

10 March 2006

The Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Fax 6277 5818
ecita.sen@aph.gov.au



Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission to Senate Inquiry into the Reserve System

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry.

National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) is an independent organisation established in 1957 seeking to ensure the protection of native animals, plants, and natural landscapes. Our membership consists of over 5,300 people extended across the state through 19 branches.

Given that our focus is primarily on NSW, we will confine most of our comments to the Senate terms of reference as they relate to NSW national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas.

Throughout this submission, a reference to '*reserve system*' will be used to refer to the areas of interest of the inquiry: national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas. The reserve system can include private land with permanent protection, but given that there are few areas at present with this status. Most of the comments apply to public land.

The *NSW State of the Parks Report 2004* is an excellent summary of the performance of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Refer to Attachment 2 for NPA's response to this important document.

A review by the NSW Auditor General into NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service: *Managing Natural and Cultural Heritage in National Parks and Reserves in 2004* is extremely helpful in explaining the performance of the NSW NPWS in managing its reserves. NPA largely agrees with the findings. Since that time, the first NSW State of the Parks report referred to above has been released, demonstrating further improvements in systems used to monitor performance. The Audit General's report can be found at http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/publications/reports/performance/2004/national_parks/nationalparks-contents.html

A detailed response to each of the terms of reference of the inquiry follows.

NPA would be interested in making a verbal presentation to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

[signed]

Andrew Cox
Executive Officer

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DETAILED RESPONSE TO SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE RESERVE SYSTEM

A. Values and Objectives

i) Values

NPA believes that the reserve system contains exceptional conservation values.

On the whole, areas added to the reserve system are selected using the best available information available at the time. As our information base has grown, the earlier areas added to the reserve system have proven to be extremely important for biodiversity conservation.

Some of the first reserves created under the modern National Parks and Wildlife Act in 1967, such as Kosciuszko National Park, Royal National Park and the Blue Mountains National Park, are examples of this. The Blue Mountains went on to be listed as a World Heritage area for its internationally significant values.

Areas added to the reserve system over the last ten year are subject to a very rigorous conservation assessment. Many of these areas were added in response to the joint State/Federal Government Forest Policy and the Comprehensive Regional Assessments.

Many areas deserving protection continue to lie outside the reserve system. In Central and Western NSW, about 3% of the land area is protected in reserves. Some biological provinces are without any reserves.

NPA supports the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system (see the National Strategy for Biological Diversity for definitions). It has been widely recognised that this requires the permanent protection in formal reserves of at least 15% of all ecosystems at their pre-European extent. This will minimise major biodiversity loss.

ii) Objectives

The objectives for the reserve system are defined by the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act* for land-based reserves and the *Marine Parks Act* for marine reserves.

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act* provides an excellent objectives statement. It could be improved by a clearer statement of the over-riding requirement to conserve native biodiversity. Reserve management principles for each of the reserve categories eg. national park or nature reserve, complement the objectives by defining the purpose of reservation and management for each category.

The objects of the Act are provided below.

2A Objects of Act

(1) The objects of this Act are as follows:

- (a) the conservation of nature, including, but not limited to, the conservation of:
 - (i) habitat, ecosystems and ecosystem processes, and
 - (ii) biological diversity at the community, species and genetic levels, and
 - (iii) landforms of significance, including geological features and processes, and

- (iv) landscapes and natural features of significance including wilderness and wild rivers,
 - (b) the conservation of objects, places or features (including biological diversity) of cultural value within the landscape, including, but not limited to:
 - (i) places, objects and features of significance to Aboriginal people, and
 - (ii) places of social value to the people of New South Wales, and
 - (iii) places of historic, architectural or scientific significance,
 - (c) fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of nature and cultural heritage and their conservation,
 - (d) providing for the management of land reserved under this Act in accordance with the management principles applicable for each type of reservation.
- (2) The objects of this Act are to be achieved by applying the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- (3) In carrying out functions under this Act, the Minister, the Director-General and the Service are to give effect to the following:
- (a) the objects of this Act,
 - (b) the public interest in the protection of the values for which land is reserved under this Act and the appropriate management of those lands.

Each reserve is managed in accordance with a plan of management. Each plan is developed in consultation with a regional advisory committee and placed on public exhibition for a minimum of three months. These plans are binding and become statutory documents that define the management actions and priorities until a new plan is put in place. About 60% of national parks and 50% of nature reserves in NSW have either finalised or publicly exhibited plans of management. This figure is good given that NSW has over 670 named areas within its reserve system. The vast majority of the major reserves and most of the older reserves have a plan of management in place.

If there is a change in the management of a reserve with a plan already in place, the change must also be placed on public exhibition. This provides a good system of public accountability for proposed infrastructure, allocation of resources or controversial management actions.

Waterbodies that lie within the NSW reserve system are not afforded any protection by the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*. The jurisdiction lies with the *Water Management Act* and the Minister for Water. As a result, the Minister for the Environment cannot control fishing within waterbodies (lakes, creeks etc) within the reserve system, and cannot regulate the stocking with feral fish such as trout. Both these activities can have an impact on aquatic ecosystems.

Freshwater ecosystems can be protected under the Fisheries Management Act as aquatic reserves. These reserves can include sanctuary zones. At present there are no aquatic reserves covering freshwater waterbodies anywhere in NSW.

The objects for marine parks defined by the *Marine Parks Act* are very good and supported by NPA. Unfortunately the NSW Government has not applied them sufficiently to ensure that the objectives are being met.

3 Objects of Act

The objects of this Act are as follows:

- (a) to conserve marine biological diversity and marine habitats by declaring and providing for the management of a comprehensive system of marine parks,
- (b) to maintain ecological processes in marine parks,
- (c) where consistent with the preceding objects:
 - (i) to provide for ecologically sustainable use of fish (including commercial and recreational fishing) and marine vegetation in marine parks, and
 - (ii) to provide opportunities for public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of marine parks.

For example, the vast majority of NSW marine parks still permit fishing. There is strong evidence to suggest that many marine species are suffering decline, such as the critically endangered Grey Nurse Shark (nationally). Many sanctuary zones put in place in the four marine park presently established in NSW exclude critical habitat of these threatened species, allowing the species to further decline.

