

**CANBERRA  
NATURE  
PARK**

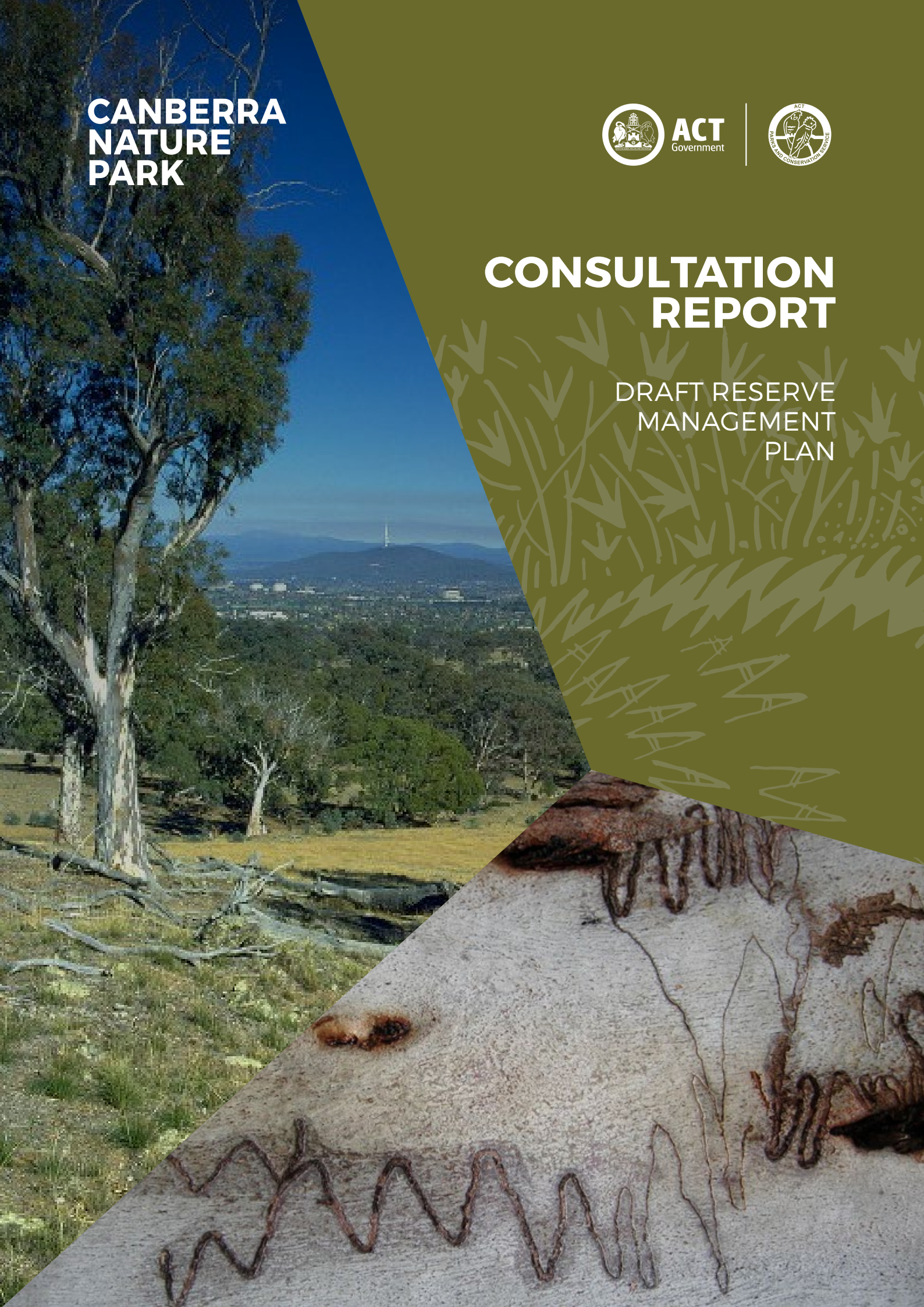


**ACT**  
Government



# **CONSULTATION REPORT**

DRAFT RESERVE  
MANAGEMENT  
PLAN



### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. We recognise the special relationship and connection that they have with this Country. Ngunnawal people are a thriving community whose life and culture are intrinsically connected to this land in a way that is core to their physical and spiritual wellbeing their cultural practices, and continuation of their law and lore.

### **© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2020**

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the [Copyright Act 1968](#), no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from:

Director-General, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate,  
ACT Government, GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601.

**Telephone:** 02 6207 1923

**Website:** [www.environment.act.gov.au](http://www.environment.act.gov.au)

### **Produced by the**

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

### **Accessibility**

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues as accessible as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, such as large print, please phone Access Canberra on 13 22 81 or email the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate at [EPSDDComms@act.gov.au](mailto:EPSDDComms@act.gov.au).

If English is not your first language and you require a translating and interpreting service, please phone 13 14 50.

If you are deaf, or have a speech or hearing impairment, and need the teletypewriter service, please phone 13 36 77 and ask for Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

For speak and listen users, please phone 1300 555 727  
and ask for Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

For more information on these services visit <http://www.relayservice.com.au>

Front cover photos: View from Red Hill Nature Reserve towards Woden TownCentre (Mark Jekabsons); Detail of a scribbly gum at Black Mountain



# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	5
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....	6
SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES THAT RESPOND TO CONSULTATION .....	7
BROAD SUPPORT .....	8
CHAPTER 1 — INTRODUCTION .....	9
CHAPTER 2 — PLANTS AND ANIMALS .....	12
CHAPTER 3 — LAND AND WATER .....	16
CHAPTERS 4 AND 5 — ABORIGINAL CONNECTION TO COUNTRY AND HISTORIC HERITAGE .....	17
CHAPTER 6 — ZONING AND ACCESS .....	18
CHAPTER 7 — NATURE-BASED EXPERIENCES .....	19
CHAPTER 8 — COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT .....	24
CHAPTER 9 — RESEARCH AND MONITORING .....	27
GENERAL COMMENTS .....	28
APPENDIX 1 .....	30





THE WOOLSHED AT MULLIGANS FLAT (MARK JEKABSON)





# INTRODUCTION

This consultation report captures and responds to all comments, concerns and ideas that were raised during consultation on the Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan (the Plan).

Canberra Nature Park is located on the lands of the Ngunnawal people. It comprises 39 reserves that protect important forest and critically endangered woodland and grassland ecosystems, and provide habitat for our native wildlife, including many threatened plant and animal species. Many significant Aboriginal and historical heritage sites are located within Canberra Nature Park.

Canberra Nature Park gives our city its distinctive character as the nation's 'city in the landscape' and contributes significantly to the liveability of our city. The reserves provide exceptional opportunities for the nature-based experiences and active lifestyles that so many Canberrans value, contributing significantly to the health and wellbeing of the community.

The park provides the Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians with important opportunities to connect with Country and, in partnership with the Parks and Conservation Service, manage Country for the benefit of future generations.

The Plan outlines the park's values, the goals for reserve management and actions to achieve these goals over the next 10 years. It balances the interests of all visitors to the park while prioritising the conservation of the natural environment.



MT TAYLOR PARKCARE VOLUNTEERS

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The custodian of the land, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), was keen to hear the community's views on the draft Plan and incorporate them into the revised draft Plan where relevant and possible.

During the development of the draft Plan, key stakeholders including government agencies, community organisations and individuals were consulted. See **Appendix 1** for a summary of this consultation.

