



POSITION PAPER

Snowy 2.0

BACKGROUND

The National Trust listed the Kosciusko Alpine Landscape Conservation Area on the National Trust Register in September, 1977.

The Listing Report's Reasons for Listing noted the "outstanding scenic grandeur of vast alpine mountains and high plain, for the most part above the tree line, containing Australia's highest peaks, glacial lakes and most extensive snowfields. Impressive views of vast distances and snowfields from vantage points contrast with fascinating displays of alpine wildflowers that form a veritable carpet across the valleys in summer."

The Reasons for Listing also noted the geomorphology, geology and ecology of the alpine environment. The Listing Report recommended "that strict control of use of the area should be aimed at conserving this important biological resource."

On 15 March 2017, then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced plans for Snowy 2.0, a \$2 billion expansion of the Snowy Hydro scheme that could power up to 500,000 homes through a new network of tunnels and power stations.

On 24 March, 2020, in an open letter to Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Premier Gladys Berejiklian 30 prominent Australian energy engineering, economic and environmental experts called for a comprehensive public review of Snowy 2.0 and alternative energy management options before the Commonwealth Government considers its final approval for the project and the NSW Government completes its assessment of the Environmental Impact Statement. They stated that it was now evident that Snowy 2.0 will cost many times its initial estimate, not deliver its claimed benefits and will permanently damage Kosciuszko National Park to an unprecedented extent. The development will convert extensive areas of Kosciuszko National Park into construction sites (for 8 years), with permanent negative impacts over thousands of hectares of the Park and beyond, including 14 million cubic metres of excavated spoil dumped in the Park, on land and in Snowy 2.0's reservoirs – with some contaminated by naturally-occurring-asbestos and potentially-acid forming rock; two double-circuit 330kV transmission lines, running 10km through the Park in a 120m-wide easement; depressed water tables and stream flows above sections of the tunnel; over 100km of new or upgraded roads and tracks; destruction of 1,000 hectares of habitat for 14 threatened species; spread of pest fish, diseases and weeds throughout the Snowy Scheme and downstream rivers, devastating the aquatic environment and recreational fishing, and probably driving an entire species, the Stocky Galaxias, to extinction. Snowy Hydro have applied for an exemption from the NSW Biosecurity Act to avoid prosecution for such illegal actions; a legacy of infrastructure and landscape scars across 30km of the Australian Alps; compounding the recent bushfire damage to the National Park and countering its recovery. See Attachment A for full Statement.

On 30 March, 2020 the National Trust expressed its strong support for an initiative calling for a review of Snowy 2.0 in view of the increased cost of construction, the lack of viability for the project and, most importantly its massive environmental impacts and threat to Australia meeting its agreed targets on Climate Action. On 28 April 2020, the NSW Government announced the first 24 projects to undergo a fast-tracked assessment process as part of the NSW Government's new Planning System Acceleration Program. One of those projects was Snowy 2.0 - Main Works, "to provide large-scale energy storage and quick-start electricity generation at critical times of peak demand when energy supply is constrained and at times when intermittent renewable energy output is low" at a cost of \$4.6b

NATIONAL TRUST POSITION

- The National Trust calls for strict control of the use of the area aimed at conserving this important biological resource.
- The National Trust continues to call for a review of Snowy 2.0 in view of the increased cost of construction, the lack of viability for the project and, most importantly its massive environmental impacts and threat to Australia meeting its agreed targets on Climate Action.
- The Trust will make its concerns about the Snowy 2.0 known, with a view to ensuring that alternative, less environmentally damaging and more effective proposals are considered.

ACTION TO PROMOTE THE TRUST'S POSITION

The Trust will publicise its position on Snowy 2 in social and the traditional media and on the National Trust website and will continue to make its views known.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Snowy 2.0 Doesn't Stack Up, National Parks Association of NSW, 15 October, 2019 <https://npansw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/191014-Snowy-2.0-doesnt-stack-up-FINAL.pdf>

Fast- Tracked Assessment Tranche one, Department of Planning Industry & Development website, <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Other/fast-tracked-assessments-tranche-one-2020-04.pdf?la=en>

Fast-Tracked Assessments Announcement, Department of Planning Industry & Development website, <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/fast-tracked-assessments>