

Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent) Notice 2015

Notifiable Instrument NI2015–562

made under the

Heritage Act 2004, s34 Notice of decision about provisional registration

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent) Notice 2015*.

2 Registration details of the place

On 24 September 2015 the ACT Heritage Council decided to provisionally register the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent to the ACT Heritage Register. Registration details of the place are at [Attachment A](#): Provisional Register entry for the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent.

3 Reason for decision

The ACT Heritage Council decided that the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria at s 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The provisional register entry is at [Attachment A](#).

4 Date of provisional registration

24 September 2015

5 Indication of Council's intention

The Council intends to decide whether to register the place under Division 6.2 within 5 months of provisional registration.

6 Public consultation period

The Council invites public comment, within 4 weeks after the day the notice is notified, on the provisional registration of the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent to:

The Secretary
ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: heritage@act.gov.au

Fiona Moore
A/g Secretary (as delegate for)
ACT Heritage Council
24 September 2015



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
HERITAGE REGISTER
(Provisional Registration)**

For the purposes of s. 32(1)(b) of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a provisional entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station

Block 120, Tennent

DATE OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

24 September 2015 Notifiable Instrument: 2015–562

PERIOD OF EFFECT OF PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Start Date 24 September 2015 End Date 23 February 2016

Extended Period (if applicable) Start Date _____ End Date _____

Copies of the Register Entry are available for inspection at ACT Heritage. For further information please contact:

The Secretary
ACT Heritage Council
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Telephone 13 22 81

This statement refers to the location of Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent as required in s. 12 (b) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

LOCATION OF THE PLACE

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Block 120 Tennent. The Station is located at the termination of Apollo Road, Namadgi National Park. The boundary featured in Image 1 follows existing cadastra for Block 120, Tennent.

This section refers to the description of Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, as required in s.12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, consisting of the following attributes:

- Operations area, consisting of remnant concrete platform;
- Power building, consisting of remnant concrete platform;
- Concrete foundations for 26 metre dish and transmitter building;
- Concrete footprint of former fuel tanks;
- Landscape setting, consisting of exotic trees:
 - A row of Cedrus (*Cedrus deodara* and *C.atlantica*);
 - Liquidambers (*Liquidamber styraciflua*);
 - Silver birches (*Betula pendula*);
 - Golden Cypress (*Cupressus macroparpa 'Brunniana Aurea'*);
 - Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*);
 - tortured willow (*Salix matsudana 'Tortuosa'*); and
 - Small junipers (*juniperis communis*).
- Internal circulation roads;
- Stone retaining walls indicating landscape setting; and
- Cleared setting within natural bushland.

This statement refers to the heritage significance of the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, as required in s.12(d) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station represents an important aspect of the ACT's cultural history, demonstrating its contribution to manned space exploration. The era of mid twentieth century space exploration saw the ACT participate in advances in burgeoning and significant fields in international science and technology. This is evidenced by Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station's direct involvement with the transmission of sound and

television pictures of the first landing and walk by US astronauts on the surface of the moon in July 1969 [*criteria (a)*].

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station was one of three highly specialised facilities of its type in the world, instrumental in receiving and transmitting data for NASA's Manned Space Flight Network (MSFN) programs. Its remnant footprint demonstrates the principal characteristics of the MSFN stations, and it bears a special association with prominent Canberra engineer Thomas Reid, and the famed National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or NASA, which enhanced the international scientific profile of the ACT [*criteria (d) (h)*].

CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE

The guiding conservation objective is that Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance.

The ACT Heritage Council may adopt heritage guidelines applicable to the place under s25 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

For further information on guidelines applicable to the place, or for advice on proposed works or development, please contact ACT Heritage on 13 22 81.

REASON FOR PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, has been assessed against the heritage significance criteria and been found to have heritage significance when assessed against criteria (a), (d), and (h) under s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the nomination for Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- information provided by a site inspection on 19 August 2015 by ACT Heritage; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station*, September 2015, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity.

Pursuant to s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

(a) importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, meets this criterion.

