

Planning and Development (Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion – Block 120, Tennent – Art Installation at Honeysuckle Creek) Notice 2019

Notifiable instrument NI2019–103

made under the

Planning and Development Act 2007, s 138AD (Requirements in relation to environmental significance opinions)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Planning and Development (Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion – Block 120, Tennent – Art Installation at Honeysuckle Creek) Notice 2019*.

2 Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion

- (1) On 11 January 2019, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, pursuant to section 138AB(4) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the **Act**), gave the Applicant a conditional environmental significance opinion in relation to the installation of artwork on Block 120 District of Tennent, at the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station in Namadgi National Park.

- (2) In this section:

Conditional environmental significance opinion means the opinion in the schedule.

Note Under section 138AD(6) of the Act, the conditional environmental significance opinion and this notice expire 18 months after the day the notice is notified.

Ben Ponton
Chief Planning Executive
25 February 2019

ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION

In accordance with section 138AB(4) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Act), I provide the following environmental significance opinion:

APPLICANT

Parks and Conservation Service, as represented by Craig Egle, Senior Project Architect.

APPLICATION and DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The applicant has applied under section 138AA 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 installation of artwork at the former Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station within Namadgi National Park to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Apollo Moon Landing as described in the submission.

LOCATION

Block 120 District of Tennent - Namadgi National Park

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

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

OPINION

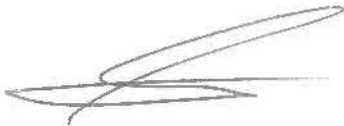
Provided the works are undertaken in the manner consistent with the following conditions, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

This opinion is granted subject to the following conditions made under s138AB(4) of the Act.

- all works are to be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation measures contained in the application for an ESO.

- All vehicles and construction equipment must be cleaned prior to entering the national park and be free of weed and soil material.
- Movement of vehicles and machinery is to be limited to existing bitumen roads and there is to be one access point for access to the installation site.
- Follow up weed control is undertaken on any disturbed areas.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.



Ian Walker
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

u January 2019

STATEMENT OF REASONS REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The proposed development is a proposal mentioned in Schedule 4 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* – Development proposal for an activity requiring an EIS Schedule 4, being:

Part 4.3, item 1(a) development that may impact on a species or ecological community that is endangered, a species that is vulnerable; protected; or has special protection status;

One nationally listed species is found in the vicinity of the works:

- Smoky Mouse *Pseudomys fumeus* listed as endangered pursuant to the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act)

Part 4.3, item 3 proposal for development on land reserved under s 315 for the purpose of a wilderness area, national park, nature reserve or special purpose reserve.

The works are within Namadgi National Park.

The proponent wants the application for the development approval assessed in the merit track 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 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 Creek Tracking Station was a NASA Earth station which opened in 1967 and closed in 1981. Honeysuckle Creek played an important role in Project Apollo and was the tracking station that received and relayed to the world the first historic TV images of astronaut Neil Armstrong setting foot on the Moon during the first moon landing on 20 July 1969.

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Moon Landing it is intended to install a commemorative artwork at Honeysuckle Creek to celebrate the role it played in 1969. The artwork will comprise six corten steel panels shaped to be symbolic of granite tors in the area and also of moon craters. Each of the panels will have a word cut into the panel - ONE, SMALL, STEP, ONE, GIANT, LEAP and will be located on a grassy knoll between the site of the former operations building and the former site of the dish. The material of the signs has been chosen to coordinate with existing interpretive signage across the site.

Each of the six steel panels will be fabricated off-site then delivered and fixed to individual concrete footing below ground level. Excavation and stockpiling is required for the six individual reinforced concrete footings. Once the panels are installed the stockpiled soil is to be back filled and lightly compacted to closely match the existing ground level. Excavation is also required to partially bury four granite boulders around the art work (currently used as bollards in the area).

The works would temporarily disturb an area of approximately 80m². These areas will be reinstated to match the current condition.

Access for the installation is to be via existing asphalt roads and from the existing asphalt slab at the base of the slope.

Documentation Submitted

- Report titled: Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the First Moon Landing – Namadgi National Park;
- Orroral Map of threatened, endangered species;
- Form 1M.

Natural conservation values present

When Honeysuckle Creek closed in December 1981, its 26 m satellite dish was relocated to the Canberra Deep Space Communications Complex at nearby Tidbinbilla. The concrete plinth for the dish remains in place, as does the concrete slabs for the former buildings, with all the roadways and carparks remaining intact.

These remnants of the tracking station are surrounded by manicured grass (albeit now via animal grazing rather than mowing) with no significant species present. The groundcover is Red Grass (*Bothriochloa macra*) and a handful of Snow Grass (poa sp.). There are some shrubs consisting of Grevillia sp. (probably from previous landscaping) and Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*). There are no eucalyptus or mature trees in the area where the art installation is to occur.

The vegetation in the surrounding areas are listed as follows, but will not be impacted by any works:

- Robertson's Peppermint grass-forb very tall woodland to open forest:
- Mountain Gum – Snow Gum ±
- Robertson's Peppermint very tall wet sclerophyll open forest

There is an area of Smoky Mouse habitat within Block 120 Tennent but this habitat does not extend into the area of the former tracking station. There the proposed installation is outside of the areas mapped as Smoky Mouse habitat, and as the species prefers heath habitat on ridge tops and slopes in sclerophyll forest, then the likelihood of any impact on this species is remote.

Impact on the Reserve

The Tracking Station buildings were demolished in 1992 after no other use could be found for them, and damage by vandals made them a danger to visitors. The satellite dish that was relocated to Tidbinbilla Tracking station was renamed Deep Space station 46, and remained in use until late 2009. The antenna remains in place at Tidbinbilla as a historical site.

The remnants of Honeysuckle Tracking station remains in situ providing a positive visitor experience giving visitors the opportunity to interpret the site's former use as a space tracking station. The proposed art installation will add to this experience without interfering with the natural values of the area.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts

To reduce the potential for impact on the National Park for works are to be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation measures contained in the supporting application for an ESO and the following:

- All vehicles and construction equipment must be cleaned prior to entering the reserve and be free of weed and soil material.
- Movement of vehicles and machinery is to be limited to existing bitumen roads and there is to be one access point for access to the installation site.
- Follow up weed control is undertaken on any disturbed areas.

It has been determined that if the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the above conditions attached to the ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.