the Executive Board and the General Conference of UNESCO as a tool for improving science-policy practice within UNESCO's planning and programming agendas, 1 August 2007, UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/6, pp 3, 4, 13
<http://www.unesco.org/mab/icc/bureau/2007/E_Madrid_methods.pdf>, viewed 27 September 2007

Biosphere reserves in Australia

- 1.10 Most of Australia's 14 biosphere reserves were listed between 1977 and 1982, before the 1995 Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves was adopted. Ten of these are essentially protected national parks or nature reserves.¹⁸ Most are considered 'first generation' biosphere reserves which place more emphasis on ecosystem and genetic resource conservation, education, and research and training, than on sustainable development for human communities, including urban communities. Kate Matysek and others argue that these early biosphere reserves, while well chosen at the time, are currently artefacts of past thinking, resulting in them not being taken seriously as biosphere reserves.¹⁹ These authors suggest the more recently designated Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve (Vic) represents the contemporary sustainable development and bioregional approach to biosphere reserve designation. Riverland (SA), Barkindji (Vic) and Noosa (Qld)²⁰ are also representative of this regional sustainable development approach, and include a range of land tenures and uses. Matysek and others suggest that biosphere reserves in Australia can 'epitomise local sustainable development' if community driven, and based on a 'regional sustainability vision'.²¹

UNESCO's review of Australia's biosphere reserves in 2003

- 1.11 UNESCO's Statutory Framework for Biosphere Reserves makes provision for a

¹⁸ Croajingolong (Vic 1977), Kosciuszko (NSW 1977), Macquarie Island (Tas 1977), Prince Regent River (WA 1977), Mumangari Conservation Park (SA 1977)[previously known as Unnamed Biosphere Reserve], Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) (NT 1977), Yathong (NSW 1977), Fitzgerald River (WA 1978), Hattah-Kulkyne & Murray-Kulkyne (Vic 1981), Wilson's Promontory (Vic 1981), Riverland (SA 1977)[Riverland was originally Danggali Conservation Park, but it was extended and renamed Bookmark in 1995, and renamed as Riverland in 2004], Mornington Peninsula and Western Port (Vic 2002), Barkindji (NSW 2005) [Noosa (Qld 2007): Australian Government Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 'Australia's Biosphere Reserves', <<http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/biosphere/index.html>>, viewed 9 August 2007

¹⁹ KA Matysek, E. Stratford, and LK Kriwoken, 'The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program in Australia: constraints and opportunities for localized sustainable development', *The Canadian Geographer*, vol 50 no 1 2006, pp 85–100 at p89. See also submissions no 14, 28

²⁰ See: <http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/new_BRs2007.shtml>, viewed 27 September 2007

²¹ Matsysek et al, 'The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program in Australia: constraints and opportunities for localized sustainable development', pp 98–99

periodic review of listed reserves every 10 years.²² In 2003 UNESCO reviewed 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. Most did not fulfil development objectives due to their remoteness and lack of human populations. As an outcome, UNESCO recommended that authorities in Australia consider, within the context of a national review, how best they can participate in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Issues identified for consideration included:

- 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 ecology and governance;
- 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 Millennium Development Goals; and
- the positive dimension of withdrawal of non-functional sites, taking the example of a similar successful experience in the UK.²³

1.12 The ICC also made a range of specific suggestions for each of the biosphere reserves it had reviewed. For example in relation to the Kosciuszko biosphere reserve, as discussed further in chapter 4, it recommended that Australian authorities:

explore the appropriateness of applying the biosphere reserve concept to the Australian Alps bioregion, adding other protected areas as a core area and adding

²² Article 9 of the Statutory Framework

²³ UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program Meeting of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council, Paris, 8–11 July 2003 *Final Report*, Paris, 30 July 2003, UN Doc SC-03/CONF.217/14, pp 16–19, <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001347/134729e.pdf>>, viewed 9 August 2007

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.²⁴

- 1.13 Following the UNESCO Review the Tasmanian Government requested that the South West National Park be de-listed as a biosphere reserve as it no longer met the functions of biosphere reserves.²⁵
- 1.14 At its September 2007 meeting, the MAB International Coordinating Council noted that the 2008 3rd International Congress on Biosphere Reserves may recommend 'a systematic and accelerated effort to review and update the biosphere reserves of pre-Seville days to current understanding of the concepts principles and practices'.²⁶
- 1.15 The need for a national review of biosphere reserves in Australia is discussed further in chapter 3.

Urban biosphere reserves

- 1.16 UNESCO's biosphere reserves are one of the few international environmental mechanisms that can be applied in urban areas.²⁷ 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:
 - Kristianstad, Sweden, nominated in 2005;²⁸
 - Mornington Peninsula and Western Port, near Melbourne, Victoria, designated in 2002;²⁹

²⁴ UN Doc. SC-03/CONF.217/14, p 18

²⁵ Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, *Annual Report 2002–03*, <<http://www.environment.gov.au/about/publications/annual-report/02-03/reports-epbc-conserving.html>>, viewed 9 August 2007

²⁶ UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/6, p 11

²⁷ Christine Alfsen-Norodom, 'Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities: Introduction', in C. Alfsen-Norodom, Benjamin D. Lane, and Melody Corry (eds), *Urban Biosphere and Society: Partnership of Cities*, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences vol 1023, New York, 2004, pp 1–9 at p 8

²⁸ See <www.vattenriket.kristianstad.se>, viewed 26 June 2006

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

- Pays de Fontainebleau, near Paris, France, designated in 1998;³⁰
- Arganeraie, near Agadir in Morocco, designated in 1998;³¹
- Cerrado, near Brasilia in Brazil, designated in 1993 and extended in 2001;³²
- Lanzarote, on northernmost island of the Canary Archipelago, Spain, designated in 1993;³³
- Mata Atlantica (including the green belts of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo), designated in 1992;³⁴
- Niagara Escarpment, Ontario, Canada, designated in 1990;³⁵
- Golden Gate, adjacent to the San Francisco Bay metropolitan area, United States, designated in 1988,³⁶ and

³⁰ 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, 'Fontainebleau: hounds, horns and motorways', *UNESCO Sources*, issue 109, 1999, p5

³¹ 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>>, viewed 26 June 2006

³² 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>>, viewed 30 June 2006

³³ 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>> viewed 3 July 2006

³⁴ 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>>, viewed 26 June 2006. The reserve has reportedly raised public awareness, stakeholder involvement, and employment in the 'ecological job market': J. Brener, 'São Paulo: green belt blues', *UNESCO Sources*, issue 136, 2001, p 14

³⁵ 725 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>, viewed 26 June 2006

³⁶ 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>> viewed 3 July 2006

- Cordillera Volcanica Centre near San José in Costa Rica, listed in 1988.³⁷

1.17 UNESCO has had working groups exploring the further application of the biosphere reserve concept to urban areas and their hinterlands, and established a new working group on urban biospheres in July 2007.³⁸ Several international conferences reflect international interest in this issue.³⁹ Urban sites that are currently represented in the Urban Biosphere Group include Johannesburg/Gauteng, New Orleans, Istanbul, Canberra, and Cape Town. The Urban Biosphere Working Group will be submitting input to the Madrid Action Plan, as discussed following.

3rd International Congress of Biosphere Reserves

1.18 From 4–8 February 2008, Spain will be hosting the 3rd International Congress of Biosphere Reserves, entitled ‘Biosphere Future: UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development’.⁴⁰ A major aim of this congress is to assess the progress that has been made with the Man and the Biosphere Program since the Seville Congress in 1995. Another is to define the niche for UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Program in the new millennium, particularly in relation to

³⁷ 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>>, viewed 26 June 2006

³⁸ Christine Alfsen, ‘Urban biosphere group: inception meeting Cape Town, South Africa, July 12 2007’, notes of meeting. For previous working group see: International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, UNESCO, ‘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 2000

³⁹ 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 9 April 2006

⁴⁰ UNESCO, ‘Spain will host the 3rd World Biosphere Reserves Congress entitled ‘Biosphere Futures’, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development, <http://www.unesco.org/mab/news/icc_spain.shtml>, viewed 15 February 2007

the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). These discussions will guide the development of the Madrid Action Plan 2008–13, and will also shape the future role of biosphere reserves. A Madrid Declaration is expected to be adopted at the congress. Working draft documents were discussed at the September 2007 meeting of the Bureau of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program's International Co-ordinating Council.⁴¹ Some of the commitments which are expected to be included in the Madrid Action Plan include:

- an emphasis on using research knowledge and partnerships to reduce biodiversity loss, to understand earth system processes, and to mitigate and adapt to climate change, thereby contributing to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 2010 target;
- a review of zones within biosphere reserves and the conservation-development relationships characteristics of each zone;
- a description for biosphere reserves as 'learning laboratories for sustainable development', interacting with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment as well as the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals;⁴²
- a recognition that as a dominant driver in global change is the increased rate of urbanisation and human activity, existing and new biosphere reserves should incorporate urban areas;
- encouragement for interdisciplinary research and participatory adaptive management approaches for integrated natural resources development, including collaboration with other UNESCO programs;
- a realignment of governance arrangements to emphasise thematic, regional and subregional networking, and to strengthen local expert contributions to national planning and program development efforts; and
- promotion of the use of geographic information systems and remote sensing technologies for monitoring the state of biosphere reserves and World

⁴¹ UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/6

⁴² especially 1,2,3 and 7 i.e. goal 1: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, goal 2: achieve universal primary education, goal 3: promote gender equality and empower women, goal 7: ensure environmental sustainability

Heritage Areas in the context of global ecosystem and climate change (2008 will be the International Year of Planet Earth).⁴³

Australia's participation in the congress

- 1.19 The Committee expects that Australia, as a national member of the United Nations, will participate in the 3rd International Congress of Biosphere Reserves. Australia's permanent delegate to UNESCO and managers of selected biosphere reserves are expected to attend.
- 1.20 UNESCO is an important participant in global initiatives for sustainability. Along with a wide range of stakeholders, UNESCO contributes to global initiatives aimed at achieving the '2010 biodiversity target', which is to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at national, regional and global levels. The target was adopted by the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-6), and by world leaders at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.⁴⁴ The involvement of local authorities is essential to the achievement of this target. In March 2007 the Mayor of the City of Curitiba, in Brazil, hosted a meeting on 'Cities and Biodiversity: Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target'.
- 1.21 It is important that Australia actively contributes to policy development in international fora and raises awareness of Australia's sustainability initiatives. This may also encourage more sustainable development domestically and internationally. The promotion of Australia's natural and cultural assets using the biosphere reserve 'brand' may attract investments in sustainability industries and encourage collaborative projects, eco-tourism and the eco-branding of sustainably produced local and regional products. It may also strengthen networks amongst stakeholders already dedicated to promoting

⁴³ UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/6; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), *Draft Resolutions 2008–09, Draft Program and Budget for the 2008–2009 biennium (34 C/5) 2nd version*, <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001501/150144e.pdf>>, viewed 9 August 2007, pp 25, 26, 56, 62, 64, 65, 153, 154, 158

⁴⁴ Convention on Biological Diversity, 'Report of the Cities and Biodiversity: Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target: Mayors' meeting on the contribution of Cities to the Achievement of the 2010 Biodiversity Target, Curitiba, Brazil, 26–28 March 2007', UN Doc UNEP/CBD/Cities/1/3, 3 April 2007; including the Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity, p 23

sustainable development, and encourage collaborative monitoring and evaluation.

- 1.22 The Committee is confident that the framework documents underpinning UNESCO biosphere reserves will be updated and improved at the congress in 2008, and that the World Network of Biosphere Reserves will become re-energised as a result. The Committee, having considered a wide range of submissions and other evidence, as discussed in more detail in chapter 2, considers that the ACT, and possibly with parts of NSW, should seek to join the world network as a biosphere reserve. The ACT can expect to see beneficial biodiversity conservation and sustainable development outcomes as a result.
- 1.23 However the Committee also considers that the ACT Government should invest more resources in raising awareness in the broader community about the nature of biosphere reserves and their functions. The ACT Government should engage in effective consultations with key stakeholder sectors such as traditional owners, young people and the broader community, and endeavour to ensure that those stakeholders support the proposed nomination. Many of the Committee's other recommendations should be viewed in light of this primary recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 1

- 1.24 **The Committee recommends that the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO biosphere reserve proceed, but that the ACT Government first pursue effective consultations with key stakeholder sectors such as traditional owners, young people and the broader community and endeavour to ensure that those stakeholders support the proposed nomination.**

RECOMMENDATION 2

- 1.25 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change ensure that a representative of the ACT Government attends the 3rd International Congress of Biosphere Reserves as an observer, and as host of a side-event promoting the ACT as a future biosphere reserve.**

2 STAKEHOLDERS' COMMENTS ON PROPOSED NOMINATION

- 2.1 This chapter explains the background to the proposed nomination and presents the views expressed in submissions, at events hosted by the Committee to discuss the proposed nomination, and at public hearings.

Background to the proposed ACT nomination

- 2.2 The issue of a possible nomination of a biosphere reserve for the ACT was raised in 1986.⁴⁵ More recently, Nature and Society Forum Inc has been advocating the nomination, which they regard as consistent with their vision for healthy people on a healthy planet. The Forum is keen to be involved as 'vigilant champions' of the biosphere.⁴⁶ In September 2004 the ACT Labor Party included the nomination proposal in its sustainability election platform.⁴⁷ The Chief Minister affirmed that the ACT Government was committed to pursuing the nomination in 2005.⁴⁸ 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 a biosphere reserve listing for the national capital in 2013.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ ACT Parks and Conservation Service, Department of Territories, *Namadgi National Park Management Plan*, Department of Urban Services 1986, p16

⁴⁶ D. Eastburn, K. Taylor, P. Bridgewater and I. Anderson, 'ACT a fine biosphere reserve', *The Canberra Times*, 18 February 2003, p8; Australian National Commission for UNESCO, 'New biosphere reserve proposed', *UNESCO News*, June 2003, p12; 'Community leadership for a sustainable future: Proposed ACT biosphere project public forum', 26 March 2003; D. Eastburn, 'A bush capital biosphere reserve could be a world's first', *The Canberra Times*, 18 June 2005, p11; Nature and Society Forum Inc, 'Proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve' <<http://www.natsoc.org.au/html/projects/br.htm>>, viewed 9 August 2007; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, pp 32–33

⁴⁷ Australian Labor Party, ACT Branch, 'Sustainability', Canberra, 2004, pp 4–5

⁴⁸ J. Stanhope, 'Making Canberra sustainable', in B. Furnass, S. Clark and P. Ramsay (eds), *Making Canberra Sustainable: Papers presented at the forum 'Making Canberra Sustainable'* Ginninderra Press, Canberra, 2005, pp 13–29 at p 15

⁴⁹ Centenary of Canberra Task Force, *Canberra 100: Celebration of a Century: The Canberra Centenary Blueprint*, Canberra, March 2006, p16

- 2.3 Future nominations of Australian biosphere reserves, such as the Australian Capital Territory, would proceed under UNESCO's anticipated Madrid Action Plan.
- 2.4 The vision for Canberra in one of the ACT Government's sustainability policy frameworks – *The Canberra Plan*⁵⁰ – 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.⁵¹
- 2.5 One of the ACT Government's 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'.⁵² 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; and
 - recognition that meeting the needs of today must not be at the expense of future generations being able to meet their needs.⁵³

Australian Government view

- 2.6 The Australian Government is a key stakeholder in the proposed nomination and listing process for the ACT biosphere reserve because it transmits the

⁵⁰ including the *Social Plan*, the *Economic White Paper* and the *Sustainable Transport Plan*

⁵¹ ACT Government, *Measuring our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, Vol. 1: Our Story, Canberra, 2004, quoting from *The Canberra Plan*, p7

⁵² Stanhope, 'Making Canberra sustainable', p 14

⁵³ ACT Government, *People, Place, Prosperity: A policy of Sustainability for the ACT*, Chief Minister's Department, Canberra, 2003, p 11

nomination document to UNESCO after assessing their compliance with UNESCO's requirements; all ACT land is Commonwealth-owned; and the Australian Government is also a major land manager, tenant and employer in the ACT.⁵⁴

- 2.7 Several Australian Government Ministers responded to the Committee's request for comment on the proposed nomination and related matters.
- 2.8 The Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, the Hon Jim Lloyd MP, advised the Committee that he supported in principle the proposed nomination of areas of the ACT as a Biosphere Reserve, and offered the assistance of the National Capital Authority in developing the nomination. Minister Lloyd noted however that he was not yet able to give his agreement to the proposed nomination as he had not yet 'been able to consider the impact that a nomination might have on the Australian Government's interest in the national capital'. Whilst recognising that the details of the proposal need to be agreed between governments, Minister Lloyd described the proposed designation as 'an aspirational statement about conservation and sustainability' while noting the need for expectations about governance of the reserve to be 'realistic'.⁵⁵
- 2.9 The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, the Hon Peter Lindsay MP, assured the Committee that the Department of Defence was committed to the sustainable management of its bases and training areas, and aimed to be a leader in sustainable environmental management. Mr Lindsay asked for a more definitive list of the areas proposed for the ACT biosphere reserve, and the zones that might apply within those areas. He said that if any additional management arrangements were proposed as a result of the nomination these would need to be agreed between governments prior to the nomination. He also acknowledged the contribution of biosphere reserves to land conservation.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 28 November 2006, p 26

⁵⁵ Letter to Committee Chair Mr Mick Gentleman MLA dated 14 March 2007; see also an earlier response: submission no 20 dated 2 June 2006

⁵⁶ Letter to Committee Chair Mr Mick Gentleman MLA dated 11 September 2007

- 2.10 The Minister for Finance and Administration, the Hon Nick Minchin MP, wrote that the Commonwealth needed to know which sites would be included in the nomination, the legal protection and governance system proposed, and any possible funding implications for the Commonwealth. Senator Minchin referred to bushfire risk management and suggested that the ACT 'should focus on improving its land management responsibilities as a priority', and that consideration of the nomination should only proceed 'once the ACT has provided clarity on the arrangements that are proposed and has made steps to demonstrate improved competence in managing land in the ACT'.⁵⁷ He said that existing regulatory and planning regimes were intended to provide sufficient protection of natural resources in the ACT and that it was unclear 'how a new layer of legal complexity would improve upon existing conservation processes or outcomes'.
- 2.11 The then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, exchanged correspondence with the Committee about a proposed national workshop for Australian biosphere volunteers. Mr Hunt's initial offer of funding support to Australian Biosphere Volunteers Inc did not proceed.⁵⁸
- 2.12 In 2006 the then Minister for the Environment and Heritage, the Hon Senator Ian Campbell, noted that 'the Australian Government's interest would largely centre on the quality of the final proposal'.⁵⁹
- 2.13 The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, advised that although the then 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.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Letter to Committee Chair Mr Mick Gentleman MLA dated 13 September 2007

⁵⁸ Letter to Committee Chair Mr Mick Gentleman MLA dated 15 January 2007

⁵⁹ Letter from the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, to the Committee Chair, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, dated 6 September 2006

⁶⁰ Letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, to the Committee Chair, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, dated 26 April 2006

- 2.14 The Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, the Hon Ian Macfarlane MP noted that the Australian Government recognises the importance of sustainability and that it was also important ‘to pursue measures that concurrently deliver both economic and environmental benefits.’⁶¹

Other stakeholders’ comments

Stakeholders supporting the proposal

- 2.15 Most submissions lodged with the inquiry or stakeholders who met with the Committee supported the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO biosphere reserve.⁶² Organisations and individuals who expressed support for the nomination, and the main evidence provided, included:

Environment Task Force Canberra Business Council (public hearing)	Conservation Council of the South-east Region and Canberra (sub no 16, public hearing, roundtable, workshop)
Commission for the Environment of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn (sub no 5)	Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand ACT Division (sub no 28, public hearing)
Mr Glen Hyman Associate Researcher, CNRS Space, Nature and Culture Laboratory, France (correspondence, public hearing)	Emeritus Professor Neville Fletcher (correspondence)
Mr Craig Forster, Australian Biosphere Volunteers Inc (correspondence, site visit)	Mr Dierk von Behrens (roundtable)
CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (sub no 14, public hearing)	Mr Brett Odgers (subs no 4, 23)
Institute of Foresters of Australia (ACT Division) (sub no 18)	Mr Ian Anderson (subs no 13, 30, workshop)
Mr George Howe (sub no 24)	Ms Fiona Spier (sub no 11)
Mr Steve Douglas, Ecological Surveys and Planning (sub no 1)	Ms Ruth Kharis (sub no 25)
Ms Fiona Spier (sub no 11)	National Trust of Australia (ACT) (subs no 17, 31)

⁶¹ Letter from the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, the Hon Ian Macfarlane MP, to the Committee Chair, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, dated 11 April 2006

⁶² Submissions which expressed reservations or opposition included nos 8, 19, 26, 32

Ms Wendy Rainbird (sub no 2)	Professor Brian Roberts, former Chair, Sustainability Expert Reference Group (sub no 15, roundtable, public hearing)
Professor Ian Chubb, Vice-Chancellor, Australian National University and Professor (public hearing)	Professor Will Steffen, Director, Fenner School for the Environment and Society, ANU (public hearing)
Professor Stephen Parker, Vice-Chancellor, University of Canberra (public hearing)	Professor John Baird, Rector, UNSW at ADFA (public hearing)
Mr Peter Ottesen, Director, Sustainability Policy and Programs, Department of the Territory and Municipal Services	Professor Brendan Mackey, Fenner School of Society and the Environment, ANU, and the Chair of the Nature and Society Forum Board
Nature and Society Forum Inc (subs no 9, 27, public hearing, workshop)	Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc (Canberra Chapter) (sub no 34)
Professor Ken Taylor (sub no 7)	World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN (The World Conservation Union) (sub no 33, public hearing)
Friends of Grasslands (subs no 21, 29)	Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park (roundtable)

2.16 These stakeholders advised the Committee that the main advantages of the proposed nomination and listing would be to:

- demonstrate the interactions between people and nature in the ACT and the educational and experiential benefits that follow from that;⁶³
- enable the ACT Government to demonstrate international leadership, and generate international recognition,⁶⁴ by showcasing the national capital as an ecologically-sensitive, well-planned city, in a biosphere reserve seeking long-term sustainability;⁶⁵
- demonstrate the application of urban ecological planning which addresses environmental, economic and social issues in an exemplary, sustainable way. The vision and enduring legacy of Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin should be central to the Biosphere;⁶⁶

⁶³ Submission no 7, 27

⁶⁴ Submissions no 16, 21, 23, 29

⁶⁵ Submissions no 4, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 18, 28, 30, 31, 34; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 8 May 2007, p 87

⁶⁶ Submission nos 4, 7, 34; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 28 November 2006, p 16; submissions no 10 and 22 suggested that the nomination may provide an opportunity for better soil management in the ACT.