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station is important in the context of the ACT's involvement in twentieth century manned space exploration. It is most famous for receiving and broadcasting footage of the Apollo 11 Moon landing, the first images of man's footsteps on the Moon.

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station transmitted and tracked data as part of Manned Space Flight Network (MSFN) during the Apollo missions, which later saw the first landings on the Moon, but initially achieved the first manned lunar flights. It also supported the SpaceLab program, which answered important research questions on the time-length capabilities of humans in space.

(b) has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, does not meet this criterion.

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station was one of only three international space tracking stations built in the ACT, and the only one of these that belonged to MSFN, until it was decommissioned in the 1980s. However, because it has been dismantled and disused, there is insufficient remaining physical fabric at the place to demonstrate its rarity in order to meet thresholds for inclusion under this criterion.

(c) potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history;

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, does not meet this criterion.

While any extant, un-investigated archaeological evidence may further demonstrate the configuration, operation, and closure of the facility, it is unlikely to provide substantial new information to the history of space exploration in the ACT, as sufficient evidence pertaining to this theme exists in the documentary record.

(d) importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects;

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, meets this criterion.

The place is important in demonstrating the layout and relationships between the structures of an MSFN tracking station. While operational, the facility was one of only three MSFN stations and was designed for specialised, sensitive tracking and receiving, unlike tracking stations in other networks which encompassed broad and flexible purpose. Its specialised function is demonstrated in the remnant platform of the characteristic 26m USB antenna and main operations building where the Apollo simulator was located.

The station had the capacity to handle simultaneous communications with astronauts on the Moon and with an astronaut in orbit around the moon, together with command, data reception and range and velocity measurement for two spacecraft. While the equipment demonstrating these elements had been removed by 1983, the footprints of the antenna and associated buildings remain at the site, demonstrating the scale of the facility and the relationships between its various technical components.

(e) importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT;

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, does not meet this criterion.

The place is situated in a picturesque visual setting and incorporates an attractive cultural landscape at the pinnacle of Apollo Road in Namadgi National Park. However, it does not possess

landmark qualities, artistic excellence, or visual prominence demonstrated to be valued by the wider ACT community or a cultural group. While the place is valued by professional and special interest groups, these are not connected through the same way of living, which has been transmitted from one generation to another, and do not share a cultural or ethnic background, and therefore do not fall within the definition of a cultural group as defined by the Council in its *Heritage Assessment Policy 2014*.

(f) importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period;

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, does not meet this criterion.

While the place was an important facility in the MSFN network, capable of sensitive data reception and transmission, its technical significance is no longer evident in the physical fabric of the place and as such it does not meet thresholds for inclusion under this criterion.

(g) has a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, does not meet this criterion.

The place is important to interest and professional groups, and previous employees of the facility. However the association does not extend to the ACT community or a cultural group, is not easily recognisable to the broader ACT community, and is not an association beyond the ordinary. These groups are not connected through the same way of living, which has been transmitted from one generation to another, and they do not share a cultural or ethnic background, and therefore do not constitute a cultural group defined by the Council in its *Heritage Assessment Policy 2014*.

