GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTENT OF A DRAFT PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area – off-road vehicle mitigation actions

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Reference: EPBC 2017/8038)

GUIDELINES FOR A DRAFT PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT REPORT FOR ARTHUR-PIEMAN CONSERVATION AREA – OFF-ROAD VEHICLE MITIGATION ACTIONS – DPIPWE

The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (Tasmania) (DPIPWE, the Proponent) proposes to conduct minor works, optimal route establishment, survey and monitoring, compliance and education, and regulation of access for off-road vehicle tracks 501, 503 and 601 in the Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area, Tasmania.

The proposal was referred under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) to the Minister for the Environment and Energy on 7 September 2017. A delegate of the Minister determined on 16 October 2017 that further assessment and approval is required as the action has the potential to have a significant impact on the following matters of national environmental significance that are protected under Part 3 of the EPBC Act (controlling provisions):

- National Heritage, in particular the values of the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape
- Listed threatened species and communities

On 16 October 2017, the delegate of the Minister also determined that the proposed activity be assessed by a Public Environment Report (PER).

Information about the action and its relevant impacts, as outlined below, is to be provided in the PER. This information should be sufficient to allow the Minister to make an informed decision on whether or not to approve, under Part 9 of the EPBC Act, the taking of the action for the purposes of each controlling provision. (Please note: references to the Minister throughout include the Minister's delegate.)

1. GENERAL ADVICE ON GUIDELINES

1.1. GENERAL CONTENT

The PER should be a stand-alone document that primarily focuses on the matters of national environmental significance listed above. It should contain sufficient information to avoid the need to search out previous or supplementary reports. The PER should take into consideration the EPBC Act Significant Impact Guidelines that can be downloaded from the following web site: <u>http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/guidelines-policies.html</u>.

The PER should enable interested stakeholders and the Minister to understand the environmental consequences of the proposed development. Information provided in the PER should be objective, clear, and succinct and, where appropriate, be supported by maps, plans, diagrams or other descriptive detail. The body of the PER is to be written in a clear and concise style that can be easily understood by the general reader. Technical jargon should be avoided wherever possible. Cross-referencing should be used to avoid unnecessary duplication of text.

Detailed technical information, studies or investigations necessary to support the main text should be included as appendices to the PER. It is recommended that any additional supporting documentation and studies, reports or literature not normally available to the public from which information has been extracted be made available during the period of public display of the PER.

After receiving the Minister's approval to publish the report, the Proponent is required to make the draft PER available for a period of public comment. Specific instructions regarding publication requirements will be provided as part of the Minister's direction to publish which will be provided to the Proponent in separate correspondence.

If it is necessary to make use of material that is considered to be of a confidential nature, the Proponent should consult with the Department on the preferred presentation of that material, before submitting it to the Minister for approval for publication.

The level of analysis and detail in the PER should reflect the level of significance of the expected impacts on the environment. Any and all unknown variables or assumptions made in the assessment must be clearly stated and discussed. The extent to which the limitations, if any, of available information may influence the conclusions of the environmental assessment should be discussed.

All discussions and conclusions should include a full justification based on best available information, including relevant conservation advices, recovery plans, threat abatement plans and guidance documents, if applicable. Commonwealth documents regarding listed threatened species and ecological communities and listed migratory species can be found at: http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl

The Proponent should ensure that the PER assesses compliance of the action with principles of Ecological Sustainable Development as set out in the EPBC Act, and the objects of the Act at Attachment 1. A copy of Schedule 4 of the EPBC Regulations, *Matters to be addressed by draft public environment report and environmental impact statement* is at Attachment 2.

1.2. FORMAT AND STYLE

The PER should comprise three elements, namely:

- a. The executive summary.
- b. The main text of the document.
- c. Appendices containing detailed technical information and other information that can be made publicly available.

The guidelines in this document have been set out in a manner that may be adopted as the format for the PER. This format need not be followed where the required information can be more effectively presented in an alternative way. However, each of the elements must be addressed to meet the requirements of the EPBC Act and Regulations.

The PER should be written so that any conclusions reached can be independently assessed. To this end all sources must be appropriately referenced using the Harvard standard. The reference list should include the address of any Internet "web" pages used as data sources.

The main text of the PER should include a list of abbreviations, a glossary of terms and appendices containing:

- a. A copy of these guidelines.
- b. A list of persons and agencies consulted during the PER.
- c. Contact details for the Proponent.

d. The names of the persons involved in preparing the PER and work done by each of these persons.

The PER should be produced on A4 size paper capable of being photocopied. Maps, diagrams and other illustrative material should be included in the PER: A4 or A3 in size; in colour where possible; and of a high resolution and quality. The Proponent should consider the format and style of the document appropriate for publication on the Internet.