- raise public awareness about the environment and sustainability principles⁶⁷ and stimulate behavioural change,⁶⁸ enabling the challenges of achieving sustainability to be better met in the national capital;⁶⁹
- identify and promote the natural, cultural and human assets of the region,⁷⁰ including the ACT's cultural landscapes and urban sustainability.⁷¹ This could attract international tourists and students, and international collaborative research;⁷²
- provide an opportunity for the ACT to become a centre of sustainable scientific endeavour, and business opportunities;⁷³
- 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';⁷⁴
- strengthen networks and collaborative activity amongst stakeholders already dedicated to protecting environmental interests and land management;⁷⁵
- generate regional and national pride, investment in sustainability, and promote tourism and the marketing of local products;⁷⁶
- demonstrate a commitment to global environmental standards, responsibilities and enhanced environmental values;⁷⁷
- the listing could provide local, regional, national and international biodiversity conservation benefits; intergenerational benefits and would be

⁶⁷ Submissions no 2, 4, 5, 11, 15, 18, 23

⁶⁸ Submissions no 4, 13, 23; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 90; *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, pp 41, 44; *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, p 22

⁶⁹ Submissions no 4, 11, 13, 23

⁷⁰ Submissions no 9, 23, 30, 34

⁷¹ Submission no 7, 17; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 51; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, p11

⁷² Submission no 9, 29, 31; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 94; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, pp 11, 19, 20

⁷³ Submissions no 9, 11, 15, ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 90; *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, pp 44–45, 55, and ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 8 May 2007, pp 85–86, 94

⁷⁴ Submission no 14

⁷⁵ Submissions no 15, 16, 27; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 94

⁷⁶ Submissions no 9, 13, 15, 16, 21

⁷⁷ Submissions no 2, 4

a tangible response to climate change;⁷⁸

- enable more research and monitoring of the environment to be undertaken, enabling progress towards long-term sustainability to be measured;⁷⁹
- reaffirm Canberra's commitment to conservation and research of landscapes,⁸⁰ ecosystems, species and genetic variation;⁸¹
- 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 people;⁸²
- provide support for the proposed Australian National Sustainability Complex (undefined);⁸³
- provide more incentives for sustainability and discourage the pursuit of behaviours harmful to the environment and others;⁸⁴
- enable Canberra's sustainability gains to be compared with other outstanding cities meeting sustainability criteria;⁸⁵ and
- provide a framework that recognises the need for all facets of government and the public to work towards a common goal.⁸⁶

2.17 The Vice Chancellors (or equivalent officers) of three of the four universities in the ACT welcomed the proposed nomination while the Australian Catholic University advised that it was unable to participate in the inquiry:

- The ANU offered to inform the sustainability debate by demonstrating leadership and providing expertise, through the dissemination of applied research, and the training of environmental professionals.⁸⁷
- The University of Canberra offered its expertise in ecology, sustainability, developing cities and communities, research and development, teaching, and consulting. Professor Parker even agreed that the University of

⁷⁸ Submission no 33

⁷⁹ Submissions no 4, 9

⁸⁰ Submission no 5

⁸¹ Submission no 4

⁸² Submissions no 5, 11

⁸³ Submission no 2

⁸⁴ Submission no 5

⁸⁵ Submission no 4

⁸⁶ Submission no 11

⁸⁷ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, pp 85–87, 90

Canberra could be branded as a university within a biosphere reserve, and could assist with the development of the brand mechanism such as a trademark, which could be used as an accreditation mechanism for sustainable products, industries and initiatives within the biosphere. His colleague, Professor Roberts, suggested that this might also stimulate better implementation of the ACT Economic White Paper concerning sustainable industries, just as the 'smart state' marketing has done for Queensland.⁸⁸

- The University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) saw itself as a good corporate citizen of Canberra, and offered its expertise in a range of environment-related disciplines, but noted that researchers could not be directed in their research work. ADFA's relevant specialisations include geospatial information science, remote sensing, forest and water management, urban sustainability, transport efficiency, ecology, water quality studies, pollution dispersion, groundwater pollution, water chemistry, air pollution and dispersion, and bushfire research. The ADFA Rector, Professor John Baird, suggested that an initial project could be to promote collaboration amongst the holders of data sets in the region concerning natural systems, terrain, hydrology, and wildlife and census data. He said ADFA would be very keen to participate in an ACT information network on biologically related areas.⁸⁹ Mr Glen Hyman agreed that cadastral level spatial information would be very useful for developing the zonation plan for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve.⁹⁰

2.18 Researchers with CSIRO's Sustainable Ecosystems suggested that the nomination of the ACT as an urban biosphere could galvanise activity about urban sustainability issues, and that the nomination process should proceed on a 'no regrets' basis because there would be benefits in the process of nominating even if it does not ultimately proceed as nominated. CSIRO explained that urban ecology is a growth area of research which aimed to

⁸⁸ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, pp 94, 96–99

⁸⁹ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, pp 101–105

⁹⁰ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p108

promote human health and wellbeing. CSIRO agreed that leaders with expertise in social ecology could help biosphere reserves progress towards sustainability, and that if seed funding was provided a range of collaborative partnerships could be developed.⁹¹

2.19 The Canberra Business Council told the Committee that its views in relation to the proposed nomination were guided by the following principles:

- the community should agree on the way forward;
- stakeholder participation must be broad;
- government should provide human and financial resources to enable the biosphere reserve to deliver practical, on-ground outcomes (including public sector support across a wide range of programs, proper budget allocations, triple bottom line accounting, and acknowledging externalities);
- the nomination must demonstrate that it will promote a genuinely sustainable community and equitably distribute the benefits of fully costed initiatives which include externalised costs, but without increased regulation;
- the biosphere should not duplicate existing forums—it might replace others in order to reduce duplication;
- the civil rights of citizens should not be reduced; and
- the outcomes from a biosphere should demonstrably provide real business opportunities, with consumer driven market demand rewarding sustainability initiatives.⁹²

2.20 The ACT Division of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand supported the nomination provided environmental practitioners in the ACT were engaged in the process. The Institute offered to contribute to the nomination process by providing peer review for the nomination documents and providing distinguished speakers for public meetings to discuss the

⁹¹ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, pp 10–11, 13, 17, 19, 23

⁹² ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, pp 43–47. See also submission no 31

proposal.⁹³

- 2.21 Nature and Society Forum held a workshop on 16 May 2007 to discuss the proposed ACT nomination. The aims of the workshop included familiarising participants with the biosphere reserve concept, the Committee's inquiry, to discuss ways to stimulate informed community interest in the nomination, and how the proposed biosphere reserve might function once established.
- 2.22 In addition to the stakeholders noted above who spoke at the forum, Professor Brendan Mackey, of the Fenner School of Society and the Environment at the ANU, and the Chair of the Nature and Society Forum Board, suggested that the proposed nomination was timely because of the creative opportunities being pursued by city-states around the world to maximise their advantages under globalisation and in their local bioregions. Many city-states face similar challenges, including how to retain skilled labour, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and promote ecologically sustainable development. Professor Mackey suggested that Seattle, Urbino and Chicago were comparable to Canberra in aspiring to respond creatively to these challenges. At the workshop Mr Bryan Furnass, the former Director of the ANU University Health Service and a sustainability advocate, expressed concern about Canberra's excessively heavy ecological footprint and the need to address building standards, public transport, city aesthetics and sustainability generally, before the nomination progressed. He also suggested that more young people need to be engaged in the discussions and that the Sustainable Schools Program should include education about the proposed Biosphere Reserve.
- 2.23 General comments were also made at the forum that the proposed nomination should be expedited because the challenges of climate change and promoting sustainability were so pressing; that Canberra is ideally placed to run something like a biosphere because it is so small people can get to meetings relatively easily and there are many groups with a likely interest, and that people involved in the ParkCare network need to be made aware of the proposal if they have not been already.

⁹³ Submission no 28; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 52

2.24 Comments were also made at the workshop that groups such as Youth Leadership for Sustainability and ACTOtherwise need to be engaged in Biosphere Reserve discussions. It was suggested that it could be a good communications strategy to train up a range of people to speak on the proposed nomination so that a wide range of stakeholders can hear about the proposal and a range of partnerships across society could be developed.

Stakeholders not supporting the proposal

2.25 The Property Council of Australia (ACT) advised the Committee that it was unable to support the current nomination proposal on the information available. The Council supports sustainability initiatives however. The Council called for a regulatory impact statement, as discussed further below.⁹⁴

2.26 The Housing Industry Association (ACT/Southern New South Wales) (HIA) submitted that it did not support the proposed nomination because environment and heritage matters in the ACT were already over-regulated, and a biosphere listing could complicate planning for future water security and other development. It said that a financial impact statement addressing the costs and benefits of the proposed nomination should be released for public consultation before the ACT Government commits to the nomination.⁹⁵ The HIA does not support the nomination because of its perceived regulatory impact. The HIA says its commitment to sustainability is demonstrated by longstanding initiatives such as its GreenSmart program and display village.⁹⁶

2.27 The HIA was also concerned that the nomination and possible listing should not create an insular approach to natural resource management in the ACT.⁹⁷ HIA Planning adviser Mr Alan Morshell suggested that

there is a risk that isolating such a reserve solely within the borders of the ACT would lead to an insular view of the environment. While a species may be rare within the ACT, it may be very well populated across the border, and unnecessary restrictions could be placed on possible

⁹⁴ Submission no 32

⁹⁵ Submission no 26

⁹⁶ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 58

⁹⁷ Submission no 26

developments in the ACT. Development and growth of the ACT are not isolated, and the territory's economic prosperity does positively impact throughout the surrounding region.⁹⁸

- 2.28 Several submissions expressed reservations about the proposed nomination, or suggested alternative mechanisms to promote sustainability. Some stakeholders would prefer Canberra to be nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage site.⁹⁹ 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.¹⁰⁰
- 2.29 The Rural Landholders' Association expressed 'difficulty in supporting the general proposal' unless the impacts on farming in the ACT were assessed.¹⁰¹ The issue of regulatory impacts is discussed further below.
- 2.30 Mr John Vassallo, for Diverse Pty Ltd and Pace Farm Pty Ltd (Parkwood Eggs) said he had 'no objection in principle to the proposed UNESCO nomination' if it had no effect on the ongoing use and operation of the farm at Parkwood.¹⁰² As negotiations about the future operation of Parkwood Eggs were underway at the time of writing this report, this issue is not discussed further except in relation to the absence of regulatory impacts from a nomination and listing.
- 2.31 Several witnesses also cautioned that a biosphere reserve listing was not the only way to progress towards a range of urban and regional sustainability outcomes, and that it should not detract from those if they were attracting leading edge thinkers and innovations.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, pp 58–59

⁹⁹ Submission no 7; Cathy Alexander, 'World Heritage Plan 'Could Save Species'', *The Canberra Times*, 4 June 2007, p 3; E. Bennett and S. Abbott, 'Community Engagement in Support of the Proposal to Nominate the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve', August 2007, p 16

¹⁰⁰ Rosslyn Beeby, 'Heritage listing sought for lake', *The Canberra Times*, 17 April 2006, pp 1, 2

¹⁰¹ Submission no 8

¹⁰² Submission no 6

¹⁰³ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 94; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 28 November 2006, p 20

Committee comments

Promoting sustainability

- 2.32 The reasons for the Committee's support for the proposed nomination are provided throughout this report. The Committee agrees that the Griffin vision for a sustainable Canberra¹⁰⁴ and Canberra's modern urban planning warrants international recognition¹⁰⁵ and that the proposed nomination would raise awareness about sustainability issues in the broader community, and may stimulate behavioural change and companies working on sustainability issues in the region. To achieve this, the Committee agrees that the media plays an important role. But there is also potential for champions to emerge to promote biosphere initiatives, for strategic partnerships to be formed, and for the wide range of current activities already underway in the ACT to be 'branded' as biosphere activities.
- 2.33 The Committee notes that many national organisations and individuals participated in the Australian Parliament's House of Representatives Committee inquiry into the proposed national Sustainability Charter, and expects that these stakeholders may be interested in engaging in either or both the proposed ACT nomination or national review of biosphere reserves.

Growing a sustainable economy

- 2.34 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 branding of quality regional products and services. Examples of biosphere reserves promoting these benefits include Entlebuch in Switzerland,¹⁰⁶ Riverland in South Australia, the Fitzgerald River in Western Australia,¹⁰⁷ the

¹⁰⁴ See generally: S. Mackenzie, I. Wood-Bradley, D. Headon and C. Vernon 2004, *The Griffin Legacy: Canberra: the Nation's Capital in the 21st Century*, National Capital Authority, Canberra

¹⁰⁵ S. Corbell MLA, (Minister for Planning), Authority wins awards for planning, design excellence, Media Release, 9 November 2006

¹⁰⁶ UNESCO, Biosphere Reserve Benefits and Opportunities, 2005, p 4

¹⁰⁷ 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

West Estonian Archipelago,¹⁰⁸ the Rhöne in Germany¹⁰⁹ and Niagara Escarpment and Clayoquot Sound in Canada.¹¹⁰ Australia's regional food groups' movement is consistent with these initiatives,¹¹¹ but that would not preclude the pursuit of these benefits.

Tourism in the proposed biosphere

- 2.35 The Committee is aware of the environmental impacts of unsustainable tourism,¹¹² but considers that this is a manageable issue with the development and/or application of appropriate policies.¹¹³ Tourism projections and impacts are required to be addressed in the biosphere reserve nomination document when addressing the development function of the proposed reserve.¹¹⁴
- 2.36 The ACT Ministerial Tourism Advisory Council is likely to have an expert view on the proposed biosphere reserve and its views should be sought and

and shire funding: Great Southern Development Commission, 'Further Boost for Fitzgerald Biosphere', <http://www.gsd.c.wa.gov.au/News/2005/25_February_2005/default.asp/-/pid/5269/pid/5776/pid/5791/name/News>, viewed 10 July 2006. See also Giles West, 'Biosphere Reserves for developing quality economies: the Fitzgerald River Biosphere Reserve, Australia', *Parks* vol 11, no 1, 2001, pp 10–17

¹⁰⁸ R. Wieting (n.d.), *Sustainable Land Use in European Protected Areas*, IUCN Regional Office for Europe, pp 9–11, <http://www.iucn.org/places/europe/rofe/documents/sustainable_land_use_report.pdf> viewed 28 June 2006

¹⁰⁹ D. Pokorny, 'Biosphere Reserves for developing quality economies: examples from the Rhöne Biosphere Reserve, Germany', *Parks* vol 11, no 1, 2001, pp 16–17

¹¹⁰ J. Birtch, 'Clayoquot Sound, Canada – new economic opportunities for different social groups', *Parks* vol 11, no 1, 2001, p 9; Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (2003), *A Cooperation Plan for Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve*, accessible at <http://www.escarpment.org/biosphere/nebr_cooperation.htm>, p 16

¹¹¹ Australian Government, 'Getting a Taste for Regional Food', *Food News Bulletin*

¹¹² B. Nadeau, 'The Curse of Approval: If UNESCO designates it, they will come. Does identifying world heritage sites do more harm than good?', *Newsweek International* 2006, <<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/12113213/site/newsweek/>>, viewed 29 June 2006

¹¹³ See for example the P.F.J. Eagles, S.F. McCool and C.D. Haynes, *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management*, IUCN Gland, Switzerland; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development*, 2002, <<http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/socio-eco/tourism/guidelines.asp>> viewed 20 April 2006; Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (2003), *Pursuing Common Goals – Opportunities for Tourism and Conservation*, Canberra; T. Griffin and M. Vacaflores, *A Natural Partnership: Making National Parks a Tourism Priority*, CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd, 2004. A previous ACT Government policy was reflected in: Canberra Tourism, ACT Parks and Conservation, *Promoting the Natural Capital: a Nature Based Tourism Strategy for the ACT*, Canberra, 1997

¹¹⁴ Section 14, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form

considered during the development of the nomination document. The role of the Council is to provide advice and feedback on matters impacting on the local, regional and national tourism industry.¹¹⁵

- 2.37 The Committee suggests that it would be appropriate to review the ACT Government's nature-based tourism strategy in the context of the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.¹¹⁶ The strategy should be updated to include travel by sustainable transport and developments in protected areas in the ACT. It could also be broadened to include a range of urban sustainability attractions, such as the Canberra International Arboretum and Gardens, the National Capital Woodland Initiative, post-bushfire catchment and urban recovery and the ACT Bushfire Memorial, Tidbinbilla redevelopments, Stromlo Forest Park, the Hume Resource Recovery Estate, sites demonstrating water sensitive urban design, innovative urban landscape design and development, amongst others. This would be consistent with proposals to nominate the ACT for its natural and urban sustainability features.
- 2.38 Local businesses may support the development and adoption of a trademark or logo for sustainable products and services produced or provided within Australian biosphere reserves. Trademarks are registrable under the *Trade Marks Act 1995* (Cwlth). Given the status of the national capital and other biosphere reserve designations, Commonwealth legislative protection for such a trademark should be sought, similar to the protection provided by the *Olympic Insignia Protection Act 1987* (Cwlth). UNESCO should be consulted about the development of such an accreditation mechanism.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ A. Barr MLA, (Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation), ACT Ministerial Tourism Advisory Council announced, Media Release, 17 November 2006

¹¹⁶ ACT Government, *Promoting the Natural Capital: A Nature Based Tourism Strategy for the Australian Capital Territory*, March 1997

¹¹⁷ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 98

RECOMMENDATION 3

- 2.39 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation engage the ACT Ministerial Tourism Advisory Council on the proposal to nominate the ACT as a biosphere reserve and particularly concerning ecotourism and its marketing for the ACT and region.**

RECOMMENDATION 4

- 2.40 **The Committee recommends that the proposed national review of biosphere reserves include a proposal advocating the development of a national UNESCO biosphere reserve trade mark and accreditation scheme for quality products and services produced within Australian biosphere reserves.**

RECOMMENDATION 5

- 2.41 **The Committee recommends that if a national UNESCO biosphere reserve trade mark is unlikely to be developed, the ACT Government commission a consultancy for the development of a UNESCO biosphere reserve trademark for the ACT, and licensing arrangements for ACT and regional stakeholders.**

RECOMMENDATION 6

- 2.42 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review and update the ACT Nature Based Tourism Strategy.**
- 2.43 The Committee regrets that many of the opinion pieces printed in *The Canberra Times* during the course of this inquiry did not, in the Committee's view, meet professional reporting standards as enunciated by the Australian Press Council in relation to the proposed nomination. *The Canberra Times* did not share the Committee's view that its coverage had been very selective, nor demonstrated an understanding of the substantial and objective research and analysis which had informed the Committee's inquiry, and which had been released through the Committee's Issues Paper.
- 2.44 UNESCO considers the extent of community engagement and support for a

proposed nomination.¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹⁹ 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.¹²⁰

- 2.45 The Committee considers that the level of support expressed for the proposed ACT nomination is more than sufficient to recommend to the Legislative Assembly that the nomination proceed.
- 2.46 The Committee requested that a table be included showing the status, under Australian Government and NSW legislation, of species that were threatened in the ACT and protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 1981* (ACT). This is at Appendix A. But it is misleading to compare listings without assessing the range of the species, as the lack of a listing in NSW may just mean that NSW is outside the species' range. Moreover, if a species is threatened locally, that can impact on the functioning of the local ecosystem, which is undesirable. The range of each threatened species also needs to be known so that more attention can be directed to conservation activities at the boundaries of species' range where stresses are likely to be higher. But in fact there are very few species listed as threatened in the ACT that are also not listed as threatened under either Australian Government and/or NSW legislation, as indicated in Appendix A.

¹¹⁸ UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, *Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form*, 2004, accessible at <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/offDoc.shtml>>, 17.6.1, 17.6.5

¹¹⁹ See for example M. Catanzaro, 'Alaska's Young calls for abolishing UN 'biospheres' on US Territory', *Human Events*, vol 53 no 34 1997, p 6

¹²⁰ EagleForum.Org, 'A Conservative Agenda for the 107th Congress', *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, vol 34 no 6 January 2001, <<http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/2001/jan01/psrjan01.shtml>> viewed 29 June 2006; J.D. Brown, 'The integration of Man and the Biosphere', *Georgetown International Environmental Law Review*, 2002, pp 741-765, at Section B

3 MANAGEMENT OF THE NOMINATION PROCESS AND LISTED BIOSPHERE

- 3.1 This chapter discusses the management of the nomination process, notes the roles of the Australian and ACT Government agencies, and suggests that the proposed nomination could lead to an enhanced role for the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, and her proposed national counterpart. It reviews relevant legislation, and recommends various amendments. The Committee agrees with stakeholders that the proposed nomination should not result in increased regulation, and suggests that the proposal does not require that a regulation impact statement be produced. This chapter also explains the Committee's view that a national review of biosphere reserves should be undertaken.

