



*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

INCLUSION OF A PLACE IN THE NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST

I, Peter Robert Garrett, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts having considered, in relation to the place specified in the Schedule of this instrument -

- (a) the Australian Heritage Council's assessment whether the place meets any of the National Heritage criteria; and
- (b) the comments given to the Council under sections 324JG and 324JH of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; and

being satisfied that the place described in the Schedule has the National Heritage values specified in the Schedule, pursuant to section 324JJ of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, include it in the National Heritage List.

Dated 4/11/2008

[Signed]

Peter Robert Garrett AM  
Minister for the Environment,  
Heritage and the Arts

**SCHEDULE****STATE / TERRITORY**

Local Government

Name

Location / Boundary

Criteria / Values

**NEW SOUTH WALES****Bombala Shire, Cooma-Monara, Snowy River Shire, Tumburumba, Tumut, Yass Valley****AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY****Australian Capital Territory****VICTORIA****Alpine Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Mansfield Shire, Towong Shire, Wellington Shire****Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves:**

About 1,653,180ha, comprising the following national parks and reserves located in the Australian Alps:

Brindabella National Park, about 12050ha, 35km south-south-west of Yass, NSW;

Namadgi National Park, about 105900ha, 35km south-west of Canberra, ACT;

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, about 5500ha, 25km south-west of Canberra, ACT;

Bimberi Nature Reserve, about 7100ha, 55km east-south-east of Tumut, NSW;

Scabby Range Nature Reserve, about 3400ha, 25km north of Adaminaby, NSW;

Kosciuszko National Park, about 690000ha, 10km west of Jindabyne, NSW;

Alpine National Park, about 646000ha, 5km south-east of Mount Beauty, VIC;

Snowy River National Park, about 98700ha, 25km north-north-west of Orbost, VIC;

Avon Wilderness Park, about 40000ha, 30km north-north-west of Maffra, VIC.

Mount Buffalo National Park, about 31000ha, Mount Buffalo Road, Mount Buffalo, VIC; and

Baw Baw National Park, about 13530ha, 5km north of Erica, VIC.

**Criterion****Values**

(a) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history.

The Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves (AANP) are part of a unique Australian mountainous region. Human interaction with the region has been distinctive in its response to the challenges and opportunities presented by this unique environment.

***Glacial and Periglacial Features***

The assemblage of glacial deposits and features in the AANP includes five alpine lakes, thirteen cirques and associated moraines, ice-grooved and polished pavements and erratic boulders. Periglacial features, both fossil and modern, include block streams, permafrost and solifluction deposits. These features are the material expression of the cold-climate, high-altitude history of the AANP, unique in the low-latitude, low-altitude Australian continent. The glacial and periglacial features contribute uniquely to our understanding of the nature of landscape response to climate during the ice ages of the late Quaternary and into the present and therefore has outstanding heritage value to the nation for its importance in the pattern of Australia's natural history (Percival 1985; Galloway 1989; Yeates 2001a; ISC 2004; AALC 2006).

### **Fossils**

The Mt Howitt fish fossil site demonstrates remarkable fossil species diversity and preserves fish fossils across a wide range of life stages from larvae to mature fish, over tens of millions of years. The site contributes an important narrative about the evolution of fish across a number of different marine and freshwater environments, and the development of features that enabled vertebrates to leave the water to exploit terrestrial environments for the first time. Fossils revealed at the site have outstanding heritage value to the nation for their place in vertebrate evolution during the so-called 'Age of Fish' (Vickers-Rich and Rich 1993; Cook ed. 2007).

### **Karst**

The Yarrangobilly karst area contains an outstanding collection of surface karst features including gorges, arches, blind valleys, springs and pinnacle fields. It also contains several hundred caves including six show caves with many intricate cave decorations, open for public viewing (ISC 2004). Yarrangobilly has yielded valuable information on the long-term dynamics of landscape formation. The thick flowstone sequences in Jersey Cave span half a million years and provide the longest continuous fire history record from a single site in Australia (DEH 2006b). Yarrangobilly has outstanding value to the nation for its features and karst processes evident in the limestone karst landscape.

