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**ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - BLOCKS 58 and 120 TENNENT HONEYSUCKLE WALK REALIGNMENT**

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

**APPLICANT**

ACT Parks and Conservation Service, 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 the part realignment of the Honeysuckle Walk as described in the submission.

**LOCATION**

Block 58 Tharwa and Block 120 Tennent, 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.

This opinion is granted subject to the following conditions made under s140 (4)(b) of the Act:

1. The proposed works may be subject to random compliance inspection by Conservation Officers as requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.



Rachael De Hosson  
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

6 January 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.*

Honeysuckle Walk is located 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

Honeysuckle Walk is a short circuit track (1.5km) located at the former Honeysuckle tracking station and Honeysuckle campground and picnic area. The Orroral Valley Fire of January/February 2020 burnt most of Namadgi National Park, including the Honeysuckle area.

As part of proposed future improvements and upgrades to the campground, it is a requirement to formalise the picnic area site as the hub for access to the local walking tracks including Honeysuckle Walk, Station Link and Booroomba Rocks. This requires small but important changes to features such as signage, as well as part realignment of the Honeysuckle Walk so that the walk both starts and finishes at the picnic area. Interpretive features will also be included on the walk to improve visitor experience, especially for families.

This project forms one of the deliverables under the Commonwealth funded Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Program for which the ACT government, with Parks and Conservation Service as the lead agency, is contracted to deliver by end of March 2025.

The project components include:

- Realign two sections of the Honeysuckle Walk to provide a circuit track that both starts and finishes at the picnic area.
- Construct new sections of realignment, and close redundant sections of the track.

Both sections of realignment will involve the installation of new tracks approximately 250 metres long and up to 1200mm in width with the inclusion of rock steps and drainage features such as earth swales as required. Seel marker posts will also be installed along each alignment.

In addition, about 580 metres of redundant sections of track will be closed by scarifying surface and placing local vegetation debris over it to promote stabilisation and re-growth.

Works will be carried out by a track contractor by hand and using small machinery such as a mini-excavator (1 tonne), skid-steer (Bobcat), motorised wheelbarrow, and side-by-side ATV.

#### **Documentation Submitted**

- ESO supporting statement
- Letter 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 new track realignment passes through subalpine woodland to open forest featuring mountain gum *Eucalyptus dalrympleana*, snow gum *E. pauciflora* and Robertson's peppermint *E. radiata*. The shrub layer includes *Cassinia longifolia* and *Acacia dealbata*. The ground layer includes *Poa sieberiana* and *Lomandra longifolia*. The protected plant *Podolepis hieracioides* has been recorded in subalpine woodlands and Scarlet Robin and Gang Gang Cockatoos have also been recorded in the works area.

### **Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts**

The first section of the realignment will require 250m of new vegetation clearing while the second section of track will be kept within the existing management trail footprint causing no additional disturbance to ecological values. The vegetation clearing required involves only small shrubs and immature trees. Clearing will be carried out by hand or with small machinery.

The biggest concern for this project is to the protected plant *Podolepis hieracioides* which may occur in the works footprint. This risk has been well considered and the works area will be surveyed prior to the commencement of any works and any plants present will be marked and avoided. In addition, no mature or significant trees will be removed under these works. Rock for the construction of the steps will be sourced from within the track footprint and any additional rock required will be sourced from quarries to ensure they are free of potential pathogens or weed propagules.

The proposal also includes additional mitigation measures to minimise any impacts including fire risks. These measures include:

- Fuel and oils will not be stored onsite, and refuelling must be undertaken on flat areas and beyond waterways and riparian areas.
- All rubbish will be removed from site.
- All machinery and materials will be thoroughly cleaned and free of soil and plant material prior to entering the park.
- All works to cease on TOBAN days and where agency FBI restrictions apply to plant/machinery.

Overall, the works as proposed will improve the tracks by providing stabilisation and adequate drainage to prevent erosion. These improvements will add significantly to visitor experience and are not at a scale to cause any negative impact to the surrounding environment.

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.