Consensus amongst marine scientists suggests that between 20 to 50% of marine waters should be protected in full protected marine sanctuaries to safeguard marine biodiversity. In NSW, less than 3% of marine waters are zoned as sanctuary.

B. Government resources to meet objectives and management requirements

In general, the reserve system in NSW does a good job in protecting the area's natural values according to the objectives (listed above). Resources are largely provided by government funding.

The resources allocated to managing the terrestrial reserve system has grown significantly over the last ten year, as has the size of the reserve system. Despite the increase of the reserve system since 1995 (from 4 million hectares to over 6.5 million hectares, or a 60% increase), total expenditure has increased to a greater extent to more that keep up with this.

As the attached table shows (**Att 1**) NPWS funding increased significantly over the last ten years. The total NPWS budget for the 1994-95 financial year was \$128M, when the land area of reserves was close to 4 million hectares. This represents about \$32 per 1,000 hectares. The real cost is likely to be much lower, possibly about two thirds of this. Much of this money was spent on a broader range of NPWS functions, including wildlife management across all tenures. For the financial year 2005-06, the NPWS budget papers predict expenditure of about \$305M to manage a total reserve area of about 6.5 million hectares. This represents about \$47 per 1,000 hectares.

This increase of spending over the last eleven years from \$32 to \$47 per 1,000 hectares represents a 42% increase in funding per hectares.

The cost of managing reserves is more expensive in the heavily populated areas where threats are greater, there is higher visitor numbers and more park neighbours. However, the reserve expansion during this period has been both in the heavily populated coastal areas and western NSW.

A portion of revenue to support the management of NSW terrestrial reserves (close to 20% of total income) is derived from income from visitor entry and camping/facility use fees. NPA supports this where it is offsetting the cost of the provision of visitor services. NPA does not support the funding of the conservation component of park management from visitor/user fees. Funding for conservation should be paid for from consolidated revenue. All people in NSW benefit from the protection of native animals and plants and the broad range of environmental services healthy functioning ecosystems provide, including clean air, drinking water, erosion control, limiting species extinctions etc.

A large portion of revenue is spent on educating and managing visitors. This is an important part of the role of a reserve manager.

NPA and other environment groups believe that greater funds need to be spent by the NSW Government on protecting biodiversity, including expanding and managing the reserve system. In a combined environment group submission to the NSW Government, it was stated that:

***“Biodiversity.** There is a need for increased funding for native vegetation regulation, continued funding for the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) which protects the States valuable environmental services, and a revamped NSW Biodiversity Strategy.” (Environmental Liaison Office, 2005)*

The submission goes on to state:

“The NSW national parks system continues to expand, visitation increases and threats grow. To meet these increasing challenges the NSW Government needs to boost funding to the National Parks and Wildlife Service to ensure that the ecological objectives of the reserve system and community expectations can be met.

The inaugural State of the Parks Report released in 2005 identified a number of areas where performance can be improved. This includes feral animal and weed control, bushfire management, neighbour relations and adaptation to climate change. It will not be possible to make major improvements without new funding.

...

The off-park biodiversity management functions of the DEC must also be better funded. Private land conservation mechanisms such as voluntary conservation agreements are critical to ensure that biodiversity outcomes are achieved beyond the formal reserve system. The key to greater uptake of private land conservation is field-based staff building relationships with landholders. At present there is insufficient funding for this.

Recommendations

- *Increase recurrent funding for National Parks and Wildlife Division by 10% or \$30.5m to improve management of national parks and other NPWS formal reserves.*

This is not to say that the NSW NPWS is doing a bad job. It is doing an excellent job within its limited resources.

The issues where performance needs to be improved are not necessarily the same types of issues that the critics of national parks claim.

On the whole, most immediate neighbours to national parks are happy with NPWS as land managers. It is the landholders further away that don't have any direct experience of NPWS as a neighbour that tend to be the loudest critics. A common

story emerging when new national parks are created is that the neighbours to the new national parks are impressed by the land management practised by NPWS and are critical of the former land managers if it was previously managed as a State forest or vacant Crown land. That is because there was little active management taking place on the lands in their former ownership. Landholders to new national parks are often surprised by the NPWS commitment to removing weeds and feral animals, strong emphasis on bushfire management and support for fencing.

Surveys of neighbour satisfaction levels contained in the NSW State of the Parks report support this finding.

Critics of national parks often advocate more access to national parks, such as by four wheel drives, as a solution to environmental problems. There is no evidence to support this claim. This is an example of one recreational user group that wants to gain access to an area, despite the environmental damage caused by four wheel driving.

In fact, it is important to challenge claims by those antagonistic to current park management practices and seek hard evidence to support their claims, not just isolated anecdotal evidence.

Invasive species, including feral animals and weeds are a major threat to the natural environment and the reserve system.

It is often claimed by critics of national parks that it is national parks that are the source of invasive species. The issue is much more complex than this, and as a simplistic statement, it is false. Invasive species are growing as a major threat to native biodiversity. The threat posed is second only to habitat destruction caused by land clearing such as for agricultural production or urban development.

Management of invasive species by park managers is far better than land managers of other public lands. NPWS spend about \$18 million on invasive species each year for about 8% of the state. This compares favourably to about \$200,000 each year by Department of Lands who directly manage about 3% of the state as vacant Crown land, Crown reserves and Crown roads, and 45% if Crown leases are included. NSW Forests spend about \$1 million each year on feral animals to manage between 2 and 3% of the State as State forests.

The original cause of invasive species must be looked at if the problem is to be solved strategically. Weeds that eventually make their way into national parks are usually escapees from urban gardens or abandoned farming land. For urban areas, new weeds continually arrive in national parks.

Native animals such as dingoes can offer have a helpful effect in controlling feral dogs. Thus supporting the survival of dingo populations may ultimately assist in reducing the numbers of feral dogs that attack stock.

Management of invasive species requires a more strategic approach across all tenures, and a boost in funding. The following extract from the combined environment groups submission to the NSW Government for the 2006-07 budget, of which NPA is part of, explains further:

“Responding to the growing threat of invasive species requires a cross-tenure approach, with Government agencies working closely with private landholders to implement species-specific programs. This would be best implemented through the development of a new State-wide Invasive Species strategy.”

An invasive species strike-force also needs to be established to quickly deal with new outbreaks before their control becomes too difficult. Some species have been identified as a major threat to Australian biodiversity and agriculture if established in Australia, such as stoats and fire ants.