### **Biological Heritage**

The Alps are one of eleven sites recognised in Australia by the IUCN as a major world centre of plant diversity. During the late Quaternary and into the present, the high-altitude, cold-climate environment has provided refuge for species in an increasingly arid climate. Containing most of the contiguous montane to alpine environments in Australia, the AANP supports a rich and unique assemblage of cold-climate specialist species that have evolved unique physiological characteristics, enabling them to survive in an environment subject to extreme climate variation. Outstandingly rich flora taxa in the AANP include the daisies (Asteraceae), willow-herbs (Onagraceae), starworts and cushion-plants (Caryophyllaceae), southern heaths (*Epacris*), bottlebrushes (*Callistemon*), orchids (*Pterostylis*, *Prasophyllum* and *Dipodium*) and pimeleas (Thymaelaeaceae). Cold-climate adapted and endemic fauna species include the mountain pygmy-possum (*Burramys parvus*), the alpine she-oak skink (*Cyclodomorphus praealtus*), Snowy Mountains rock skink (*Egernia guthega*), Baw Baw frog (*Philoria frosti*), southern corroboree frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*), and the northern corroboree frog (*P. pengilleyi*). Species of a great many invertebrate taxa are endemic to the Alps. These include stoneflies, caddisflies, mayflies, grasshoppers, and earthworms. Many display cold-climate adaptations, such as the mountain grasshopper (*Acripeza reticulata*), mountain spotted grasshopper (*Monistria concinna*) and alpine thermocolour grasshopper (*Kosciuscola tristis*). The Bogong moth undertakes regular migration in Australia and an essential part of its lifecycle occurs within the AANP. The AANP is a vital refuge for alpine and sub-alpine flora and fauna species, with a high level of richness and endemism across a wide range of taxa, and therefore has outstanding value to the nation for encompassing a significant and unique component of Australia's biological heritage (Nankin 1983; Costin 1989; Strahan 1995; Good 1995; Boden and Given 1995; WWF and IUCN 1995; Cogger 1996; Crabb 2003 Good 2003; ISC 2004; DSE 2005; AALC 2005; DEC 2006; McDougall & Walsh 2007, ANHAT 2007).

### **Moth Feasting**

The use of an adult insect – the Bogong moth – as the basis for past large-scale annual gatherings of different Aboriginal groups for ceremonies sets the gatherings in the AANP apart from other Aboriginal ceremonial gatherings and has captured the Australian imagination, making it exceptional in Australia (White 2006). Therefore the AANP has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the importance of Aboriginal social gatherings based on moth feasting in the course, or pattern, of Australia's cultural history.

***Transhumant Grazing***

The AANP has outstanding heritage value for its association with historic transhumant grazing that commenced in the 1830s. The practice of using alpine high plains to graze stock during the summer months was a significant pastoral activity of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and was continuously practised for a period of over 150 years; making a considerable contribution to the early pastoral industry of south-east Australia. Transhumant grazing created and sustained a distinctive way of life that is valued as an important part of Australia's pioneering history and culture. Evidence of transhumant grazing includes huts, the former grazing landscapes, stock yards, and stock routes.

***Scientific Research***

The AANP has outstanding heritage value for the scientific research that has taken place since the 1830s, demonstrated by the density and continuity of scientific endeavour. Research sites within the AANP include those relating to botanical surveys, soil conservation exclosures, karst research, fauna research, meteorology, fire ecology plots, arboreta and glacial research sites. Space tracking undertaken in the ACT with Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station having played a significant role in the Apollo 11 moon landing mission.

***Water Harvesting***

Water harvesting in the AANP has outstanding heritage value to the nation for its contribution to the social and economic development of Australia. Water harvested from headwaters in the AANP contributes to the water needs of Canberra and Melbourne. The Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme and the Kiewa Valley Hydro-electric Scheme also contributes to the electricity needs of south-eastern Australia. Both schemes were major post-war reconstruction projects, encouraging migration to Australia and employing over 60,000 displaced persons from post war Europe. Evidence of water harvesting in the AANP for power and irrigation includes the major pondages along with the numerous tunnels, aqueducts, power stations, huts, roads and former settlements, town and work camp sites.

***Recreation***

The AANP has outstanding heritage value for the longevity and diversity of its recreational use. Snow sports commenced in Kiandra in 1861 with the establishment of the Kiandra Snowshoe Club and expanded from an ad hoc activity by enthusiasts to a multi-million dollar snow sport and tourism industry characterised by the groomed ski slopes, ski lift infrastructure and substantial village resorts. The chalets supported by government were major features of the expanding activity and were established in scenic locations in the early twentieth century when mountain retreats were highly regarded for good health. These include the Mount Buffalo Chalet, the Yarrangobilly Caves House Precinct, the Chalet at Charlottes Pass, and the former Hotel Kosciusko and Mount Franklin Chalets.

