

Planning and Development (Namadgi National Park) Plan of Management 2010

Disallowable instrument DI2010–192

made under the

Planning and Development Act 2007 section 330

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Legislative context

Namadgi National Park is defined as public land in the Territory Plan. Under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (Part 10.4, s. 320) the custodian for an area of public land may prepare a draft plan of management for the area if the custodian considers the existing plan of management is outdated. The 1986 plan of management for Namadgi is now outdated and a new plan has been prepared.

A plan of management is a disallowable instrument under section 330 (1) of the Act.

The Territory Plan identifies that Namadgi National Park is comprised of two public land categories: 'Wilderness area' and 'National park'. Schedule 3 of the *Planning and Development Act* sets out the management objectives for these categories of public land as:

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| Wilderness area | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To conserve the natural environment in a manner ensuring that disturbance to that environment is minimal2. To provide for the use of the area (other than by vehicles or other mechanised equipment) for recreation by limited numbers of people, so as to ensure that opportunities for solitude are provided. |
| National park | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To conserve the natural environment.2. To provide for public use of the area for recreation, education and research. |

The Act (s. 319) requires that plans of management include a description of the area to which it applies and how the management objectives for the area are to be implemented or promoted in the area.

Namadgi National Park

Namadgi National Park is the largest conservation reserve in the ACT covering approximately 46% (106 095 ha) of the Territory. The park includes the rugged mountain ranges and broad grassy valley in the western and southern parts of the ACT.

The park protects the Cotter River Catchment which is Canberra's main water supply and is also important for conserving biodiversity. Namadgi's snow gum woodlands, subalpine fens and bogs, grasslands and montane forest communities provide habitat for a diverse range of species.

Namadgi has a rich heritage of human history with remnants of homesteads, huts and fences from early pastoral settlers and there is evidence of Aboriginal use including quarry sites, ceremonial stone arrangements and rock art.

The park is popular for low key recreation including bushwalking, camping, cycling, rock climbing and abseiling. In addition, the Bimberi Wilderness provides a place of solitude for inspiration and wellbeing.

Namadgi is one of eleven national parks and reserves in the Australian Alps that are collectively known as the Australian Alps national parks. These parks provide protection for much of the alpine and subalpine environments of mainland Australia.

Preparation of the plan of management

The Planning and Development Act outlines the consultation required in preparing a plan of management. The *Namadgi National Park Plan of Management* has met these legislative requirements.

Preparation of the plan of management for Namadgi National Park commenced in 2002 with the release of a discussion paper for which 70 submissions were received. A number of workshops were held during June 2003 with the public and NSW neighbours to enable more in-depth discussion of the key issues identified in the responses to the discussion paper.

Discussions were also held throughout 2004 and 2005 with key interest groups including the Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee, the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, Canberra Regional Tour Operators Association, community environment groups and Government departments.

The *Namadgi National Park Draft Plan of Management* was released for public comment in September 2005 for a period of 12 weeks. An invitation to comment was advertised in the Canberra Times and the consultation notice was placed on the legislation register. One hundred and seventy five submissions were received. A report on the submissions was prepared and the draft plan was revised in response to these submissions.

As required under legislation, the Minister referred the revised draft plan and submissions report to the Standing Committee on Planning and Environment. The Committee conducted an inquiry into the revised plan providing 22 recommendations in their June 2008 report *Inquiry into the Namadgi National Park (Revised) Draft Plan of Management*. A Government response to the report was tabled in the Legislative

Assembly in May 2010 and the final plan of management has been revised to take account of the agreed recommendations.

Contents of the *Namadgi National Park Plan of Management*

Most chapters of the plan follow a common format providing background information, issues to be considered as part of managing the park, the objectives to be achieved and policies and actions for implementation.

Chapter 1 provides a brief history of Namadgi, explains its significance and values, sets out the primary management objectives, and outlines cooperative management arrangements with members of the Ngunnawal Aboriginal community.

Chapter 2 outlines the purpose and scope of the plan, the planning framework and statutory responsibilities.

Chapter 3 describes the management zoning system which is based on the natural and cultural heritage values of the park.

Chapter 4 deals with the protection of water quality within the park, in particular the Cotter Catchment which is a major source of water to Canberra.

Chapter 5 describes management objectives in protecting natural resources of the park including flora, fauna, geology, and landscape. The chapter includes actions for the conservation of threatened species and ecological communities and the protection of the Bimberi wilderness area.

Chapter 6 addresses management of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage within the park.

Chapter 7 outlines approaches to fire management within the park which is in line with the requirements of the *Strategic Bushfire Management Plan for the ACT*.

Chapter 8 considers visitor use including permitted recreational activities, access arrangements and facilities, public safety, commercial activities and for group and special events.

Chapter 9 looks at the interpretation of the park to visitors, education and research activities.

Chapter 10 considers management issues associated with neighbours, community groups and volunteers.

Chapter 11 addresses operational management issues such as air quality, use of chemicals, management of waste and management of contaminated sites.