Wider community consultation on the draft Plan was held for 12 weeks, from 23 September to 16 December 2019. The engagement was hosted on the ACT Government's community engagement portal, [YourSay.act.gov.au](https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au). The following tools were used to reach a wide demographic of Canberrans:

- » Media release by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mick Gentleman
- » Social media on the PCS and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate Facebook accounts
- » Posters at the reserves' entry points
- » Posters and copies of the plan at ACT libraries
- » Posters and copies of the Plan at ACT Government shopfronts
- » Emails to stakeholder groups

The [YourSay webpage](https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au) included links to the draft Plan, an online survey, dates for community meetings and

instructions for making submissions. The community could comment on the management of the wider Canberra Nature Park and/or on individual reserves.

Staff from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) held conversations with community members and stakeholders at five community information sessions in different geographical areas of Canberra and made presentations to some key stakeholder groups.

Following consultation, a [Listening Report](#) was published on the YourSay website to let the community know what we heard during the consultation.

Ninety-nine written submissions were received. Each submission was considered in revising the draft Plan. Several comments were clarified through follow-up conversations with individuals and groups. A summary of key changes is in the section below. The table below includes the public comments and Government response to the matters raised, by chapter. Comments that relate to the whole Plan are addressed under 'General Comments'. Comments of an editorial nature have not been summarised.



# SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES THAT RESPOND TO CONSULTATION

Many of the comments that were of an editorial nature or required only minor changes to the text to clarify a particular issue have been incorporated into the revised draft Plan.

Comments about operational issues that did not seek changes to the Plan were referred to PCS for consideration in operations planning and implementation.

Many comments supported the management approaches to various issues in the Plan.

Given the considerable support for the Plan to emphasise the primacy of conservation over recreational activities, the goals were re-ordered and other sections revised to clarify that the primary management objective for Canberra Nature Park is conservation of the natural environment, consistent with the objectives in the Planning and Development Act.

Involvement of the Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians in the management of Canberra Nature Park received considerable support. The Vision for Canberra Nature Park has been revised to read:

**Canberra Nature Park's natural and cultural heritage is conserved forever in partnership with Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians, enriching the lives of a vibrant and healthy community.**

A section has been added about the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee, which was formed after the draft Plan was released. Some sections have been revised in consultation with the committee, including access to Country for cultural practices, the Murumbung Yurung Murra Network and the ACT Aboriginal Fire Management Framework.

Comments about recreational activities primarily focused on the most popular activities of dog walking, horse riding, climbing and mountain bike riding. Many of these comments related to the behaviour of people undertaking these activities and a lack of compliance with existing restrictions. These comments have been referred to PCS for appropriate action.

Most comments on dog walking suggested further restrictions. The Plan still allows dogs in most reserves and requires them to be on leash, and an additional restriction has been included that restricts dogs to tracks and trails.

Comments on mountain bike riding were largely concerned about riders not keeping to tracks and trails and causing damage to reserve values. This is a compliance issue and the Plan emphasises the importance of providing information to the public about appropriate behaviour. A review of tracks and trails is proposed, which will identify informal tracks that are causing damage and may need to be closed.



BUTTON WRINKLEWORT (PCS LIBRARY)

Most comments about horse riding suggested removal of Appendix 5, which sets out principles and policies for horse riding. This Appendix was prepared in 1999 and was intended to be the basis for further discussions with the equestrians. The Appendix indicated that endurance riding was prohibited in Canberra Nature Park. As it is not the intention of PCS to prohibit endurance riding, the Appendix has been deleted from the revised draft Plan.

Climbers made the comment that climbing should not be prohibited. After careful consideration of the potential impacts of climbing, the Plan was revised

to allow climbing and bouldering in all reserves except two locations with sensitive environmental values. Allowing climbing is consistent with the Namadgi and Molonglo River management plans.

Numerous comments were made about the need for additional funding and resources, maintenance of reserves and the deteriorating condition of tracks, trails and signage. An audit of tracks and trails is identified as an action and a signage replacement program is in progress, as budgets permit. Additional funding and resourcing are subject the ACT budget cycle and government priorities.

## BROAD SUPPORT

Submissions that supported the Plan outlined support for:

- » the focus on nature conservation as the primary goal for park management, with recreation activities supported where they align with this
- » the goals to:
  - manage ecosystems;
  - ensure reserves contribute to the liveability and character of Canberra; and
  - provide a connection between residents and nature
- » scientific evidence to underpin management actions
- » the use of up-to-date reference material
- » a sensible approach to managing nature reserves for the protection, conservation and enhancement of their natural assets and values
- » the intent of the Plan and many of the guiding principles and actions
- » engagement with volunteers
- » enhancing connecting corridors
- » the Plan's content, high standard and comprehensiveness
- » the detail provided about each reserve in Part 2 and other improvements on the 1999 Plan.







MULLIGANS FLAT WOODLAND SANCTUARY (MARK JEKABSONS)

# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Canberra Nature Park and future reserves (14 comments in 8 submissions)	<i>Why are Molonglo River Reserve and Jerrabomberra East not included in Canberra Nature Park and the plan?</i>	No change required. Molonglo River Reserve, which includes Kama Nature Reserve, is part of Molonglo River Reserve, which has a separate reserve management plan. Jerrabomberra East will be incorporated into Canberra Nature Park when it is declared a reserve under the Territory Plan.
	<i>Proposed new reserves (Franklin Nature Reserve) should be incorporated into the Plan.</i>	The revised draft Plan incorporates Franklin Grasslands Nature Reserve as part of Canberra Nature Park. Franklin Grasslands was declared a reserve under the Territory Plan in 2020.
	<i>Several locations (e.g. Mt Rogers) and areas managed by PCS abutting the park should be added to Canberra Nature Park.</i>	<p>Additional information has been added to the Plan to explain the mechanisms by which additional areas could be added to Canberra Nature Park.</p> <p>Mt Rogers is urban open space, managed by TCCS. PCS will review the values of Mt Rogers to determine whether the area is a priority for inclusion in Canberra Nature Park.</p> <p>PCS is reviewing areas adjacent to reserves that are managed by PCS for potential incorporation into Canberra Nature Park. Technical amendments or variations to the Territory Plan may be required to incorporate some areas.</p>

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Management goals and key outcomes (5 comments in 5 submissions)	<i>It is essential the plan makes clear that conservation is prioritised over all other objectives.</i>	Various sections in the plan have been revised to clarify that conservation is prioritised over other objectives, including a reordering of the management goals and key outcomes. As outlined in the Plan, the primary objective for the management of Canberra Nature Park is to conserve the natural environment.
	<i>The Plan's recognition of the importance of Traditional Custodians, their culture and land management practices is supported.</i>	Additional recognition has been given to the importance of involving Nggunawal Traditional Custodians in the management of Canberra Nature Park; this important issue has been included in the Plan's vision. A new section has been added about the Dhawura Nggunawal Caring for Country Committee and several other sections have been revised in consultation with the Committee.
	<i>Recreation, health and tourism activities should be sympathetic to the social and cultural values of the Park, and not put at risk the ecological values.</i>	The primacy of nature conservation over other activities has been further emphasised in several sections, including a change in the order of goals. Balancing recreational use with the conservation of reserve values is an ongoing challenge for PCS. Permitted recreational activities may be reviewed if found to have a significant impact on reserve values. Any proposed new activities in reserves will be rigorously assessed and only permitted where there will be no adverse impacts on the values of reserves.
Management framework (11 comments in 9 submissions)	<i>The Plan should clearly explain the relationship between various strategies and management of the reserves.</i>	Additional information has been added to clarify the relationship between conservation strategies and reserve management. Figure 1.2, which shows the key elements that guide management of Canberra Nature Park, refers to the role of grassland, woodland, aquatic and riparian, pest and weeds strategies in setting management goals and shows the linkages from strategies down through the management plan to implementation and operations plans and on ground works. The relationship between ACT conservation strategies and reserve management is discussed in several places and additional information has been provided in some areas. Implementation and operations plans, when developed, will further clarify this relationship.
	<i>Operational plans should be developed for all individual reserves.</i>	Additional information has been added to the Plan, including a new action to 'develop five yearly implementation plans and, in consultation with stakeholders, annual operations plans'. PCS will continue to develop annual operations plans for Canberra Nature Park in consultation with ParkCare groups and other key stakeholders. However, for management purposes, operations plans may be developed for groups of reserves, rather than individual reserves.



ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Legislation (4 comments in 3 submissions)	<i>Linkages between the legislative and policy framework and individual reserve Plans should be more explicit.</i>	Comments noted. Section 1.8 of the Plan discusses key legislation for Canberra Nature Park and Appendix 2 describes other relevant legislation, strategies and action plans relevant to the Plan. This level of detail will be included in implementation and operations plans which will further clarify these linkages.
	<i>Activities Declarations should be made for reserves that currently do not have one.</i>	Minor changes have been made to the text to clarify the purpose of Activities Declarations. The requirement for Activities Declarations for all reserves is recognised and the Conservator of Flora and Fauna will continue to develop Activities Declarations for all Canberra Nature Park reserves.
Development and Land Planning (14 comments in 11 submissions)	<i>The Plan should address the impacts of neighbouring development on reserves.</i>	Changes have been made to Section 8.3 Neighbours to emphasise the importance of working collaboratively with neighbours to reduce impacts on reserve values. The Plan notes how the urban interface and associated edge effects impact biodiversity, and how urbanisation has modified vegetation and reduced connectivity across the landscape. There is an action in the Plan that PCS will work with other agencies and neighbours to improve connectivity between reserves and minimise impacts of development on reserve values.
	<i>New urban areas should be designed in a way that reduces impacts on neighbouring reserves. For example, ensuring adequate areas for recreation [to reduce pressure on reserves] and ensuring appropriate buffer zones.</i>	Comments noted. These broader urban planning issues are outside the scope of this Plan. The ACT Planning Strategy sets out broad objectives for the future planning of the ACT. The ACT Government's urban development policy is outlined in the Territory Plan, which guides planning and development in the ACT.  New development areas in the ACT are required to include inner asset fire protection zones and urban edge roads within the urban boundary to reduce impacts on reserves.
	<i>Management agreements should be required with all utility providers operating in Canberra Nature Park reserves.</i>	An action (Action 85) has been added to the revised Plan to establish management agreements under the Nature Conservation Act with all major utility providers operating in Canberra Nature Park.

# CHAPTER 2 – PLANTS AND ANIMALS

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Significant species/ecosystem management (11 comments in 8 submissions)	<i>While the Plan lays out a comprehensive list of actions to be undertaken in the next 10 years, it is unclear what success will look like. Benchmarks and targets should be provided for threatened flora and fauna, and monitoring should be carried out periodically.</i>	<p>Comments noted. Benchmarks and targets for flora and fauna are in associated documents and will be included in implementation planning. Monitoring is an integral part of evaluating the effectiveness of management actions in achieving nature conservation objectives.</p> <p>Threatened flora and fauna have action plans that guide management for each species. Action plans can be found on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) website at: <a href="https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation_and_ecological_communities">https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation_and_ecological_communities</a></p> <p>The Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program (CEMP) is an overarching ecosystem condition monitoring framework for the ACT conservation estate. The CEMP aims to create a coordinated, systematic, and robust biodiversity monitoring program that will detect changes in ecosystem condition within reserves, evaluate the effectiveness of management actions in achieving conservation outcomes, and provide evidence to support land management decisions. A key component of the program is to develop target conditions and monitoring plans for the ecosystem units within the ACT reserve system. Further information can be found at: <a href="https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1059241/Conservation-effectiveness-monitoring-program.pdf">https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1059241/Conservation-effectiveness-monitoring-program.pdf</a></p>
	<i>Actions should be identified to protect specific species in some individual reserves.</i>	<p>Minor revisions have been made to the Plan to include additional actions for the conservation of specific species and communities in some individual reserve summaries in Part 2 of the Plan.</p> <p>Management of Canberra Nature Park incorporates the requirements of action plans for threatened species into reserve management. These requirements will be incorporated into implementation and operations Plans. Action plans can be found on the EPSDD website at: <a href="https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation_and_ecological_communities">https://www.environment.act.gov.au/cpr/conservation_and_ecological_communities</a></p>





BOOBOOK CHICKS BLACK MOUNTAIN (ANDREW TATTNELL)

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
<b>Native wildlife management</b> (6 comments in 6 submissions)	<i>The Plan should discuss the different issues for wildlife management within the predator-proof fence at Mulligans Flat.</i>	Additional information has been added to the Plan to acknowledge the special circumstances applying in the Mulligans Flat Sanctuary and that a different approach to wildlife management and other activities may be required. PCS, the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust and their research partners are currently developing a strategy for the Sanctuary. The EPSDD Environment Division is also preparing a Conservation Action Plan for the Mulligans Flat/Goorooyarroo Sanctuary.
	<i>Water should be provided for wildlife in some reserves.</i>	Comments noted. There are many dams across Canberra Nature Park that wildlife can access for water. There is insufficient evidence that the provision of water will have a broad ecological benefit across Canberra Nature Park and there are no plans to increase the number of water points for wildlife.
<b>Connectivity</b> (8 comments in 6 submissions)	<i>Working outside of Canberra Nature Park boundaries to increase connectivity is supported.</i>  <i>Working with urban tree planters is identified as an ideal opportunity to improve connectivity between reserves.</i>	<p>The Plan has been revised to include reference to the Living Infrastructure Plan and draft Urban Forest Strategy and an action added to ‘ensure consideration of connectivity and linkages in the implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy’.</p> <p>While it is beyond the scope of the Plan to undertake work outside the reserve boundaries, the Plan notes that PCS will continue to liaise with other agencies and land managers to help improve connectivity between reserves, through urban areas, and across the broader landscape. The importance of connectivity is recognised in the Plan in more than 140 references.</p> <p>In the individual reserve profiles in Part 2 of the Plan, actions relating to connectivity have been added to the reserves that are particularly important for this issue.</p>

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Fire management (7 comments in 7 submissions)	<i>Fire management should be informed by the latest science to support ecological outcomes.</i>	<p>Minor revisions have been made to emphasise that ecological guidelines for fire fuel management activities are evidence-based.</p> <p>Fire management is carried out in accordance with the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP), including ecological fire management guidelines. One of the key long-term goals of the Canberra Nature Park Plan is to ensure scientific evidence underpins management decisions.</p> <p>The Plan states that fire fuel management activities are subject to evidence-based ecological guidelines that aim to protect rare, threatened and fire-sensitive species. Research into the relationship between fire and plant and animal species is ongoing and will inform an adaptive management approach.</p>
	<i>Fire management is critical to protect human life and assets.</i>	Comments noted. PCS recognises that fire management is important to protect human life and assets; this needs to be balanced with the conservation of nature within the reserves. Fire management is carried out in accordance with the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) and the goal of much prescribed burning is to protect Canberra suburbs from the risk of uncontrolled fire.
	<i>Fire management should support ecological outcomes.</i>	<p>Comment noted. The use of fire in Canberra Nature Park is a valuable management tool to conserve the biodiversity values of different ecosystems and species. Controlled burning can help conserve biodiversity by promoting a mosaic of habitats, and by considering ecological thresholds and other evidence-based guidelines that aim to protect species. Ecological guidelines for fire fuel management are developed to support ecological outcomes.</p> <p>High conservation values of reserves are considered in the implementation of the SBMP.</p>
	<i>Fuel reduction activities should be undertaken at several specific locations.</i>	Comment noted. Fuel management activities in specific locations are incorporated into annual Bushfire Operational Plans (BOPs), required under the Emergencies Act. A range of issues are considered in the development and implementation of these BOPs. This includes, but is not limited to, the protection of human life and other assets, fire history and ecological fire thresholds.



ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Pest animal/ invasive Plant management (15 comments in 10 submissions)	<i>There is a need for ongoing investment in invasive plant and pest animal control.</i>	<p>Comments noted. Ongoing investment in invasive plant and pest animal control is subject to the ACT Government budget cycle and government priorities.</p> <p>The Plan recognises that invasive plants and pest animals cause environmental, social and economic damage to Canberra Nature Park reserves. Key objectives in the Plan are to exclude, eradicate or control invasive species to minimise their adverse impacts on conservation values. Invasive plant and pest animal control are guided by relevant strategies.</p>
	<i>Cats are a significant threat to wildlife; the whole of ACT should be a cat containment area.</i>	<p>Comments noted. This is a broader issue. The Plan outlines the significant threat posed by roaming domestic cats. However, there are currently no practical options for broad-scale stray/feral cat control in Canberra Nature Park other than cat containment in adjacent suburbs. More detail on the issue of roaming cats and the ACT Government's policy response, is outlined in the <a href="#">Draft ACT Cat Plan (2019-2029)</a>.</p>
Climate change (6 comments in 6 submissions)	<i>Action is needed now to increase the resilience of our species and ecological communities to future impacts of climate change. Suggested actions include restoration work, suitable buffers against ecological threats, appropriate fire management, maintaining and restoring diversity in ecological communities and maintaining large, well-connected and genetically diverse populations.</i>	<p>Comments noted. Section 2.5.8 of the Plan discusses the impacts of climate change. The Plan includes several approaches and actions to enhance the resilience of species and communities to the impacts of climate change. Prioritisation is given to restoration activities that increase connectivity, condition and resilience of sites across Canberra Nature Park.</p> <p>Promoting resilience through maintaining and restoring native plant diversity, controlling non-climate change stressors (e.g. invasive species), and managing and protecting climate refugia are also identified as approaches to mitigate the impacts of climate change. The <a href="#">ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–2025</a> and other relevant documents that discuss climate change are referred to in the Plan.</p>
	<i>Progressive management and practical planning for the future is required.</i>	<p>Comments noted. EPSDD is doing considerable work on managing ecosystems in the face of predicted climate change. Understanding climate change projections for the ACT, their impacts for species and ecosystems, and how management can respond to these, is highlighted as a key theme in the EPSDD Environment Division Science Plan, currently in the late stages of development. This research is critical to achieving Action 32 of the Plan, to develop management responses for those species and communities most at risk to the impacts of climate change.</p>



MOLONGLO GORGE (BILL PHILLIPS)

## CHAPTER 3 – LAND AND WATER

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Geology (7 comments in 2 submissions)	<i>There should be more information on the geology of Canberra Nature Park and why geological features are valued.</i>	<p>The Plan has been revised to include additional information on the geology of Canberra Nature Park and the importance of protecting sites of geological significance.</p> <p>A map of soil landscapes of Canberra Nature Park has been included.</p>



# CHAPTERS 4 AND 5 – ABORIGINAL CONNECTION TO COUNTRY AND HISTORIC HERITAGE

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Aboriginal Heritage/ Knowledge (14 comments in 7 submissions)	<i>Aboriginal connection to Country and cooperative management with Traditional Custodians is strongly supported.</i>	The vision for Canberra Nature Park has been changed to include the involvement of Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians in the management of Canberra Nature Park. A new section has been added about the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee. Several other sections have been revised in consultation with the committee.
	<i>Traditional knowledge and cultural practices should be promoted and inform reserve management.</i>	EPSDD will continue to work with the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee and Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians to support Ngunnawal engagement in caring for Country and to progress co-management of reserved lands.  An objective of the Plan is to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into reserve management to improve environmental and cultural outcomes.
	<i>There should be increased engagement with Aboriginal people and greater Ngunnawal involvement in managing Canberra Nature Park.</i>	Comment noted. See above.
	<i>A cultural survey should be undertaken to identify and protect additional Aboriginal heritage sites.</i>	Action 42 of the Plan is to undertake an assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage across Canberra Nature Park in partnership with Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians, Representative Aboriginal Organisations and the ACT Heritage Council.
Historic Heritage (2 comments in 1 submission)	<i>In addition to the focus on natural values, the Plan could also emphasise care for all heritage places, not just those on the Heritage Register.</i>	Comments noted. The Plan provides information, objectives and actions to work with relevant stakeholders to protect all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage sites (see Chapters 4 and 5). The Plan also includes actions to protect, manage and interpret historic heritage and develop Conservation Management Plans for significant historic heritage places.



# CHAPTER 6 – ZONING AND ACCESS

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Management zones (20 comments in 8 submissions)	<i>The proposed management zoning is supported and would benefit from clarification of which recreational activities are appropriate for each of the zones.</i>	Comments noted. The primary purpose of zoning in the Plan is to ensure impacts from infrastructure development or other disturbances are directed outside of reserves or into the less sensitive areas of Canberra Nature Park. Zoning will also inform approval decisions for group recreational events. Aligning zoning with short-term or individual recreational activities, such as dog walking, was tested during development of the draft Plan but could not be consistently applied across the zoning of all Canberra Nature Park reserves.
	<i>The proposed management zoning should be reviewed to address implications for fire management.</i>	Comments noted. Management zoning in the Plan is based on values, with conservation of natural values a key consideration in line with the primary management objective for the reserves. Section 2.5.3 of the Plan discusses the role of the Emergencies Act, SBMP, BOPs and the Regional Fire Management Plan, as well as the Inner and Outer Asset Protection Zones, in undertaking fire fuel management in Canberra Nature Park reserves.



CYCLING ON MANAGEMENT TRAIL MULLIGANS FLAT (PCS LIBRARY)

# CHAPTER 7 – NATURE-BASED EXPERIENCES

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Recreation — Tourism strategy (6 comments in 6 submissions)	<i>There is a need for an ACT wide recreation and tourism strategy rather than an expansion of activities in Canberra Nature Park.</i>	Comments noted. The Plan refers to the development of a Visitor Experience Strategy that will outline policy and priorities for recreational use of all ACT parks and reserves, including future recreational and commercial opportunities.
	<i>The focus for Canberra Nature Park should be on conservation rather than tourism and events.</i>	Various sections in the Plan have been strengthened to clarify that conservation is prioritised over other objectives, including a reordering of the management goals and key outcomes. Throughout the Plan it is recognised that the primary objective for management of Canberran Nature Park is conservation of the natural environment.
Recreation — Maintenance and upgrades, tracks and trails (16 comments in 7 submissions)	<i>The network of tracks and trails should be upgraded, maintenance improved, and a tracks and trails classification applied.</i>	The Plan includes an action to review all tracks and trails and prepare a track management plan for Canberra Nature Park. Track and trail issues, upgrades and the balance of multi-use and other tracks will be considered in this review, as well as classification of tracks and trails in accordance with Australian standards.  Track and trail maintenance issues raised at specific locations have been forwarded to the PCS Director Urban Reserves for consideration in the operational works program. Any works will be subject to competing priorities and the availability of resources.
	<i>Closing of unauthorised trails is supported.</i>	Comments noted. The Plan proposes a review of tracks and trails, and the preparation of a track management plan will consider the closure of informal tracks.
Recreation — Maintenance and upgrades, signage and notice boards (2 comments in 2 submissions)	<i>Damaged signs or notice boards should be promptly repaired or replaced.</i>	Comments that identified damaged signs and notice boards at specific locations have been forwarded to the PCS Director Urban Reserves for consideration in the operational works program. Any works will be subject to competing priorities and the availability of resources.