2. SPECIFIC CONTENT

2.1. GENERAL INFORMATION

This should provide the background and context of the action including:

- a. The title of the action.
- b. The full name and postal address of the designated Proponent.
- c. A clear outline of the objective of the action.
- d. The location of the action.
- e. The background to the development of the action.
- f. How the action relates to any other actions (of which the Proponent should reasonably be aware) that have been, or are being, taken or that have been approved in the region affected by the action.
- g. The current status of the action.
- h. The consequences of not proceeding with the action.

2.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

All construction, operational and (if relevant) decommissioning components of the action should be described in detail. This should include the precise location (including coordinates) of all works to be undertaken, structures to be built or elements of the action that may have impacts on matters of national environmental significance.

The description of the action must also include details on how the works are to be undertaken (including stages of development and their timing) and design parameters for those aspects of the structures or elements of the action that may have relevant impacts.

2.3. FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES

Any feasible alternatives to the action to the extent reasonably practicable, including but not limited to:

- a. If relevant, the alternative of taking no action.
- b. Consideration of further alternatives than those initially provided, for example but not restricted to:
 - o Limiting the action to some/not all of the tracks.
 - o Restrictions on the types of off-road vehicles allowed on the tracks.
 - o Reduced/limited allocation of off-road vehicle permits.
 - o Increased compliance actions as an alternative to physical works.
 - Re-routing tracks away from middens, hut depressions and seal hunting hides.

- c. A comparative description of the impacts of each alternative on the matters of national environmental significance protected by controlling provisions of Part 3 of the EPBC Act for the action.
- d. Sufficient detail to make clear why any alternative is preferred to another.

Short, medium and long-term advantages and disadvantages of the options should be discussed.

2.4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A description of the environment of the proposed action area and the surrounding areas that may be affected by the action. It is recommended that this include the following information:

- a. Listed threatened species and ecological communities that must be considered in the PER include, but are not limited to:
 - Lowland native grasslands of Tasmania critically endangered
 - Hooded plover (eastern) (*Thinornis rubricollis rubricollis*) vulnerable
 - Australian grayling (Prototroctes maraena) vulnerable
 - Growling grass frog (*Litoria raniformis*) vulnerable
 - Windswept spider-orchid (Caladenia dienema) endangered
 - Pretty leek-orchid (*Prasophyllum pulchellum*) critically endangered
 - Australian fairy tern (*Sternula nereis nereis*) vulnerable
- b. For listed threatened species and ecological communities that are likely to be present in the vicinity of the site, the following details must be included:
 - Information on the abundance, distribution, ecology and habitat preferences of the species or communities.
 - Discussion of the known threats to the species or communities, with reference to threats posed by the proposed action.
 - Maps identifying known or potential habitat for the species or communities in the proposed action area and surrounding areas.
 - Assessment of the quality and importance of known or potential habitat for the species or communities within the proposed action area and surrounding areas.
 - Scope, timing (survey season/s) and methodology for studies or surveys used to provide information on the listed species/community/habitat at the site (and in areas that may be impacted by the project). Survey methodology must have regard to any relevant publicly available guidance issued by the Department.
 - An assessment of the adequacy of any surveys undertaken (including survey effort and timing). In particular the extent to which these surveys were appropriate and undertaken in accordance with the Department's relevant scientific and policy guidance (see <u>http://www.environment.gov.au/cgibin/sprat/public/sprat.pl</u>).
- c. A description of the National Heritage values of the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape National Heritage Place, including but not limited to:
 - Statement of the listed National Heritage Values for the Western Tasmanian Aboriginal Cultural Landscape as gazetted and available on the Federal Register of Legislation.

- Comprehensive updated details of the location, condition and significance of middens, hut depressions and seal hunting hides and their relationship to each other within the proposed action area, with reference to their listed National Heritage Values, and their location with reference to proposed works, including direct and indirect impacts.
- Details of the scope and methodology of survey to provide this updated information.