Recommendations

- *Double agency spending of \$20m on invasive species to \$40m per year (DEC, Lands, State Forests, Rural Lands Protection Board).*

Estimated expenditure: *An additional \$20m p.a.*

- *Prepare an Invasive Species Strategy.*

Estimated expenditure: *\$0.5m*

- *Form an invasive Species Strike Force.*

Estimated expenditure: *\$4m p.a.*

Given the need to continue to further expand the reserve system, NPA strongly support continued funding from the NSW Government, supported by the Federal Government, to achieve this. The NSW Environmental Trust has played an important role over the last five years as a source of funds for targeted land acquisition. The 2005 purchase by NPWS of the property 'Yenga' in the Riverina, covering almost 80,000 hectares of poorly protected wetland ecosystems on the lower Murrumbidgee River is a great example of the benefits of a major acquisition program that has allowed these important areas to be added to the reserve system. This property cost between \$20 and \$30 million. It was money well spent.

Funding needs to be directed to supporting volunteers assisting with reserve management. This should encourage as a priority those volunteers whose motives are aligned with the objectives of national parks management.

C. Threats to the objectives and management

I have covered a number of the threats to the reserve system earlier.

It was a pity that the committee did not also consider 'opportunities'.

In summary these include invasive species, high impact recreation, commercial development and inappropriate bushfire management. Climate change is emerging as a far greater threat to the ecological values of many reserves than all these other threats combined.

The NSW State of the Parks Report 2004 provides a good summary of most of the key threats and the NPWS response to them. It is an excellent and constructive framework to assist park managers to respond to management threats in a coordinated way that utilises their scarce resources efficiently.

The fact that there is criticism of the management of the reserve system or that more should be done to improve it should not be an argument against expanding the reserve system. Placing an area in the reserve system provides immediate legal protection and in most cases, improved management. To fail to reserve these areas may result in irretrievable biodiversity loss. Once the values of an area are gone, it is difficult to recover these.

Bushfire management

Bushfire management is an important aspect of reserve management. It often generates strong views, many of which are unrealistic or would result in the loss of many native animal and plants if implemented.

Firstly there is a claim that national parks are the major source of bushfires. I presume that NPWS will provide you with specific information on this. This claim cannot be supported by the statistics. In summary, looking at the 2003-04 fire season, of the 5,600 fires during that period, 186 started on park and stayed on park (3.3%) and only 13 started on park and moved off park (0.2%). 64 fires started off park and moved onto national park (1.1%). The remaining 95.3% burned entirely off-park.

Secondly, regular burning or grazing of areas of bushland will not significantly reduce the risk of bushfires. Putting aside the impracticality of regularly burning such a large area in a safe way, an area that is burnt one year earlier will still hold a fire the following year.

During extreme climatic conditions that existed during the major bushfires in NSW and ACT of the summers of 2001-02 and 2002-03, there is little that can stop the spread of large fires in conditions of low humidity, strong winds and extreme temperatures. The fires even jumped a water body over 1km wide.

A strategic approach that focuses on asset protection at the perimeter of bushland and good planning controls on new development is a far more realistic and effective approach.

High impact recreation

Horse riding and four wheel driving are the forms of recreational that NPA is most concerned with in this category. These activities create a range of impacts. I have attached our policy on motor vehicles and horseriding to elaborate on this.

NPA believes that there is no place for recreational horseriding in national parks due to their environmental impacts. We also support vehicle-based car touring, but roads for this purpose should be confined to the perimeters of the reserve system to limit the fragmentation and impacts on the centres of large natural areas. NPA does not support the provision of vehicle trails specifically for four wheel driving as a sport. Roads in parks on the whole should be of a two wheel drive standard. Recreational four wheel drive use tends to cause severe erosion and a range of other impacts.

The NPA policy on horseriding and four wheel driving is attached.

These forms of recreation should ideally take place, if necessary, on areas of lower environmental value outside the reserve system.

Other recreation

As the reserve system becomes more popular, there is a danger that with high numbers of visitors even lower impact recreation such as bushwalking can result in significant impacts.

To respond to this, a pre-emptive approach works best. Higher numbers of visitors should be catered for on the perimeters of the reserve system and through the

provision of infrastructure that protects the natural environment while not detracting from the experience. NPA does not support the uncontrolled hardening of tracks in response to growing numbers. A range of strategies should be employed.

The NPA policy on walking track is attached.

Invasive species

The major feral animals affecting the reserve system are foxes, wild dogs, pigs, rabbits, horses, goats and cats. Cane toads are becoming a growing concern as their range expands southwards.

Responding to this growing threat occurring across all tenures requires a strategic cross-tenure approach involving landholder and public land managements. I have provided details of this type of approach earlier.

NPA does not support the use of recreational hunters playing a role in the management of feral animals. Professional hunters should be used as part of a broader approach that includes baiting, trapping and biological control. Recreational hunters are not motivated to significantly reduce or eradicate feral animals, but by hunting for fun.

Commercial developments

With the drive for Government departments to generate funds there is increased pressure to find ways of using the reserve system to generate income.

In NSW this occurs primarily through the introduction of visitor fees, first established for the NSW NPWS reserve system in 2000.

Another form of revenue raising is allowing private operators to carry out activities or developments in the reserve system. It is important that ecological objectives govern the administration of commercial use of the reserve system.

Of most concern to NPA are commercial developments. The largest example of this is the ski resorts in Kosciuszko National Park. The strong political pressure that the owners of these resorts have applied means that the resorts have continued to expand, despite the large ecological footprint created in a highly sensitive environment. This is despite there being suitable alternative sites for accommodation and visitor infrastructure outside the national park such as at Jindabyne, Adaminaby, Tumut and Khancoban.

Impacts caused by the ski resorts include pollution of streams, clearing for ski runs (destroying the habitat of species such as the endangered mountain pygmy possum), water use for artificial snow-making, providing food sources to feral animals such as foxes and cats, proliferation of high impacting sports such as golf courses, adventure mountain bike riding, horseriding, and the direct impacts of building and car parks.

These impacts will increase if the resorts seek to move higher in response to the rising snowline due to global warming. In 50 years time the worst case scenario predicted by CSIRO predicts that more than 90% of the original snow covered areas will have disappeared.