Lodging the nomination document

- 3.2 The national focal point for biosphere reserves in Australia is currently the Australian Government's Department of Environment and Water Resources, and more particularly the Parks and Reserves section of the department. The Australian National Commission for UNESCO has overall responsibility for UNESCO activities in Australia. Its secretariat is based in the Department of Foreign Affairs. Australia also has a permanent delegate who represents Australia at UNESCO.
- 3.3 The Australian Government Department of Environment and Water Resources assists each biosphere reserve nomination process for Australian biosphere reserves by providing information and assessing completed nomination documents before these are lodged with the Australian National Commission for UNESCO.
- 3.4 The Australian Government, through the Australian National Commission for UNESCO and/or the Australian permanent delegate to UNESCO – is responsible for lodging each biosphere reserve nomination with the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program Secretariat. That Secretariat verifies the completeness of the nomination document and supporting information, and if

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 ICC's decision on each nomination is communicated back to national governments by the Director-General of UNESCO.¹²¹

- 3.5 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.¹²²

Community engagement in developing the ACT nomination

- 3.6 Stakeholders' views differed on whether the ACT nomination should be community driven, or led, top-down. Professor Stephen Parker, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canberra, said that it was important that the nomination and listing not be seen as a top-down initiative, and that it has community input and support,¹²³ as did the CSIRO.¹²⁴
- 3.7 The Director, Sustainability Policy and Programs in the Department of Territory, Mr Peter Ottesen, told the Committee that he had been surprised by the different levels of understanding of the concept amongst stakeholders given that the Committee's Issues Paper had been 'very comprehensive'.¹²⁵ The ACT Government had promoted community engagement by providing briefings to some stakeholder organisations. It had also provided small grant funding to the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra to facilitate community engagement and promote understanding. But there

¹²¹ Article 5 – Designation Procedure, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*

¹²² Email communication from Dr Thomas Schaaf, Man and the Biosphere Program, UNESCO, dated 27 June 2006

¹²³ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 94

¹²⁴ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 28 November 2006, p 17

¹²⁵ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 28 November 2006, p 26

appeared to be a need to propose the development of a communication strategy during the nomination process, and this could include targeted communications through the Sustainable Schools Program.¹²⁶ The Director of the Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra, Ms Trish Harrup, agreed that the Sustainable Schools program would be an ideal communication mechanism.¹²⁷

- 3.8 Mr Pryor, for the Canberra Business Council, told the Committee that the biosphere reserve can be what the community wants it to be, but that 'community change cannot take place without effective public discussion'. A 'proper public discourse' in the local media is needed, with the media a key participant in the process.¹²⁸ Mr Pryor also suggested that the ACT Government could simply proceed with the nomination, and then implement better the suite of sustainability policies that are already in place, genuinely engaging the wide community and local business in the process.¹²⁹
- 3.9 Mr Richard Sharp, President of the ACT Division of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, said that the ACT Government should engage a broad range of professional associations in the process of nominating an ACT biosphere reserve, including those in science, environmental management and education.¹³⁰
- 3.10 Mr Glen Hyman, said that bottom up processes can only succeed where community organisations have the capacity to drive them; and that a top-down overlay of a biosphere reserve status can stimulate on-ground sustainability initiatives.¹³¹

¹²⁶ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence* 28 November 2006, pp 26–30

¹²⁷ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, p 36

¹²⁸ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 43

¹²⁹ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, pp 48–49

¹³⁰ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 51

¹³¹ Referring to the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve in Canada: ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 109

- 3.11 The Conservation Council suggested similarly, that a demonstrated, practical 'on the ground' commitment to biosphere reserves by all levels of government would increase the level of community engagement. The Council's project on community engagement had found that the concept of biosphere reserves was poorly understood in the community, and that governments should take the lead or foster community/government partnerships.¹³²
- 3.12 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.¹³³ Other evidence also noted that the proposed nomination and listing might be used to argue against development.¹³⁴
- 3.13 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.¹³⁵

Committee comments

- 3.14 The Committee's consultations are detailed in [Appendix B](#). The Committee regrets that it has been unable to engage members of the ACT Indigenous community in this inquiry. In addition to its general invitations for submissions, in April 2007 the Committee wrote to members of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council inviting their participation in the inquiry. The Committee appreciates that leaders in the Indigenous community carry multiple responsibilities, and understands that members may not be familiar with the concept of biosphere reserves, despite the wide circulation of the Committee's Issues Paper on the proposed nomination. Nevertheless it is important that the Council is engaged on the proposed nomination as it concerns the traditional country of the Ngunnawal/Ngambri.

¹³² E. Bennett and S. Abbott, 'Community Engagement in Support of the Proposal to Nominate the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve: Project Consultants' Final Report', August 2007, p 4

¹³³ Submission no 15

¹³⁴ Submission no 18; ACT legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, pp 94–95

¹³⁵ Submission no 14

RECOMMENDATION 7

- 3.15 **The Committee recommends that before the nomination document for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve is lodged with UNESCO, the ACT Government ensure that culturally-appropriate consultations occur about the proposed nomination with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council.**

Stakeholders' comments

- 3.16 Stakeholders 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.¹³⁶
- The former 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 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.¹³⁷
 - A member of the former group, Mr Odgers, also submitted later in a personal capacity that the entity responsible for the nomination should be embedded in and 'owned by' the ACT Government as professional, managerial and communications/public relations expertise is required.¹³⁸
 - Nature and Society Forum suggested that a suitably qualified project officer be engaged by the ACT Government to prepare the nomination. It also suggested that an expert advisory panel be established, comprising representatives of government, educational and research institutions, community groups, business sector, and professional organisations (e.g.

¹³⁶ Submission no 16; see also submission no 31

¹³⁷ Submission no 15

¹³⁸ Submission no 23

architects and engineers) to oversee the nomination process.¹³⁹ Nature and Society Forum also suggested that its earlier work, the reports of the ACT Commissioner for the Environment, and other successful Australian biosphere reserve nomination documents (such as the Mornington Peninsula nomination) be considered when preparing the nomination document.¹⁴⁰

- Professor Taylor suggested similarly 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.¹⁴¹
- 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 designated.¹⁴²
- 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.¹⁴³
- 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, and would:

¹³⁹ comprising representatives of government, educational and research institutions, community groups, business sector, and professional organisations (e.g. architects, engineers)

¹⁴⁰ Submission no 9

¹⁴¹ Submission no 7

¹⁴² Submission no 11

¹⁴³ Submission no 13

- examine progress made by the UNESCO biosphere program and the ACT's contribution within that;
- decide how the ACT can promote the concept of the ACT as a biosphere reserve internationally, nationally, regionally and locally;
- examine ways the ACT might reduce the city's ecological footprint and greenhouse gases, and promote a more sustainable city; and
- make recommendations to government and other stakeholders on how to foster the aims under the *Seville Strategy*.¹⁴⁴

3.17 Other stakeholders also suggested that a wide range of community groups, stakeholders and expertise needs to be represented in the body which progresses the nomination.¹⁴⁵

3.18 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 need to obtain approval for decisions from their organisation; or
- 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.¹⁴⁶

3.19 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 a government appointee, or (his preference) to be elected by the network. Local councils could have observer status. Mr Anderson also suggested that the people involved, rather than the organisational structure, were of primary

¹⁴⁴ Submission no 16

¹⁴⁵ Submission no 25, 27, 28, 29

¹⁴⁶ Submission no 14; a similar view was expressed in submissions no 25, 27, 29, 31

importance to the successful implementation of the biosphere concept.¹⁴⁷

- 3.20 Community roundtables, as have been established in the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve, were not recommended for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve.¹⁴⁸

Committee comments

- 3.21 The Committee has considered stakeholders comments on possible governance structures, as well as arrangements in other jurisdictions.
- 3.22 In 2007 the following arrangements were in place for the governance of Australian biosphere reserves:
- most national park biosphere reserves were managed primarily by the state-level department responsible for the environment and protected areas;¹⁴⁹
 - the Mornington Peninsula Biosphere Reserve was managed by the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Ltd, a company limited by guarantee, and a multi-stakeholder governing board. The Foundation had the support of local community-based roundtables for project activities. Each roundtable in the six designated local government divisions within the reserve can nominate a Director to the board. Other directors could be 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).¹⁵⁰ The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council provided administrative support for the Foundation, and managed its finances for the first twelve months.¹⁵¹
 - the Barkindji Biosphere Reserve, listed in 2005, had an administering board representing diverse stakeholders. Cooperation amongst governance bodies

¹⁴⁷ Submission no 13

¹⁴⁸ Submission no 13

¹⁴⁹ Matysek et al, 'The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program in Australia: constraints and opportunities for localized sustainable development', at p 91

¹⁵⁰ Constitution of Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Ltd, sub-clause 22.3

¹⁵¹ Rob Gell, 'Chair's report' in Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Ltd, 2005–06 Annual Report, Hastings

tended to be encouraged through the negotiation and adoption of memoranda of understanding;¹⁵² and

- Calperum and Taylorville Stations in the Riverland Biosphere Reserve were managed by the Australian Landscape Trust under contract to the Australian Government's Director of National Parks.¹⁵³

- 3.23 Glen Hyman has reviewed the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port biosphere reserve structure and concluded that it seriously restricts the ability of the biosphere reserve to address regional issues and implement an ecosystem approach, with roundtables likely to compete for resources against each other.¹⁵⁴ Another review, in 2005, found it to be top-down and cumbersome, but still preferable to alternatives.¹⁵⁵
- 3.24 In Canada a statutory commission was established, supported by community groups, to manage the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve. Canadian biosphere reserves also function under cooperation plans, as noted above.
- 3.25 In South Australia a statutory trust was established to manage the former Bookmark biosphere reserve but was subsequently dissolved.¹⁵⁶
- 3.26 The Committee is of the view that all levels of government should be represented in biosphere reserve governance bodies, and that most Australian biosphere reserves have not engaged local councils sufficiently. Governments, including local councils, have a significant role to play in the conserving of biodiversity and responding to climate change by influencing where and how

¹⁵² See for example the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Regional Management Partnership Agreement between Barkindji Biosphere Ltd and the Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority, and the Governance Protocol developed by the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Board in 2005–06

¹⁵³ 'Calperum and Taylorville Stations',

'<http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/biosphere/riverland/index.html>', viewed 11 September 2007

¹⁵⁴ Hyman, 'La Peninsule de Mornington et la Baie de Port Western: L'expérience d'une réserve de biosphère en Australie', pp 94–95

¹⁵⁵ Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Organisational Review Report, p 8

¹⁵⁶ J. Fitzsimons, 'The Contribution of Multi-tenure Reserve Networks to Biodiversity Conservation', PhD Thesis, School of Ecology and Environment, Deakin University, Melbourne, 2004, accessible at <<http://tux.lib.deakin.edu.au/adt-VDU/public/adt-VDU20050817.103606/>>, p 153

environmentally impacting developments will occur.¹⁵⁷ The Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, has warned councils they need to do much more in responding to climate change or face risks of substantial legal liability.¹⁵⁸ The Canadian approach to biosphere reserve governance differs concerning local government engagement, as there municipal and provincial government agencies tend to be key supporters of biosphere reserves.¹⁵⁹

- 3.27 But a range of other stakeholders also need to be involved in biosphere reserve governance as biosphere reserves should promote community engagement and private-public partnerships in sustainability initiatives. As the Senate committee report commented in relation to whole-of-landscape approaches:

The primary impediment to the further development of this model remains the cost and complexity of putting together different land tenures and sea uses, gaining the cooperation of the many government departments and agencies in a federal system, as well as coordinating the private and community input. This will only occur with real and sustained commitment of policy and funding by both national, state and territory and local governments. The emergence of a vibrant and innovative private conservation sector will be a vital component in pursuing the goal of large ecological networks.¹⁶⁰

RECOMMENDATION 8

- 3.28 **The Committee recommends that a broad range of stakeholders be invited to participate in the development of the nomination document and a cooperation plan for the ACT biosphere reserve. Once the biosphere**

¹⁵⁷ M. Fallding, A.H. Kelly, P. Bateson, and I. Donovan, *Biodiversity Planning Guide for NSW Local Government – Edition 1*, NSW NPWS, Hurstville 2001
<<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/toolbox/templates/pubs/nsw-bio-plan-guide.pdf>>, viewed 22 August 2007

¹⁵⁸ Marian Wilkinson, 'Councils warned on climate change', *The Age*, October 4 2007,
<<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2007/10/03/1191091193876.html>>

¹⁵⁹ Sara Edge, *Sustaining Canadian Communities: Place, Space, Governance*, Masters of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2006 <<http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2006/Edge-Mcallister.pdf>>, viewed 3 October 2007

¹⁶⁰ Australian Senate, Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, *Conserving Australia: Australia's National Parks, Conservation Reserves and Marine Protected Areas*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2007, para 9.10

reserve has been listed, interested stakeholders should be invited to become ACT biosphere reserve partners willing to further the objectives of the biosphere reserve. A steering committee should be elected from amongst the partnership, chaired by the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

3.29 On the issue of who should manage the nomination process, various models are available, as noted above. The Committee's view is that the office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, with support from the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TaMS), should manage the nomination process and coordinate stakeholder input. The Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change, and officers in the Department of Territory and Municipal Services are responsible for environmental management and sustainability programs, often in partnership with community groups and academics and other government agencies (both Australian Government and ACT). TaMS has responsibility for the proposed nomination and reports on this and other environmental matters to the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change.

3.30 The vision of the Office of Commissioner is for 'a society with the will to achieve a sustainable high quality environment for all'. The mission of the Office is:

to develop understanding of changes in the condition of the environment and the reasons for these, and to encourage all sectors of the community to progressively improve the environment, and so work towards sustainability.¹⁶¹

3.31 In the Committee's view this vision and mission applies well to the proposed ACT biosphere reserve.

3.32 The role and functions of the Commissioner for the Environment are currently prescribed in the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* (ACT). They are to:

- produce state of the environment reports for the ACT;

¹⁶¹ Australian Capital Territory Commissioner for the Environment, *Annual Report 2006–07*, Canberra, p 1
<http://www.environmentcommissioner.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/69202/AnnualReport2006-07.pdf>, viewed 27 September 2007

- investigate complaints from the community regarding the management of the environment by the ACT Government and its agencies;
 - conduct investigations as directed by the Minister;
 - initiate investigations into actions of an agency where those actions would have a substantial impact on the environment of the ACT; and
 - make recommendations for consideration by government and include in the annual report the outcomes of those recommendations.
- 3.33 The Office has also prepared state of the environment reports for the Australian Capital Region on a fee-for-service basis for the local governments who are members of the Regional Leaders' Forum.
- 3.34 The Commissioner is appointed by the ACT Government but also operates with a degree of independence, and she does not perform regulatory functions. The Commissioner's Office has been significantly under-funded for several years, but that is expected to change as Dr Cooper has been appointed as a full-time Commissioner whereas in the past the Commissioner was a part-time appointment.
- 3.35 The Committee considers that the management of the nomination process and the biosphere reserve, if and when designated, should have substantial input from TaMS, as the land manager for the ACT, and stakeholders. The Chief Minister and his Department should also have input as they 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 ACT Planning and Land Authority to provide advice on the draft nomination document.
- 3.36 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. For private sector and community-held information, stakeholders

could be invited to contribute data using on-line templates,¹⁶² which could be edited and followed-up by departmental staff as part of the secretariat services provided to the nomination process.

- 3.37 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.¹⁶³ But neither would a wholly government-driven nomination be likely to be regarded by UNESCO as demonstrating community support and commitment to sustainability outcomes and the nomination process.¹⁶⁴
- 3.38 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. In the Committee's view the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Dr Maxine Cooper, would be an effective chair of the nomination process and implementing body.
- 3.39 The Committee considers it appropriate that Dr Cooper be given statutory responsibility for chairing an advisory body to the ACT Government on the proposed ACT biosphere reserve (whatever its ultimate boundaries and name). The Committee does not recommend that a separate legal entity be established to manage the proposed biosphere reserve if listed. The Commissioner or the Department of Territory and Municipal Services should maintain financial accounts for any biosphere reserve activities that are not managed by other organisations in their capacity as a biosphere reserve partner.
- 3.40 The *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993* (ACT) is likely to need amending to enable the Commissioner and her office to perform functions in relation to the proposed biosphere reserve.

¹⁶² 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>>

¹⁶³ G. Hyman, 'La Peninsule de Mornington et la Baie de Port Western: L'expérience d'une réserve de biosphère en Australie', 2004, pp 88-91

¹⁶⁴ Informal advice provided by Ms Helen Halliday, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, 10 July 2006

- 3.41 If the biosphere reserve extends into NSW a rotating chair with an officer of equivalent status to the ACT Commissioner would be appropriate.
- 3.42 The composition of the advisory body or steering committee for the biosphere reserve when listed, would depend partly on whether the proposed biosphere includes parts of NSW. Following the ACT Government's functional review, all ACT advisory groups have been, or are being reviewed. Representation within a biosphere reserve partners' organisation could be drawn a wide range of organisations in the ACT, and include individuals.
- 3.43 Many organisations may be interested in becoming partners of the proposed biosphere reserve, including those who made submissions to this inquiry or participated in the roundtable or public hearings. These could include, for example, the ACT Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee, ACT Natural Resource Management Council, Flora and Fauna Committee, Interim Namadgi Advisory Board, United Ngunnawal Elders Council, Planning and Development Forum, Planning Institute of Australia (ACT), Australian Alps Liaison Committee, ACT Heritage Council, Environment Protection and Technical Advisory Committee, See-Change Network, Greening Australia, Southern ACT Catchment Group (SACTCG), Ginninderra Catchment Group and Molonglo Catchment Group, Capital Region Development Board, Capital Region Area Consultative Committee, tourism bodies, representatives of all levels of the education sector, and the many other professional and community associations interested in sustainable development.¹⁶⁵

RECOMMENDATION 9

- 3.44 **The Committee recommends that a consultation and communications strategy be developed for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve and national review of biosphere reserves.**

RECOMMENDATION 10

- 3.45 **The Committee recommends that particular attention be placed on engaging with young people in the ACT about the proposed ACT**

¹⁶⁵ See for example the list of organisations making submissions to the Australian House of Representatives Committee inquiry into the proposed Sustainability Charter

nomination.

RECOMMENDATION 11

- 3.46 **The Committee recommends that the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993 (ACT)* be amended, and that additional resources be provided to the Office of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, so as to enable the Commissioner to chair the proposed ACT biosphere reserve steering committee and broader biosphere partners' association.**

RECOMMENDATION 12

- 3.47 **Pending the commencement of the proposed amendments of the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993 (ACT)*, the Committee recommends that the ACT Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change ask the Department of Territory and Municipal Services to continue consulting with stakeholders and begin negotiations concerning the proposed nomination.**

Management plans for Australian biosphere reserves

- 3.48 Both Australian Government and ACT laws and policies govern land management in the ACT. On self-government, the ACT assumed responsibility for managing all Territory land that was not national land.
- 3.49 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).¹⁶⁶
- 3.50 The Commonwealth Constitution and the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* (Cwlth) (PALM Act) give the Australian Government overriding powers with respect to planning and development decisions in the ACT.¹⁶⁷ The PALM Act establishes the National Capital Authority, which prepares and administers the National Capital Plan. The

¹⁶⁶ 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)

¹⁶⁷ accessible at <<http://scale.law.gov.au/html/pasteact/0/160/top.htm>>

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 Canberra's urban areas.¹⁶⁸

- 3.51 The PALM Act also provides for the establishment of an ACT statutory planning authority – now the ACT Planning and Land Authority¹⁶⁹ – to develop and implement the Territory Plan. The *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991 (ACT)*¹⁷⁰ (the Act) requires the Territory Plan to set out the planning principles and policies for giving effect to its object,¹⁷¹ 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)¹⁷²

- 3.52 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 be developed and implemented cooperatively by the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and the State or self-governing Territory.¹⁷³

- 3.53 The plan must not be inconsistent with the Australian Biosphere reserve management principles prescribed in Schedule 7 of the *Environment Protection*

¹⁶⁸ National Capital Plan, <<http://downloads.nationalcapital.gov.au/plan/ncp/seca.pdf>>, viewed 3 July 2006

¹⁶⁹ established under the *Planning and Land Act 2002 (ACT)*

¹⁷⁰ Accessible at <<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1991-100/current/pdf/1991-100.pdf>>

¹⁷¹ *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, ss 7(2))

¹⁷² *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*, ss 7(1)

¹⁷³ ss 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': ss 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: ss 525(2) *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)*

and *Biodiversity Conservation Regulations*.¹⁷⁴ 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;

(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.

3.54 The EPBC Act requires that the Australian Government take all reasonable

¹⁷⁴ Refer s 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)*

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.¹⁷⁵ 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.¹⁷⁶

- 3.55 The EPBC Act can also apply in other ways to areas listed as biosphere reserves. Its provisions concerning Commonwealth assessments and approvals for actions that are likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance, for example, apply to Ramsar wetlands,¹⁷⁷ listed migratory species, and nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities.¹⁷⁸ 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.
- 3.56 The EPBC Act does not prescribed a format for biosphere reserve management plans, but as noted above, they 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, the application of the precautionary principle, and the policy and management framework and programs for research, monitoring, education and training.
- 3.57 In the ACT, existing management plans such as 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 into the biosphere reserve management plan by cross-reference. The does not have to be highly

¹⁷⁵ s 339 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

¹⁷⁶ s 341 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)

¹⁷⁷The 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)

¹⁷⁸ such as the White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland critically endangered ecological community noted below

detailed and prescriptive, but it should be developed consultatively.¹⁷⁹ This may be sufficient to discharge currently regulatory requirements. As several submissions noted, these plans are already protective of the ACT environment and promote more sustainable development.¹⁸⁰

3.58 But the Committee would prefer to see the EPBC Act amended so that provisions requiring the development of cooperation plans replace current provisions concerning management plans. Cooperation plans, as have been negotiated in Canada, bring together multiple stakeholders and sectors (including municipal council appointees and *ex officio* members from Federal and Provincial government departments, and community stakeholders). The biosphere reserve partners agree on a vision for the biosphere, identify challenge and goals, prioritise agreed biodiversity conservation, sustainable development initiatives and capacity building activities, and agree on the roles for biosphere reserve partners. The plans may also identify potential partners, the resources needed to fulfil tasks, as well as provide information about the biosphere reserve.¹⁸¹

3.59 Cooperation plans were promoted in a paper considered by the MAB International Coordinating Council in September 2007 with a view to their inclusion in the Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves. One of the actions recommended to the ICC was that:

Biosphere reserve planning and management authorities develop cooperation plans that establish how objectives and functions are to be achieved in the differently designated areas of the biosphere reserve, and thereby demonstrating the significance of biosphere reserves as sites of excellence integrating the different functions. Management concepts adopted support sustainable development in the region, reflect the region's identity, and implement national criteria

¹⁷⁹ Lee Thomas and Julie Middleton, *Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas*, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, 2003, p67

¹⁸⁰ Submission no 26

¹⁸¹ Cooperation Plan for the Mont Saint-Hilaire Biosphere Reserve, April 2002; A Cooperation Plan for the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, April 2002; Rea Fraser, A Cooperation Plan for the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve Foundation April 30, 2002; A Cooperation Plan for the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, April, 2002, A Cooperation Plan for the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, exhibits provided by Mr Glen Hyman

that take into account the special conditions of the State concerned.¹⁸²

- 3.60 Cooperation plans are not a new concept in the ACT. The ACT Government already has various memoranda of understanding in place to promote cooperation in the sustainable management of the Territory. For example, the Commonwealth and ACT Governments entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Griffin Legacy Project. This covers an agreed statement of principles for the project, the purpose of the MOU, terms of reference for the Commonwealth and ACT Griffin Legacy Forum, identified mutual benefits, provides background to the document, definitional matters, agreed outcomes and outputs, the development framework which would apply, communication protocols and miscellaneous provisions.¹⁸³

RECOMMENDATION 13

- 3.61 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government suggest to the Australian Government, in the context of the proposed national review of UNESCO biosphere reserves recommended in this report, that consideration be given to replacing the provisions concerning management plans for biosphere reserves in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)* with provisions concerning cooperation plans for biosphere reserves.**

RECOMMENDATION 14

- 3.62 **The Committee recommends that the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainability be asked to develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a cooperation plan for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve, having considered Canadian precedents, and with provisions for regular review and amendment as needs arise.**

Governance arrangements for Australian biosphere reserves

¹⁸² UNESCO, Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, Meeting of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 18–20 September 2007, Item 6 of the provisional agenda: Preparations for Madrid – working documents, Madrid Action Plan and Madrid Declaration, What are the implications for each of the biosphere reserve zones contributing to conservation and development taking into consideration constraints and opportunities inherent in each zone?, UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/7, pp 7–8

¹⁸³ Commonwealth and ACT Government (ACT) Griffin Legacy Forum, *Griffin 21C Project*, Memorandum of Understanding, November 2006

Australian Government

- 3.63 The national focal point for biosphere reserves in Australia was noted above.
- 3.64 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 did not meet as such after 2001,¹⁸⁴ 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 have been discussed at other meetings with the same membership however.
- 3.65 The Australian Government has not given a high priority to implementing the non-binding recommendations for national governments enunciated in the 1995 Seville Strategy.
- 3.66 Biosphere reserves have not been reviewed in any detail in several recent national reviews of protected areas in Australia, despite administrative responsibility for biosphere reserves being located in the Parks and Reserves Section of the Department of Environment and Water Resources.¹⁸⁵ For example, they were not assessed in the 2006 Gilligan review of the National Reserve System Program.¹⁸⁶ The 2007 Senate report on Australia's national parks, conservation reserves and marine protected areas also did not examine Australia's biosphere reserves in detail, but did endorse a whole-of-landscape/bioregional/ecosystem approach to conservation planning.¹⁸⁷ Nor were biosphere reserves addressed in the future directions planning in 2005 by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council and its National

¹⁸⁴ 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>>, viewed 26 June 2006

¹⁸⁵ as previously in the Department of the Environment and Heritage

¹⁸⁶ B. Gilligan, *The National Reserve System Program: 2006 Evaluation* (Commonwealth of Australia 2006) <<http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/nrs/evaluation/index.html>>, viewed 9 August 2007

¹⁸⁷ Australian Senate, Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, *Conserving Australia: Australia's National Parks, Conservation Reserves and Marine Protected Areas*, Canberra, 2007, ch 9, <http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/ecita_ctte/nationalparks/report/index.htm>, viewed 20 August 2007

Reserves System Action Plan Task Force, although that task force agreed with whole-of-landscape planning.¹⁸⁸

- 3.67 Recent state-level environmental reviews have also not assessed biosphere reserves.¹⁸⁹

State and site-specific governance arrangements

- 3.68 The Committee's preference for the governance arrangements for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve were discussed above.