SIGNAGE - MT AINSLIE (MARK JEKABSONS)

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Community Education — Signage (9 comments in 8 submissions)	<i>Better and more consistent information is required on reserve signage, particularly in relation to dog walking rules, track information and reserve values.</i>	The Plan notes that PCS will roll out additional signage throughout Canberra Nature Park in 2020–2021 and will continue to inform reserve users of their responsibilities through other means, including website information, direct contact and social media.
Community education/ information (14 comments in 12 submissions)	<i>More information should be made available about what activities are permitted and in which locations.</i>	Comments noted. The Plan outlines allowable recreation activities in each reserve (Table 7.1 and Part 2 individual reserve profiles). More detailed reserve profiles, including maps of tracks and trails and information on recreational activities, will be available on the EPSDD website.
	<i>Information on tracks and trails should be improved, both within reserves (signs), and in online content (better maps).</i>	PCS will roll out additional signage throughout Canberra Nature Park in 2020-2021.  Maps of tracks and trails will be included in full reserve profiles on the EPSDD website.
	<i>Best practice guidelines should be available for all recreational activities.</i>	The Plan has been revised to include new best practice guidelines for bouldering, orienteering and rogaining, developed in consultation with recreational groups. Some amendments have been made to other best practice guidelines, such as for geocaching.  Best practice guidelines are available for the most popular recreational activities in Canberra Nature Park. These include horse riding, dog walking, cycling and mountain biking, geocaching, bouldering, orienteering and rogaining. Consideration will be given to providing this information on the EPSDD website.



ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Recreation — Unauthorised (5 comments in 5 submissions)	<i>Unauthorised activities are causing degradation of reserves, e.g. the creation of informal tracks, dogs off-leash chasing wildlife, dog faeces left on the ground, dumping of rubbish and unauthorised vehicle entry.</i>	<p>The section on nature-based activities has been revised to emphasise the importance of appropriate behaviour by recreational users, such as dog walkers and cyclists, and to provide additional information on their legal obligations.</p> <p>PCS will continue to inform reserve users of their responsibilities through signage, website information, direct contact, social media etc. In addition, PCS will roll out additional signage throughout Canberra Nature Park in 2020–21 and investigate the capacity for increased compliance and enforcement by rangers in some reserves.</p>
Recreation — Climbing (10 comments in 6 submissions)	<i>Prohibiting rock climbing in Canberra Nature Park is not justified.</i>	<p>After carefully considering the impacts of rock climbing and the limited locations suitable for climbing, the Plan has been revised; rock climbing is no longer prohibited. However, climbing is not permitted at Mt Ainslie Quarry and bouldering is not permitted in Black Mountain Nature Reserve.</p>
Recreation — Cycling (15 comments in 11 submissions)	<i>Mountain biking is causing significant damage because riders are going off-track and creating informal tracks instead of staying on the formed management trails.</i>	<p>The section on cycling and mountain biking has been revised to emphasise the importance of cyclists staying on management trails and multi-use tracks.</p> <p>As part of the tracks and trails audit, an assessment of informal tracks will be undertaken to determine their suitability for either closure, maintenance or upgrade to meet Australian Standards.</p> <p>PCS will continue to inform cyclists of their responsibilities through signage, website information, direct contact, social media etc. In addition, PCS will roll out additional signage throughout Canberra Nature Park in 2020–21 and will investigate the capacity for increased compliance and enforcement by rangers in some reserves.</p>
	<i>Greater clarity in the track and trail nomenclature is needed.</i>	<p>The Plan uses standard and agreed terms for tracks and trails. These terms are consistent with maps available within reserves and those that will be available on the EPSDD website.</p>
	<i>Cycling should be permitted in grassland reserves.</i>	<p>Due to the sensitivity of grassland habitat and presence of critically endangered species, cycling is not permitted in many grassland reserves.</p>

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Recreation — Dogs (21 comments in 17 submissions)	<i>Many dog owners are not complying with the requirement for dogs to be on leash and under control.</i>	The Plan has been revised to include reference to the legal requirements under the Domestic Animals Act. This includes the requirement for dogs to be on leash, under the control of their carer, and for carers to hygienically dispose of dog droppings. The Plan now also requires that dogs are restricted to formal tracks or trails.
	<i>Some people do not adequately dispose of dog faeces.</i>	PCS will continue to inform dog owners of their responsibilities through signage, website information, direct contact, social media etc. In addition, PCS will roll out additional signage throughout Canberra Nature Park in 2020–21 and will investigate the capacity for increased compliance and enforcement by rangers in some reserves.
	<i>There should be more restrictions on dog walking in Canberra Nature Park.</i>	The Nature Conservation Act generally prohibits dogs in nature reserves. Allowing dogs into Canberra Nature Park is a continuation of past practice and is only permitted through an Activities Declaration specifying certain conditions such as a requirement that the dog be on a leash. The Plan now requires that dogs are restricted to formal tracks or trails.
	<i>There should be more opportunities for dog walking in Canberra Nature Park.</i>	Dog walking is recognised as a popular activity in Canberra Nature Park. However, as outlined in the Plan, dogs can have a significant impact on reserve values and allowing dog walking in additional reserves is not proposed. There are currently no plans to increase or reduce the number of reserves that permit dog access. However, if the presence of dogs is found to be having a significant impact on reserve values, the approval for dog walking in some locations may be reviewed.



ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Recreation — Drone Policy Support (6 comments in 6 submissions)	<i>The prohibition on recreational drones in Canberra Nature Park is supported.</i>	Comments noted. The policy prohibiting the recreational use of drones in Canberra Nature Park will remain.
Recreation — Events (9 comments in 6 submissions)	<i>Community events are not appropriate in Canberra Nature Park because of the impacts on natural values.</i>	Comments noted. The Plan includes a section on booked group events that clarifies there are restrictions on some activities in Zone 1 Core Conservation areas and to avoid these sensitive areas. Larger events require consultation with PCS during the planning stages. Applications for events will be rigorously assessed and will only be permitted when there will be no adverse impacts on the natural or cultural values of reserves.
	<i>Larger events have the potential to adversely impact high conservation value areas e.g. Mulligans Flat Sanctuary.</i>	The Plan has been revised to acknowledge that the special circumstances applying in the Mulligans Flat Sanctuary may require a different approach to recreation and other activities. The PCS, the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust and their research partners are currently developing a strategy for the Sanctuary. The EPSDD Environment Division is preparing a Conservation Action Plan for the Mulligans Flat Sanctuary.
Recreation — Horse riding (31 comments in 12 submissions)	<i>Appendix 5 (Principles for horse riding in Canberra Nature Park) is unjustified and should be deleted.</i>	Appendix 5; Horse Riding in Canberra Nature Park: A Report to Environment ACT (Landsberg 1999) was included in the draft plan as the basis for further discussions with the equestrian community. The relevant principles have been incorporated into best practice guidelines for horse riding. Following discussions with equestrians and clarification that it is not the intention of the PCS to prohibit endurance riding in Canberra Nature Park, the Appendix has been deleted.
	<i>Trialling additional horse-riding trails in Canberra Nature Park is/is not supported.</i>	Comments noted. The potential for additional horse-riding opportunities is considered in the Plan and will be explored with relevant stakeholders. Additional trails will not be considered in sensitive areas or where horses may adversely impact the natural and cultural values of reserves.  Horses will continue to be restricted to management trails and designated equestrian trails.



ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Recreation — Permitted activities (6 comments in 4 submissions)	<i>Some recreational activities are not suitable for Canberra Nature Park.</i>	Comments noted. The Plan provides guidance for all existing recreational uses in Canberra Nature Park and restrictions are placed on some activities in sensitive areas. While the primary objective for management of nature reserves is nature conservation, the secondary statutory objective is to provide for public use of the area for recreation, education and research.  The PCS Visitor Experience Strategy (in development) will provide a detailed outline of the ACT Government's policy and priorities for recreational use of all ACT parks and reserves, including future recreation and commercial opportunities.
	<i>The Plan focuses almost entirely on conservation actions and fails to identify actions for other users, including recreation.</i>	A significant number of actions in the Plan are related to recreation and nature-based experiences. The number of actions related to achieving conservation outcomes reflects the primary statutory objective for managing nature reserves, which is conservation of the natural environment.

## CHAPTER 8 – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Community education (10 comments in 5 submissions)	<i>Critical areas for education programs to increase community awareness include reserve values, threats to reserve values (from recreation, domestic animals, pest species etc.) and allowable activities.</i>	Comment noted. Chapter 8 of the Plan contains objectives and actions that relate to education programs and engaging the community.  Educational topics suggested in submissions will be considered in the development of education programs.
	<i>The Plan should mention the Woodland Learning Centre, currently under development, as a significant resource for education and interpretation.</i>	The Plan has been updated to include information about the Woodland Learning Centre (in Chapter 8 and the reserve profile for Mulligans Flat).

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Community involvement (18 comments in 11 submissions)	<i>Continued recognition and support of the significant volunteer work and monitoring undertaken by community groups within Canberra Nature Park is important.</i>	Comment noted. Additions have been made to several sections of the Plan to incorporate comments made by community groups. Many community and other organisations make a significant contribution to maintaining reserve values. PCS will continue to recognise and support these groups and their work within Canberra Nature Park.
	<i>Additional opportunities should be taken to engage young people in the reserves (e.g. nature play and junior ranger programs).</i>	There are several actions in Chapter 8 of the Plan that aim to increase the engagement of school-aged children with Canberra Nature Park reserves.  Topics suggested in submissions will be considered in the development of programs to engage young people.
	<i>Increased resourcing for PCS staff to engage with the community is supported.</i>	Comments noted. Resourcing is beyond the scope of the Plan. Resource allocation for engagement with the community will continue to be prioritised by PCS under this Plan.  In 2019–2020 an additional ranger was allocated to support the ParkCare Program. Further resourcing will be subject to the ACT Government budget cycle.
	<i>Improving partnerships between PCS staff and organised community groups to undertake monitoring and management is encouraged.</i>	Comments noted. PCS recognises the importance of partnerships and continuing engagement with groups that undertake monitoring and management within Canberra Nature Park. Several actions in the Plan aim to ensure the development and maintenance of strong partnerships with community and other interested groups.



FRIENDS OF MT MAJURA PLANTING DAY (A. TATNELL)

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Cross tenure management (12 comments in 8 submissions)	<i>Impacts from urban areas on Canberra Nature Park are significant, cooperation with urban land managers is essential and relevant actions should be increased from medium to high priority.</i>	Changes have been made to Section 8.3 Neighbours to emphasise the importance of working collaboratively with neighbours, including institutional neighbours and government agencies, to reduce impacts on reserve values. The Plan notes the impacts from urbanisation on Canberra Nature Park and the importance of working in collaboration with urban land managers on a range of issues. The priority for actions relating to working in partnership with adjacent land managers and the community in weed and pest animal management has been revised to 'high' and 'ongoing'.
	<i>The Plan does not adequately identify relevant neighbouring land managers and ways that PCS can work with neighbours to improve conservation outcomes and mitigate threats to natural values.</i>	Additional information on relevant neighbouring land managers has been added to Section 8.3. Many actions relate to PCS working in collaboration with neighbours to improve conservation outcomes and mitigate threats. These include undertaking biosecurity activities, pest animal and weed management, traditional land management and reducing the impact of urbanisation on reserves.
	<i>There is a need to coordinate some management actions with adjoining landholders.</i>	See above.



WEED SPRAYING AT MT TAYLOR





FRIENDS OF ARANDA BUSHLAND, WITH PCS STAFF DOING AN INSPECTION FOLLOWING A PRESCRIBED BURN

# CHAPTER 9 – RESEARCH AND MONITORING

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Research and monitoring (12 comments in 7 submissions)	<i>Increased opportunities for research and monitoring and evidence-based decision making is strongly supported.</i>	Comment noted. Additional information on research and monitoring has been added to Chapter 9. Monitoring is an integral part of evaluating the effectiveness of management actions in achieving nature conservation objectives. The CEMP is an overarching ecosystem condition monitoring framework for the ACT conservation estate. The CEMP aims to create a coordinated, systematic, and robust biodiversity monitoring program that will allow us to detect changes in ecosystem condition within reserves, evaluate the effectiveness of management actions in achieving conservation outcomes, and provide evidence to support land management decisions. A key component of the program is to develop target condition and monitoring plans for the identified ecosystem units within the ACT reserve system. Further information can be found at: <a href="https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1059241/Conservation-effectiveness-monitoring-program.pdf">https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1059241/Conservation-effectiveness-monitoring-program.pdf</a>
	<i>There is insufficient funding for research and monitoring.</i>	Comments noted. Funding for research and monitoring is subject to the ACT Government budget cycle.

# GENERAL COMMENTS

ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Editing (72 comments in 16 submissions)	<i>Several edits (including formatting, changing/adding images and adding additional information) should be made to clarify the meaning of some statements.</i>	Numerous edits have been made in response to these submissions.
Editing — Technical detail (62 comments in 17 submissions)	<i>Some text requires fact checking and the consideration of additional information.</i>	Several technical details have been reviewed and revised to improve accuracy. In some cases, additional information has been added to clarify specific sections.
Management prioritisation (15 comments in 10 submissions)	<i>It is important that nature conservation has primacy over recreation.</i>	Various sections in the Plan have been revised to clarify that the primary management objective for Canberra Nature Park is conservation of the natural environment.
Operations — Location specific (17 comments in 16 submissions)	<i>Management actions should be undertaken at specific reserves including rubbish removal, reducing the number of informal tracks and trails, weed removal, reducing pressure from recreational use causing degradation, introducing security measures, dog faeces disposal, improved fencing and the poor condition of some reserves due to drought and overgrazing by kangaroos and rabbits.</i>	<p>Many of these comments related to compliance issues and day-to-day maintenance of the reserves. Where appropriate, suggested management actions specific to individual reserves have been forwarded to the PCS Director Urban Reserves for incorporation into the operational works program. All works are subject to the availability of resources.</p> <p>Some suggested management actions, such as installing rubbish bins for dog faeces, are not considered appropriate and are not included in the Plan.</p>
Reserve summaries (4 comments in 3 submissions)	<i>More detail should be provided on management actions for individual reserves and linkages shown upwards to the goals and objectives of the Plan and downwards to operational plans for individual reserves.</i>	Comments noted. Additional detail on management actions for individual reserves will be provided in reserve implementation plans and operations plans. The goals and objectives of the Plan are considered in preparing these subsequent documents.