Climate change

Climate change is the biggest long-term threat to the biodiversity of Australia and NSW. What areas have not been destroyed by habitat loss since European settlement will now be under growing pressure due to large and rapid changes to climate.

There will be some opportunities to adapt to this change, such as through altitudinal or longitudinal migrations. For many species this will not be possible due to the highly fragmented nature of much of the remaining native habitats, or the lack of suitable climatic conditions available. For example, snow-dependent ecosystems have nowhere to migrate to on the Australian mainland with the shrinking and possible total loss of natural snow making conditions over the next century.

Some early scientific predictions have been made for some parts of Australia, such as the wet tropics, the WA wheatbelt and the Australian Alps. These should be looked at carefully because they demonstrate how serious the issue is. A high number of extinctions and extensive areas of habitat loss will occur.

There is no excuse for lack of action. There is evidence that some loss will occur under the most conservative estimates. It is now a matter of seeing how much loss there will be. International scientists have already warned that this phase of human development will result in the sixth major phase of extinction, the last one being 65 million years. One scientist, Professor Norman Myers, has recently predicted that up to half of all the species on earth could become extinct unless something is done over the next 40 years, primarily through addressing the threat of climate change.

The *National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan 2004-2007* (Natural Resources Management Ministerial Council), supported by the national and all state governments, is an important resource to guide future action.

D. Responsibilities of governments concerning reserve creation and management

The NSW and Federal governments play a critical role in expanding and managing the reserve system. Australia's constitutional arrangements mean that the respective state Government plays the lead role in environmental regulation, environmental protection and land management such as managing the reserve system.

Despite the lead role played by the NSW Government in managing the reserve system in NSW, the Federal Government plays an important role in a number of areas.

The Federal Government supports the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system. The Federal Government, along with all states, have supported the National Strategy for Biological Diversity and the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005.

World Heritage Management

The Federal Government oversees the implementation of its system of world heritage areas. There are four world heritage sites in NSW, the majority being public protected areas managed by NPWS – Lord Howe Island, Willandra Lakes, Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves and Blue Mountains.

The Federal Government provides limited financial resources to support the management of these areas. This funding needs to be significantly enhanced.

Increase funding will allow land managers better promote the areas' international values, educate the public about their importance, promote sustainable visitation, limit the impact from threatening processes and generate revenue for neighbouring towns that provide infrastructure. A figure of up to \$5 million for each world heritage site to achieve these objectives would be appropriate.

Implementing the National Reserve System

The *National Reserves System – A Partnership Approach* was finalised in 2005. This whole of Government document sets out a good framework for building a national reserve system.

The Federal Government thus provides a leadership role in the implementation of this strategy, and a specific support role in certain aspects due to the national nature of some elements. NPA agrees with the role of the Federal Government identified in this document.

Funding for expansion of the national reserve system

The National Reserve System in the past has supported funding for additions to the reserve system across the State. This has been extremely valuable for assisting State Governments and other institutions in purchasing land to be part of the reserve system.

Given the importance of continuing to establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system, this program should be continued. In NSW, the priority should be on poorly reserved bioregions, namely those in Central NSW: Nandewar, Brigalow Belt South, Darling Riverine Plains, Cobar Peneplain, South West Slopes and Riverina bioregions. These areas have on average less than 3% of their land area within the reserve system. This compares with the coastal bioregions that have over 20% of their land area within the reserve system.

Funding should be restored to the 2:1 ratio, where for every \$1 that is spent by the NSW Government or accredited private body, the Federal Government funds \$2. This funding arrangement, dropped to a 1:1 ratio three years ago, has resulted in major purchases in western NSW.

Climate change

As mentioned earlier, climate change will result in massive effects to natural systems and the reserve system over the next century. The best approach is to see global cooperation to reduce greenhouse emissions to limit climate change. Tragically time is running out to limit irreversible change. In the absence of global agreement at present it will be necessary to adopt a range of adaptation and amelioration strategies to limit the extent of biodiversity loss. This will require land managers playing a greater role in intensive management of species most vulnerable to the effect of global warming.

Clearly the Federal Government should play a global leadership role in limiting climate change and its effects on biodiversity. It should reduce its own greenhouse emissions and encourage and assist other countries to do likewise.

Role of private bodies and individuals

NPA supports the growing role of privately run conservation organisations such as Australian Bush Heritage and Australian Wildlife Conservancy. These organisations play a very valuable role in purchasing land and permanently dedicating the lands for conservation.

It is best if they complement, rather than compete with Government land management agencies. This may mean that they identify different roles or emphasis in the establishment of the reserve system, or agree to cooperate where there are similar objectives attempting to be met. This may involve a sharing of resources and expertise, or even sharing management.

Other bodies that play an important role include the Nature Conservation Trust of NSW that has a revolving fund to buy, covenant and on-sell lands, and offer third-party covenants (trust agreements). The National Parks and Wildlife Service voluntary conservation agreements that put in place binding conservation covenants, is also supported. At the end of January 2006 there were 194 agreements currently in place covering 14,165 hectares.

The public land reserve system is still critically important and should form the core, or central components of the reserve system.

Increasingly it is recognised that isolated reserves will not on their own safeguard our native biodiversity, particularly in light of growing threats due to climate change, invasive species, and even large bushfires. It is important the reserves are connected to allow species migration and movement, and improve long-term viability. This will require a range of approaches from all land managers – public and private. The concept of 'managing the matrix' will ensure that the reserve system is seen in a large context of connected landscape elements.

Several conservation scientists have recommended that to limit biodiversity loss across a landscape, a minimum of 30% of each habitat type must be managed for conservation (ideally in a formal reserve system, public or private), 40% managed for a mixture of conservation and production, and the rest can be available for production. This limits massive biodiversity loss. Where ecosystems are already full intact, this should be retained.

Thus private landholders, whether as part of a formal reserve or not. Play a critical role in the maintenance of native fauna and flora.

The Federal Government should support this vision through its programs, including the Natural Heritage Trust program, agricultural programs, scientific research priorities and drought assistance.

Role of volunteers

NPA believes that greater community participation in the establishment and management of reserves will lead to improved understanding about the importance of protected areas.