Regulatory impacts

- 3.69 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.¹⁹⁰ 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.¹⁹¹
 - The Housing Industry Association (HIA) argued similarly that current regulations and planning systems more than adequately regulate and protect the ACT's environment and private sector initiatives were already in place. The HIA was concerned that the proposed nomination and listing not be used to increase regulatory requirements nor encourage opposition to particular developments. The HIA suggested that the Mornington and

¹⁸⁸ Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council, *Directions for the National Reserve System: A Partnership Approach*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra 2005 <<http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/nrs/directions/index.html>>, viewed 9 August 2007

¹⁸⁹ See for e.g. *The State of the Environment Report: Western Australia 2007* <www.soe.wa.gov.au> and *Victoria's State of the Parks Report 2007* <<http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1ministry.cfm?story=222>>, viewed 20 August 2007

¹⁹⁰ Submissions no 6, 8

¹⁹¹ Submission no 8; with similar views expressed in submission no 26

Western Port Biosphere Reserve listing had enabled local councils to extend Victoria's already stringent water and energy sustainability requirements.¹⁹²

This view was not shared by witnesses with whom the Committee met in March 2007 in the Mornington Peninsula Biosphere Reserve, however, including Victorian Government and local council officials.

- Two industry associations called for impact assessments to be undertaken before the nomination proceeds. The HIA called for the release of a financial impact statement addressing the claimed benefits of the nomination and listing and possible regulatory restrictions and disincentives to potential investment.¹⁹³ The Property Council of Australia (ACT) called for a regulatory impact statement to be developed, which included a triple bottom line assessment of the impact of a listing, 'including the cost benefit to government, the business community, and any social uplift to the broader ACT and regional community.'¹⁹⁴
- In November 2006 Mr Andrew Wilson, for the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (ACT), noted that the Institute had not yet discussed the issues raised by the proposed nomination and the Committee's issues paper but queried whether there would be any sharp end regulatory impacts.¹⁹⁵

3.70 Dr Natarajan Ishwaran, the Director of UNESCO's Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, advised participants in the Committee's November 2006 roundtable on the proposed ACT biosphere reserve, that biosphere reserves are sometimes criticised for their lack of regulatory impact and legal basis. He noted that biosphere reserve zones are rarely recognised in legislation, and that the primary aim is for stakeholders to come together and find a way forward on sustainability. Zones do not have to remain fixed and can change over time. He said that a proactive attitude should be applied to determine the aims and objectives for a nominated Biosphere for the 10 years following its

¹⁹² Submission no 19, 26, ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p58

¹⁹³ Submission no 26

¹⁹⁴ Submission no 32

¹⁹⁵ 'Notes of discussion: Roundtable Discussion on UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and the Proposed ACT Nomination Inquiry, co-hosted by the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Environment and the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra', 3 November 2006

listing, after which time UNESCO would review the biosphere reserve. Dr Ishwaran also noted that biosphere reserves are founded on a UNESCO resolution rather than a multilateral treaty like the World Heritage Convention.¹⁹⁶

3.71 Mr Ottesen reinforced this point when appearing before the Committee. He quoted from the UNESCO website, suggesting that the lack of regulatory impact was clear, since biosphere reserves:

- were not the object of a binding international convention or treaty;
- UNESCO does not require any change in law or ownership and each biosphere reserve has its own system of governance to ensure it meets its functions and objectives;
- for most countries it is not necessary to enact special national legislation for biosphere reserves but rather to use the existing legal frameworks for nature protection and land/water management; and
- only the core area requires legal protection and hence can respond to an existing protected area such as a nature reserve or a national park.¹⁹⁷

3.72 The Director Southern, Parks and Wildlife, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, Mr Henschman, told the Committee that biosphere reserves were about international recognition of the significance of the reserve and are not regulatory. Mr Henschman referred to the Alpine Resorts Sustainability Forum as an example of private sector operators recognising the business advantages of pursuing sustainability initiatives above and beyond regulatory requirements.¹⁹⁸

3.73 The National Parks Association has not actively supported the proposed

¹⁹⁶ Dr Natarajan Ishwaran, 'Notes of discussion: Roundtable Discussion on UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and the Proposed ACT Nomination Inquiry', 3 November 2006

¹⁹⁷ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, p 26

¹⁹⁸ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2007, pp 80–81

nomination because of its lack of regulatory impact.¹⁹⁹

Committee comments

- 3.74 The Committee is concerned that several industry associations oppose the proposed nomination mainly because of fears about possible regulatory impacts, despite clear assurances that there would be no regulatory impact above and beyond what would or might otherwise apply under Commonwealth and/or ACT law and policy. The Committee does not consider that the principles for managing Australian biosphere reserves enunciated in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth) go beyond existing obligations under other Acts.
- 3.75 Some of industry's concern arises from a misconception of the nature of a biosphere reserve. 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 some or all commercial developments and other impacting activities in the area because the conservation of its natural and associated cultural resources is the paramount objective for the area.²⁰⁰ 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).²⁰¹ Protected areas tend to have one management plan, and simple zonation. There is usually one manager for the area.
- 3.76 Biosphere reserves, on the other hand, include mosaics of land under a variety of zones, tenures and uses. They have three objectives (sustainable development, logistic support for science and education, and conservation);

¹⁹⁹ E. Bennett and S. Abbott, *Community Engagement in Support of the Proposal to Nominate the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve*, August 2007, p16

²⁰⁰ 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), *Innovative Governance: Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Protected Area*, 2003, pp 1–27

²⁰¹ See generally G. Worboys, M. Lockwood, and T. De Lacy, *Protected Area Management: Principles and Practice*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001. 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)

and usually have coordinated management or several managers. Only the 'core' zones in biosphere reserves are usually protected areas managed in accordance with IUCN guidelines.²⁰² As will be discussed further, the location of policy responsibility for biosphere reserves in Australia in the Parks and Reserves section of the Department of Environment and Water Resources may have confused stakeholders about the nature of biosphere reserves. The failure of all governments to respond appropriately to the UNESCO recommendations for a national review is likely to have increased this misunderstanding.

- 3.77 As discussed further below, UNESCO has criticised Australian biosphere reserves that are essentially national parks because they no longer comply with the aims of the Man and the Biosphere Program. Submissions which suggest that the proposed ACT biosphere reserve be confined to the national park areas of the ACT misunderstand the current concept of a biosphere reserve.²⁰³
- 3.78 Modern biospheres tend to cover ecosystems and landscapes and/or seascapes and to pursue issues of sustainable development. UNESCO reports that 'only 11% of the total surface area of the 187 post-Seville biosphere reserves is in legally protected core areas; nearly 32% of the area is in buffer zones and 57% of the designated surface area in transition areas, respectively.'²⁰⁴ Buffer and transition zones are 'protected' in the same sense as core areas.
- 3.79 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,²⁰⁵ intergovernmental agreements²⁰⁶ and policy

²⁰² F. Bioret, 'Biosphere Reserve manager or coordinator', *Parks* vol 11 no 1, 2001: 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>>

²⁰³ See for example submission no 26

²⁰⁴ UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/6, p4

²⁰⁵ e.g. *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993 (ACT)*, *Environment Protection Act 1997 (ACT)*, *Financial Management Act 1996 (ACT)*

²⁰⁶ e.g. *Natural Heritage Trust Agreement*, *Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and the ACT*, (March 2003)

documents.²⁰⁷ 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.²⁰⁸ Urban sustainability is a growth area of research and biosphere reserve designation may stimulate research and collaboration in this area. But such research would not be driven by any regulatory impact of the proposed biosphere reserve.

- 3.80 On the issue of a Regulatory Impact Statement, the Committee is of the view that this would not be required. The *Legislation Act 2001* (ACT) only requires a regulatory impact statement (RIS) to be prepared for a proposed subordinate law or disallowable instrument 'if it is likely to impose appreciable costs on the community, or a part of the community', and the Minister has not exempted the proposed law from the RIS requirement. The Act provides that the preparation of a RIS is unnecessary if the matter is not of a legislative nature and the matter does not operate to the disadvantage of anyone.²⁰⁹ In the Committee's view, these provisions would apply to the proposed nomination as it is non-legislative, and would not operate to any person's disadvantage.²¹⁰
- 3.81 The Australian Government also does not require the preparation of a regulatory impact statement if no new regulation is proposed, as is the case if the ACT were to be listed as a biosphere reserve and the Australian Government was required by the EPBC Act to take all reasonable steps to act consistently with that listing.²¹¹
- 3.82 To clarify the issue raised by the HIA concerning protected species in the ACT and NSW, the Committee requested that a table of protected species listing for the ACT, NSW and nationally be prepared. This is at Appendix A.

²⁰⁷ 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, Performance Audit Report: Reporting on Ecologically Sustainable Development*, Canberra, 2005, pp 16–17, 39

²⁰⁸ Submission no 14

²⁰⁹ Section 36, *Legislation Act 2001* (ACT)

²¹⁰ Section 34

²¹¹ Office of Best Practice Regulation, *Best Practice Regulation Handbook*, <www.obpr.gov.au/bestpractice/index.html>, viewed 27 September 2007

A national review of biosphere reserves

- 3.83 There are many reasons why a national review of biosphere reserves in Australia is overdue. Such a review has previously been advocated by the Committee.²¹² In summary, these include:
- the pressing challenge of promoting sustainable development in the context of increasing urbanisation and global ecosystem change;
 - the need to enhance access to funding for biosphere reserves;
 - the desirability of Australia developing input to convey to the 3rd International Congress on Biosphere Reserves in Spain, February 2008; and
 - UNESCO's recommendation in 2003 that a national review should be undertaken.
- 3.84 Urban biosphere reserves can enhance the values of protected areas. The 2004 NSW State of the Parks Report noted that 19% of parks in NSW were threatened in a major way by inappropriate adjacent land uses (such as industrial use, some forms of agriculture and residential development). The report also suggested that isolating parks through land clearing and urban development threatened about 25% of parks in NSW.²¹³ Since biosphere reserves promote sustainable land uses across the landscape, they can be managed to better protect the biodiversity values of these protected areas.
- 3.85 Bioregional/landscape scale /connectivity conservation initiatives are increasingly being recognised as a mechanism for sustaining ecosystem services under climate change, and into the future. Protected areas as islands are unlikely to maintain their biodiversity values over time. Habitats and ecological processes need to be connected across landscapes to promote ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change.²¹⁴ This is an area of research that UNESCO is particularly interested in promoting within the World

²¹² ACT Legislative Assembly, *Week 4 Hansard 1 May 2007*, p 720

²¹³ NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), *State of the Parks Report 2004*, Sydney 2005, p 52 <<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/sop04chap5.pdf>>, viewed 15 February 2007

²¹⁴ World Conservation Union World Commission on Protected Areas (Australia-New Zealand), Draft statement on Connectivity Conservation, July 2007

Network of Biosphere Reserves.²¹⁵

- 3.86 Whether state and local governments should be encouraged to become more active participants in the governance of Australian biosphere reserves, in partnership with non-government stakeholders, is an issue that needs to be addressed in a national review of biosphere reserves. This has been addressed in other reviews. For example, in the 2006 review of the regional delivery of NRM in Australia recommendations were made concerning the need to better engage local government in NRM regional bodies and NRM program delivery.²¹⁶
- 3.87 In the Committee's view, as the follow-up response to UNESCO's 2003 review of Australian biosphere reserves was very limited, and Australia's engagement with biosphere reserves has been less successful than in comparable countries such as Canada and South Africa, consideration should be giving to relocating the Australian National Commission for UNESCO out of the Department of Foreign Affairs and back within the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, or within the proposed national Sustainability Commission.
- 3.88 The Committee is aware of the recommendations of the Australian Parliament's House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage in relation to the creation of a statutory national Sustainability Commission headed by a Sustainability Commissioner. The Committee recommended that broad functions be conferred on the Commission, including:
- to create an aspirational Sustainability Charter with objectives and milestones;
 - to create a technical implementation agreement and evaluate progress in meeting national sustainability goals;

²¹⁵ UN Doc. SC-07/CONF.207/8, p 10

²¹⁶ See recommendations 11 and 12: K. Keogh, D. Chant, B. Frazer, *Review of Arrangements for Regional Delivery of Natural Resource Management Programmes: Report prepared by the Ministerial Reference Group for Future NRM Programme Delivery*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2006, pp 48–52, <<http://www.nrm.gov.au/publications/books/pubs/regional-delivery-review.pdf>>, viewed 2 October 2007

- conducting inquiries into sustainability matters;
- reviewing national sustainability goals, objectives and targets;
- building and strengthening partnerships with government, industry and the community (nationally and internationally);
- influencing and guiding government, industry and the community in advancing sustainability outcomes; and
- collecting, maintaining and disseminating information on sustainability, including national performance statistics.²¹⁷

3.89 The House of Representatives Committee recommended that the proposed Sustainability Charter, should, at a minimum, cover the following sustainability sectors: the built environment, water, energy, transport, ecological footprint, economics, waste, social equity and health, community engagement and education.²¹⁸ These were further developed recommendations than those in the earlier *Sustainable Cities* report.²¹⁹ Relevant recommendations in this reports should be assessed during the national review of biosphere reserves recommended in this report.

3.90 There is considerable potential for the proposed national Sustainability Commission to have focal point responsibility for UNESCO biosphere reserves in Australia. In this Committee's view, such responsibility could remain in the Department of Environment and Water Resources if the Sustainability Commission is not established; be relocated with the Australian National Commission for UNESCO to the Department of Education, Science and Training; or be relocated to the Sustainability Commission if established. The Commission could work with state and territory governments, sustainability commissioners, universities, local councils and a broad range of stakeholders, including in relation to biosphere reserves.

²¹⁷ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, *Sustainability for Survival: Creating a Climate for Change: Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter*, September 2007, pp xiii–xiv

²¹⁸ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, *Sustainability for Survival: Creating a Climate for Change: Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter*, pp xv–xvi

²¹⁹ Australian Parliament, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, *Sustainable Cities*, Canberra, 2005

RECOMMENDATION 15

- 3.91 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change write to his Australian Government counterpart to suggest that consideration be given to conferring focal point status for UNESCO biosphere reserves in Australia on the national Sustainability Commission once established. If the Commission is not established, consideration should be given to relocating the focal point to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.**
- 3.92 A community organisation, Australian Biosphere Volunteers Inc, is based in the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve. A spokesman suggested in 2006 that since the ACT was discussing a proposed biosphere reserve nomination it would be timely to hold a national meeting for volunteers in biosphere reserves.²²⁰ In response to the inclusion of the conference proposal in the Issues Paper, several submissions also supported the holding of a national meeting of volunteers supporting biosphere reserves,²²¹ while others were equivocal.²²²
- 3.93 The Committee supports the holding of a national conference on biosphere reserves in the national capital. In the Committee's view, the conference would provide an unprecedented and very welcome opportunity to facilitate networking amongst Australian biosphere reserve volunteers and managers, promote ecologically sustainable development in diverse biosphere reserves, and promote discussion about ways that volunteers can contribute to the evolution of biosphere reserves nationally and in the region.
- 3.94 In August 2006 the Minister for the Territory and Municipal Services, Mr John Hargreaves MLA expressed support for a face-to-face networking meeting for biosphere reserve volunteers. He advised that the ACT Government was unable to offer funding support for the conference, but may be in a position to host a side event should the Government decide to proceed with the proposed

²²⁰ Email communication, Mr Craig Forster, dated 9 July 2006

²²¹ Submission no 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31

²²² Submission no 29

nomination following consideration of the Committee's report.²²³

RECOMMENDATION 16

- 3.95 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government seek Australian Government and private sector financial support for the convening of a national conference on biosphere reserves in Canberra.**

Who should conduct the national review?

- 3.96 There are several intergovernmental bodies which could conduct a national review of biosphere reserves in Australia. These include the subsidiary bodies to the various Ministerial Councils that report to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). These include:
- the Planning Officials Group and Local Government Joint Officers Group which report through the Local Government and Planning Joint Committee to the Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council;
 - the Environment Protection and Heritage Standing Committee, which reports to the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC); and/or
 - the Natural Resource Policies and Programs Committee which reports through the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Standing Committee to the NRM Ministerial Council.
- 3.97 Other suitable entities include the Council of Local Governments, the Council for the Australian Federation, or Australian Parliamentary Committees, either individually or collaboratively.
- 3.98 Whichever body conducts the review, it is essential that the local government sector is represented and participates. Since the 1992 Earth Summit's Agenda 21, the status of local authorities as key actors in sustainable development has been better recognised internationally. The International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) has been involved with many Local 21 campaigns, as well as initiatives such as Local Action for Biodiversity (LAB), Cities for Climate Protection, and the ICLEI Water Campaign. There are at

²²³ Letter to the Committee Chair Mr Mick Gentleman MLA dated 11 August 2006. Under the Ministerial reshuffle of April 2007 responsibility for the biosphere reserve nomination was reallocated to the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change

least 117 ICLEI members within Oceania.²²⁴ Many local authorities are now attempting to better integrate biodiversity into local planning processes. The partners in the LAB project include the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Countdown 2010, South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), Roma Natura and twenty cities from around the world.²²⁵ In Australia, the cities of Liverpool in Sydney and Joondalup in Perth are LAB cities.

- 3.99 A more recently formed local government political entity, the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, launched its 'National Capital Cities Policy' in August 2007. This manifesto suggests that Australian Government funding should be provided to capital cities for sustainability, transport and infrastructure, social infrastructure (such as affordable housing), global engagement and tourism, and city safety and security. Urban biosphere reserves are not directly mentioned, but fit well within the Council's aims.²²⁶
- 3.100 It is also vitally important that non-government stakeholders be engaged in any national review of biosphere reserves. There are already a range of consultative mechanisms in place for government-stakeholder interaction, but given the breadth of stakeholders, a new mechanism would be appropriate.
- 3.101 A new consultative group could be established with an independent chair, and representation from peak non-government organisations who are involved with, or interested in, biosphere reserves. Officials should be permitted to attend and participate. This could meet back-to-back with the officials group.

RECOMMENDATION 17

²²⁴ 'ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability 2007' <<http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=6112>>, viewed 9 August 2007

²²⁵ Convention on Biological Diversity, 'Cities and Biodiversity: Engaging Local Authorities During The Enhanced Phase of the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity: Note by the Executive Secretary', 30 January 2007, UN Doc UNEP/CBD/Cities/1/2Rev.1, pp 9–10 <<http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/biodiv/mayors-01/official/mayors-01-02-en.pdf>>, viewed 9 August 2007

²²⁶ Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, 'Capital Cities– Partners in Prosperity', August, 2007, <<http://www.lordmayors.org/>>, viewed 9 August 2007

- 3.102 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change write to the Australian Government Ministers for the Environment and Water Resources, and Foreign Affairs, requesting that a broad-ranging review of UNESCO biosphere reserves in Australia be undertaken.**

Funding needs and sources

- 3.103 The funding needs of the proposed ACT biosphere would depend on the governance model agreed and the nature and extent of the projects and activities undertaken within the reserve.
- 3.104 At a minimum, resources would be needed to cover the cost of preparing the nomination document, and the salary of a secretary/coordinator who would be responsible for advising and supporting the chair of the biosphere partners steering committee, and for progressing the goals, partnerships and projects agreed in the cooperation plan for the biosphere reserve. The coordinator's primary duties would be seeking project funding, liaising with stakeholders, providing communication and coordination information and providing secretariat services for the steering committee meetings chaired by the Sustainability and Environment Commissioner. Administrative support should also be provided for this staff position.
- 3.105 Additional funds should be provided for the biosphere reserve nomination for the development of a communication and engagement strategy and media, and for covering the costs of steering committee meetings, and partial costs of workshops and conferences.
- 3.106 Some jurisdictions create trusts to raise and manage funds for local biosphere reserve activities,²²⁷ but this is not recommended in the ACT initially.
- 3.107 There are a range of funding programs within many Australian and ACT Government portfolios under which applications can be made for biosphere reserve projects. But biosphere reserve experts have warned that grant funding is an inadequate source of funding for biosphere reserves, and that administrative and institutional arrangements need to be allocated program

²²⁷ Such as the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust in Canada: UNESCO: Biosphere Reserve Benefits and Opportunities, 2005

funding.²²⁸

- 3.108 Public environmental funding for biosphere reserves may be accessed from within the regional component of the national Natural Resource Management (NRM) Framework established under the Natural Heritage Trust and National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, or from the local Envirofund. This is despite the fact that the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)* (EPBC Act) and its regulations include management principles and planning for biosphere reserves and refers to the provision of Commonwealth financial or other assistance for biosphere reserves.²²⁹ NRM funding is not usually administered under the EPBC Act.
- 3.109 It is likely that many projects undertaken in the biosphere in future would fall within the targets in the ACT natural resource management plan. Projects would need to be supported by the accredited regional body, and be a priority in the accredited Natural Resource Management Investment Strategy. The ACT Natural Resource Management Council was engaged in a consultative process to revise the ACT targets under the ACT Natural Resource Management Plan in 2006–07. Only legally constituted organisations, such as incorporated associations, can receive such funding.²³⁰
- 3.110 The offer of in-kind assistance from the National Capital Authority in preparing the nomination document has been noted above. The Australian Government has previously provided environmental funding for existing biosphere reserves in Australia from the Natural Heritage Trust – \$1.2 mil 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

²²⁸ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 108

²²⁹ See for example Part 15 Div 3 *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)

²³⁰ 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

Riverland were the main beneficiaries.²³¹ Funding has also been available under the local funding program, the Australian Government Envirofund.

