



NAMADGI NATIONAL PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT 2010 REVIEW

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

The ACT Government has reviewed the 2010 Namadgi National Park Plan of Management in preparation for the development of a new plan, commencing in 2023.

The current management plan for Namadgi National Park was developed in 2010 to “protect in perpetuity the natural and cultural values (including hydrological values) of the park from a range of pressures...”.

Key areas of focus in the 2010 plan were: maintaining the ecological and hydrological condition of water catchments; conserving the biodiversity and geodiversity of the park; identifying, conserving and interpreting cultural heritage in the park; integrating multiple objectives into fire management strategies; providing a variety of sustainable recreation opportunities; providing opportunities to community to participate in managing and better understand the park and maintaining effective relationships in program management with neighbours. The plan also aimed to direct efficient, effective and informed management of Namadgi National Park.

The 2023 review examined the success of the plan’s implementation, including whether management objectives were achieved. It also identified new and emerging issues and opportunities to be considered in developing a new plan. The recommendations in the review are a first step to ensuring that a new plan provides a comprehensive and robust planning framework for Namadgi National Park.

THE CONVERSATION

The review of the 2010 Namadgi National Park Management Plan was released for public comment in March 2023, with the YourSay survey active from 27 March 2023 to 14 May 2023.

The ACT Government provided the community with an opportunity to consider the strengths and areas for enhancement of the 2010 plan and to provide feedback on the key issues and recommendations identified in the review. The consultation was hosted on the YourSay Conversations website, with links to the review and the 2010 plan, and was promoted on ACT Government social media platforms and websites.

WHO WE ENGAGED

During the public consultation period we received 31 responses to the YourSay website survey and 7 written submissions from individuals, peak organisations and community groups across the ACT.

Most of the submissions received included detailed comments across multiple themes, which have been grouped where possible below.



Key insights from the community

Park zoning (2 submissions, 1 survey comment)

1. Several small special purpose reserves bordering Namadgi National Park (Namadgi) should be incorporated into the park, where their condition and permitted activities are consistent with those of Namadgi.
2. The boundaries of Bimberi Wilderness area should be rationalised to encompass areas that better suit the definition of “wilderness”, by including new areas or excluding existing areas.

Landscape and biodiversity protection

Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation (3 submissions, 8 survey comments)

3. Additional and updated detail on biodiversity values and ecosystems is needed, including changes to the conservation status of species since the 2010 plan, newly discovered species and species in decline. The new plan should be informed by both official changes to threatened species status under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and via public records from citizen science databases such as the Atlas of Living Australia and Canberra Nature Map.
4. Bird related information must be updated in the new plan of management, including an acknowledgement of long-term declines in abundance of several woodland bird species, the identification of species at risk of the negative effects from management interventions such as changed fire regimes, and species at risk from climate change.
5. There should be increased emphasis and detail in the management plan on biodiversity conservation, including through adaptive management, more comprehensive values/ species records, better monitoring (including setting biodiversity indicators to measure change over time), whole of ecosystem restoration projects and improved threat mitigation.
6. Climate refugia must be identified and protected throughout the park.
7. The management plan objective of “conservation of” the biodiversity and geodiversity of Namadgi should be updated to the “conservation and enhancement of” the biodiversity and geodiversity of Namadgi.

Threats (5 submissions, 12 survey comments)

8. Invasive plant, vertebrate pest control and biosecurity programs are strongly supported, including the zero-tolerance approach to feral horses. Invasive species programs should be informed by improved knowledge of threatened species habitats and seasonal movement i.e., protecting key populations of Bandicoots and Rosenberg’s Goanna must be a key consideration of the location, timing and effort given to fox-baiting.
9. There is a need for additional resourcing for invasive species programs and expanding target species to include pests such as aquatic and invertebrate species and species with the potential to become invasive in Namadgi, while also reviewing control arrangements for dingoes/wild dogs. This includes expanding education programs and boot/ vehicle washing facilities to prevent the spread of weeds and diseases.
10. Climate change is an important issue, particularly in relation to drought and increased fire frequency and intensity (discussed further under Fire Management, below), and the subsequent impact on water, soils and biodiversity. The Australian Alps Bioregion is of particular importance in a changing climate as species progress higher in



altitude to maintain their climatic niche. Climate mitigation actions are needed, including revegetating previously cleared grazing areas and developing reseeding programs post-fire.

11. The existing objective that Namadgi's ecosystems are to be "managed so that they can continue to function and evolve naturally" is no longer adequate in the face of the climate change crisis and needs to be linked to adaptive strategies to address climate change impacts.

