



## **ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - Construction of Visitor Infrastructure – Yankee Hat Rock Art Site – ESO202500010**

In accordance with section 140 (4) of the *Planning Act 2023* (the Act), I provide the following environmental significance opinion:

### **APPLICANT**

Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, as represented by Adam Henderson, Project Manager.

### **APPLICATION and DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

The applicant has applied under section 140 (4) of the Act to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna for an environmental significance opinion to the effect that the development proposal set out in the submission is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact (the application).

The development proposal is for construction of visitor infrastructure at Yankee Hat Rock Art site as described in the submission.

### **LOCATION**

Block 3, Rendezvous Creek Road, Rendezvous Creek, within Namadgi National Park

### **MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES**

This opinion applies only to the development proposal as described in the application.

### **OPINION**

Provided the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the mitigation measures contained in the supporting application for an ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

1. Access to the site must be granted to Conservation Officers if a random compliance inspection is requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Burkevics". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping tail.

Bren Burkevics  
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

24 March 2025

## STATEMENT OF REASONS REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The proposed development is a proposal mentioned in Schedule 1 of the *Planning (General) Regulation 2023* – requiring environmental impact statement, being:

*Part 1.2, item 18 - proposal for development in a reserve, unless the proposal is for minor public works to be carried out by or for the Territory in accordance with a minor public works code approved by the conservator of flora and fauna under the Nature Conservation Act 2014, section 318A;*

The proposed works are within Namadgi National Park.

The proponent is seeking an environmental significance opinion to remove the requirement for an environmental impact statement on the grounds that the proposal is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, and has applied to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna for an opinion to that effect.

### **Meaning of *significant* adverse environmental impact**

An adverse environmental impact is ***significant*** if—

- (a) the environmental function, system, value or entity that might be adversely impacted by a proposed development is significant; or
- (b) the cumulative or incremental effect of a proposed development might contribute to a substantial adverse impact on an environmental function, system, value or entity.

In deciding whether an adverse environmental impact is ***significant***, the following matters must be taken into account:

- (a) the kind, size, frequency, intensity, scope and length of time of the impact;
- (b) the sensitivity, resilience and rarity of the environmental function, system, value or entity likely to be affected.

In deciding whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact it does not matter whether the adverse environmental impact is likely to occur on the site of the development or elsewhere.

It has been determined that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant environmental impact, based on the documentation submitted, known values of the site, and provided the works and ongoing management are carried out in accordance with the conditions attached to this ESO.

## **Project description**

The Yankee Hat 1 Aboriginal rock art site is in southern Namadgi National Park and is accessed via a popular walking track. During the Orroral Valley Fire of 2020 a combustible timber viewing platform in the rock art shelter was removed prior to the fire impacting the area. Other visitor facilities around the site were damaged by the fire, including interpretive signs, and walking track infrastructure, the rock art site has been closed to the public since then pending the re-establishment of visitor facilities.

The project will include three elements including a viewing platform, boardwalk and signage. The viewing platform proposed will replace the old timber platform with a steel structure. The boardwalk proposed is a 420m raised steel structure forms a loop for access and egress to and from the rock art site. New interpretive and protocol signage will be installed to direct visitors to the site.

## **Documentation Submitted**

- ESO supporting statement;
- Attachment A – closed area and location map;
- Attachment B – SHE decision;
- Attachment C – Viewing platform plan
- Attachment D – Typical boardwalk plan
- Attachment E – Breakout point and interpretive signs installation
- Letter(s) of Authorisation
- Form 1M.

## **Natural conservation values present**

Namadgi National Park conserves a wide variety of ecosystems and contributes to regional ecological connectivity through its links to reserves within NSW. The ecosystems include:

- low open woodland covering much of the park with Snow Gum woodland in the high mountain areas;
- open grasslands and frost hollows on the eastern side of the park in the Orroral and Boboyan valleys;
- tall wet forests with Alpine Ash and fern gullies in sheltered locations, especially on the western side of the park;
- wetlands including sedge fens in the valleys and sphagnum moss bogs on the peaks that are important for water catchment and as habitat for the endangered Northern Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne pengilleyi*), and
- sub-alpine peaks and alpine communities above 1600m.

The project site itself is a subalpine woodland dominated by candlebark (*Eucalyptus rubida*) and snow gum (*E. pauciflora*) with a shrubby understory featuring *Daviesia mimisoides*, *Acacia dealbata* and *Cassinia longifolia*. The ground layer features *Poa sieberiana*, *Lomandra longifolia* and *Themeda triandra*. The area comprises granite derived soils and granite boulders and tors. The area is in good condition and has regenerated well after the 2020 Orroral Fire, with minor weed infestation. Part of the area provides potential habitat for the smoky mouse *Pseudomys fumeus*.

Yankee Hat 1 is one of seven Aboriginal rock art sites in Namadgi National Park listed as a group on the ACT Heritage Register. A SHE Decision approving the project was issued on 13 January 25.

### **Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts**

The proposed works will have a very minimal impact to the area. The viewing platform will replace the already removed timber structure keeping to the same footprint and will rest on steel plates rather than being dug into the ground. The raised boardwalk has been specifically designed to minimise impacts, similarly to one installed last year at the Yankee Hat Walking Track. It does not require any steps or drainage features, and no excavation or ground disturbance will be caused by its installation. Signage will be installed by anchoring them to the boardwalk with no excavation required. In the long term, boardwalks allow the bushland to regenerate and thrive, enhancing the aesthetic for viewers.

The site is located in a bushfire prone area however, that risk is well mitigated in the proposal. The proposal also includes mitigation measures to reduce the risk of weeds spreading into the National Park. These include post work invasive weed monitoring.

Overall, the impacts of this project will be low with very little ground disturbance required and no clearing of vegetation. Works will be carried out under the supervision of ACT Parks and Conservation Staff and will enable visitors to visit and experience the Rock Art site. The infrastructure being installed will reduce visitor impacts by encouraging them to use the boardwalk, protecting local vegetation and fauna habitat and preventing surface impacts and erosion caused by foot traffic.

It has been determined that if the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the mitigation measures contained in the supporting application for an ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.