- 3.111 There is currently an opportunity to enhance local, state and Australian government collaboration in relation to biosphere reserve governance because regional bodies are not particularly well-suited to this role. The Committee is of the view that a national review of biosphere reserves could assist policy development in this area. Regional NRM bodies have long-term investment strategies which are agreed between governments, and there is little flexibility to reallocate funds once the regional plans and investment strategies have been negotiated. The staff of regional bodies may be fully committed to other projects and may be unable to provide facilitators to ensure that the momentum that stakeholders have generated for a biosphere reserve listing is not later lost when projects need to be implemented. NRM regional bodies are also less likely to have funds available for the diverse sustainable *development* initiatives that biosphere reserves should support, and in any event have no statutory functions and powers in relation to town and regional planning.
- 3.112 Several submissions suggested that ongoing funding, including from government, industry and philanthropic organisations, rather than short-term grant funding, was essential for the proposed biosphere reserve.²³² Two submissions referred to the possible opportunity costs of the proposed nomination since environmental budgets were already stretched.²³³ Others suggested funding would be needed for a suitably qualified coordinating officer or organisation to undertake research, coordination tasks, secretariat and communication activities.²³⁴ Volunteers, educational and research institutions, and interested community groups could provide substantial assistance.²³⁵

²³¹ Information provided by Michelle Evans, Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, 13 July 2006. See also Australian Government, *Director of National Parks Annual Report 2004–05*, Canberra, 2005, pp 94, 168

²³² Submission no 1, 2, 9, 13, 16, 21

²³³ Submission no 1, 3

²³⁴ Submission no 16

²³⁵ Submission no 9

- 3.113 The Committee notes that substantial funding is not necessarily a determinant of success. The Committee heard evidence during its visit to Mornington Peninsula and Western Port and Barkindji Biosphere Reserves, that the low level of funding to the former, and relatively generous funding for the latter, had not lead to markedly different levels of engagement. Rather the poorly funded Mornington Peninsula biosphere reserve seemed to have a higher level of community support.
- 3.114 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, and that the Commonwealth should contribute 50:50. For a cross-border biosphere, NSW could make a further minor contribution to the cost-sharing, with a 45:45:10 division.²³⁶ 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.²³⁷ Suggested sources of funding included philanthropic organisations, the business sector²³⁸ and Australian and ACT government agencies.²³⁹
- 3.115 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.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Submission no 15

²³⁷ Submission no 13

²³⁸ Also Submission no 21

²³⁹ Submission no 9, 13

²⁴⁰ Submission no 14, referring to the Australian Parliament, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, *Sustainable Cities*, Canberra 2005; Australia, Parliament, House of Representatives, Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, *Inquiry into a Sustainability Charter: Discussion Paper*, Canberra, 2006

Committee comments

- 3.116 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 develop the nomination document and communication strategy, to implement some early initiatives, and to realise the gains possible from a biosphere reserve designation.

RECOMMENDATION 18

- 3.117 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure the provision of about \$400 000 for the proposed nomination and implementation of the ACT biosphere reserve, to cover salary and project costs, with financial and in-kind contributions sought from the Commonwealth and NSW Governments and private sector sources.**

Timeframe for the proposed nomination

- 3.118 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 that as a general rule, nominations should be lodged by the end of a calendar year for consideration the following year.²⁴¹ But UNESCO is considering whether to change the meeting times for the International Coordinating Council so that they occur soon after the October-November UNESCO General Conference and Executive Board meetings.²⁴²

Stakeholders' comments

- 3.119 Stakeholders suggested various dates for the proposed nomination in submissions:

²⁴¹ Email communication, Dr T. Schaaf, UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program, 29 June 2006

²⁴² UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/6, p9

- Nature and Society Forum suggested that the nomination document should be submitted by December 2007 with the aim of having the ACT biosphere reserve declared in 2008, and fully operational and celebrated during Canberra's 2013 centenary.²⁴³ Or at least within a two-year timeframe.²⁴⁴
- Mr Geoff Pryor, for the Canberra Business Council, suggested that the proposed nomination should be developed and debated in the lead up to the 2008 ACT election.²⁴⁵ Other submissions also suggested that 2008 would be appropriate for the nomination and/or listing.²⁴⁶ In 1908 the Yass-Canberra area was selected as a finalist for the site for the national capital. 2009 could also be appropriate, as 1909 was when Charles Scrivener reported that the Limestone Plains would be the best site for the capital.²⁴⁷
- 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.²⁴⁸
- Professor Brian Roberts of the University of Canberra said that experience internationally showed that it takes four to six years for communities to accept and adopt a biosphere reserve concept.²⁴⁹
- Ms Kharis submitted that it may be too ambitious to aim for lodgement of a nomination in 2008 'as the success of the Biosphere relies on the support and involvement of many sectors of the community'.²⁵⁰
- Mr Peter Ottesen suggested that if the centenary year was regarded as important for the nomination and listing, the Australian Government's timeframe, and UNESCO's, would need to be factored into the timing of the listing announcement.²⁵¹

²⁴³ Submission no 27

²⁴⁴ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, p 35

²⁴⁵ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p90; *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 44

²⁴⁶ Submissions no 7, 13, 16, 21, 23, 28

²⁴⁷ Submission no 7, 30

²⁴⁸ Submission no 14, citing M.M. Ravindra. 'A Road to Tomorrow: Local organizing for a Biosphere Reserve' *Environments* vol 32 no 3, 2004, pp 43–59; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, pp 10, 17, 23

²⁴⁹ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 95

²⁵⁰ Submission no 25

²⁵¹ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, p27

Committee comments

- 3.120 The Committee considers that awareness raising about UNESCO biosphere reserves should continue in relation to this proposal. A communications strategy should be developed in relation to both the nomination and implementation stage. The Committee is of the view that the ACT Government should give the proposed nomination more attention, with a view to lodging the nomination by December 2008. This would enable the nomination to respond to the Madrid Declaration and Madrid Action Plan.
- 3.121 The Committee has examined the nomination document lodged for Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve, Barkindji and Cape Winelands and considers that these 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.
- 3.122 The Committee considers that the themes and priorities identified in the nomination document could deliver environmental, social and economic benefits beyond existing programs.

RECOMMENDATION 19

- 3.123 **The Committee recommends that the nomination document for the proposed ACT UNESCO biosphere reserve be lodged with UNESCO by December 2008.**

4 CONTENT OF PROPOSED NOMINATION DOCUMENT

4.1 This chapter identifies various possible core, buffer and transition areas for the proposed ACT biosphere in a very preliminary manner. It notes the research and monitoring activities that may be stimulated by the proposed nomination, and recommends a participatory process for the naming of the proposed biosphere.

The nomination template

4.2 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 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.²⁵²

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

Criteria for designation as a biosphere reserve

4.4 As noted above, the key attributes of designated biosphere reserves are that they should –

²⁵² UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, *Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form*, 2004, accessible at <<http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/offDoc.shtml>>

- encompass a mosaic²⁵³ of ecological systems representative of major biogeographic regions,²⁵⁴ 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;
 - (c) a designated authority or mechanism to implement this policy or plan; and
 - (d) programmes for research, monitoring, education and training.²⁵⁵

4.5 These criteria may be amended at the international conference in 2008.

Stakeholders' comments

4.6 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'.²⁵⁶ Urban ACT and its surrounds constitute a

²⁵³ 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, *Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form*, 2004

²⁵⁴ 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

²⁵⁵ Article 4 – Criteria, *Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves*

²⁵⁶ Submission no 7

unique and evolving cultural landscape that has changed through Aboriginal and more recent human occupation.²⁵⁷ The nomination should also recognise the contribution of Scrivener, the Griffin plan and the work of Charles Weston and Lindsay Pryor.²⁵⁸ 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.²⁵⁹ As did others.²⁶⁰

- 4.7 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.²⁶¹ Similarly, the Cape Winelands and Noosa nomination documents could usefully inform the ACT nomination document given the similarities between these regions.
- 4.8 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.²⁶²
- 4.9 The ACT Rural Landholders Association queried whether an ACT population policy would be an element of the biosphere proposal.²⁶³
- 4.10 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.²⁶⁴

Zones – possible boundaries of the core, transition and buffer zones

- 4.11 Listed biosphere reserves have a diversity of zonations. They include urban

²⁵⁷ Submission no 7

²⁵⁸ Submission no 7

²⁵⁹ Submission no 13

²⁶⁰ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 92

²⁶¹ Submission no 13

²⁶² Submission no 18

²⁶³ Submission no 8

²⁶⁴ Submission no 4

areas surrounded by green belts, urban green corridors running through urban areas, and scatters of green spaces within urban areas.²⁶⁵ Under the current Seville strategy, the core, buffer and transition zones of each biosphere reserve should be identified and mapped.²⁶⁶ Buffer and transition zones can be used for socially sustainable activities compatible with the objectives of the core zone.²⁶⁷ UNESCO is also reviewing its zonation system and is expected to adopt changes at the 3rd International Congress on Biosphere Reserves in early 2008. At the September meeting of the International Coordinating Council, the following definitions were recommended:

a) Core Areas: The primary function of the core areas is to ensure long-term protection of the environment and its biological diversity. This primary function also entails provision of ecosystem services which are essential to ensure sustainable development (e.g. carbon sequestration, soil stabilization, health services through the supply of clean air and water, recreation for physical and spiritual well-being, income derived from eco-tourism). Core areas are legally constituted to meet conservation objectives for both current and future generations. Secondary functions relate to knowledge generation (including environmental research, monitoring, public awareness and education) and contribute to sustainable development. Core areas may be made known as 'conservation for development' areas. Core areas need to be of sufficient size to meet the primary and secondary functions.

(b) Buffer/Connectivity Areas: The primary function of buffer/connectivity areas is to minimize negative effects of human-induced activities on the core areas. They may be areas where restoration and rehabilitation of degraded lands is practiced. Their secondary functions are of equal importance as their primary functions: economic activities that are in line with conservation objectives in core and buffer areas, such as recreation and eco-tourism linked with environmental education, research and environmental rehabilitation measures. Buffer/connectivity areas may not necessarily need legal protection status, but could have a lesser degree of legal protection than the core areas. To the extent

²⁶⁵ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2007, p 15

²⁶⁶ *The Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves*, Goal IV.10

²⁶⁷ *The Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves*, Goal IV.10, IV.12, IV.15

possible, buffer areas should surround core areas, provide connectivity in the landscape via corridors or stepping-stone patches, and/or meet their function as stand-alone polygons.

(c) Areas of Cooperation: Formerly known as transition areas, the primary function of 'Areas of Cooperation' is to contribute to sustainable development of the biosphere reserve and the broader region as a whole. They are characterized by multiple land-use systems (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, settlements, physical infrastructure, etc.) and are managed in such a way that adverse human impacts on the environment are mitigated through on-going consultation processes among different stakeholders and interest groups. They may also be areas where 'new' approaches to development, e.g. sustainable energy use, development of renewable energy sources for rural developments and/or infrastructure development with low carbon footprints may be experimented. Their secondary functions aim at maintaining environmental and biodiversity conservation and providing ecosystem services in human-transformed landscapes. Areas of Cooperation need to be sufficiently large to encompass different land-use systems, and spatially delineated.²⁶⁸ The outcomes of the September meeting had not been released before this report

- 4.12 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.²⁶⁹
- 4.13 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,²⁷⁰ and can be considered a transboundary cooperative partnership.²⁷¹ The entire

²⁶⁸ UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/7, p 7

²⁶⁹ Australian Labor Party ACT Branch, *Sustainability*, 2004, p 4

²⁷⁰ International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN): Department of Environment and Conservation NSW, *Plan of Management – Kosciuszko National Park*, p 7

²⁷¹ Worboys *et al*, *Protected Area Management*, 2006, p 240

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 C.

- 4.14 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 'medium'.²⁷²

Stakeholders' comments

- 4.15 Various boundaries have been recommended for the biosphere reserve:
- CSIRO suggested that the upper Murrumbidgee catchment might be a bioregional or ecological boundary for the proposed biosphere reserve. It could include the Lake Eucumbene and Tantangara reservoirs near Cooma, the Murrumbidgee River and all its tributaries running through Canberra, Yass, Burrinjuck Dam etc;²⁷³
 - several submissions said the boundary should be the ACT.²⁷⁴ The Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra suggested that while there could be merit in nominating the Australian Capital Region initially the nomination should be confined to the ACT for practical, achievability reasons. The ACT Division of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand expressed a similar view;²⁷⁵ and
 - the Conservation Council also suggested that the core area ought to embrace high quality ecosystems, natural landscapes (including riparian

²⁷² NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, *Plan of Management – Kosciuszko National Park*, Sydney, 2006 <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/PDFs/KNP_POM.pdf> viewed 29 June 2006, pp xviii, 24, 226, 312

²⁷³ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 November 2006, pp 11, 13–14

²⁷⁴ Submissions no 4, 13, 15, 23; ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 54

²⁷⁵ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 52

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'.²⁷⁶

- 4.16 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).²⁷⁷
- 4.17 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.²⁷⁸
- 4.18 Expressing a contrary view, but one similar to CSIRO's concerning urban Canberra, Professor Taylor suggested that the core area could correspond with the city 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.²⁷⁹

Committee comments

- 4.19 The Committee is aware that UNESCO may review its approach to zonation at the 3rd International Congress on Biosphere Reserves in 2008, and that its current approach is quite flexible.²⁸⁰ Biosphere reserves are not a 'physical location' but rather their importance lies in how they are managed. As Mr

²⁷⁶ Submission no 16; submission no 21 expressed a similar view

²⁷⁷ 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

²⁷⁸ Submission no 13

²⁷⁹ Submission no 7

²⁸⁰ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, pp 106, 111

Glen Hyman put it for the Committee:

Biosphere reserve status recognises an approach to management which is novel and which responds directly to the needs of a place in a way which is sustainable in all of its senses.²⁸¹

- 4.20 Nevertheless, the Committee will make recommendations on the current UNESCO approach to zonation, recognising that this may change in the near future.
- 4.21 The Committee considers that the proposed biosphere can deliver both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development benefits. For protected areas to be effective in biodiversity conservation they should be managed adaptively in their changing landscape context at a bioregional scale. This approach, known as 'whole of landscape', 'ecosystems networks', 'biodiversity corridors', or 'the bioregional approach', is the approach taken in biosphere reserves, where buffer and transition zones are managed to protect the biodiversity values of the core protected area.²⁸² Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) endorsed the 'ecosystem approach' in 2000.²⁸³
- 4.22 The Committee recognises that under climate change habitat connectivity and ecosystem restoration is important to the maintenance of plant and animal populations as it may enable species to adapt to climate change. Without effective connectivity across landscapes, protected areas are likely to lose their biodiversity values.

²⁸¹ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 8 May 2007, p 107

²⁸² G. Worboys, I. Pulsford, P. Figgis, and B. Mackey, Draft IUCN statement: Connectivity Conservation, August 2007

²⁸³ Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, COP No 5: Decision V/6 2000, <<http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.asp?lg=0&dec=V/6>> viewed 27 September 2007; COP No 7: Decision VII/2 2004, <<http://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop-07.shtml?m=cop-07>> viewed 27 September 2007

- 4.23 Managing protected areas in their broader landscape is also likely to contribute to the maintenance of the ecosystem functions and the provision of ecosystem services. These are essential for the well-being of all life-forms, including humans. Relevant ecosystem services which are globally in decline include:
- ‘provisioning services’: i.e. food, fibre, genetic resource, biochemicals, natural medicines, and freshwater;
 - ‘regulating services’: i.e. the regulation of air quality, climate, water, erosion, water purification and waste treatment, pest regulation, pollination, natural hazard regulation; and
 - ‘cultural services’: i.e. spiritual and aesthetic values and recreation and ecotourism.²⁸⁴
- 4.24 Bioregional approaches can also improve the implementation and effectiveness of sustainable development policies and programs by raising public awareness, strengthening existing sustainability networks, and mobilising new support for those policies and programs at a regional scale. New partnerships can be fostered as stakeholders can be encouraged to interact who might not otherwise do so. New networks of protected areas, people and institutions can be fostered. For example, the Gondwana Link partners are the Australian Bush Heritage Fund, the Nature Conservancy, the Wilderness Society, Fitzgerald Biosphere Group, Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park, and the Malleefowl Preservation Group.

Core areas

- 4.25 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, part of the corridor between Namadgi National Park, the Tinderry

²⁸⁴ UNESCO, Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, Meeting of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 18–20 September 2007, Item 6 of the provisional agenda: Preparations for Madrid – working documents, Madrid Action Plan and Madrid Declaration, How can biosphere reserves be used for innovative research and capacity building enhancing the role of ecosystem goods and services in development?, UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/8, p 1, <http://www.unesco.org/mab/icc/bureau/2007/E_agenda.pdf>, viewed 27 September 2007

Nature Reserve and the Tallaganda 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.

- 4.26 It may also be feasible to nominate Canberra's aboreta – the Canberra International Arboretum and Gardens, Westbourne Woods and the Lindsay Pryor Arboretum – as core areas.
- 4.27 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.²⁸⁵ The Committee notes that the World Wildlife Fund has awarded the management of protected areas in the ACT a triple-A rating.²⁸⁶ Appendix F has a map depicting wildlife corridors in the ACT.
- 4.28 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.²⁸⁷ Kosciuszko National Park is similarly significant for its core values of natural and cultural heritage, and its social, recreational, tourism, utilitarian

²⁸⁵ 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

²⁸⁶ J. Stanhope, (Chief Minister of the ACT), Bush capital gets tick of approval, Media Release, 8 December 2006

²⁸⁷ For a detailed statement of significance see ACT Government, Environment ACT, *Namadgi National Park Draft Management Plan*, Arts, Heritage and Environment, Canberra, 2005, accessible at <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/bushparksandreserves/strategiesandplans/namadginationalparkmanagementplan>, viewed 29 June 2006, pp 9–10

and economic values.²⁸⁸ Both parks have important values for Aboriginal people and a rich heritage value for the broader community.

- 4.29 The Manager of Strategies for Conservation on Private Land in the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, Mr Ian Pulsford, advised the Committee that the biosphere reserve proposal could fit into the larger Atherton to Alps (A2A) landscape conservation proposal for the Great Eastern Ranges. The A2A initiative has the support of Australian and state governments and is intended to protect biodiversity along the east coast by providing linked natural areas which enable species to move and adapt to climate change.²⁸⁹ The ACT would be a 'keystone point' in the corridor. For example, part of the corridor between Namadgi National Park, the Tinderry Nature Reserve and the Tallaganda National Park could demonstrate the ecological benefits of the movement of species through this area.²⁹⁰
- 4.30 The Committee notes that there is already a biosphere reserve thematic program on Global Change Research in Mountain Biosphere Reserves involving more than 20 mountain biosphere reserves and more than 100 scientists. It developed a research strategy for conducting global change research in mountain areas.²⁹¹ Changbaishan Biosphere Reserve in China, for example, has been an active participant in this network.²⁹² The MAB International Coordinating Council has been discussing how it can 'reinvent itself' to better engage with the pressing issues of biodiversity loss, climate change and sustainable development, including greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency and carbon sequestration. At its September meeting the

²⁸⁸ Department of Environment and Conservation NSW, *Plan of Management – Kosciuszko National Park*, 2006, pp 7–10

²⁸⁹ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2007, pp 68–69, 77

²⁹⁰ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2007, pp 73–4, 77, 81

²⁹¹ UNESCO, Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, Meeting of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 18–20 September 2007, Item 6 of the provisional agenda: Preparations for Madrid – working documents, Madrid Action Plan and Madrid Declaration, How can biosphere reserves be used for innovative research and capacity building enhancing the role of ecosystem goods and services in development?, UN Doc SC-07/CONF.207/8, p8, <http://www.unesco.org/mab/icc/bureau/2007/E_agenda.pdf>, viewed 27 September 2007

²⁹² UNESCO, *Biosphere Reserve Benefits and Opportunities*, 2005, p 5

International Coordinating Council discussed whether the world network of biosphere reserves could provide a platform for research and development co-operation, capacity building and networking for sharing information, knowledge and experience about climate change, biodiversity loss and the implications of these for sustainable development.²⁹³

- 4.31 The involvement of the ACT in the A2A initiative could demonstrate international leadership in cooperative conservation, and also enable the ACT to influence the evolution of the initiative.²⁹⁴ Regional demonstration projects could be developed consistent with *The Seville Strategy* in Namadgi National Park, in the Murrumbidgee corridor and on rural leasehold land, in local-scale wildlife corridors and on revegetation sites with community projects for example.²⁹⁵ The ACT could also profile innovations in the Territory such as the Think Water, ACT Water and other urban water policy initiatives, solar and recycling initiatives, and industry activities such as the Master Builders' Association Green Building Council.²⁹⁶
- 4.32 Several of the actions in the ACT Climate Change Action Plan could contribute to the implementation of that initiative,²⁹⁷ as could other mechanisms such as targeted voluntary conservation agreements.²⁹⁸
- 4.33 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.²⁹⁹ The Reserve is also home to breeding programs for threatened species, including the Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby and the Northern Corroboree

²⁹³ UN Doc Sc-07/CONF.207/6, p 5

²⁹⁴ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2007, pp 73–4, 77

²⁹⁵ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2007, p 83

²⁹⁶ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 43

²⁹⁷ ACT Government 2007, *Climate Change Strategy – Action Plan 2007–2011*, Canberra, see for example Actions 33–35, 37, 41

²⁹⁸ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment 2007, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2007, p 74

²⁹⁹ ACT Government, *Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Management Plan*, Environment ACT, Canberra, 1999;

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.