2.5. RELEVANT IMPACTS

The PER must include a description of all of the relevant impacts of the action. Relevant impacts are impacts that the action will have or is likely to have on a matter protected by a controlling provision. Impacts during the construction, operational and (if relevant) decommissioning phases of the project should be addressed, and the following information provided:

- a. A detailed assessment of any likely impact that this proposed action may have directly, indirectly or facilitate on the following (at the local, regional, state, national and international scale):
 - i. Listed threatened species and ecological communities
 - Including but not limited to those threatened species and ecological communities listed at 2.4 above.
 - Where relevant for the individual species or ecological community, the assessment should state:
 - The number of individuals directly or indirectly impacted.
 - Loss of area of occupancy of the species or ecological community, measured in hectares.
 - Analysis of the impacts to the species' population resulting from the proposed action.
 - Habitat disturbance, fragmentation, loss, destruction or modification, including degradation of the quality of the habitat, number of hectares impacted or the number of breeding sites (such as nests, burrows, dens, etc.) impacted.
 - ii. The National Heritage values of the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape National Heritage place. A Heritage Impact Statement must be prepared with specific reference to impacts on the listed values, particularly taking into account but not limited to:
 - Consequences of facilitated impacts of the action, such as off-road vehicles driving on the tracks, the risk of increased off-track use and the facilitation of camping and increased movement of off-road vehicles between tracks.
 - Consequences of off-road vehicles driving over matting on middens, hut depressions and seal hunting hides and how the combination of off-road vehicle use and matting may impact these sites.
 - Consequences of accessing the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape for installation and maintenance of proposed works, for example comparison of impacts of accessing sites by off-road vehicles vs helicoptering in staff and equipment.
 - Consistency of the potential impacts with any management plans for the area.

- Detail on the frequency and duration of potential impacts, including the insertion of plastic matting, gravel, fencing, signage, drainage works and possible camping sites, for example how often plastic matting will be replaced, how often maintenance will occur on site and how long workers may be camping on site when such works are conducted.
- b. Maps identifying the location of the action relative to the location of the protected matters and any impacts.
- c. A detailed assessment of the nature and extent of the likely short-term and long-term impacts.
- d. The discussion of impacts must take into account direct, indirect, cumulative and facilitated impacts of the proposed action.
- e. A statement of whether any relevant impacts are likely to be unknown, unpredictable or irreversible.
- f. Analysis of the significance of the relevant impacts.
- g. Any technical data and other information used or needed to make a detailed assessment of the relevant impacts.
- h. A statement identifying and addressing cumulative impacts, where potential project impacts are in addition to existing or future impacts of other activities (including known potential future expansions or developments by the proponent and other proponents in the region and vicinity).

The PER should also address:

- i. The potential cumulative impacts of the proposal on ecosystem resilience including the cumulative effects of climate change impacts on the environment.
- ii. Where relevant to the potential impact, a risk assessment should be conducted and documented.

2.6. PROPOSED AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The PER must provide information on proposed avoidance and mitigation measures to deal with the relevant impacts of the action on matters of national environmental significance. Specific and detailed descriptions of proposed measures must be provided and substantiated, based on best available practices and must include the following elements:

- a. A consolidated list of mitigation measures proposed to be undertaken to prevent or minimise the relevant impacts of the action, including:
 - A description of the environmental outcomes the measures are expected to achieve including details of any baseline data or proposed monitoring to demonstrate progress towards achieving these outcomes.
 - A description of proposed safeguards and mitigation measures to deal with relevant impacts of the action, including mitigation measures proposed to be taken by the State government, local governments or the Proponent, including but not limited to:
 - The process for the implementation and expected effectiveness of proposed program of education and information for off-road vehicle users, including how information on the heritage and compliance

consequences of off-road vehicle use in the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape will be incorporated into this program.

- Consideration of culturally-appropriate recording of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and their relationship to each other (middens, hut depressions and seal hunting hides).
- Consideration of heritage interpretation measures to communicate heritage values of the area.
- Specific details of which impacts (direct, indirect, cumulative and facilitated) the mitigation measures aim to prevent or minimise.
- Assessment of the expected or predicted effectiveness of the mitigation measures, including but not limited to:
 - Evidence as to why plastic matting is proposed as an effective mitigation measure for driving impacts.
 - Evidence as to how proposed mitigation measures will address the identified risk of off-road vehicles going off-track and the associated impacts of off-track driving.
- Any statutory or policy basis for the mitigation measures.
- The cost of the mitigation measures.
- b. A detailed outline of an environmental management plan that sets out the framework for management, mitigation and monitoring of relevant impacts of the action, including any provisions for independent environmental auditing.
 - The environmental management plan needs to address the project phases (construction, operation, decommission) separately. It must state the environmental objectives, performance criteria, monitoring, reporting, corrective action, responsibility and timing for each environmental protection measure.
 - The environmental management plan should also describe contingencies for events such as, but not limited to, delays, adverse weather events or heavy or prolonged rainfall.
- c. The name of the authority responsible for endorsing or approving each mitigation measure or monitoring program.
- d. Maps identifying the location of physical mitigation measures (for example physical barriers, fencing or signage) relative to the location of protected matters and works areas of the proposed action.