ISSUE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Resourcing — Compliance (5 comments in 5 submissions)	<i>Increased investment is required in enforcing compliance (e.g. camping, dogs, appropriate use of tracks and littering) including increasing the numbers of rangers on-the-ground to enforce compliance and undertake community education.</i>	Comments noted. Additional resourcing is subject to the ACT budget cycle and government priorities. Additional signage will be rolled out across Canberra Nature Park in 2020–21 and PCS will investigate the capacity for increased compliance and enforcement by rangers in 2020–21. PCS will also continue to inform reserve users of their responsibilities through signage, website information, direct contact, social media etc.
Resourcing — Funding (12 comments in 9 submissions)	<i>Adequate funding is required if the objectives of the Plan are to be achieved.</i>	Comments noted. Funding is subject to the ACT budget cycle and government priorities.



JUVENILE ROSENBERG'S GOANNA (MATTHEW HIGGINS)



# APPENDIX 1

## Summary of key stakeholder engagement prior to release of the Draft Canberra Nature Park Reserve Management Plan for public comment

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service consulted a wide range of key stakeholders in preparing the Canberra Nature Park Draft Reserve Management Plan. Issues discussed with these groups assisted in informing the development of the draft Plan.

Key stakeholders consulted:

- » ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB)
- » ACT Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainability
- » ACT Scientific Committee
- » ACT Emergency Services Agency
- » ACT Heritage Council and Heritage Unit
- » ACTPCS Murrumbung Rangers
- » ACT ParkCare Groups
- » ACT Recreation Users Group
- » ACT Equestrian Association
- » Canberra Ornithologists Group
- » Conservator of Flora and Fauna (statutory requirement)
- » Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra (Biodiversity Working Group)
- » Dual Sport Motor Riders Association
- » Friends of Grasslands
- » Land Development Agency
- » National Parks Association of the ACT
- » National Capital Authority
- » Natural Resource Management Advisory Committee (NRMAC)
- » Planning and Land Authority (statutory requirement)
- » Representative Aboriginal Organisations
- » Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians
- » United Ngunnawal Elders Council
- » Woodlands and Wetlands Trust (Mulligans Flat sub-committee)
- » Woodlands Working Group

Consultation included workshops with ACT ParkCare and ACT Recreation Users groups, a field trip with Ngunnawal Traditional Custodians and presentations and discussions with other organisations. In summary, the key issues raised were:

- » the importance of protecting nature conservation values
- » support for proposed reserve zoning
- » support for introduction of reserve ‘complexes’
- » recognition of the social and health benefits provided by nature reserves
- » concern about managing impacts from increasing recreational use
- » recognition that recreation organisations holding group events within Canberra Nature Park (e.g. orienteering and rogaining) are already applying strategies to avoid impacts on reserve values
- » the need for better public maps of each nature reserve e.g. show natural values and public access
- » the incorporation of Aboriginal traditional knowledge into reserve management
- » improved access to Country by Aboriginal people for cultural purposes and opportunities to be actively engaged in working on Country.

# ACT ParkCare Group workshop (26 May 2016)

## NATURAL VALUES:

- » Nature conservation should be the top priority for nature reserves.
- » Objectives should largely emphasise nature/habitat conservation management and enhancement.
- » Include thinning of even age trees as a management tool.
- » Aranda Bushland and adjoining block 1550 have a relatively low weed cover following significant effort over many years by ParkCare and rangers.
- » A landscape focus on planning and management is important and this has improved through connectivity mapping, the Woodland Restoration project and the proposed reserve complexes.
- » Concern about the use of fire in Canberra Nature Park and limited consultation for ParkCare through the Bushfire Operation Plan.
- » Improve monitoring of fire impacts and incorporate the long-standing knowledge of ParkCarers.

## MANAGEMENT ZONES:

- » Ensure that Zone 2 areas can be re-categorised as Zone 1 at a later stage as ParkCare are working hard to enhance some of these sites.
- » Important that the zones do not reflect management effort.

## RESEARCH:

- » Need to improve licensing and coordination of research, and reporting back on outcomes.
- » Some inconsistency in monitoring techniques, and ParkCare knowledge associated with monitoring is not always considered.

## RECREATION:

- » Concerned by the impact of increasing recreational use.
- » Concerned by the impact of increased mountain biking.
- » Need to clarify the recreational carrying capacity of reserves.
- » Need to monitor the numbers of informal recreational users.

- » Much of current conflict between recreation user groups seems to focus on mountain biking.
- » Horse riders seem to want priority and do not like conservation restrictions.
- » More multi-use trails could be developed on nature reserves to give people a wider environmental experience, including in currently under-developed reserves.
- » Centenary Trail maintenance funding should include weed control to avoid spreading weeds and reduce impact on the user's appreciation of the natural environment.
- » Include a chapter on compliance so that the public know that rules do get enforced.
- » Make clear legislation gives priority to the natural environment over recreation, education, and research.
- » Include the Landsberg horse riding criteria in the management plan as horse-riding issues will not disappear despite the provision of great horse-riding areas elsewhere.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION:

- » Provide better public maps of reserves including boundaries, key values and threatening processes e.g. rabbits, foxes, kangaroos.
- » Improve signage.
- » Concern that 'community engagement' and 'conservation information' is mainly driven by volunteer ParkCare groups, and not by PCS.
- » Need to target users to engage the community.
- » Include community education programs in the management plan.
- » Implement a school engagement program.
- » Note that Ginninderra, Southern ACT and Molonglo Catchment Groups provide a coordinated approach to community driven projects at a landscape scale across all tenures and incorporate Canberra Nature Park into a strategic vision for each catchment.
- » An updated plan will be a useful guide for politicians and policy makers, but less useful to volunteers who work on the ground and are fully aware of the issues they are confronting.

- » Concern that urban development on the border of Canberra Nature Park reserves has severe impacts and must be part of environment assessments at the earliest stages of development planning and must be monitored for compliance.
- » Need to consider adjacent public land which is important for fire management, weed control, connectivity and other environmental effects.
- » Cat-free neighbourhoods are required bordering some new nature reserves.
- » Weed-free neighbourhoods should be encouraged to stop garden plants invading reserves.

#### **SOCIAL VALUES:**

- » Canberra Nature Park is a dynamic socio-ecological landscape with multiple social values e.g. biodiversity, outdoor recreation, education, cultural heritage, buffering noise, air and water pollution, landscape and visual amenity.
- » Recognise the strong attachment Canberra residents have to their reserves and recognise Canberra Nature Park's role in providing opportunities for local stewardship, nature connection (childhood disconnected from nature), health, etc.
- » Only fleeting reference is made in the plan to links with public health and wellbeing.

- » Plan needs to be more explicit about what 'Healthy parks Healthy people' means in the context of Canberra Nature Park and seek to have better integration with complementary policy initiatives in ACT including partnering with other agencies e.g. Recreation and Health.

#### **RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES:**

- » Canberra Nature Map is a splendid example of conservation volunteer activities.
- » ParkCare use ArcGIS for mapping and reporting on weeds, rabbits and trails.
- » Parkcare groups and external groups such as Green Army are an essential working part of the past, present and future for this new management plan.

#### **REVIEW OF 1999 PLAN:**

- » The strengths and weaknesses of the previous management plan should be clearly explained so that we can learn and identify where/how to improve the core objectives of the new plan.
- » Could have a short sharp action plan with five-year goals and five-year review.
- » There is insufficient monitoring to quantify effectiveness of the previous version of the management plan.

