



ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION– NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTRE POWER UPGRADE (ESO 202500009)

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 Mr Luke Halls, Senior Director – Operations Coordination and Planning.

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 an upgrade to the power supply to the Namadgi Visitor Centre. The works will require the excavation of a trench from an existing power pole, through the Namadgi depot carpark to the Visitor centre.

LOCATION

Namadgi National Park Visitor Centre
Block 363, Paddys River, within Namadgi National Park.

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

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

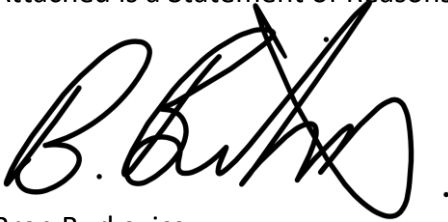
OPINION

Provided the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the following conditions in addition to 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. Conditions of approval including mitigation measures as stated in the application.
2. 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', with a small dot at the end.

Bren Burkevics
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

19 February 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

Namadgi National Park is located in the south and west of the ACT and covers 106,095 hectares or approximately 46% of the ACT. The western boundary of the park is the ridgeline of the Brindabella, Bimberri and Scabby Ranges. The south-eastern border of Namadgi follows the ridgeline of Clear Range.

The project aims to rectify the ongoing issues with the Namadgi Visitor Centre (VC) and enable a fit for purpose and stable power supply through works, in partnership with EVO Energy and ACT Property Group that will deliver:

- Upgrade of the pole mounted substation from 100Kva to 315kva
- Upgrade of the point of entry (POE) and Main switch Board (MSB)
- Upgrade of the cable from the pole mounted substation to the POE
- Upgrade of the Submain cable from the MSB to the VC

The works will require the excavation of a trench (approximately 150m long and 800mm deep and 600mm wide), from an existing power pole, through the Namadgi depot carpark to the VC. The trench will house four 100-150mm conduits. The total footprint of the works will be approximately 150m x 2m (approximately 300m²).

Documentation Submitted

- Explanatory note regarding supporting documentation for the application for an Environmental Significance Opinion
- Letter(s) of Authorisation
- Form 1M
- Heritage Advice Document
- EPA Advice Document

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.

Nearly 600 species have been recorded in Namadgi, with at least 23 species listed under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*:

- Smoky Mouse (*Pseudomys fumeus*)
- Broad-toothed Rat (*Mastacomys fuscus*)
- Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*)
- Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby (*Petrogale penicillata*)
- Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)
- Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata*)
- Mountain Skink (*Liopholis montana*)
- Trout Cod (*Maccullochella macquariensis*)
- Riek's Crayfish (*Euastacus rieki*)
- Key's Matchstick Grasshopper (*Keyacris scurra*)
- Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans* var. *tricolor*)
- Dwarf Violet (*Vioa improcera*)
- Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*)
- Southern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*)
- Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus*)
- Varied Sitella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*)
- Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*)
- White-winged Triller (*Lalage tricolor*)
- Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*)
- Pilotbird (*Pycnoptilus floccosus*)
- Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)
- Two-spined Blackfish (*Gadopsis bispinosus*)
- Austral Toadflax (*Thesium austral*)

The entire disturbance footprint is within the existing Namadgi Visitor Centre, Namadgi depot or adjacent exotic grassland. The proposed works are outside of mapped potential Box Gum Woodland and unlikely to support significant habitat for Yellow-bellied Glider, Greater Glider, Grey-headed Flying-fox and Spotted-tailed Quoll.

There are four mature eucalypts directly adjacent to the proposed works corridor, however they will not be impacted by the proposed works (i.e. the trench alignment will be outside the tree protection zone or where this is not possible then hydro excavation or underboring will be used). The small area in which the trench terminates contains African Lovegrass, mitigation measures below will need to be adhered to, to prevent weed distribution.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts

The proposal footprint does not intersect sensitive environmental values, being exclusively within Namadgi depot car park and a small area of exotic grassland. In the absence of mitigation measures, the proposal presents a risk of impacting the root

systems of mature native trees (through trenching) and increasing the cover of weed species. The paddock where the trench terminates will need to be the last section trenched, due to the potential spread of African Lovegrass, with careful washdown of equipment after works undertaken. Equipment will need to be pressure cleaned and inspected before works begin.

The area of proposed works has been well chosen to avoid any significant impact. The total disturbed footprint is approximately 300m² and consists primarily of cleared areas that are laid with bitumen and gravel, and a small area of exotic grassland. There are four mature eucalypts directly adjacent to the works corridor, however, the works are unlikely to have a significant impact on these trees as the ESO application has included appropriate protective measures.

Further to the above, the application includes a range of mitigation measures that will minimise or eliminate the impact of the works including protocols for;

- the covering and filling of the trenching works;
- equipment cleaning to minimise possibility of weed and contaminant incursion;
- rehabilitation of any ground disturbance; and
- Post-construction weed control that will continue for 24 months.

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

1. Conditions of approval including mitigation measures as stated in the application.
2. Access to the site must be granted to Conservation Officers if a random compliance inspection is requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

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