2.7. RESIDUAL IMPACTS/PROPOSED OFFSETS

The PER must also provide details of:

- a. The likely residual impacts on matters of national environmental significance after proposed avoidance and/or mitigation measures are taken into account. If applicable, this must also include reasons why avoidance or mitigation of impacts cannot be reasonably achieved.
- b. If relevant, an offset package to compensate for residual impacts to matters of national environmental significance. This should consist of an offset proposal (strategy) and key commitments and management actions for delivering and implementing a proposed offset (e.g. an Offset Management Plan). Please note the strategy and management

plan should be prepared as two separate documents. The proposed offset must meet the requirements of the Department's *EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy* (October 2012) available at: <u>www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/epbc-act-environmental-offsets-policy</u>.

The offset package must include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. A description of the offset site(s) including location, size, condition and environmental values present.
- b. Justification of how the offset package meets the *EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy*.
- c. An assessment (and justification for each input used) of the offset site(s) using the Department's *Offset Assessment Guide* available at: www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/epbc-act-environmental-offsets-policy.
- d. Details on how the offset will be secured, managed and monitored, including management actions, responsibility, timing and performance criteria. This should include the specific environmental outcomes to be achieved from management measures.

Offsets required by the State can be applied if those offsets meet the *EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy*.

2.8. OTHER APPROVALS AND CONDITIONS

The PER must include information on any other requirements for approval or conditions that apply, or that the proponent reasonably believes are likely to apply, to the proposed action. This must include:

- a. Details of any local or State Government planning scheme, or plan or policy under any local or State Government planning system that deals with the proposed action, including:
 - What environmental assessment of the proposed action has been, or is being, carried out under the scheme, plan or policy.
 - How the scheme provides for the prevention, minimisation and management of any relevant impacts.
- b. A description of any approval that has been obtained from the State or a Commonwealth agency or authority (other than an approval under the Act), including any conditions that apply to the action.
- c. A statement identifying any additional approval that is required.
- d. A description of the monitoring, enforcement and review procedures that apply, or are proposed to apply, to the action.

2.9. CONSULTATION

Any consultation about the action, including:

- a. Any consultation that has already taken place.
- b. Proposed consultation about relevant impacts of the action.
- c. If there has been consultation about the proposed action, any documented response to, or result of, the consultation.

- d. Identification of affected parties, including a statement mentioning any communities that may be affected and describing their views.
 - In particular, evidence of consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community and the outcomes of this consultation, undertaken in accordance with the Tasmanian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet document *The Tasmanian Aboriginal Community: A Guide to Engagement*¹ and supported by the Department of Environment and Energy's *Guide to Indigenous Engagement*² and the Australian Heritage Commission's *Ask First Guidelines*³.

2.10. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MATTERS

The economic and social impacts of the action, both positive and negative, must be analysed. Matters of interest may include:

- a. Projected economic and social costs and benefits of the project, including the basis for their estimation through cost/benefit analysis or similar studies.
- b. Employment opportunities expected to be generated by the project (including construction and operational phases).

Economic and social impacts should be considered at the local, regional and national levels. Details of the relevant cost and benefits of alternative options to the proposed action, as identified in section 2.3 above, should also be included.

2.11. ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD OF PERSON(S) PROPOSING TO TAKE THE ACTION

The information provided must include details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against:

- a. The person proposing to take the action.
- b. For an action for which a person has applied for a permit, the person making the application.

2.12. INFORMATION SOURCES PROVIDED IN THE PER

For information given in a draft PER, the draft must state:

- a. The source of the information.
- b. Whether the information is current.
- c. How the reliability of the information was tested.
- d. Uncertainties (if any) in the information.
- e. The guidelines, plans and/or policies considered.

¹ https://stors.tas.gov.au/1337859

² http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/engage-early

³ <u>http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/ahc/publications/ask-first-guide-respecting-indigenous-heritage-places-and-values</u>

2.13. CONCLUSION

An overall conclusion as to the environmental acceptability of the proposal should be provided, including discussion on compliance with principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (see Attachment 1) and the objects and requirements of the EPBC Act. Reasons justifying undertaking the proposal in the manner proposed should also be outlined.

Measures proposed or required by way of offset for any unavoidable impacts on matters of national environmental significance, and the relative degree of compensation, should be restated here.

ATTACHMENT 1

THE OBJECTS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT 1999

SECTIONS 3 AND 3A

3 Objects of the Act

- (a) to provide for the protection of the environment, especially those aspects of the environment that are matters of national environmental significance;
- (b) to promote ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources;
- (c) to promote the conservation of biodiversity;
- (d) to promote a co-operative approach to the protection and management of the environment involving governments, the community, land-holders and indigenous peoples;
- (e) to assist in the co-operative implementation of Australia's international environmental responsibilities;
- (f) to recognise the role of indigenous people in the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity; and
- (g) to promote the use of indigenous peoples' knowledge of biodiversity with the involvement of, and in co-operation with, the owners of the knowledge.

