



## South Branch, Regional Operations Review of Environmental Factors Sign off Sheet

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| <b>Name of Proposal:</b> Lower Thredbo Valley Track, Bullocks Flat to Thredbo River Picnic Area | <b>Activity Application No:</b>   |
| <b>Park or Reserve Name:</b> Kosciuszko National Park   | <b>Proponent:</b> Internal<br><small>(Cross out option that does not apply)</small> |
| <b>Region:</b> Southern Ranges  | <b>Area:</b> Alpine-Queanbeyan  |

|   | Signature | Date      |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| REF seen and endorsed by Area Manager –<br>Anthony Evans  |           | 15.10.15  |
| REF seen and endorsed by Regional Manager –<br>Mick Pettitt   |           | 15.10.15  |
| Date registered by Team Leader, South East Region<br>Regional Operations<br>PO Box 2115, Queanbeyan NSW 2620 Fax: 02 62297001 |           |           |
| Date of Determination, Regional Manager, South East Region Regional Operations  |           | 5/11/2015 |
| Determination/approval received,<br>Regional Manager  |           | 13.11.15  |

## REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

### DETERMINATION REPORT

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>REF Trim ref:</b>      | DOC 15/410452  |
| <b>Project Name:</b>      | Lower Thredbo Multi-use Track - Bullocks Flat to Thredbo River Picnic Area |
| <b>Proponent:</b>         | OEH Southern Ranges Region   |
| <b>Reserve Name:</b>      | Kosciuszko National Park   |
| <b>Region/ Area:</b>      | Southern Ranges Region/ Alpine Queanbeyan Area                             |
| <b>Date REF received:</b> | 15 October 2015  |

| Criteria                                 | Yes/No | Comments   |
|--|--------|--|
| Is the activity described satisfactorily | Yes    | <p>The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) is proposing to extend the recently opened (January 2015) shared-use Thredbo Valley Track within Kosciuszko National Park. The new section of track will be known as the Lower Thredbo Valley Track (LTVT).</p> <p>The proposed route starts at the current end point at Bullocks Flat and extends to the Thredbo River Picnic Area within Kosciuszko National Park (KNP). The track will be a multi-use trail (pedestrian and cycle) track similar to existing stages.</p> <p>From the starting point at Bullocks Hut the shared-use track will immediately cross to the northern side of the Thredbo River using the pedestrian access on the Skitube Bridge. It will run roughly adjacent to the Thredbo River for approximately 20 kilometres and end either at the Thredbo River Picnic Area or at the Gaden Trout Hatchery.</p> <p>Very short sections of the track would be within approximately 10–20 metres of the Thredbo River; however, the vast majority of the track would be located at least 50–100 metres from the river, with some sections being more than 500 metres from the river.</p> <p>The Snowy River Shire Council is currently working with community stakeholders and government to seek approval and fund a bridge-crossing and trail that will link the proposed Lower Thredbo Valley Track to Jindabyne at Gaden Trout Hatchery.</p> <p>Due to the uncertainty as to whether Snowy River Shire Council will secure the funds or approvals required, this Review of Environmental Factors investigates two options at the lower end of the proposed track:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Option 1</b> – Construction of a bridge at the Gaden Trout Hatchery. Under this option an external party, likely Snowy River Shire Council, would own the</li> </ul> |

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|   |     | <p>bridge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Option 2</b> – Track to continue past the Gaden Trout Hatchery, join the Pallaibo Track at the lowest point where it crosses Sawpit Creek and continue along the Pallaibo Track to the Thredbo River Picnic Area.</li> </ul> <p>This option will require that section of the Pallaibo Track to be re-zoned from a walking track to a multi-use track in an amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park, Plan of Management.</p> <p>The preferred route is presented on Map 2 of the REF on Page 5.</p> <p>Construction of the track will use a combination of approaches and materials suited to the terrain, gradient and resultant design requirements.</p>  |
| Background information on study area  | Yes | The study area includes the Lower Thredbo Valley from Bullocks Hut to Thredbo Valley Picnic Area. The multi-use track would be constructed on the northern side of the Thredbo River.   |
| Reasons for activity  | Yes | <p>The main reason for the activity will to provide improved visitor facilities. The original concept had a detailed feasibility study associated with the project at that time - <i>Thredbo Valley Multi-use Track Feasibility study (Planning for People 2007)</i>. It found that there was a strong demand for mountain bike riding and walking in the Thredbo Valley. The feasibility study highlighted that many of the 3 million annual visitors to the Park are seeking recreation opportunities from Thredbo. In particular Thredbo is the major non-winter recreation destination in the Park with more than 40000 people walking to Mt Kosciusko from Thredbo in the summer period (OEH 2007).</p> <p>At that time the Minister for the Environment released the Centenary fund policy statement on the use of a proportion of KNP entry fees as part of the centenary celebrations for KNP. The policy proposed to re-invest visitor entry fees into walking tracks and campgrounds and tourism facilities amongst other commitments. The multi-use track from Thredbo was specifically identified as a key project as part of the centenary funding initiative.</p> <p>Since then the first stage of track was completed and has been operational since January 2015. It has shown strong usage numbers and wide community support.</p> |
| Is there any reference to a timeframe for the construction & operation of the activity? | No  | Page 26 states that the works are expected to proceed subject to approvals over three years period beginning in 2016 and finishing in 2019.   |
| Alternative   | Yes | Alternate options for project are reviewed in section 4.1 of  |