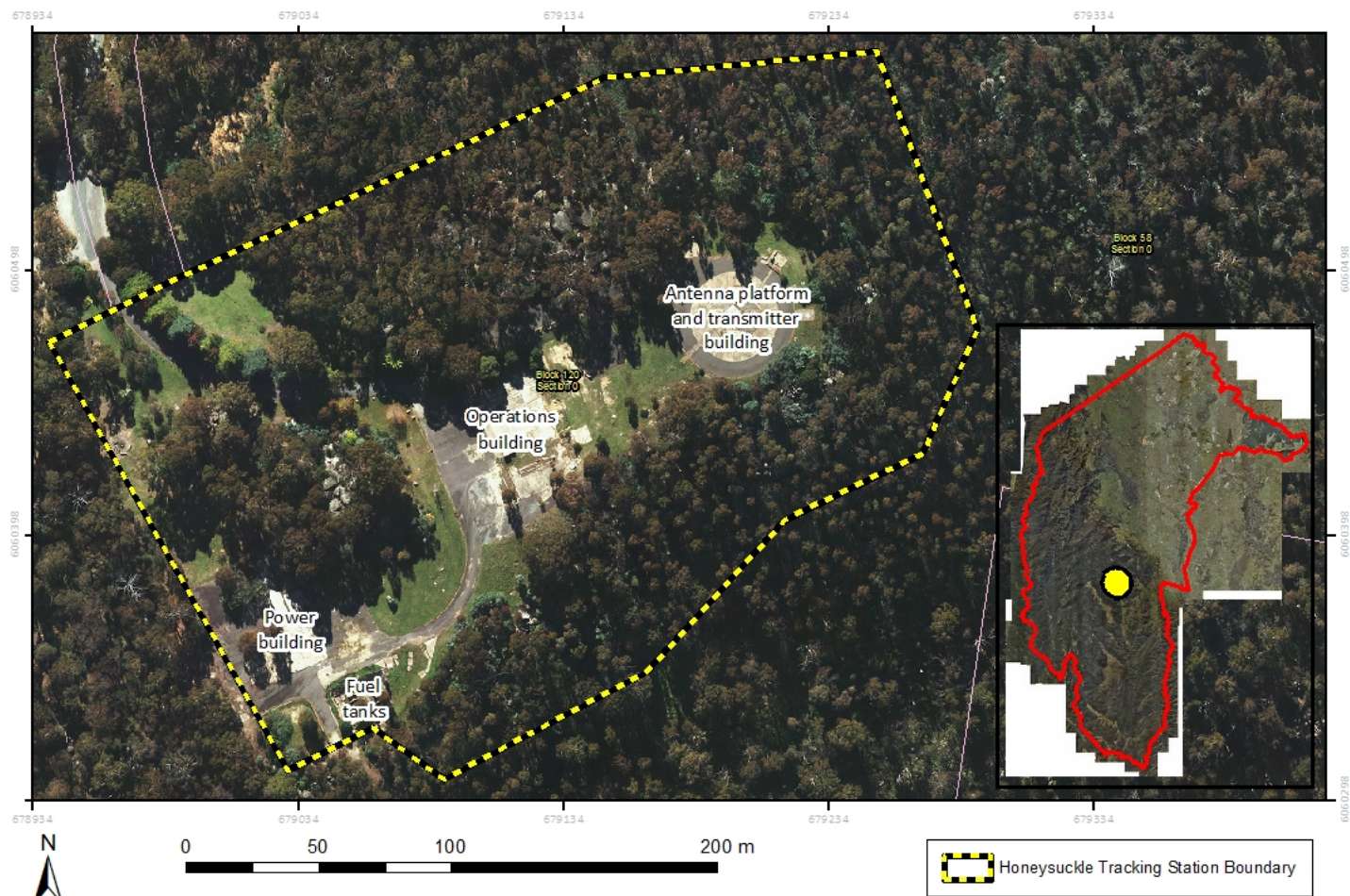
(h) has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT.

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, Tennent, meets this criterion.

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station has a special association with NASA, the United States Government body which has been prominent international space exploration since the mid twentieth century. NASA has made an important contribution to the history of the ACT in signing an agreement with the Australian Government that established stations to manage information for international space tracking and manned space flight programs. Establishment of the stations raised the scientific profile of the ACT on an international level, and the work of Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station was instrumental in the success of renowned space exploration programs such as Apollo and SpaceLab. NASA's connection with the scientific profile of the ACT is enduring, as evidenced by the ongoing operation of the Tidbinbilla Tracking Station for the Deep Space Network.

Further, the place bears an association with prominent engineer Thomas Reid, who successively directed all three space tracking stations at Orroral Valley, Honeysuckle Creek, and Tidbinbilla, and whose notable management style directly contributed to the successful running of each station and its contribution to the scientific history of the ACT.

SITE PLAN



Coordinate System: MGA94 Zone 55
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: GDA 94

Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station (Block 120 Tennent)

Image 1 Site Boundary