NPA has initiated HarbourKeepers to harness the community interest in the natural environment of Sydney Harbour. Volunteers register via the HarbourKeepers website (www.harbourkeepers.org.au) to participate in a range of activities that improve the health of Sydney Harbour. This includes underwater and foreshore surveys, bush regeneration, underwater weed removal (*calerpa taxifolia*) and fish surveys. Our

HarbourKeepers are enthusiastic people doing practical activities to solve real environmental problems.

Due the success of HarbourKeepers, NPA launched CoastKeepers in 2005, and intends to launch NatureKeepers during 2006. These focus on the coastal and terrestrial environments respectively. We believe that this model forms a valuable niche to build a growing volunteer support-base for park managers and other land managers. The model can be applied across Australia. It will supplement and support existing volunteer activity, not compete with it. New groups will emerge under the model. Where there is a management need, NatureKeepers, CoastKeepers and HarbourKeepers can recruit volunteers to meet it.

NPA encourages the Federal and state governments to support this model.

E. Government record in reserve system creation and management

As mentioned earlier, the Federal and state governments play an important role in creating and managing the national reserve system.

The NSW Government has an outstanding record over the last ten years in expanding the reserve system. Prior to this, the expansion of the reserve remained largely static for the proceeding eight years.

On park management, the NSW Government has expanded the resources available for park management in accordance with the expanded area. As noted above, there is still room for improvement.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is a professional body managing the reserve system competently and in a sophisticated manner. This is against a context of greater complexity of reserve management, more competing issues, a heavy demand for Government resources and improved requirements to safeguard staff safety.

The Federal Government has consistently supported the establishment of the reserve system throughout Australia. However in recent years, there has been reduced funding to support the implementation of the National Reserve System, and specifically to fund the purchase of lands for additional to the reserve system. Support for the management of NSW World Heritage Areas has consistently been lacking.

NPA would welcome enhanced leadership and financial resources from the Federal Government to assist with the expansion and management of the reserves system across Australia.

As mentioned earlier, the Federal Government record on playing a role in limiting global warming has been woefully inadequate. This needs to drastically change to avert the impending massive impact on biodiversity.

ATT 1. NSW Government Financial Allocations to NPWS/DEC 1994-2006

DEC Parks and Wildlife Division / NPWS	DEC Parks and Wildlife			NPWS*				
	budget 05-06	revised 04-05	revised 03-04	revised 02-03	revised 01-02	revised 00-01	revised 95-96	actual 1994-05
Recurrent expenditure	305,446	302,859	303,981	314,653	291,068	265,189	147,309	127,849
Reserve conservat'n mgmt expenditure				112,122	96,126	85,865	51,740	Not avail
Recurrent appropriation	Not avail	Not avail.	Not avail	187,439	182,420	172,840	84,767	69,412
Income	56,678	55,539	72,224	~120,000	83,860	56,146	36,946	37,316
Capital works	39,481	31,029	41,408	32,097	46,865 [#]	58,776 [#]	31,249	29,328

* NPWS Abolished Oct 2003. NPWS included functions additional to park management, including threatened species recovery efforts, responding to development applications and plans, biodiversity education and Aboriginal cultural heritage conservation. Most of these functions now part of broader Dept of Env. and Conservation (DEC) role.

Increased expenditure due to major bushfires in NSW

Figures compiled from NSW Treasury Budget Papers and NPWS Annual Report

ATT 2. NPA Media Release in response to NSW State of the Parks Report

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

15 July 2005

State of Parks Report a Fair and Valuable Assessment

National Parks Association of NSW today welcomed the newly released State of the Parks Report as being a robust and fair assessment of the condition of NSW national parks. This world-class report will lift the quality of debate on the management of our priceless national parks.

The State of the Parks Report 2004, released on Monday, provides a clear assessment of the management of more than 660 national parks and other reserves managed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (part of Department of Environment and Conservation)," said Andrew Cox, NPA Executive Officer.

"NPA is satisfied that the report tells it as it is. This report will be a sound baseline to determine trends and make long-term decisions to benefit national parks, their neighbours, park visitors and the broader community."

"NPA praises the NSW Government for such a frank assessment at a time when modern government tends to put a positive spin on all its activities, regardless of performance."

"Openness of management will ensure that the whole community can understand the challenges of managing six million hectares of national parks and other reserves. This should increase the community's willingness to help make their work easier."

"Using the report to score cheap political points or push an anti-environmental agenda will help no-one," said Mr Cox.

"Highlights of findings of the State of the Parks Report include:

- The condition of the natural values within the parks are considered to be good (p 41)
- While weeds, pest animals and inappropriate fire regimes are the most common threats to our national parks, for most parks the threat is either absent or low to moderate (p. 43)
- The effort on controlling pest animals is being expended in the right places (p. 47)
- Only 10% of all bushfires affecting national parks actually start in national parks and then burn surrounding areas (p. 50)
- Parks are also suffering from other threats such as climate change, isolation from other natural areas, altered natural river flows and incompatible adjacent land uses (p. 51)"

"An earlier study of visitors to national parks confirms that 97% are satisfied with their visit. Despite this, many people have differing views on how national parks should be managed," said Mr Cox.

"The State of the Parks Report will help dispel the many myths of national park management with objective information."

"NPA looks forward to building on this world-class reporting system and using it to ensure further improvements in park management occur in the face of increasing threats and limited resources," concluded Mr Cox.

Contact: Andrew Cox 9299 0000 (w); 0438 588 040 (mob)

ATT 3. NPA POLICIES ON MOTOR VEHICLES, WALKING TRACKS AND HORSERIDING

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW

POLICY No.1

1/5/99

MOTOR VEHICLES IN NATURAL AREAS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Aware of the severe environmental and social impacts that have resulted from the proliferation and poorly controlled use of motor vehicles on natural lands, the National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) believes that such use must be adequately controlled and restricted, and on the majority of such areas, prohibited.

The types of motor vehicles used on natural lands include ordinary cars, special purpose cars and trucks (e.g. 4-wheel drive or 4WD), dune buggies, trail bikes, oversnow vehicles (e.g. snowmobiles), amphibious craft, and hovercraft. Motor vehicles can have a heavy impact on unsealed bush roads, and off roads in bushland, particularly in or bordering wetlands and on vegetated sandmasses. Associated biological problems can be introduced: e.g. plant pathogens such as *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (Cinnamon Root Rot) and various weed seeds. There are also increased risks of fire and littering.