3A Principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development

The following principles are principles of ecologically sustainable development.

- (a) Decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations.
- (b) If there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- (c) The principle of inter-generational equity that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.
- (d) The conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making.
- (e) Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.

ATTACHMENT 2

MATTERS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED IN A PER

(SCHEDULE 4 OF THE EPBC REGULATIONS 2000)

1 General information

- 1.01 The background of the action including:
- (a) the title of the action;
- (b) the full name and postal address of the designated Proponent;
- (c) a clear outline of the objective of the action;
- (d) the location of the action;
- (e) the background to the development of the action;
- (f) how the action relates to any other actions (of which the Proponent should reasonably be aware) that have been, or are being, taken or that have been approved in the region affected by the action;
- (g) the current status of the action; and
- (h) the consequences of not proceeding with the action.

2 Description

- 2.01 A description of the action, including:
- (a) all the components of the action;
- (b) the precise location of any works to be undertaken, structures to be built or elements of the action that may have relevant impacts;
- (c) how the works are to be undertaken and design parameters for those aspects of the structures or elements of the action that may have relevant impacts;
- (d) relevant impacts of the action;
- (e) proposed safeguards and mitigation measures to deal with relevant impacts of the action;
- (f) any other requirements for approval or conditions that apply, or that the Proponent reasonably believes are likely to apply, to the proposed action;
- (g) to the extent reasonably practicable, any feasible alternatives to the action, including:
 - (i) if relevant, the alternative of taking no action;
 - (ii) a comparative description of the impacts of each alternative on the matters protected by the controlling provisions for the action; and

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- (iii) sufficient detail to make clear why any alternative is preferred to another;
- (h) any consultation about the action, including:
 - (i) any consultation that has already taken place;
 - (ii) proposed consultation about relevant impacts of the action; and
 - (iii) if there has been consultation about the proposed action any documented response to, or result of, the consultation; and
- (i) identification of affected parties, including a statement mentioning any communities that may be affected and describing their views.

3 Relevant impacts

- 3.01 Information given under paragraph 2.01(d) must include
- (a) a description of the relevant impacts of the action;
- (b) a detailed assessment of the nature and extent of the likely short term and long term relevant impacts;
- (c) a statement whether any relevant impacts are likely to be unknown, unpredictable or irreversible;
- (d) analysis of the significance of the relevant impacts; and
- (e) any technical data and other information used or needed to make a detailed assessment of the relevant impacts.

4 Proposed safeguards and mitigation measures

- 4.01 Information given under paragraph 2.01(e) must include:
- (a) a description, and an assessment of the expected or predicted effectiveness of, the mitigation measures;
- (b) any statutory or policy basis for the mitigation measures;
- (c) the cost of the mitigation measures;
- (d) an outline of an environmental management plan that sets out the framework for continuing management, mitigation and monitoring programs for the relevant impacts of the action, including any provisions for independent environmental auditing;
- (e) the name of the agency responsible for endorsing or approving each mitigation measure or monitoring program; and
- (f) a consolidated list of mitigation measures proposed to be undertaken to prevent, minimise or compensate for the relevant impacts of the action, including mitigation measures proposed to be taken by State governments, local governments or the Proponent.

5 Other Approvals and Conditions

5.01 Information given under paragraph 2.01(f) must include:

- (a) details of any local or State government planning scheme, or plan or policy under any local or State government planning system that deals with the proposed action, including:
 - (i) what environmental assessment of the proposed action has been, or is being carried out under the scheme, plan or policy; and
 - (ii) how the scheme provides for the prevention, minimisation and management of any relevant impacts;
- (b) a description of any approval that has been obtained from a State, Territory or Commonwealth agency or authority (other than an approval under the Act), including any conditions that apply to the action;
- (c) a statement identifying any additional approval that is required; and
- (d) a description of the monitoring, enforcement and review procedures that apply, or are proposed to apply, to the action.

6 Environmental record of person proposing to take the action

- 6.01 Details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against:
- (a) the person proposing to take the action; and
- (b) for an action for which a person has applied for a permit, the person making the application.
- 6.02 If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework.

7 Information sources

- 7.01 For information given the PER must state:
- (a) the source of the information; and
- (b) how recent the information is; and
- (c) how the reliability of the information was tested; and
- (d) what uncertainties (if any) are in the information.