- 4.34 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.³⁰⁰ In 2006 the then Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Hon Ian Campbell, advised the Committee that the inclusion of the Gardens in an ACT Biosphere has some merit, but that he would like to see the whole proposal in context.³⁰¹
- 4.35 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
- Black Mountain
- Cooleman Ridge
- Dunlop Grasslands
- Goorooyaroo
- Gungaderra
- Jerrabomberra Wetlands
- Aranda Bushland
- Bruce Ridge
- Crace Grasslands
- Farrer Ridge
- Gossan Hill
- Issacs Ridge
- Mt Majura

³⁰⁰ Director of National Parks, 'Australian National Botanic Gardens' in State of the Parks Report, Canberra, 2005, <<http://www.anbg.gov.au/anbg/annual-report/anbg-dnp-report-0405.pdf>> viewed 3 July 2006, p 45

³⁰¹ Letter from the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon Ian Campbell, to the Committee Chair, Mr Mick Gentleman MLA, dated 6 September 2006

- 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

4.36 Parts of the Molonglo River Corridor, Gorge areas along the Murrumbidgee River Corridor and some of the catchment of the Gudgenby and Naas rivers may warrant nomination as core areas for the proposed biosphere reserve.³⁰² In the Murrumbidgee River Corridor these areas may include downstream of Guises Creek, Red Rocks, Bullen Range, downstream of Casuarina Sands and on the northern ACT border.³⁰³

4.37 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 Arboretum and Gardens, west of the Tuggeranong Parkway and Lake Burley Griffin, will eventually include 100 forests and 100 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

4.38 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

³⁰² ACT Government, *Ribbons of Life – Draft Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy*, Action Plan No. 29, Canberra, 2006, p 106

³⁰³ National Capital Authority, *Consolidated National Capital Plan*, <http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/planning_and_urban_design/national_capital_plan/>, viewed 3 July 2006, p 67

agriculture, and Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshores.³⁰⁴

- 4.39 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.
- 4.40 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.
- 4.41 Buffer areas in NSW would need to be identified and negotiated with the NSW Government, local councils and other stakeholders. The Planning Framework for Natural Ecosystems of the ACT and NSW Southern Tablelands contains much information of relevance, and particularly in the appendices which summarise features, issues and management actions for various landscape units.³⁰⁵

Transition areas

- 4.42 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. Water, transport infrastructure, regional tourism and bushfire management also cross the ACT and NSW borders, and sustainable management of these could be addressed in the transition zones of a transboundary regional biosphere reserve.
- 4.43 There are numerous laws and policies and sustainability projects being pursued in urban Canberra, which are worthy of international recognition. Many are listed in Appendix G.

³⁰⁴This 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>, p 71

³⁰⁵ M. Fallding, *A Planning Framework for Natural Ecosystems of the ACT and NSW Southern Tablelands*, Natural Heritage Trust, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Land & Environment Planning, 2002

Cross-border issues

- 4.44 Nature and Society Forum submitted that the proposed nomination of the ACT biosphere reserve should not be delayed by negotiations with NSW on cross-border issues.³⁰⁶
- 4.45 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.³⁰⁷
- 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 Australian Capital Region boundaries could be used to address Canberra's urban ecological footprint.³⁰⁸ CSIRO also suggested that urban Canberra should be the core of what could be known as the National Capital Urban Biosphere Region;³⁰⁹
 - 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;³¹⁰
 - Mr Brett Odgers described negotiations with NSW about possible cross-border zonation as 'vital';³¹¹ and
 - Mr Eric Martin suggested that cross-border nomination should only be considered if NSW areas are 'consistent and compatible' with Canberra³¹²
- 4.46 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.³¹³

³⁰⁶ Submissions no 27, 30

³⁰⁷ Email communication, Mr Glen Hyman, 6 April 2006; see also submission no 3, 25

³⁰⁸ Submission no 14; see also [Appendix J](#) for a map of the National Capital Region

³⁰⁹ Submission no 14

³¹⁰ Submission no 15

³¹¹ Submission no 23

³¹² Submission no 31

³¹³ Submission no 12

4.47 The Director Southern, Parks and Wildlife in the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, Mr Alistair Henschman, advised the Committee that Kosciuszko has a long and well-respected history of scientific research and that many educational projects are run in the park and NSW schools. International climate change research is also undertaken in the park. Mr Henschman advised the Committee:

[F]ollowing the UNESCO review of biosphere reserves in 2003, the review committee recommended to Australia that we look at expanding the Kosciuszko Biosphere Reserve to keep it in currency with the new regime for biosphere reserves and the expanded objectives for biosphere reserves. So, since that time, we have been having some preliminary discussions with our neighbours, and that includes the local government areas around the park. There are five local government areas. We see the ACT's interest in creating a biosphere reserve as consistent with our desire to expand the Kosciuszko Biosphere Reserve beyond the boundaries of the national park itself. So we are very interested in talking with the ACT, should you be interested, in expanding the reserve and working together to create a larger biosphere reserve.³¹⁴

Committee comments

4.48 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.³¹⁵ These bioregions are indicated on the maps at Appendices D and E. In the Committee's view, 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.

4.49 Some might prefer that the entire Australian Alps bioregion should be assessed for incorporation in the proposed biosphere reserve. This would be

³¹⁴ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2007, p 68

³¹⁵ Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, *Australia's Biogeographical Regions*, <<http://eriss.erin.gov.au/parks/nrs/ibra/index.html>>, viewed 4 July 2006

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.³¹⁶

- 4.50 High quality white box-yellow box-blakely's red gum grassy woodland and derived native grasslands in the region should be included in the core zone of the proposed biosphere reserve, as these are recognised as endangered.³¹⁷ 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,³¹⁸ and their associated flora and fauna, should 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.³¹⁹ The Committee has not pursued world heritage issues for the purposes of this inquiry however.
- 4.51 The ACT Government is already party to several cross-border agreements. A Senior Officer Group led by the Chief Executive of the ACT Chief Minister's Department and the Director General of the NSW Premier's Department, and supported by relevant agency senior officials, meets 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-

³¹⁶ Victorian Government, *State Government Policy on Biosphere Reserve Proposals*, 2002 <
[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)>, viewed 3 July 2006

³¹⁷ 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-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland as critically endangered.

³¹⁸ These grasslands include wet *Themeda*, *Poa Labillardieri*, *Austrodanthonia*, and dry *Themeda* grasslands: see generally ACT Government, *A Vision Splendid of the Grassy Plains Extended – ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy*, Action Plan 28, Canberra, 2005, pp 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)

³¹⁹ Rosslyn Beeby, 'Heritage listing sought for lake', *The Canberra Times*, 17 April 2006

- governmental consultation. First Ministers are to meet annually, usually early in the year.³²⁰
- 4.52 The Chief Minister's Department has advised that the Regional Management Framework Senior Officer Group could have a general oversight/monitoring role in relation to possible cross-border negotiations, but that the technical and consultative work should be driven by the Department of the Territory and Municipal Services. If agreement to pursue the biosphere reserve nomination was reached, the issue could be added to the joint ACT–NSW work plan and fall within the general oversight of the Senior Officer Group.³²¹
- 4.53 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.³²² 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*.³²³
- 4.54 In the Committee's view, the Senior Officer Group under the ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework would be an appropriate mechanism for pursuing negotiations concerning possible cross-border issues raised by the zonation of the proposed biosphere reserve, including issues concerning Kosciuszko National Park, high quality riparian areas, and any high quality woodlands and grasslands towards Lake George.³²⁴

³²⁰ ACT Government and NSW Government, *ACT-NSW Regional Management Framework*, 2006

³²¹ Email communication, Departmental Liaison Officer, Department of Territory and Municipal Services, Ms Maria Mangeruca, dated 14 September 2007

³²² Submission no 6; see also Submission no 9

³²³ M. Fallding, *Planning Framework for Natural Ecosystems—NSW Southern Tablelands and ACT*

³²⁴ 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*

- 4.55 The Committee is of the view that a range of shires may well be suitable for inclusion in a regional biosphere reserve, but consultation for this should be undertaken with relevant councils in the region. A large regional representative body, the Capital Region Development Board, should be consulted about the regional biosphere reserve proposal. The Board is a joint initiative of the NSW and ACT Governments and was initiated in 1994 to facilitate sustainable economic, employment and investment development in the South East Region of NSW and the ACT. It covers local councils and the ACT within a 60 000 kilometre area, with a population of more than 540 000, as represented in the map in [Appendix J](#). Although the Board meets 4 to 5 times a year, members would also need to consult within their local council area. The timeframe required for this to be done properly would be beyond that envisaged by the Committee for the proposed nomination of the ACT as a UNESCO biosphere reserve.
- 4.56 A smaller regional body, the Capital Region Area Consultative Committee (CR-ACC) serves the ACT and 5 shires, as represented in the map in [Appendix I](#). The CR-ACC is one of the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services' 54 regional development committees. Area Consultative Committees deliver the Regional Partnerships Program, to promote economic development, sustainable regions, access to services and economic diversity.
- 4.57 In the Committee's view, the Capital Region Development Board is a preferable consultative mechanism because it has more direct local council and ACT Government support.

RECOMMENDATION 20

- 4.58 **The Committee recommends that the Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change ask the Department of Territory and Municipal Services in the first instance, and following amendments to the *Commissioner for the Environment Act 1993 (ACT)*, the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, to pursue negotiations with local governments in the Capital Region, the Capital Region Development Board and the Capital Region Area Consultative Committee about a possible biosphere reserve for the Capital Region.**

RECOMMENDATION 21

- 4.59 **The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister consider the desirability of consulting with the Australian Government about the consolidation and rationalisation of regional development bodies such as the Capital Region Development Board and Capital Region Area Consultative Committee.**

The logistic support function of biosphere reserves

- 4.60 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).
- 4.61 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' comments

- 4.62 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)'.³²⁵
- 4.63 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

³²⁵ Submission no 13

Town, Rome and São Paulo be considered.³²⁶ 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.³²⁷

- 4.64 There is considerable scope for the development of environmental education initiatives within biosphere reserves, as they are intended to be, in part, learning laboratories for sustainability. This has been pursued in other Australian biosphere reserves. Barkindji Biosphere Reserve, for example, promotes understanding about sustainable development through its Education Strategy. The privately run Australian Inland Botanic Gardens is intended to become a hub for education, research, tourism and support for conservation volunteers. Barkindji aims to provide an Interpretative Centre, a Kids Teaching Kids Program, an Aboriginal Youth Training Program and a Virtual Biosphere.³²⁸
- 4.65 The HIA recognised the need for consumers to be better educated about eco-efficiency savings that can be made by living more sustainably.³²⁹
- 4.66 The Committee sees much potential for promoting collaboration amongst researchers in the ACT, and welcomes Professor Baird's comments. The committee is aware that the Australian Government developed a collaborative approach to information provision when it established the Environmental Resources Information Network (ERIN) as a unit within the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Water Resources. ERIN provides access to online data and information management, and spatial data integration and analysis, to support environmental decision-making. Most of ERIN's data sets provide information about biodiversity, including for the national reserve system. It has limited national, regional or local data on the built environment, water, climate change, or greenhouse gas emissions. But there is scope for data-base development work in this area. An ERIN official advised that updating information in data bases is always a challenge, but

³²⁶ Submission no 14

³²⁷ Submission no 14

³²⁸ Catherine Brown and Associates Pty Ltd for Barkindji Biosphere Ltd, Barkindji Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form, Mildura, 2005, pp 81–83

more collaboration amongst agencies and researchers could be beneficial.³³⁰ Mr Allen Kearns, CSIRO, agreed that collaboration could be developed in these and other areas such as landcover analysis, ecological footprints, ecosystem services and human impacts on ecosystem function, energy, transport, and environment-related human-health.³³¹

- 4.67 The Committee was advised informally that that only \$8million remained uncommitted in the Commonwealth Environment Research Facility (CERF) program, and that there were no current plans to develop another competitive funding round. However the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training was developing national collaborative infrastructure funding to assist in the improvement of technical platforms for environmental research. Further consultations were to be undertaken in relation to the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network initiative.³³²
- 4.68 The Committee recognises the merit in increased collaboration and data-sharing amongst researchers working on sustainability issues in a wide range of areas and the ACT Government may share this view. The logistic function of the proposed biosphere reserve may function more effectively if the datasets held or accessed by ACT Government agencies were to be shared and consolidated with those held by universities and other stakeholders.
- 4.69 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider whether the Office of the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, and/or the Department of Territory and Municipal Services, should be the repository of new collaborative research platforms and databases for the proposed ACT biosphere reserve.**

Sister-city relationships

- 4.70 Canberra has had a sister-city relationship with Nara, Japan, since 1993, and

³²⁹ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, *Transcript of Evidence*, 13 February 2007, p 63

³³⁰ Informal communication, Mr Shane Cridland, Department of Environment and Water Resources, 14 September 2007

³³¹ Informal communication, Mr Allen Kearns, Deputy Chief CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, 14 September 2007

³³² informal advice, Mr David Wilson, Innovation and Research Branch, Australian Government Department of Education Science and Technology, 3 October 2007

with Beijing since 2000. The ACT Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hangzhou Municipal Government, China, in 1998. Friendly stakeholder relationships have since flourished between the sister cities amongst schools, cultural and sporting organisations, Rotary clubs, professional organisations, business and government.

- 4.71 Several submissions suggested sister-city relationships should be pursued, but Nature and Society Forum and Friends of Grasslands submitted that sister-city issues should not delay the ACT's nomination process.³³³
- 4.72 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,³³⁴ for example, but not yet in Asia or Oceania. The Committee sees potential in such a regional network being encouraged but does not regard this as a priority in the early days of the biosphere reserve.

RECOMMENDATION 22

- 4.73 **The Committee recommends that the ACT Government support the pursuit of funding for the development of collaborative research platforms for research relevant to the proposed ACT biosphere reserve.**

Name of the proposed biosphere reserve

- 4.74 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

³³³ Submission no 30 favoured consultations with NARA. Others were less willing to slow down the nomination process – submissions no 27, 29

³³⁴ James D. Brown, 'The integration of Man and the Biosphere', *Georgetown International Environmental Law Review*, 2002, pp 741–765, at Section D

ACT).³³⁵

- 4.75 The name of the proposed biosphere reserve was raised in several submissions. Mr Howe suggested that the name ‘incorporate the words Kamberri and Ngunnawal, either individually or together, to recall and honour original inhabitants of the region’, provided this is acceptable to the living descendants of the original inhabitants.³³⁶ Mr Odgers also suggested that the name ‘should mainly be about Aboriginal values and living in productive harmony with the natural environment’.³³⁷ Ms Kharis supported a participatory process for the selecting the name for the proposed biosphere reserve.³³⁸ Mr Ian Anderson also supported a participatory naming process.³³⁹
- 4.76 Mr Eric Martin, on the other had, submitted that the naming of the biosphere reserve was not critical at this stage.³⁴⁰
- 4.77 The ACT Place Names Committee has advised the Committee³⁴¹ that it can propose a name for a proposed designation before the nomination has been assessed and listed. 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.
- 4.78 The Place Names Committee advised further that the process to name a public place in the ACT is not generally a public one. However if requested by the ACT Government, consultation and collaboration would be undertaken with relevant agencies and stakeholders and could include the community. The Committee Secretariat would undertake appropriate research and collaborate with the National Capital Authority and the Department of the Territory and

³³⁵ UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form, 2004, section 1

³³⁶ Submission no 24, referring to A. Jackson-Nakano, *The Kamberri – A History of Aboriginal Families in the ACT and Surrounds*, Weereewaa History Series Vol 1, Aboriginal History Monograph 8, pp xxi–xxiv

³³⁷ Submission no 23

³³⁸ Submission no 25

³³⁹ Submission no 30

³⁴⁰ Submission no 31

³⁴¹ Correspondence dated 30 June 2006 from Lorraine Bayliss, Secretariat ACT Place Names Committee, ACT Land Information Centre

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.

4.79 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.

4.80 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. Information to assist may be found in *Ngambri Ancestral Names*.³⁴²

RECOMMENDATION 23

4.81 **The Committee recommends that the Chief Minister and/or the Minister for Planning initiate a participatory process by which the ACT Place Names Committee would recommend a name for the proposed biosphere reserve.**

Viability of the proposed nomination

4.82 The criteria applied by UNESCO for the designation of biosphere reserves, prescribed in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, have been noted above.

4.83 In the Committee's view these criteria could be satisfied on current practices in the ACT. The Australian Alps and South-east Highlands bioregions, and the core areas tentatively identified in this report, are highly significant for

³⁴² A. Jackson-Nakano, *Ngambri Ancestral Names for Geographical Places and Features in the Australian Capital Territory and Surrounds*, Canberra, 2005

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.

- 4.84 The Committee is confident that concerns about the impact of the 2003 bushfires in the Territory, and bushfire management in the ACT will not impact negatively on the proposed nomination. Many parts of the ACT are recovering well from the devastating impacts of the fires, but the health of our freshwater resources and sub-catchment lands has been declining, impacting on local biodiversity such as woodland birds and native fish.³⁴³ Policies have been developed to address this, but restoring ecosystems is a complex challenge.³⁴⁴ The ACT Government has prioritised bushfire risk management since the 2001 fires. The Committee also notes that the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Legal Affairs is inquiring into ACT fire and emergency services arrangements.
- 4.85 The Committee is aware that several expert commentators consider implementation to be more challenging than the nomination process for biosphere reserves.³⁴⁵ But there are already 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. A management or as recommended here, a cooperation plan could be developed for the proposed biosphere reserve drawing on readily accessible information. The ACT and the region is also well endowed with programs and institutions dedicated to research, monitoring, education and training, and most universities have

³⁴³ Office of the Commissioner for the Environment, *Progress Towards Sustainability: State of the Environment Report 2003*, Canberra, p 3

³⁴⁴ ACT Government, *A Vision Splendid of the Grassy Plains Extended – ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy*, Action Plan No. 28, Canberra, 2005; ACT Government, *Ribbons of Life – Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy*, Action Plan No. 29, Canberra 2006; ACT Government, *Woodlands for Wildlife: The Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy* Action Plan 27, Canberra, 2004,

³⁴⁵ View expressed to Committee by Dr James Fitzsimons, 27 March 2007, Melbourne

expressed a willingness to support the implementation of an ACT biosphere reserve. Cooperation and coordination to enhance outcomes is required more than the development of new activities initially.

- 4.86 The Committee appreciates that the ACT does not yet demonstrate sustainability, but progress is being made.³⁴⁶ On many economic, social and environmental indicators, Canberra is performing well, or improving.³⁴⁷ 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,³⁴⁸ but behavioural change is needed.
- 4.87 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.³⁴⁹ We should do better on children's wellbeing, housing affordability, and resource efficiency.³⁵⁰ 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

³⁴⁶ ACT Government, *Measuring our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, Vol. 1: Our Story, Canberra, 2004

³⁴⁷ ACT Government, *Measuring our Progress: Canberra's Journey to Sustainability*, 14–20; Office of the Commissioner for the Environment, *Progress Towards Sustainability: State of the Environment Report 2003*, Canberra, p 3; Australian Bureau of Statistics, *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/7d12b0f6763c78caca257061001cc588/146CD38767574BBCA2571310000F7AF?opendocument>>

³⁴⁸ listed at [Appendix G](#)

³⁴⁹ '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, Population-Development-Environment Project, *Canberra's Ecological Footprint (Parts 1&2)*, Working Document 98-12-1, 1998, p 1. See also - Working Document 98-12-2, <<http://www.cse.csiro.au/publications/reports.htm>>, viewed 19 April 2006, and ACT Government, *Measuring Our Progress*, pp 22–23

³⁵⁰ P. Ottesen, 'Communication, integration and caring for Canberra', in B. Furnass, S. Clark and P. Ramsay (eds), *Making Canberra Sustainable*, Ginninderra Press, Canberra, 2005, pp 30–38, 33

older indigenous children and in health and longevity is recognised.³⁵¹

4.88 The ACT *Natural Resource Management Plan 2004–2014* is a key document promoting ecologically sustainable development in the ACT. It was developed by the former ACT Natural Resource Management Board, in consultation with the community, to meet the requirements of the Commonwealth–ACT Bilateral Agreement for the delivery of the Natural Heritage Trust. Revised targets for water, biodiversity (including urban biodiversity), land and community were being developed in 2006–07. The Plan 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; and
- ecologically significant invasive species managed to minimise threats to biodiversity.³⁵²

4.89 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.

4.90 The Committee does not express a view on the proposed nomination of the ACT as a World Heritage site, as 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 for both its natural heritage and as a cultural landscape (combined work of nature and humankind).

³⁵¹ J. Stanhope (Chief Minister of the ACT), Flag raising for NAIDOC Week, Media release, 3 July 2006

³⁵² See

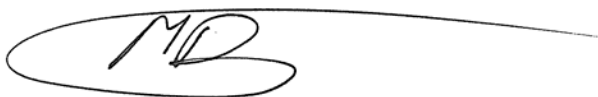
<http://www.tams.act.gov.au/live/environment/landcare_and_catchment_management/actnaturalresourcemanagementplan>, viewed 27 September 2007

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Canberra can be a sustainable city. Residents enjoy an amenable and aesthetically pleasing environment with highland horizons and integrated water features. Despite being a national capital, Canberra's predominantly modest urban form reflects 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 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 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. Mechanisms to manage activities in the proposed biosphere reserve 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 policies are listed at Appendices G. In the Committee's 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.