On beach backshores, severe damage to sand-binding vegetation can occur, resulting in dunes becoming prone to excessive wind erosion and migration. Even on the intertidal zone, it is likely that some sand-dwelling fauna are affected by compaction of the sand in heavily trafficked areas, where seabirds are forced to rise and resettle constantly. The value of these natural lands as habitat and places of aesthetic appeal and human escape is reduced.

There are also severe social effects. The noise and air pollution - indeed the very presence of motor vehicles on natural lands, particularly in national parks, other conservation reserves and beaches, reduces their value for passive recreation of all kinds. People have an inalienable right to the opportunity to escape from the artificial impositions of others, and certain areas must be guaranteed to be free from motor vehicles.

The Recreational Vehicles Act (1983) is wrongly based, in that it assumes a basic right of motor vehicles (MVs) to go anywhere, with certain exceptions. NPA asserts that the NSW law should reverse this: that, as in Victoria, motor vehicles should be prohibited from going anywhere with certain exceptions, the principal of which is the public road system. The ethical basis for this view is that, where there is conflict over access to natural areas, the passive areas should have priority of consideration as they cause the lesser environmental and social impacts.

Vehicle owners and drivers are well provided for in NSW: the network of roads denies access to very few places, taking the State as a whole. Roadless areas in the remnant areas of naturalness left to us, particularly the "protected" areas, have become too precious for us to tolerate increased vehicular intrusion, as is constantly threatened by an active 4WD lobby.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy No.4 (Road Systems in National Parks) and Policy No.20 (Appropriate Recreation in National Parks).

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

- * Motor vehicle (MV) means any vehicle essentially for use on land, propelled or assisted by a motor or an engine.
- * Natural lands means lands essentially and substantially in a state of nature, functioning as natural systems.
- * Protected areas are areas reserved for nature conservation and protected from influences contrary to or threatening nature conservation objectives. Examples are: national parks under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974; declared wilderness under that Act or under the Wilderness Act, 1987; flora reserves under the Forestry Act, 1916; water catchment areas under the Catchment Management Act.
- * Environmental impact means adverse effects of human activity on nature, which includes natural environments, native flora and fauna, ecosystems, biodiversity, landscapes, water bodies (e.g. streams, lakes, wetlands, coastal waters), scenery etc.
- * Social impact means the adverse effect on a person or persons of any human action, activity or man-made object, which they consider undesirable, unacceptable or inappropriate in a natural area.
- * Passive recreation is recreation which has a minimal impact upon the natural environment and wildlife, and upon the enjoyment and seclusion of other people.
- * Public road system: a system of roads in a natural area which are designated under the plan of management for that area, or by other means in the absence of such a plan, for vehicles driven by any members of the public.

POLICY

1. Motor vehicle access

Motor vehicles on natural lands should be driven only on formed roads, with the exception of those areas and circumstances listed under 2. below.

2. Off-road driving

Permissible driving off formed roads on natural lands should be only where this is provided for on:

2.1 Recreational Vehicle Areas (RVAs) under the Recreational Vehicles Act, 1983

2.2 Freehold or leasehold lands or permissive occupancies, with the consent of the owner, lessee or occupant, and limited by the terms of the lease or PO permit, any additional conditions set by the owner, lessee or occupant, and the conditions of any conservation agreement or the like, provided adequate provisions for minimising environmental impact (e.g. erosion and weed control) are in place.

2.3 Public lands under circumstances of special need, such as emergencies (e.g. fire, and rescue where life is threatened) and research where there are no reasonable alternative means of access, and special permission by the land manager has been given because it is expected that there will be a net benefit to the area (e.g. nature conservation research of some kind).

3. Protected areas

3.1 Within protected areas (as defined), access by motor vehicles driven by the public on natural lands should be limited to roads and parking areas designated for public use in management plans. (See also NPA Policy No.4: Road Systems in National Parks).

3.2 Management roads or fire trails in national parks and reserves under the NP&W Act 1974 should not be made available for private vehicular use. There should be no so-called "controlled access" arrangements made available to exclusive groups of private vehicle users.

3.3 Existing road and track systems should be assessed and reviewed at an early stage to provide interim management guidelines determining appropriate uses in the public interest pending development of the plan of management.

The public interest includes nature conservation and community education.

4. Private lands

The use of motor vehicles on freehold, leasehold and permissive occupancy lands should be permissible with the consent of the owner, lessee or occupant, but limited by any conditions set by the owner, lessee or occupant, or any conservation agreement and the like between the above and the state government, and provided adequate provisions for minimising environmental impact (e.g. erosion and weed control) and social impact (e.g. excessive noise close to urban development or neighbours) are in place.

5. Right of review

The government should establish the right to review terms and conditions of leases and permissive occupancies on an individual basis, particularly in regard to road construction, and to impose limitations on the rights of freeholders to permit the use of MVs on their properties where excessive environmental damage to the subject land and/or to the adjoining land, or excessive public nuisance, would otherwise be likely to result.

6. Oversnow vehicles

Vehicles used for transport over snowfields on national parks should be used only for management, research and rescue purposes, except where confined to the public road system.

7. Beaches and dunes

Coastal beaches and dunes should be free of motor vehicles, the following exceptions only being permissible:

7.1 Rescue in life-threatening circumstances

7.2 Management access where roads are absent. Use of beaches as management roads should be as sparing as possible. Coast-parallel hind-dune roads should not be formed or constructed as an alternative.

7.3 Professional fishing from the shores of national parks and nature reserves should be phased out, but permitted temporarily by non-transferable annual permit which prohibits driving above High Water Mark. No new permits should be issued.

8. Wilderness

No vehicles of any kind or for any purpose should be permitted within wilderness areas designated under either the Wilderness Act 1987 or the National Parks & Wildlife Act, 1974, except in life-threatening emergencies. Other rescues can be by helicopter if necessary, but any vegetation clearing required must be minimal and the area later rehabilitated.

9. Road closure

Land managers should reserve the right to close a road to traffic when necessary, e.g. during protracted wet weather, high fire danger periods, road in a state of gross disrepair.

10. Penalties

Severe penalties must be imposed for motor vehicle damage to natural values, particularly in protected areas and to flora and fauna.

11. Management roads

The use of management roads must be limited to management, research and rescue, or other emergencies.

