

Environment and Communications References
Answers to questions on notice
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Portfolio

Inquiry: Impacts and management of feral horses in the Australian Alps
Question No: IQ23-000248
Division/Agency: Nature Position Integration Division
Topic: Kosciuszko Biosphere Reserve
Question Date: 03 August 2023
Question Type: Written

Senator Hanson-Young asked:

1. Kosciuszko National Park was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1977. In 2020, the Australian Government withdrew Kosciuszko National Park from the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Programme due to its inability to comply with the revised criteria outlined in the 1995 Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework.¹
 - a. Why was Kosciuszko withdrawn from the Biosphere Reserve Programme, and what steps were followed by the department to progress the withdrawal?
 - b. Were any statements outlining the reason(s) for the withdrawal provided to UNESCO to support the withdrawal of the site? If so, please provide the committee with the statement(s).
 - c. When and how was the withdrawal of Kosciuszko from the Biosphere Reserve Programme made public?
 - d. Are there any plans to apply for Kosciuszko to be re-entered into the Biosphere Reserve Programme?
2. The management of Biosphere Reserves is set out in the EPBC, with reference to the Australian Biosphere reserve management principles in the EPBC Regulations 2000 (the management principles). The management principles set out that where the Biosphere Reserve is in a state, the Commonwealth may co-operate with the state on the management plan, but the plan must not be inconsistent with the management principles.
 - a. Was a management plan prepared for the Kosciuszko Biosphere Reserve? If so, please provide the committee with a copy of the plan.
 - b. How did the management plan seek to achieve Australia's obligations under the Biosphere Reserve Programme to protect the reserve area 'from disturbance and threatening processes'?²
 - c. How did the management plan seek to address the issue of feral horses in the Biosphere Reserve?
3. Between 2018 and 2020, both the Biosphere Reserve Programme entry for Kosciuszko National Park and the NSW Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 were co-existing.
 - a. How did these two sets of obligations exist simultaneously, given they have contradictory objectives?

Answer:

1.
 - a. The Kosciuszko National Park Biosphere Reserve was withdrawn because it no longer met the revised criteria for an area to qualify for designation as a biosphere reserve outlined in the 1995 Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework.
 - b. See correspondence at Attachment A.

¹ DCCEEW, [Australia's Biosphere Reserves](#).

² Schedule 7—Australian Biosphere reserve management principles (regulation 10.03)

c. and d. The New South Wales (NSW) National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is the entity responsible for managing the former Kosciuszko National Park Biosphere Reserve. These questions are best directed to the NSW NPWS.

2. a., b. and c. Prior to the withdrawal of the Kosciuszko National Park Biosphere Reserve in 2020, development of a management plan for the Biosphere Reserve was the responsibility of the NSW NPWS. A plan of management for the Kosciuszko National Park is available on the NSW NPWS website. The Department is not aware of a separate management plan for the Kosciuszko National Park Biosphere Reserve.
3. a. Questions about the intersection between the Kosciusko National Park Biosphere Reserve and the *Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 (NSW)* should be directed to the NSW NPWS.



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

Miguel Clüsener-Godt
Director, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences
Secretary, Man and the Biosphere Programme
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Dear Mr Clüsener-Godt

Update on Australia's Biosphere Reserves

The Australian Government, through the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, is pleased to provide you with a Periodic Review of the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserve, for consideration by the Advisory Committee for UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme.

Australia is participating in the Process of Excellence to support the integrity of the Man and the Biosphere Programme by ensuring only those sites meeting the Programme's current objectives continue to be included.

After consultation with the relevant Biosphere Reserve managers, I request the withdrawal of Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga), Croajingalong, Riverland (formerly Bookmark), Kosciuszko and Unnamed (Mamungari) Biosphere Reserves. These sites cannot meet the necessary criteria to function effectively as Biosphere Reserves.

The Australian Government remains committed to the Man and the Biosphere Programme and continues to work with our partners and state and territory governments to support biosphere reserves across Australia.

I will continue to keep you informed of relevant developments for each of Australia's Biosphere Reserves as they come to hand.

Yours sincerely

Tia Stevens
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Biodiversity Policy and Water Science
Biodiversity Conservation Division
5 September 2019