- 5.4 The Committee considers that broader community engagement will need to become an integral part of sustainability policy implementation. One strategy may be to encourage better communication and collaboration amongst advisory bodies such as the ACT Natural Resource Management Council, the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, the successor body to the Sustainability Expert Reference Group, the Planning and Development Forum, and the ACT Ministerial Tourism Advisory Council, other university-based experts, and community groups, so that sustainability priorities are identified with expert advice, and implementation addressed. As Professor Roberts from the University of Canberra has cautioned, the implementation of a biosphere reserve has to be about more than lobbying for funding for local initiatives, and can be an opportunity for engaging the academic community and other stakeholders as catalysts for change towards more sustainable local and regional development.³⁵³



Mick Gentleman
Chair
October 2007

³⁵³ ACT Legislative Assembly, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment, Transcript of Evidence, 8 May 2007, p 96

APPENDIX A: Protected species list

Vulnerable and Endangered Species and Ecological Communities which are protected in the ACT, NSW and the Commonwealth, and uncommon ACT species³⁵⁴

Native plants

Common name	Scientific name	ACT	Cwlth	NSW
Canberra Spider Orchid	<i>Arachmorchis actensis</i>	E, SPS	CE	–
Mauve Burr–daisy	<i>Calotis glandulosa</i>	UC	V	–
Brindabella Midge Orchid	<i>Corunastylis ectopa</i>	E, SPS	CE	–
Australian Anchor Plant	<i>Discaria pubescens</i>	UC	–	–
Michelago Parrot–pea	<i>Dillwynia glaucula</i>	UC	–	E
Golden Moths	<i>Diuris pedunculata</i>	UC	E	E
Creeping/Trailing Hopbush	<i>Dodonaea procumbens</i>	UC	V	V
Mountain Cress	<i>Drabastrum alpestre</i>	UC	–	–
a subalpine herb	<i>Gentiana baeuerlenii</i>	E, SPS	E	E
Ginninderra Peppergrass	<i>Lepidium ginninderrense</i>	E, SPS	V	–
Hoary Sunray (white form)	<i>Leucochrysum albicans</i> var. <i>tricolour</i>	UC	E	–
Tuggeranong Lignum	<i>Muehlenbeckia tuggeranong</i>	E, SPS	E	–

³⁵⁴ Nature Conservation (Threatened Ecological Communities and Species) Action Plan 2007 (No 1) DI2007–84; Nature Conservation (Threatened Ecological Communities and Species) Action Plan 2007 (No 2) DI2007–85; Nature Conservation (Species and Ecological Communities) Declaration 2005 (No 1) DI2005–39; Nature Conservation (Threatened Ecological Communities and Species) Action Plan 2005 (No 1) DI2005–84; Nature Conservation (Special Protection Status) Declaration 2005 (No 1) DI2005–64; *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (NSW); *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (NSW); EPBC Act lists of threatened flora and fauna accessible via <http://www.environment.gov.au>. Many additional species have SPS status because they are listed as threatened under an Act of the Commonwealth, or of an international agreement entered into by the Commonwealth, or are threatened with extinction or are declared as endangered

a leek orchid (aka Tarengo l.o.)	<i>Prasophyllum petilum</i>	E, SPS	E	E
no common name	<i>Pomaderris pallida</i>	UC	V	V
Monaro Golden Daisy	<i>Rutidosis leiolepis</i>	–	V	V
Button Wrinklewort	<i>Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides</i>	E, SPS	E	E
Small Purple Pea	<i>Swainsona recta</i>	E, SPS	E	E
Silky Swainson-pea	<i>Swainsona sericea</i>	UC	–	V
Austral Toadflax	<i>Thesium australe</i>	UC	V	V

Native birds

Common name	Scientific name	ACT	Cwlth	NSW
Gang-gang Cockatoo	<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	–	–	E ³⁵⁵ & V
Brown Treecreeper	<i>Climacteris picumnus</i>	V	–	V
Varied Sitella	<i>Daphoenositta chrysoptera</i>	V	–	–
Diamond Firetail	<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	–	–	V
Crested Shrike-tit	<i>Falcunculus frontatus</i>	SPS	–	–
Painted Honeyeater	<i>Grantiella picta</i>	V	–	V
White-winged Triller	<i>Lalage sueurii</i>	V	–	–
Swift Parrot	<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	V, SPS	E	E
Hooded Robin	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>	V	–	V
Barking Owl	<i>Ninox connivens</i>	–	–	V
Superb Parrot	<i>Polytelis swainsonii</i>	V	V	V
Speckled Warbler	<i>Pyrrholaemus sagittata</i>	–	–	V
Regent Honeyeater	<i>Xanthomyza phrygia</i>	E, SPS	E	E

³⁵⁵ Gang-gang Cockatoo population in the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Local Government Areas

Native mammal

Common name	Scientific name	ACT	Cwlth	NSW
Spotted-tailed Quoll	<i>Dasyurus maculatus</i>	V	E	V
Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby	<i>Petrogale penicillata</i>	E, SPS	V	E
Smoky Mouse	<i>Pseudomys fumeus</i>	E, SPS	E	E
Squirrel Glider	<i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i>	–	–	E ³⁵⁶ & V
Koala	<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	–	–	E ³⁵⁷ & V

Native reptile

Common name	Scientific name	ACT	Cwlth	NSW
Pink-tailed Legless Lizard	<i>Aprasia parapulchella</i>	SPS	V	V
Striped Legless Lizard	<i>Delma impar</i>	V	V	V
Grassland Earless Dragon	<i>Tympanocryptis pinguicolla</i>	E, SPS	E	E
Rosenberg's Goanna	<i>Varanus rosenbergi</i>			V

Native frog

Common name	Scientific name	ACT	Cwlth	NSW
Northern Corroboree Frog	<i>Pseudophryne pengilleyi</i>	E, SPS	V	V

Native fish and crustacean

Common name	Scientific name	ACT	Cwlth	NSW
Silver Perch	<i>Bidyanus bidyanus</i>	E, SPS	–	V
Two-spined Blackfish	<i>Gadopsis bispinosus</i>	V	–	–

³⁵⁶ Squirrel Glider on Barrenjoey Peninsula, north of Bushrangers Hill and in the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area

³⁵⁷ Koala, Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens population; Koala in the Pittwater Local Government Area

Trout Cod	<i>Maccullochella macquariensis</i>	E, SPS	E	E
Murray Cod	<i>Maccullochella peelii peelii</i>	–	V	–
Macquarie Perch	<i>Macquaria australasica</i>	E, SPS	E	V
Murray River Crayfish	<i>Euastacus armatus</i>	V	–	–

Native invertebrates

Common name	Scientific name	ACT	Cwlth	NSW
Perunga Grasshopper	<i>Perunga ochracea</i>	V	–	–
Golden Sun Moth	<i>Synemon plana</i>	E, SPS	CE	E

Ecological community

Common name	Scientific name	ACT	Cwlth	NSW
Natural Temperate Grassland	–	E	E ³⁵⁸	E ³⁵⁹
Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland	–	E	CE ³⁶⁰	E ³⁶¹

Key

AP= Nature Conservation Act 1980 (ACT) Action Plan

R = rare

CE = critically endangered

SPS = Special Protection Status in ACT

Cwlth = Australian Government jurisdiction

UC = uncommon, as listed in APs

E = endangered

V = vulnerable

³⁵⁸ Natural Temperate Grassland of the Southern Tablelands of NSW and the Australian Capital Territory

³⁵⁹ *Themeda* grassland on seacliffs and coastal headlands in the NSW North Coast, Sydney Basin and South East Corner Bioregions (as described in the final determination of the Scientific Committee to list the ecological community)

³⁶⁰ White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland

³⁶¹ White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland (as described in the final determination of the Scientific Committee to list the ecological community)

APPENDIX B: Committee consultations

On 14 March 2006 the Committee resolved to undertake this inquiry.

On 23 March 2006 the then Executive Director of the 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 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.

The Committee received 34 submissions and considered 16 exhibits, and held 5 public hearings. It convened a stakeholder roundtable in November 2006. It also met with stakeholders over 3 days of inter-state field visits in March 2007.

Submissions received

The submissions received by the Committee and authorised for publication are listed here:

- No 1 — Mr Steve Douglas for 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, President, ACT Rural Landholders' Association
- No 9 — Mr Keith Thomas, Office Manager, Nature and Society Forum
- No 10 — Mr Bruce McFarlane for Sustainable Agriculture Systems
- No 11 — Ms Fiona Spier
- No 12 — Mr Alistair Henchman, Director Southern, 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 for CSIRO

- No 15 – Professor Brian H Roberts, Chair, ACT Government’s Sustainability Expert Reference Group
- No 16 – Ms Trish Harrup, Director, Conservation Council of the South-east Region and Canberra
- No 17 – Mr Eric J Martin, President, National Trust of Australia (ACT)
- No 18 – Mr Phil Pritchard, Chair and Mr Tony Fearside, Member, ACT Division, Institute of Foresters of Australia
- No 19 – Ms Caroline Lemezina, Executive Director 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
- No 22 – Mr Bruce McFarlane, Principal, Sustainable Agriculture Systems
- No 23 – Mr Brett Odgers, supplementary submission
- No 24 – Mr George Howe, a Canberra musician
- No 25 – Ms Ruth Kharis
- No 26 – Ms Caroline Lemezina, Executive Director, Housing Industry Association, ACT/Southern NSW
- No 27 – Mr Keith Thomas, Office Manager, Nature and Society Forum
- No 28 – Mr Richard Sharp, President, Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand
- No 29 – Mr Kim Pullen, President, Friends of Grasslands
- No 30 – Mr Ian Anderson
- No 31 – Mr Eric J Martin
- No 32 – Ms Catherine Carter, Property Council of Australia (ACT)
- No 33 – Mr Graeme Worboys, Vice Chair (Mountains Biome)
IUCN WCPA
- No 34 – Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc, Canberra Chapter

Witnesses appearing at public hearings for the inquiry

The following witnesses attended the Committee’s public hearings for the inquiry into the proposed nomination and responded to Members’ questions:

8 August 2006

- Mr Harold Adams, President, ACT Rural Landholders Association
- Dr Anthony Griffin, Vice-President, ACT Rural Landholders Association

28 November 2006

- Mr Ian Anderson, Board Member, Nature and Society Forum

- Mr Guy Barnett, Urban Systems Program, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems
- Ms Trish Harrup, Director, Conservation Council of the South East Region & Canberra
- Mr Allen Kearns, Deputy Chief, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems
- Mr Peter Ottesen, Executive Director, Sustainability, Department of Territory and Municipal Services
- Mr Keith Thomas, Office Manager, Nature and Society Forum

13 February 2007

- Ms Caroline Lemezina, Executive Director, Housing Industry Association
- Mr Alan Morschel, Planning Adviser, Housing Industry Association
- Mr Geoff Pryor, Chair, Environmental Task Force, Canberra Business Council
- Mr Richard Sharp, President, Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (Australian Capital Territory Division)

10 April 2007

- Mr Alistair Henchman, Director Southern, Parks and Wildlife, New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation
- Mr Ian Pulsford, Manager, Strategies for Conservation on Private Land, New South Wales Department of Environment and Conservation
- Mr Graeme Worboys, Vice Chair (Mountains Biome), IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas

8 May 2007

- Professor John Baird, Rector, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy
- Professor Ian Chubb AC, Vice-Chancellor and President, the Australian National University
- Mr Glen Hyman, Associate Researcher, CNRS Space, Nature and Culture Laboratory
- Professor Stephen Parker, Vice-Chancellor, University of Canberra
- Professor Brian Roberts, Emeritus Professor, Division of Health, Design and Science, University of Canberra
- Professor Will Steffen, Director, the Fenner School for the Environment and Society, the Australian National University

Exhibits³⁶²

The following exhibits were tabled during public hearings or private meetings:

- No 1 – J.A. Fitzsimons and G. Wescott, 'Perceptions and attitudes of land managers in multi-tenure reserve networks and the implications for conservation', (2007) 84 *Journal of Environmental Management*: 38–38
- No 2 – J.A. Fitzsimons and G. Wescott, 'History and attributes of selected Australian multi-tenure reserve networks', (2005) 36(1) *Australian Geographer*: 75–93
- No 3 – J.A. Fitzsimons (2002), Some possible criteria for reviewing the performance of Victorian Biosphere Reserves, unpub.
- No 4 – Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Ltd, 2005–2006 Annual Report
- No 5 – Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Board Governance Protocol
- No 6 – Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Organisational Review Report
- No 7 – NSW Minister for the Environment (2007), 'News release: Groundbreaking Alps to Atherton corridor', 24 February
- No 8 – I. Pulsford (2007), 'Connectivity conservation from the Australian Alps to Atherton (A2A): Executive Summary'
- No 9 – I. Pulsford (2007), 'Australian Alps to Atherton and beyond connectivity conservation initiative (A2A): a continental-scale landscape connectivity conservation program', PowerPoint presentation
- No 10 – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Regional Natural Resource Management Partnership Agreement between Barkindji Biosphere Ltd and Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority, n.d., received 5 April 2007
- No 11 – Canberra Business Council Declaration that the ACT be a Sustainable Community and Regional Centre
- No 12 – A Cooperation Plan for the Mont Saint-Hilaire Biosphere Reserve, April 2002
- No 13 – A Cooperation Plan for the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve, April 2002
- No 14 – Rea Fraser, A Cooperation Plan for the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve Foundation April 30, 2002

³⁶² available on request from the Committee Office

No 15 – A Cooperation Plan for the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, April, 2002

No 16 – A Cooperation Plan for the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, April, 2002

Reception for launch of Issues Paper

On 18 July 2006 the Committee hosted a function in the Legislative Assembly Reception Room to draw stakeholders' attention to the discussion items in the Committee's Issues Paper on the proposed nomination, and to thank stakeholders for their participation in the inquiry.

Roundtable on UNESCO Biosphere Reserves

The Standing Committee on Planning and Environment endeavoured to stimulate community interest in this inquiry by undertaking varied consultations. The Committee co-hosted a Roundtable on UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and the proposed ACT nomination inquiry, with the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra on 3 November 2006. The key-note speaker was Dr Natarajan Ishwaran, the Paris-based Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences in UNESCO.

The following stakeholders participated in the roundtable:

- Mr Ian Anderson, Board member, Nature and Society Forum Inc
- Dr Matt Beaty, Post-doctoral fellow, Healthy Urban Ecosystems, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems
- Mr Dierk von Behrens, long-term conservationist
- Ms Jenny Bounds, President, Conservation Council South East Region and Canberra
- Ms Natalie Broughton, Senior Planner, National Capital Authority
- Ms Kerry Browning, Policy Officer, Dept of Transport and Regional Services
- Em. Prof Ian Falconer, Vice President, Conservation Council South East Region and Canberra
- Ms Linda Francis, A/g Secretary, Unions ACT
- Mr Evan Gallagher, Secretary General, Australian National Commission for UNESCO
- Ms Trish Harrup, Director, Conservation Council of South East Region and Canberra
- Dr Hanna Jaireth, Secretary, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
- Mr Colin Lyons, ACT Division, Planning Institute of Australia

- Mr Andrew Mackenzie, Lecturer, Landscape Architecture, University of Canberra
- Mr Noel McCann, Property Council, ACT Division
- Mr Bruce McFarlane Principal, Sustainable Agriculture Systems
- Mr Alan Morschel Planning Advisor, Housing Industry Association
- Mr Peter Ottesen, Executive Director, Sustainability, Dep't Territory and Municipal Services
- Ms Nicolette Pidcock, Green Ambassador for CVA and the Cwlth Bank
- Mr Geoff Pryor Director, Pryor Knowledge (ACT) Pty Ltd
- Mr Geoff Robertson, Vice President, Friends of Grasslands Inc
- Ms Cathy Robertson, Vice-President, Southern Tablelands Ecosystem Park Inc
- Ms Mary Porter AM MLA, Member, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
- Dr Barry Richardson, Chair, Commission for the Environment, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn, & Convenor of the Anglican Commission for the Environment Network
- Professor Brian Roberts, Chair, Sustainability Expert Reference Group, and University of Canberra
- Mr Zed Seselja MLA, Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
- Ms Kathryn Tracey, Principal Officer, Urban Design, ACT Planning and Land Authority
- Mr Andrew Wilson FRAIA, Chair, Planning Committee, ACT Chapter Royal Australian Institute of Architects

Screening of A Gardener's City – Canberra's Garden Heritage

On Friday 1 December 2006 the Committee and the Australian Garden History Society co-hosted a screening of the Australian Garden History Society's documentary 'A Gardener's City – Canberra's Garden Heritage' in the Legislative Assembly Reception Room. Mrs Dawn Waterhouse, recipient of the ACT Heritage Council Award for Outstanding Achievement, was a guest speaker. The Committee Chair, Mr Gentleman MLA, also addressed the audience about the biosphere reserve inquiry. About 60 people attended the screening.

Field trip to Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve, and Barkindji Biosphere Reserve

The Committee visited the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve, and Barkindji Biosphere Reserve in March 2007. During the field trip the Committee met with the following persons and organisations of interest to the inquiry, at the times and places noted below:

27 March 2007

- 9:15am to 10:00am: Dr James Fitzsimons, Hon Research Fellow, Deakin University, Victorian Environment Assessment Council, Level 1, No 8 Nicholson St, East Melbourne
- 11:45am to 12:15pm: Mr David Buntine CEO, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Level 1 Landmark Corporate Centre, 454-472 Nepean Hwy, Frankston
- 1:15pm to 2:15pm: Dr Michael Kennedy, CEO Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, inaugural Chair of the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Board and Mr Atkins, Director of Sustainable Development, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Pelican's Pantry, Hastings
- 7.00pm to 10.00pm: Mr Jack Krohn, Secretary, Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation and Manager, Project Development & Practice, Strategic Projects Group, Port Phillip Region, Vic. Department of Sustainability and Environment; Mr Alex Atkins, Director Sustainable Development, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council; Ms Libby Anthony, Environment Manager, Frankston City Council; Mr Reade Smith; Councillor, Mornington Peninsula Shire; Mr Rob Gell, Chair, Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation; Victoriana Restaurant, Hastings.

28 March 2007

- 9:00am to 10:00am: Mr Craig Forster, Australian Biosphere Reserve Volunteers Inc, Pelicans' Pantry, Hastings
- 10:00am to 11:00am: Mr Ralph Kenyon, CEO, Port of Hastings Corporation; Hastings Council, Hastings
- 11:00am to 12 noon: Mr Robin Borger, Business Systems Manager, Bluescope Steel; Hastings Council, Hastings
- 12:00noon to 2:30pm: Ms Virginia Richardson, Project Officer, Watson Creek Project, Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation; and Chairs of other Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Foundation Roundtable Chairs: Ms Alison Kuitert, Mr Jim Keryn;

and Mr Jack Krohn; Hastings Council, Hastings

29 March 2007

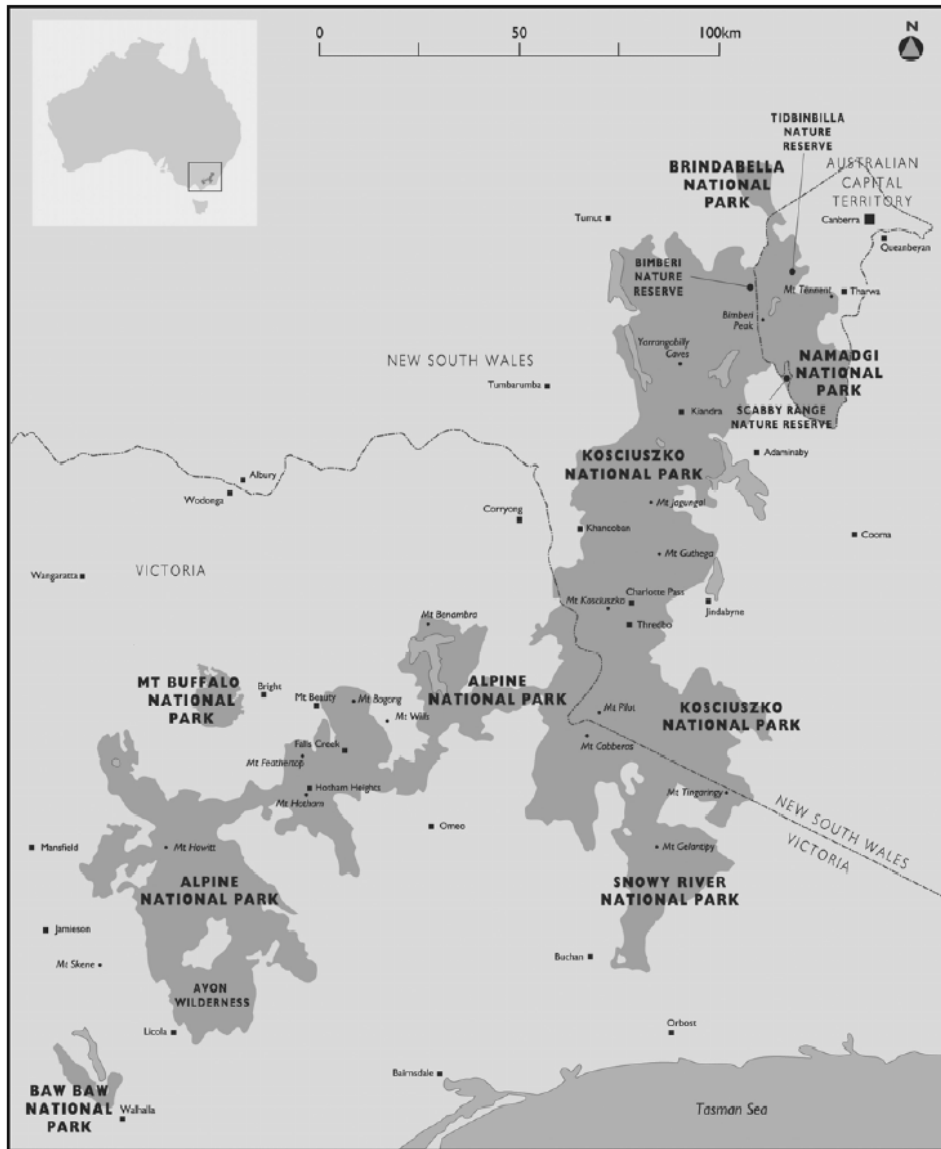
- The Chair, with the approval of the full Committee, met with the following persons and organisations of interest to this inquiry at the following times and places, accompanied by the Secretary:
- 9:15am to 10:15am: Mr John Irwin Chair, Barkindji Biosphere Ltd; Mr Bill Tatnell, Programs Manager, Lower Murray Darling Catchment Management Authority; Mr Michael Gilby, Catchment Officer (Aboriginal Communities); and Mr Ken Mansell, Australian Inland Botanic Garden, CMA Office, Buronga, NSW
- 10.30am to 11.45am: The Chair and Secretary discussed the potential role of Botanic Gardens in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves while touring the Australian Inland Botanic Garden with Mr Ken Mansell

Nature and Society Forum workshop, 16 May 2007, on the proposed Biosphere Reserve nomination

The Committee Chair and Secretary attended a workshop hosted by the Nature and Society on 16 May 2007. Other Committee members were unable to attend.