12. Recreational Vehicles Act

12.1 The Recreational Vehicles Act 1983 (amended 1998) should be amended so that its basis is the general prohibition of motor vehicles driven off formed roads, but retaining the provision for driving on certain areas - Recreational Vehicle Areas, or RVAs - designated for that purpose.

12.2 RVAs should not be provided within existing or proposed protected areas.

13. RVA environmental impact

Recreational Motor Vehicle Areas provided under the present RMV Act should be established only where the environmental impact is:

13.1 low in terms of noise pollution and visual intrusion in relation to nearby residential areas, passive recreation areas, declared wilderness, and other areas of high environmental or biological values,

13.2 low in terms of biological or environmental damage or disturbance, or

13.3 unlikely to be extended to adjoining areas in the form of excessive water run-off, turbidity, siltation, weed infestation, oil pollution, etc.

14. Registration

14.1 All motor vehicles, whether intended for use on public roads only or off the public road system, should be registered under the Motor Traffic Act, to facilitate their regulation and control.

14.2 New types of off-road vehicles, whether imported or made in Australia, should not be registered until an assessment of their potential to cause environmental damage or social nuisance has been made by the Government.

15. Recreational Vehicle organisations

Drivers and riders should be encouraged to join these clubs which educate members in regard to environmental and social responsibility. This statement does not imply in any way that NPA condones certain vehicle uses considered acceptable by many clubs, but which are contrary to NPA policy, such as driving on beaches (even though confined to the intertidal zone), in declared wilderness, and off the designated public access system in national parks and other reserves.

16. Advertising

Recreational vehicle advertisements should promote an environmentally and socially responsible attitude towards recreational vehicle driving in natural areas. Advertisements should be required by law to avoid giving the impression that such driving need take no account of environmental damage, or can be off-road in national parks and wilderness.

Adopted by State Council in June 1978
Amended by State Council 2/5/92
Amended by State Council 1/5/99

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW

**POLICY No.8
SEPTEMBER 1987**

TRACKS IN NATIONAL PARKS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Although national parks must be regarded principally as reserves for the conservation of nature, they are also used conventionally for certain forms of human recreation. By international agreement as to the nature and purposes of national parks (embodied in the IUCN definition of 1994), this use must be of a very low impact kind, attuned to the quiet ambience of natural settings. Of the relatively few forms of appropriate recreation in national parks calling for some degree of physical exertion, walking is the most generally recognised.

National park walking may range between short easy strolls on constructed tracks in the vicinity of relatively developed areas (e.g. campgrounds, picnic areas, carparks), to long and difficult, sometimes trackless, walks in wild and rugged country.

Tracks are considered desirable or necessary in some national parks to facilitate passage and increase enjoyment, and to protect the environment by confining most intrusion, disturbance and impact to the area in which the track is located.

Tracks are either constructed deliberately to various degrees of sophistication, or are formed inadvertently by the frequent passage of human and other feet. Ideally they should be planned, but are usually "inherited". The following attempts to deal with all aspects of track provision in national parks. The provisions could apply also to other reserves, modified if necessary by the extent of their differences in nature and purposes from national parks.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

* National park means national park, nature reserve and state recreation area under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, and declared wilderness under that Act or under the Wilderness Act 1987, and is the type of area and land use described in the IUCN definition of 1994:

A national park is a natural area of land and/or sea, designated to
(a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations;
(b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area, and
(c) provide a foundation for spiritual, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally compatible.

* Track: A track is any way formed by or for human passage on foot or (subject to any specific management objective) on bicycles.

This definition is for the purposes of the policy, and is far more specific than dictionary definitions. "Track" is a general term which can embrace different classes or types of walking track as may be agreed upon from time to time, e.g. as proposed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS): walk, track and route; or different standards of construction, as adopted by the NSW Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs Inc: walking, constructed and cut tracks. "Tracks" used by motor vehicles should be regarded and referred to as roads. The NPA definition excludes obviously inappropriate usage such as by motor vehicles and horses. Bicycles should be limited to using roads, including management roads (except in declared wilderness), and special bicycle tracks.

POLICY

1. Purpose of tracks in national parks

Tracks may be provided in national parks in order to:

- enable a variety of park visitors to use and enjoy the park appropriately;
- provide for a variety of enjoyment and other benefits through planned location;
 - design and construction;
- facilitate environmental education and interpretation of the park;
- separate walkers from vehicular traffic; and
- divert visitors from natural areas or communities which are to be given special protection.

2. Management plans (plans of management - POM)

2.1 The provision of tracks in national parks should be part of, and in accord with, other provisions of park management plans, which are required under S.72 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

2.2 All approved tracks should be clearly marked on management plan maps, including any yet to be constructed, which should be marked accordingly.

2.3 The reason for planning or approving each track should be clearly stated in the management plan.

3. Planning

3.1 The location and design of tracks should be subject to careful and detailed planning, so as to be in accord with both general and specific management objectives.

3.2 Subject to the objectives, tracks may enable the presentation of a variety of scenery, landforms and features, ecosystems, communities, observable wildlife, and recreation opportunities.

4. Unplanned tracks

4.1 Existing road and track systems should be assessed and reviewed at an early stage to provide interim management guidelines determining appropriate uses in the public interest, pending development of the plan of management.

"The public interest" includes nature conservation and public education.

4.2 Tracks which are not provided for in the management plan should be closed and allowed to revegetate with plants which are native to the area.

5. **Limitation of track provision**

A major proportion of any national park should be trackless (and roadless), as the essence of a national park is naturalness.

6. **Wilderness**

6.1 Declared wilderness should ideally be trackless, and the management plan should not provide for the construction of wilderness tracks.

6.2 Existing tracks in wilderness, if consistently used (i.e. enough to keep them open), should be kept in repair only to the extent of countering erosion and weed infestation, and should not be hardened or upgraded.

6.3 Existing tracks in wilderness, if little used, should be allowed to revegetate naturally.

6.4 Former roads (or "tracks" or "trails") used for walking in wilderness should be allowed, or assisted if necessary, to contract by revegetation to walking track width (approx. 500mm), or to contract out of existence if virtually unused.

7. **Trackless walking**

Groups walking off tracks in national parks or declared wilderness should be mindful of the sensitivity of the natural environment, and limit their numbers to avoid creating tracks.