- (b) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history.

#### *Landscape and Topography*

The high altitudes of the plateaus and peaks in the AANP are prominent in a continent with an average elevation of only 330 metres above sea level. The AANP includes most of continental Australia's peaks over 1,700 metres and all of those over 1,900 metres. These high peaks and plateaus contain the vast majority of alpine and sub-alpine environments in Australia. The AANP experiences extensive snow coverage on a seasonal basis, and its glacial lakes are the only wetlands on the Australian mainland covered by ice sheets in winter. The high-altitude landscape of the AANP has outstanding heritage value to the nation for its topographic heights, uncommon alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems and glacial lakes. (AALC 2005; DEC 2006; Geoscience Australia 2007).

#### *Glacial and Periglacial Features*

Continental Australia and its southern territorial islands have experienced periods of historic glaciation, with current snow and ice coverage limited to the highest peaks and altitudes. On mainland Australia, the AANP preserves a concentration of glacial and periglacial features without comparison from the ice ages of the late Quaternary Period. The Kosciuszko Plateau is unique in mainland Australia as the only place irrefutably exhibiting landforms shaped by Late Pleistocene glaciers during a series of glacier advances known as the Late Kosciuszko Glaciation. The active and fossil periglacial landforms of the AANP include blockstreams and solifluction features (solifluction is the gradual movement of waterlogged soil down a slope, especially where percolation is prevented by a frozen substrate). They are the most striking and extensive in mainland Australia and demonstrate the widespread effects of cold climate in the Quaternary, mild climate in the Holocene and the absence of intensive Pleistocene ice modification of the elevated landscape of the Victorian and ACT Alps. Therefore the AANP has outstanding heritage value to the nation for containing uncommon glacial and periglacial features (Percival 1985; Yeates 2001; Barrows et al. 2001).

#### *Fossils*

The Mt Howitt fish fossil site is globally rare because it preserves a diverse array of fossil fish in uncommon detail at all stages of their lives. It is unique nationally in providing a snapshot of a complete freshwater vertebrate community from the past, and for yielding fossils from all stages of growth of a species, from tiny fish larvae to adult fish, and therefore has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of its preservation of an uncommon aspect of Australia's natural history (Long 2002; Cook ed. 2007).

#### *Alpine and Sub-alpine Ecosystems*

The AANP has outstanding heritage significance to the nation for possessing extremely uncommon aspects of Australia's natural history. Alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems are uncommon in the generally arid and warm climate of Australia. The distribution of cold-climate species on the mainland retreated to the higher altitudes of the Alps in the Late Pleistocene as conditions began to warm up. The AANP contains most of the alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems on mainland Australia, supporting flora and fauna species that have evolved to the harsh conditions of the high altitudes. Many of these species are endemic to the Alps and are found nowhere else in Australia. The bog and fen groundwater communities are supported by organic soils and contain exceptional water retention properties. These communities play an integral role in ecosystem function by regulating the slow release of water from saturated peatbeds to the surrounding alpine humus soils, streams and other alpine communities (Good 1995; AALC 2006b).

*Eucalypt Flora Community*

The AANP provides an outstanding example of the adaptability of a plant genus, the genus *Eucalyptus*, along a steep topographical transect. The eucalypts dominate the AANP vegetation from the lowlands to as high as the alpine region, where the snow gum (*E. pauciflora*) defines the treeline. Much of the highest land in Australia occurs within the AANP, which also demonstrates very large topographical variations, which in turn is reflected in the high diversity of eucalypt species replacing each other along the altitudinal and climatic gradient (Costin 1988; Kirkpatrick 1994; ISC 2004; ANHAT 2007).

- (d) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments.