Protecting and managing cultural heritage (3 submissions, 4 survey comments)

12. There is the need to update the management plan to reflect changes in the *Heritage Act 2014*.
13. There is a need for a whole of landscape approach to heritage management, notably for historic huts, a resourced framework for the management of historic heritage across all ACT PCS managed reserves, and a monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness of heritage protection in the park.
14. Heritage sites should be managed through conservation plans that incorporate hazard protection measures (such as water tanks beside huts, fire retardant treatments and asset protection zones). A policy should be developed on rebuilding heritage assets that are destroyed (e.g., burnt in wildfire).
15. There is a need to align the management of Namadgi with changes to the Burra Charter, which now places more emphasis on retaining intangible heritage values as well as physical heritage assets.
16. Small fires should be allowed within huts (when appropriate infrastructure is provided) to prevent unauthorized fires, which have greater potential to escape fireplaces and damage buildings.

Fire management (4 submissions, 8 survey comments)

17. Lessons learnt from infrastructure reconstruction activities following the 2020 fires should be reflected in the new plan of management and influence future management, particularly where these did not work.
18. More work is needed on managing fire in the park. This includes additional hazard reduction burns as a means of controlling fire and limiting high severity burns, particularly at a small scale, and consideration for tolerable fire intervals/growth stage diversity across the park while excluding fire from wet areas/sensitive communities.
19. Fire management regimes should replicate pre-European conditions as best as possible to both reduce fire risk and improve biodiversity outcomes.
20. The importance of quick suppression of wildfires in the future, i.e., to extinguish fires before they become uncontrollable, is becoming increasingly important with increased severe fire weather.

Recreation and visitor use

New opportunities and maintenance (3 submissions, 14 survey comments)

21. Considerations should be given to:
 - New and improved visitor infrastructure in the park such as more public toilets, expanded car parks and campgrounds, and improving disabled access.
 - Additional facilities and allowances for rock climbing.



- Greater vehicular access throughout the park including into remote areas.
- Additional walking tracks, and realignments/ improvement to existing tracks and trail heads, and a greater emphasis on the Australian Alps Walking Trail experience.
- Creating better management trails and repairing damaged trails in a timelier manner.
- Improving mountain bike access, including permission to ride in wilderness areas.

Recreational impacts on other values (4 submissions, 8 survey comments)

22. Increased visitor numbers may compromise environmental and heritage values as well as visitors' experience/ feeling of remoteness in the park.
23. Infrastructure, including signage, should be limited to improve amenity and secure a more natural experience for park visitors.
24. Consideration should be given to develop a permit and/ or fee system for camping and biking in parts of the park to limit numbers and curb impacts.
25. Any nature-based commercial tours must be undertaken sustainably and to the highest standards, with appropriate payments used to fund maintenance of and improvements to the park.
26. Commercial operators should not be given exclusive access to any areas and commercial development should be precluded in the park.
27. The new management plan requires greater flexibility to ensure management can respond to/ regulate new and emerging recreational activities, including the use of e-bikes.

Communication, information, interpretation, education & research (4 submissions, 5 survey comments)

28. Greater promotion of Namadgi's values and features is needed, including the Australian Alps partnership.
29. There is a lack of promotion and emphasis of European heritage values.
30. There is a need for additional interpretative, directional and safety signage outside wilderness areas.

Neighbours, community groups and volunteers (3 submissions. 3 survey comments)

31. Greater community involvement and opportunities for volunteer engagement are needed as well as greater promotion and use of citizen science projects such as Canberra Nature Map.
32. Specialist heritage-focused volunteer activities are required, with additional trained staff allocated to support these activities.
33. The new plan should refer to the benefits of, and commitment, to cross border and cross jurisdictional communication, coordination and collaboration in regard to park conservation and land management issues such as invasive species control and management.

Park management and other comments (5 submissions, 13 survey comments)

34. There is a general need for additional staffing and resourcing.



35. Joint management of the park with Traditional Custodians should be a priority, including allowing more opportunities for maintaining connections to country.
36. The new plan should emphasise and commit to adaptive management, with agreement to regularly review management outcomes to ensure objectives are being met, i.e., through accessible regular reporting.
37. There is a need to update the Activities Declarations for Bimberi and Namadgi, and for a better permit system for events and vehicle access beyond locked gates.
38. The review of the plan is inadequate; it does not interrogate the reasons behind objectives not being met and should have been conducted independently of the ACT Government.
39. The information provided around park closures was inadequate and the decisions unjustified, both during the lockdown stages of the pandemic and following the Orroral Valley bushfire.

WHAT'S NEXT?

All submissions will be considered and inform the development of a new draft Namadgi National Park Plan of Management, which will then be released for further public consultation.

Following government approval processes, the final plan will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

To find out more about reserve management planning and other initiatives, policies and projects in Canberra, visit www.yoursay.act.gov.au or follow the [ACT Parks and Conservation Service Facebook page](#).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

981

We reached 981 people via YourSay

21,986

We reached a social media audience of
21,986

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We received 7 written submissions and
31 survey responses)