## **ACT Government Recreational Users Group workshop (24 May 2016)**

#### **ORIENTEERING ACT (OACT)**

- » Areas within Canberra Nature Park have been important since orienteering was established in the ACT in 1971 and became more critical following the 2003 fire when most pine forests close to Canberra were burnt and subsequently developed for other purposes.
- » Some Canberra Nature Park reserves have been used several times per year over several decades with low observed impact.
- » Studies in Namadgi National Park, and elsewhere in Australia and overseas, show low impact on the environment as participants spread across an area.
- » Sensitive areas can be avoided during course planning and by marking particular areas on the map as 'out of bounds'.
- » Last minute approvals and unexpected event conditions make life very difficult for event organisers.
- » OACT is preparing Event Management Plans which incorporate environmental or land management issues.
- » OACT proposes the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Orienteering ACT and Canberra Nature Park, based on Orienteering ACT's Event Management Plans which would:
  - maintain a consistent and practicable approach towards managing Orienteering in Canberra Nature Park areas
  - ensure that event organisers are aware of relevant management issues early in the planning of events.



- » OACT has prepared a handbook for landowners and managers which provides advice on the optimum management of orienteering in a range of circumstances.
- » OACT appreciates the rationale behind the proposed zoning scheme but is concerned that such zoning should not be used as a blanket basis for regulating low impact activities such as orienteering.
- » OACT has detailed records on the number of times each CNP reserve is used for orienteering.
- » Orienteering use of Mulligans Flat/Goorooyarroo has declined with the establishment of the fenced wildlife sanctuary, and because of delays in approving events.
- » Some Canberra Nature Park reserves are currently not used for orienteering, but OACT would not like these to be prohibited by the management plan.
- » OACT concerned that 'large' events may require approval six months in advance as OACT regularly organises larger events and planning could not be achieved six months in advance.
- » OACT occasionally organises a national or international event, and planning is ideally submitted two years in advance of the event, with ongoing liaison as the planning of the event progresses.

#### ACT ROGAINING ASSOCIATION

- » ACT Rogaining Association is conscious of the need to minimise impact on natural areas and tries not to frequently re-use areas.
- » Only parts of Canberra Nature Park are suitable for some rogaining activities e.g. navigation workshops require relatively dense bush with a suitable level of complexity for teaching navigation.
- » Participants are spread across an area which lessens the potential for erosion or track formation.
- » Using Canberra Nature Park is a good way to introduce new people to the sport in an environment that they feel safe in, and the many trails and other features make navigation simple which is good as an introduction.
- » Use of an area should include an assessment of probable impacts e.g. staying on track in a high value area.

#### ACT EQUESTRIAN ASSOCIATION

- » Concerned that areas for horse riding have been reduced by suburban development and the loss of pine forest from fire.
- » The management plan does not adequately consider the impact on reserves from growing recreational pressure over the life of the plan.
- » The management plan indicates horse riding is permitted in 15 reserves, but at least half of these reserves have horse riding restricted to either an external fenced laneway or a single boundary through track.
- » There is no scientific evidence-based rationale for why mountain bikes have access to formed vehicle tracks in 30 reserves while equestrians remain significantly restricted, especially when the number of mountain bike riders is much higher than the number of horse riders.
- » ACT Equestrian Association strongly objects to ACT Parks and Conservation relying on principles outlined in Horse Riding in Canberra Nature Park: A Report to Environment ACT (Landsberg 1999) when there is much more recent evidence proving that recreational horses travelling in small numbers are no more likely to spread weeds, compact soil or deposit pathogens than any of the other users of the same space.
- » All reserve users cause impact and there is very little research into the impact from horse riding e.g. weed spread, different types of trails.
- » Horses travelling on compacted management tracks do not spread weeds or disturb soil any more than walkers, cyclists, vehicles, birds, kangaroos or surface water and are far less numerous in the environment than all of those. Researchers have not been able to isolate the impacts of horses as weed dispersers from other users or prove that a passing horse distributes any more weeds than any other passing vector.
- » The inter-connected network of horse trails, government paddocks and pony club grounds is under constant threat and the availability of additional safe horse riding space on management tracks in the Canberra Nature Park would be very welcome.

- » Urban development and infrastructure changes mean riders have to negotiate suburbia or cross increasingly busy major roads. Safe connectivity of trails between reserves is a priority. Equestrians ride for pleasure, not to commute. Circular or loop rides are an added safety benefit as horses are more relaxed than on an out and back journey.
- » ACT Equestrians Association indicate they would like access to the following Canberra Nature Park reserves: Crace Grasslands, Mt Taylor, Farrer Ridge, Wanniasa Hills, Cooleman Ridge, McQuoids Hill, Urambi Hills, Kenny and Gorooyarroo.

#### ACT VETERANS ATHLETIC CLUB (ACTVAC)

- » Use of Canberra Nature Park for large running/walking events is not adequately addressed in current draft.
- » ACTVAC has around 150 competitors and 20 officials at monthly events and has difficulty finding new courses with adequate parking. New car parks could be located in peripheral disturbed areas and would be widely used by others.

- » A number of previous tracks and event courses are no longer available due to residential development following the 2003 fire.

#### CANBERRA CLIMBERS ASSOCIATION

- » Cooleman Ridge and a couple of small areas on Black Mountain are occasionally used for bouldering.
- » The Mt Ainslie quarry is closed to climbers but on recent inspection the quarry seems stable and we do not see a need for the new management plan to list this as a banned area on the basis of safety. Re-opening Ainslie Quarry is not a high priority for us but might be appreciated by schools, scout groups or commercial abseil operators in using the area.
- » We are not aware of climbing activity at Molonglo Gorge, which is listed as a possible area for climbing and abseiling in the draft plan. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that the draft does not see fit to ban climbing here. Again, perhaps there is (or would be) interest from schools and other groups.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

#### ACT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ELECTED BODY (MARCH 2015)

- » Suggest input could focus on the following two questions:
  - What is the Significance of Canberra Nature Park for Aboriginal people?
  - How can we strengthen connections?

#### TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS FIELD TRIP (MAY 2016) AND UNITED NGUNNAWAL ELDERS COUNCIL (JUNE 2016)

- » Aboriginal people see Canberra Nature Park as a cultural landscape, rich in past and present meaning.
- » Objectives discussed:
  - Aboriginal heritage places are protected and conserved

- Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal staff are actively involved in the conservation and interpretation of Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Aboriginal traditional knowledge is incorporated into reserve management
- Community awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage and connection to Country is increased
- Aboriginal people have improved access to Country for cultural purposes and opportunities to be actively engaged in working on Country
- The Aboriginal history of the reserves is better understood and interpreted with the assistance of Aboriginal people.

# Conservation Council Biodiversity Working Group

## NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE ACT (JUNE 2016)

- » Who is the intended audience, as best practice guides weaken the plan and are best dealt with where visitors seek information?
- » Adaptive management does not preclude the plan establishing broad priorities for management, so include prioritisation of objectives.
- » There is need for an ACT state of the parks reporting.
- » The monitoring section does not fully address how the results will be reported to the community and does not establish the need for baseline data.
- » Will implementation of management plan be reported every five years (required under [Nature Conservation Act 2014](#))?
- » Reserve 'complexes' do not adequately address the requirements of specific ecosystems.
- » Strongly support action to develop a recreation strategy for Canberra Nature Park and other parks and reserves in the ACT but it must identify recreation risks and opportunities on public and private land.

## FRIENDS OF GRASSLANDS (JUNE 2016)

- » A table of the vegetation types/ecosystems/ associations etc should be presented in an appendix to explain the relationships and their key characteristics, to assist in understanding the terminology and identifying what is present in Canberra Nature Park.
- » Clarify relationships between the Canberra Nature Park nature reserves and other larger parks (Namadgi NP and Murrumbidgee River Corridor) as well as other areas e.g. mention North Mitchell Grassland and Woods Lane, which are important areas protecting threatened species and communities.