*North-East Kosciuszko Pastoral Landscape*

The landscape is outstanding for demonstrating the use of mountain resources, namely the summer grasses and herbfields. As a relict landscape of past grazing leases it conveys the principal characteristics of transhumance and permanent pastoralism in a remote environment, these being large areas of open grassy landscapes between timbered ridges and hills, stockman's huts, homestead complexes, stockyards and stock routes. The grasslands with swathes of pioneer shrubs include the Kiandra landscape, Boggy Plain, Nungar Plain, Gulf Plain, Wild Horse Plain, Tantangara Plain, Dairymans Plain, Currango Plain, Long Plain, Cooleman Plain, Kellys Plain, Blanket Plain, Peppercorn and Pockets Saddle (KHA 2008). Homestead buildings include Cooinbil and Old Currango and the modest homestead complexes of Currango and Coolamine with additional features including exotic plantings, sheds, barns, and workers' accommodation. Former stock routes, now fire trails, include the Port Philip Fire and Murrays Gap Fire Trails. Located in the former grazing leases are stockman's huts, Bill Jones Hut, Circuits Hut, Gavels Hut, Hains Hut, Hainsworth Hut, Millers Hut, Oldfields Hut, Pedens Hut, Pockets Hut, Townsends Lodge, Gavels Hut, Long Plain Hut, Gooandra Hut, Schofields Hut, and Witzes Hut (KHA 2008), which in their use and re-use of available materials typify a lifestyle and vernacular bush building technology using hand tools. The array of characteristics relate to over a century of alpine grazing.

- (e) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

The AANP is a powerful, spectacular and distinctive landscape highly valued by the Australian community. The mountain vistas, including distinctive range-upon-range panoramas, snow covered crests, slopes and valleys, alpine streams and rivers, natural and artificial lakes, the snow-clad eucalypts and the high plain grasslands, summer alpine wildflowers, forests and natural sounds evoke strong aesthetic responses. Much of the terrain of the AANP is highly valued for its remoteness, and naturalness, including views to and from the region that capture snow clad ranges and mountain silhouettes against clear skies as well as expansive views of natural landscapes from the high points of the Alps.

The upper Snowy River and Snowy Gorge, Mount Buffalo, the Kosciuszko Main Range, Lake Tali Karng, Dandongadale Falls the peaks and ridges between and including Mt Cobbler, Mt Howitt and the Bluff and other high peaks, ridgelines, granite outcrops and escarpments are examples of dramatic awe-inspiring landscapes. Recreational pursuits in these landscapes are enhanced by aesthetic appreciation of their wild and natural quality.

Snow-covered eucalypts, huts in mountain settings and mountain landscapes are distinctive Australian images captured by numerous artists and photographers. The mountain landscapes have inspired poets, painters, writers, musicians and film makers.

- (g) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
- The Australian Alps have a special association with the Australian community because of their unique landscapes, the possibility of experiencing remoteness and as the only opportunity for broad-scale snow recreation in Australia. The AANP is widely recognised by Australians as the 'high country' and many community groups have a special association with the AANP for social and cultural reasons.
- Mount Kosciuszko is an iconic feature for all Australians and visited by over 100,000 people each year. It was named by the explorer Paul Edmund Strzelecki after the Polish freedom fighter, General Tadeusz Kosciuszko, in appreciation of freedom and a free people, an association that is highly valued by Australia's Polish community.
- The pioneering history of the high country is valued as an important part of the construction of the Australian identity featuring in myths, legends and literature. The ballad "The Man from Snowy River" epitomises horsemanship undertaken historically in the rugged landscape. The stories, legends and myths of the mountains and mountain lifestyles have been romanticised in books, films, songs, and television series and many such as the Elyne Mitchell's Silver Brumby novels are part of Australia's national identity.
- The mountain huts of the AANP constructed for grazing, mining and recreation are valued by communities as a physical expression of the cultural history of the region. They have special associations with many groups, such as mountain cattlemen, skiers and bushwalkers but particularly with huts associations that have been maintaining mountain huts and associated vernacular building skills for over 30 years.
- (h) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.
- Baron Ferdinand von Mueller is highly recognised nationally and internationally for his contribution to Australian botany, particularly his extensive and thorough botanical collections of the Australian Alps undertaken in several botanical collecting trips on horseback, each of several weeks' or months' duration (Costin et al. 1979).
- Eugen von Guerard was a significant nineteenth century artist producing a prolific record of Australian landscapes. His 1863 painting the "North-east view from the northern top of Mount Kosciuszko" is regarded as one of his finest artistically and is in Australia's national collection.
- Through his ballad "The Man from Snowy River", Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson captured the imagination of the Australian people, stimulating a passion for the High Country and the way of life associated with the mountains. His iconic ballad has had a lasting influence on Australians.
- The writer Elyne Mitchell and poet David Campbell lived near the mountains and their strong association with the place is expressed in much of their nationally important literary works.