8. **Long distance tracks**

Long distance tracks which traverse national parks should conform to all points of NPA policy and to an existing management plan (POM), interim management guidelines (IMG), or review of environmental factors (REF).

9. **Track types**

9.1 The national parks system may provide for different types of track, for different purposes and in different areas.

9.2 Tracks requiring a high level of disturbance of the natural condition should constitute a small proportion of the total length of a given park's track system.

9.3 Tracks should be provided for incapacitated persons where appropriate.

10. **Construction**

10.1 The environmental impact of a track, including its visual or aesthetic impact, should be minimised, initially by adequate planning and later by careful and skilful location and construction, with special attention to drainage and to the nature of the environment and the setting.

10.2 Tracks should be so designed and constructed as to resist erosion and generally require minimum maintenance.

10.3 Special provision, such as steps, boardwalks and snowpoles, should be installed only if provided for in the management plan.

10.4 Where track markers are provided, they should comply with Australian Standard AS 2156.

11. **Maintenance**

Approved tracks should be maintained, and adequate resources should be provided to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for this purpose.

12. **Closure**

Management plans should include the option of closing any track, either temporarily or permanently, at managerial discretion.

13. **Guidelines**

13.1 A set of guidelines for the planning, design and construction of tracks of different types should be available to region, area and operations managers.

13.2 The guidelines should accord with, and expand upon, Clauses 3, 5, 9 and 10 of this (the NPA) policy.

Adopted by State Council September 1987
Amended by State Council May 1999

HORSERIDING IN NATURAL AREAS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The National Parks Association of NSW strongly disagrees with the policy of the National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW providing for horse-riding in a number of national parks, as both the environmental and social impacts of this activity are unacceptable in such areas. They are also unacceptable in other areas where nature conservation is a primary objective. Horses (as defined below) are objectionable in these areas for the following reasons:

1. They cause surface damage due to the penetrating impact of their hooves, which deepen tracks, create quagmires, and increase water run-off and erosion.
2. Weed seeds are contained within their droppings. These germinate on track sides and elsewhere, and are further dispersed by the increased run-off during heavy rains.
3. The experience of encountering horses in otherwise natural areas is contrary to that which should be expected in national parks and kindred areas, their presence being contrary to the purpose and spirit of national parks outlined in the IUCN definition of national parks, which is adopted by all Australian governments.
4. Horse excreta upsets the nutrient balance of the Australian bushland which has been noted as being phosphate deficient. The extra nitrogen introduced in the excreta will also upset the nitrogen balance of the bushland. Alteration of both of these cycles will lead to altered floral assemblages.

The NPA recognises, however, that horse-riding outside protected areas (see A1), properly controlled and limited to areas where the inevitable environmental and social impacts are acceptable, is a legitimate pursuit. It is an Australian tradition, almost a culture, and the chief recreation of a small segment of the population. The growth of towns and cities is accompanied by steady retreat of the rural-urban fringe from their centres. Land such as unoccupied Crown land, where equestrians might freely ride, is now a rarity adjacent to national parks, etc. near the cities, and busy roads further frustrate the urban rider. A clear example of this situation is where a riding school operates in the Ingleside area of Sydney, adjacent to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, giving rise to a protracted conflict because of the provision by the NPWS of riding tracks in the Park.

For these reasons, the NPA believes that the Government should attempt to make reasonable provision for horse-riding where there can be no serious conflict with nature conservation and nature-oriented recreation. Such areas and routes could well include both natural and cleared areas.

DEFINITIONS

* Horseriding: For the purposes of this policy, "horse-riding" includes riding of horses, donkeys, mules, or any other hard-hoofed animals. This does not imply that the NPA therefore condones the use of animals which have a lesser impact upon the ground, such as camels. NPA opposes the presence of any exotic fauna in national parks, etc.

* Park road: Road owned, controlled and maintained by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as part of a national park or other NPWS Estate reserve, and open to general public vehicular use.

* Public road: Road excluded from a national park or other NPWS reserve, owned, controlled and maintained by an authority other than NPWS, and open to general public vehicular use.

POLICY

A. HORSE-RIDING IN NATURAL AREAS

1. Protected Areas.

1.1 Horse-riding should not be provided for within national parks, nature reserves and Aboriginal areas under the NPWS Act; nor in flora reserves under the Forestry Act; nor within catchment areas for domestic water conservation; nor in wilderness areas declared under either the NP&W Act or the Wilderness Act; nor in Crown lands which are reserved for the preservation of flora and fauna.

1.2 The areas described in 1.1 include park roads, as defined above.

Park roads, being part of the NPWS Estate, are controlled and managed by the NPWS. This agency therefore has the power to prohibit horseriding on park roads, but not on public roads.

2. Permissible Areas

Horse-riding may be provided for in some state forests; some Crown lands (where not proposed for conversion to nature conservation areas); and some Crown and urban council reserves. Private and leasehold lands may be used by agreement with landholders and lessees, and limited by any conditions set by same or under the leases, or by any conservation agreements.

B. WAYS TO REDUCE IMPACT OF HORSE-RIDING IN NATURAL AREAS

1. Responsibilities of Riders

When horse-riding in permitted areas, riders should be required to

- . Stay on any tracks designated as riding tracks,
- . Observe codes of behaviour as walkers are required to do in the bush,
- . Minimise stream pollution by not allowing horses to stand therein,
- . Avoid galloping where environmental damage would be increased or pedestrians endangered.
- . Report cases of severe or worsening environmental damage by horses,
- . Pay any fees for permits issued by the managing authority.

2. Responsibilities of Clubs

Horse-riding clubs should be encouraged to

- . Educate members in regard to proper horse-riding practices in natural areas and the bush code of ethics
- . Undertake some track maintenance and dung removal work, using environmentally acceptable methods
- . Propose improvements in regard to environmental care, and propose or arrange for alternative areas for riding which help minimise environmental impact while maintaining the enjoyment of riders.

3. Permits

Riders should be required to purchase horse-riding permits to finance maintenance of riding tracks in natural areas, especially where these have been provided in national parks (against NPA policy). Infringement of permit conditions should lead to instant cancellation of the permit.

ADOPTED BY STATE COUNCIL 7/11/92
AMENDED BY STATE COUNCIL 6/11/99