APPENDIX C: Map of Australian Alps National Parks³⁶³

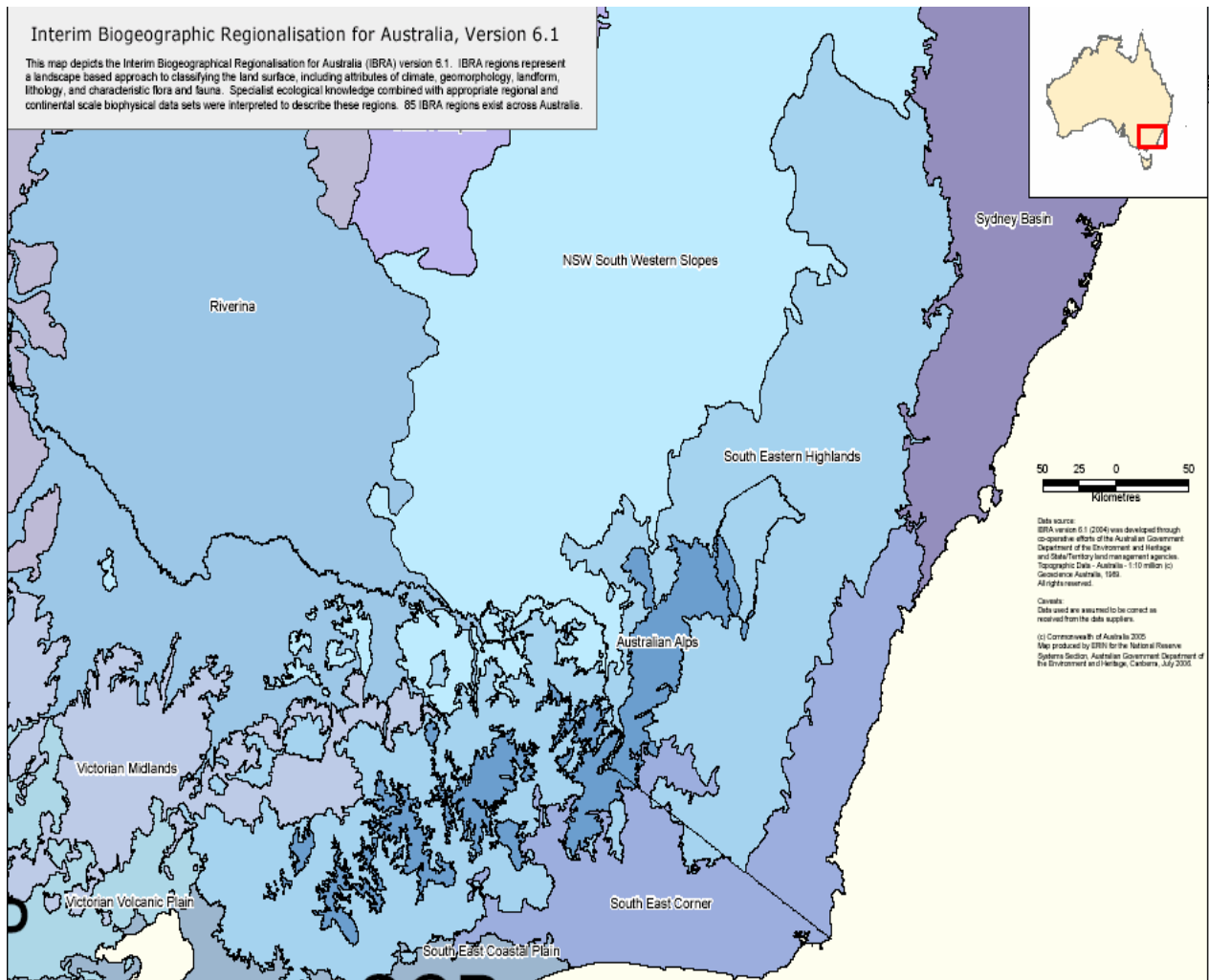
Map 1 Australian Alps national parks



³⁶³ ACT Government, Environment ACT, *Namadgi National Park Draft Management Plan*, Arts, Heritage and Environment, Canberra, 2005, accessible at <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/bushparksandreserves/strategiesandplans/namadginationalparkmanagementplan>, viewed 29 June 2006, xvi

APPENDIX D: South-east Australian Bioregions³⁶⁴

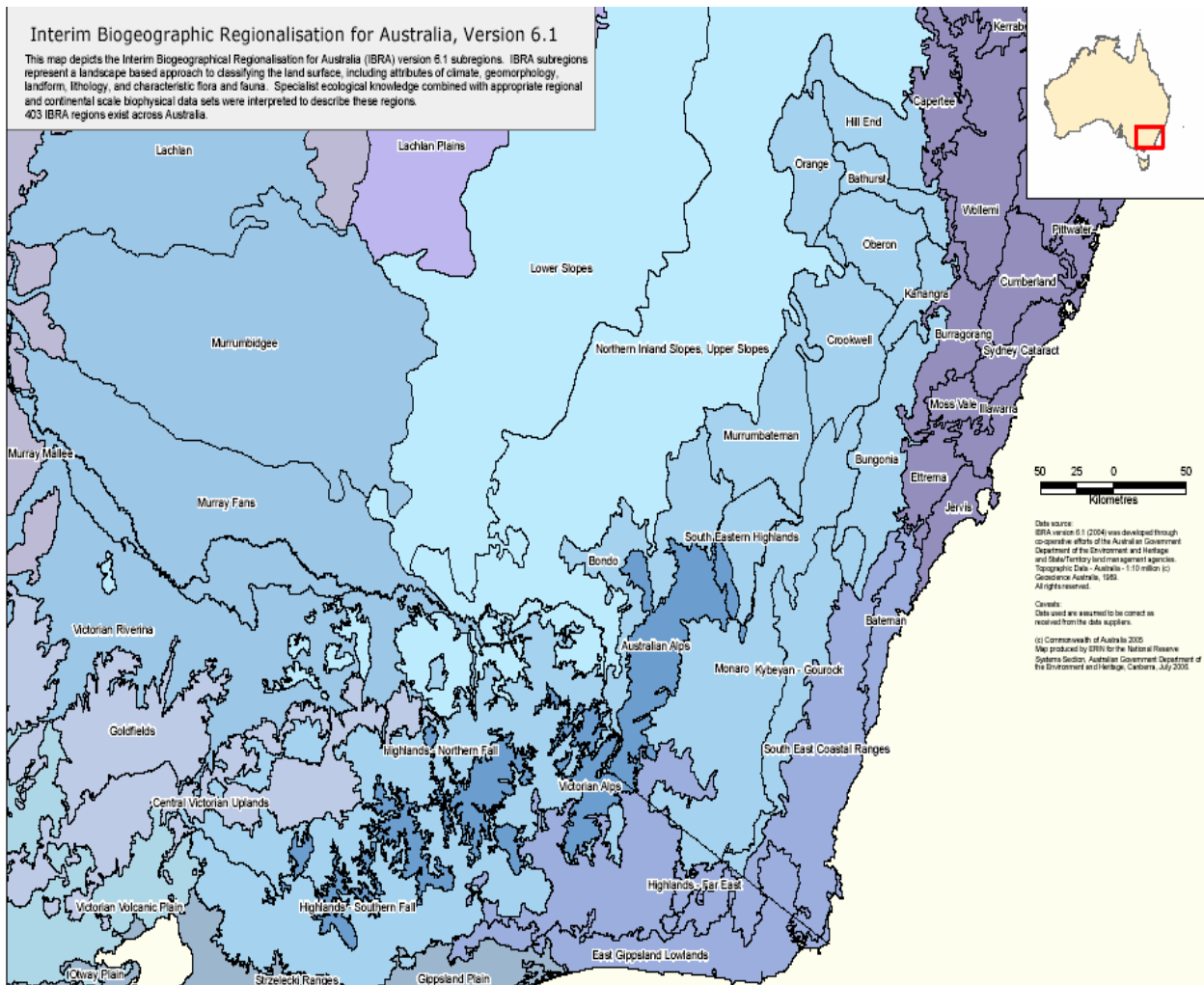
Map showing Australian Alps and South Eastern Highlands Bioregions –



³⁶⁴ 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 E: South-east Australian Sub-Bioregions³⁶⁵

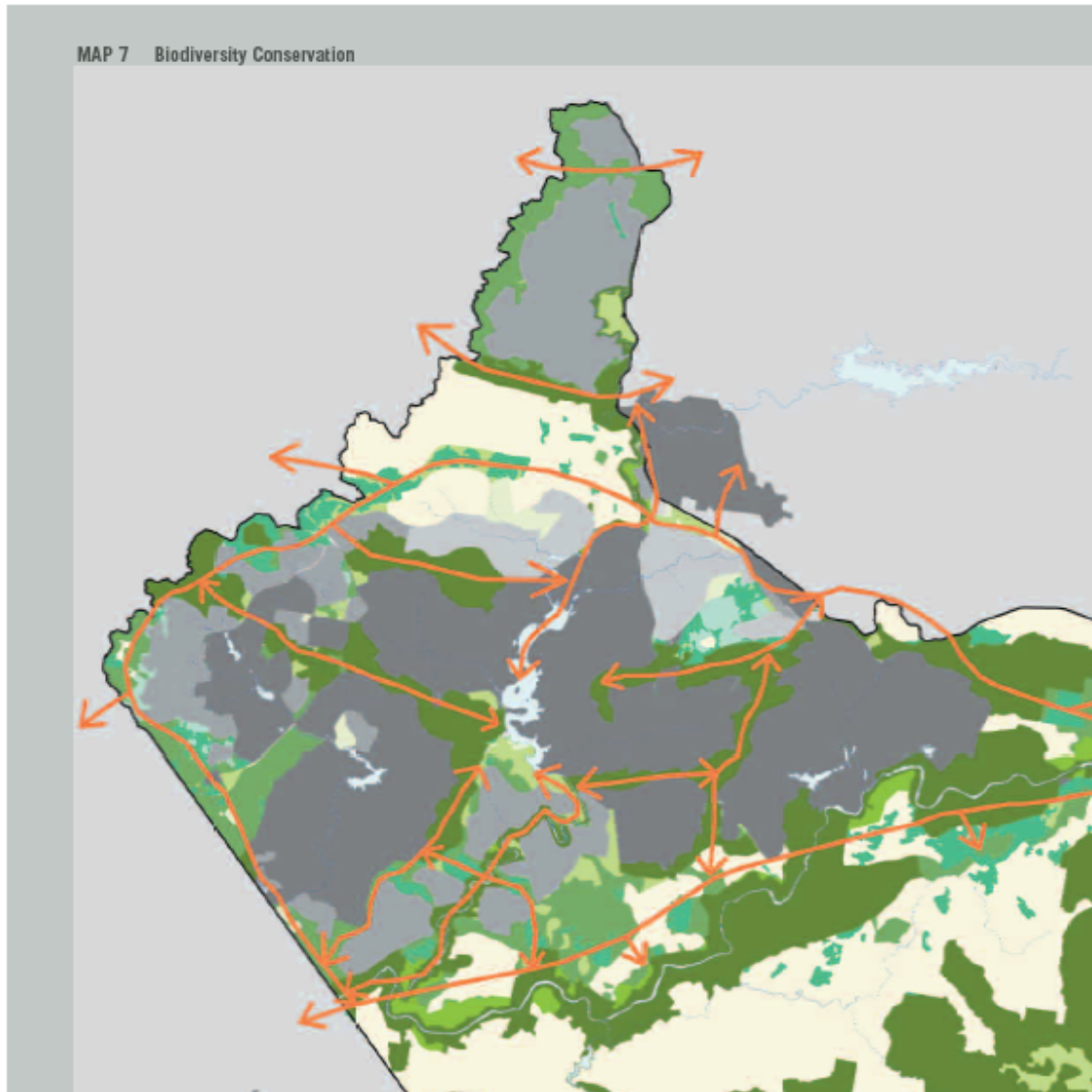
Map showing Australian Alps and South Eastern Highlands Sub-bioregions –



³⁶⁵ 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 F: Proposed core zones

Wildlife corridors, marked in the *Canberra Spatial Plan*, cover many of the proposed core zones for the proposed Biosphere Reserve nomination³⁶⁶



³⁶⁶ ACT Government, *Canberra Spatial Plan*, ACT Planning and Land Authority, Canberra, 2004, Map 7, <<http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/plandev/sp-intro/sp-pdf/spatialplan.pdf>>, viewed 30 June 2006

APPENDIX G: Plans and Policy Instruments for Sustainable Development in the ACT³⁶⁷

Policy/Plan	Legislative status
A Vision Splendid of the Grassy Plains Extended – ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy: Action Plan No 28	policy taking an integrated, territory-wide approach to the protection of the remaining lowland native grasslands and grasslands flora and fauna
ACT and NSW on Cross Border Region Settlement and on Agreement on Cross Border Water Supply	provides for the sustainable use, supply and access to water for ACT and NSW residents in agreed circumstances
ACT and Sub-region Planning Strategy	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
ACT Environmental Flow Guidelines	provide for the maintenance of the flows necessary to maintain aquatic ecosystems
ACT Government Energy Consumption Reports	first produced in 2001
ACT Government Human Capital Action Plan	outlines current activities and future investments for literacy and numeracy, Type II diabetes and early childhood and childcare in the ACT
ACT Greywater Use: Guidelines for Residential Properties in Canberra	provides guidance on the use of greywater in residential properties
ACT Multicultural Strategy 2006–2009	provides 10 themes for promoting a multicultural society
ACT Natural Resource Management Plan 2004–2014	a CwIth-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.
ACT Nature Conservation Strategy	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.
ACT Planning and Land Authority design guidelines being incorporated in the revised Territory Plan	incl. development application and design guidelines, ACT House Energy Rating Scheme (ACTHERS), Residential Sustainability Reports
ACT Rainwater Tanks: Guidelines for Residential Properties in Canberra	provides guidance on the installation of rainwater tanks in residential properties

³⁶⁷ Including discussion papers for proposed policies, mainly focussing on the environmental rather than social and economic aspects of sustainable development

ACT State of the Environment Report	produced by the ACT Commissioner of the Environment under a program of state of the environment reporting
ACT Strategic Bushfire Management Plan	prepared by the Emergency Services Authority under the Emergencies Act 2004, 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
ACT Weeds Strategy (1996), ACT Draft Weeds Strategy (2007) and ACT Vertebrate Pests Management Strategy (2002)	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
ACT Women's Plan	Sets out how the ACT Government will work to improve the status of women and girls
Affordable Housing Action Plan 2007	Includes measures aimed at improving access to home ownership, public housing, private rental, community housing and supported accommodation
Asset Management Plan for Urban Trees	Provides strategies for replacing ageing trees over 10–20 years
Australian Capital Region State of the Environment Report	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
Avoid, Abate, Adapt: Discussion Paper for an ACT Climate Change Strategy (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
Canberra Nature Park Management Plan	Addresses management objectives, policies, issues and actions specific to CNP and is consistent with the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan
Canberra Plan	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
Future Water Options for the ACT Region – Implementation Plan	An ACTEWAGL report on future water options for the ACT
Googong Foreshores Draft Plan of Management (2007)	This is a draft management plan for the Googong Foreshores in NSW. The Googong Dam supplies potable water to the ACT and Queanbeyan.
Government Procurement (Principles) Guideline 2002 (No 2) and Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Circular 2004/07	Includes direction for the procurement of environmentally sustainable goods, services or works
Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) Framework for the ACT	Consists of principles, processes and commitments to guide community and government natural resource related activities
Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve Management Plan 1994	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
Land Supply Strategy 2006–2011	The ACT Government's agreed metropolitan development sequence
Lower Molonglo River Corridor Management Plan 2002	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
Minister for Planning's Statement of Planning Intent	<i>Issued pursuant to sub-section 14(1) of the Planning and Land Act 2002</i> setting out the main principles that are to govern planning and land development in the ACT (the statement of planning intent)
Murrumbidgee Blueprint	policy document providing for future intergovernmental agreements
Murrumbidgee River Corridor Management Plan (1998)	addresses the management issues, objectives, management policies and procedures specific to the Corridor
Namadgi National Park Draft Management Plan	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
National Capital Plan	statutory plan implemented at Federal level under the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (Cth) for the ACT
National Heritage Trust and National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality	established in 1997 under the Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997 (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
New Focus for Nature Conservation in the ACT	a 2002 policy statement including a program to establish strategies for priority species/ecological communities
NoWaste by 2010: A Waste Management Policy For Canberra And Turning Waste Into Resources	waste management policy for sustainability
People, Place, Prosperity: A Policy for Sustainability in the ACT	broad sustainability policy committing the ACT to monitoring and reporting on progress towards sustainability
Planning for Bushfire Risk Mitigation Interim Guideline	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
Planning Framework for Natural Ecosystems—NSW Southern Tablelands and ACT	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.
Promoting the Natural Capital: A Nature Based Tourism Strategy for the Australian Capital Territory	proposes a vision and strategy for the development of nature based tourism in the ACT and provides a framework for its planning, development and marketing. It was developed by then Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning, Gary Humphries.
Reliable, Responsible, Renewable: A Discussion Paper for an ACT Energy Policy	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	each government agency is required to report under the Environment Protection Act 1997 (ACT) and the Chief Minister's Annual Report Directions on various aspects of ecologically sustainable development (ESD)
Ribbons of Life: ACT Aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy	this is an Action Plan for species that occur in ACT rivers and riparian zones and are declared threatened under the Nature Conservation Act 1980 (ACT)
Ribbons of Life: Draft aquatic Species and Riparian Zone Conservation Strategy: Action Plan No 29	takes an integrated Territory-wide approach in a regional context to the protection and management of the rivers and riparian areas in the ACT

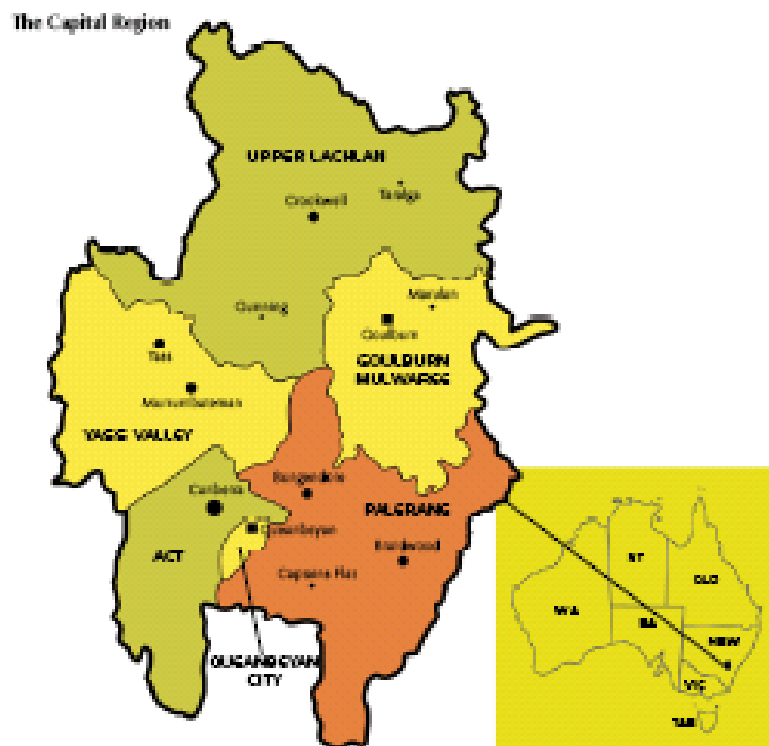
Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the ACT (2005) and Bushfire Operational Plan	fire management programs address biodiversity conservation under a zoning system for different land parcels; provide strategies for management bushfire risk
Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (Ver 2)	
Sustainable Transport Plan	aims to maintain accessibility of Canberra but achieving more sustainable transport over time
Sydney-Canberra Corridor Strategy	Policy document providing for future intergovernmental agreements.
Territory Plan	statutory document. Identifies and regulates land use and development. Protects open space, conservation of ecological resources and functions
Think Water, Act Water: Strategy for Sustainable Water Resource Management in the ACT 3 vols	provides a framework for a partnership between the ACT Government and stakeholders in managing, using and conserving the water resources of the region
Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Management Plan	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
Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines for Sustainable Development in Canberra	aims to integrate the management of the total urban water cycle into the urban development process
Water Ways: Water Sensitive Urban Design General Code	the code incorporates the principles of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) which aims to integrate the management of the total water cycle into the urban development process.
Weathering the Change: ACT Climate Change Strategy 2007–2025 and Action Plan 2007–2011	provides a strategy and actions for dealing with climate change to 2025
Woodlands for Wildlife – ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy: Action Plan 27	a conservation strategy covering endangered Yellow Box-Red Gum Grassy Woodland, other lowland woodlands and associated species
Working Together for the Environment – A Support Strategy	recognises the importance of the active participation of the ACT community in natural resource management.

APPENDIX H: ABBREVIATIONS

ADFA	Australian Defence Force Academy
ANU	Australian National University
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CERF	Commonwealth Environment Research Facility
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
COP	Conference of the Parties
CR-ACC	Capital Region Area Consultative Committee
CRDB	Capital Region Development Board
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cwlth)
HIA	ACT/Southern NSW Housing Industry Association
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environment Initiatives
ICC	Intergovernmental Coordinating Council
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (the World Conservation Union)
LAB	Local Action for Biodiversity
LMA	Land Management Agreement
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Program
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHT1	Natural Heritage Trust 1996/7–2001/02
NHT2	Natural Heritage Trust 2002/03–2007/08
NRM	natural resource management
RIS	regulatory impact statement
TaMS	Department of Territory and Municipal Services
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
World Heritage Convention	Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

APPENDIX I: Map of the Capital Region Area Consultative Committee's jurisdiction

The Capital Region ACC works with the communities of the ACT and the NSW Local Government Areas of Goulburn Mulwaree, Palerang, Queanbeyan City, Upper Lachlan and Yass Valley, as indicated in the map below:³⁶⁸



³⁶⁸ reproduced from Capital Region Area Consultative Committee, Annual Report to the Community 2005–06, < http://www.cr-acc.asn.au/uploads/files/CR_ACC_Annual%20Report_interactive.pdf >

APPENDIX J: Map of the Capital Region

The Capital Region Development Board is a joint initiative of the NSW and ACT Governments and was initiated in 1994 to facilitate sustainable economic, employment and investment development in the South East Region of NSW and the ACT. The Capital Region covers local councils and the ACT within a 60 000 kilometre area, and has a population of more than 540 000.