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| proposals  |     | <p>the document. Different design specifications are canvassed on the construction standards, width of the track and difficulty rating. Advantages and disadvantages of each option are considered.</p> <p>The preferred option is Option 3 600 - 1200mm hand-benched track, IMBA blue square grade (including vegetation corridor clearance of 1500 - 1800mm). The analysis lists the</p> <p>Advantages as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links Thredbo to Jindabyne</li> <li>• Low capital cost compared to Option 2 (green circle)</li> <li>• Accessible for hikers, runners, moderate and advanced cyclists</li> <li>• Will attract significant use by cyclists due to the increased challenge of the blue square grade</li> <li>• Exclusion of beginner cyclists reduces the risk of injury/rescue from the remote valley</li> <li>• A higher graded track will slow traffic, thus reduce overall risk of collision and injury</li> </ul> <p>Disadvantages as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility challenges for construction and maintenance</li> <li>• Beginner cyclists will not be at a suitable level to access the track</li> </ul> |
| Justification of Option  | Yes | Adequate justification is provided on why the preferred route was selected as above.  |
| Is monitoring mentioned in the REF? Is further monitoring appropriate? | Yes | The monitoring programs are referred to in the REF mainly as part of the ongoing <i>Track Management Plan (TMP)</i> . This is to give greater detail for the ongoing operation phase of the project. This would include the controls and methods for the ongoing maintenance of the track and the monitoring that is to take place.   |

#### PLANNING

| Is the activity permissible under:  | Yes/No | Comment   |
|---|--------|---|
| National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974  | Yes    | A multi-use trail is permissible use in a National Park under the Act. It is providing for recreational facilities which is in accordance with the provisions and objectives of the Act   |
| EP&A Act, eg SEPPs, REP, LEP (has relevant section of the LEP been included?) | Yes    | Zoned E1 National Park in Snowy River LEP 2013.<br>The Department of Planning and Environment was consulted as far SEPP ( <i>Kosciusko National Park - Alpine Resorts</i> ) 2007 is concerned.  |
| POEO Act  |        | Given the distance away from the river the project is not considered to require approval under POEO Act.  |
| Heritage Act  | Yes    | One heritage listed items or features of European heritage is listed in the study area- Collins Hut. Recommended safeguards for this item in the REF include that interpretive signage should be installed at 'Collins Hut' and NPWS personnel should complete a risk assessment and implement any appropriate measures to reduce risks of the item |

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|   |     | collapsing on visitors.   |
| Commonwealth legislation:<br>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act<br>Other  | Yes | No significant impact on matters covered by the EPBC Act, including threatened species  |
| NPWS policies such as Plans of Management (PoM)<br>Any policies applying to a particular activity | Yes | The Kosciusko National Park Plan of Management (2006) gives some direction for the proposed activity.<br><br>The REF summaries the provisions of the PoM concludes that the intent of such a track is supported in numerous sections of the Plan of Management. This view is supported.<br><br>If Option 2 is pursued as preferred route it will require that section of the Pallaibo Track to be re-zoned from a walking track to a multi-use track. The potential re-zoning of the section of the Pallaibo Track would need to be included in an amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management.<br><br>The conditions of approval are structured to reflect this position. |
| Have all other approvals from OEH been obtained (or have in-principle support)?                   | Yes | None outstanding.<br><br>If the Pallaibo Track option is pursued an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) will need to be obtained for the works.  |

#### CONSULTATION

| Criteria  | Yes/<br>No | Comments   |
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| Did the proponent consult with the groups listed in section 2.6 of the Proponents' Guidelines?                    | Yes        | There has been extensive consultation with the project to date as outlined in Section 3 of the REF.<br><br>Initial consultation has also occurred with Aboriginal communities in accordance with the OEH Consultation guidelines.  |
| Have they included detail of who was consulted, how, when and the results?  | Yes        | Details are included in the <i>Report of Submissions Proposed Lower Thredbo Valley Track NPWS October 2015</i> including submissions received and date, issues raised and responses.   |
| Is there any evidence of incorporating the results of consultation into the REF/details of the proposed activity? | Yes        | The Alpine-Queanbeyan Area received 18 submissions in total. Of these; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• two made objections to the proposal</li> <li>• 14* supported the project,</li> <li>• two submissions that did not obviously state whether they were in support or against the proposal. However these submissions provided comments about the proposed safeguards and other matters relevant to the proposal.</li> </ul> *one of the above submissions made it clear that they supported the project but had issues with the REF and |

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|  |     | <p>the proposed safeguards.</p> <p>These matters are addressed in the <i>Report of Submission Proposed Lower Thredbo Valley Track NPWS October 2015</i>. A response is provided to all issues and project design revised where appropriate.</p>  |
| <p>Did the proponent place the Draft REF on public exhibition?<br/>If so, have they included evidence of consideration of submissions?</p> | Yes | <p>Yes the region made the decision to publicly display report.</p> <p>The REF and background documents were placed on public exhibition from 3rd September 2015 to 3rd October 2015 at OEH in the region and public notices put in the local newspaper. It was also displayed on the OEH website for that period.</p> |

#### EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

| Criteria  | Yes/No | Comments   |
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| <p>Has the REF covered all aspects of the environment listed in the REF Format?</p>                   | Yes    | <p>The REF considered all listed aspects of the existing environment. It is considered to have fulfilled the requirement to addresses to the fullest extent possible, all of the factors listed in Clause 228 of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000</i>.</p> <p>The Threatened Species Evaluation Appendix 5 by <i>Envirokey S. Sass August 2015</i> attached to the REF adequately addresses the existing EEC vegetation and biodiversity issues. A Part 5A assessment under the EP&amp;A Act was conducted on threatened flora and threatened fauna species, with the conclusion that a significant impact is not likely to occur.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study <i>Lower Thredbo Valley Shared Path: Bullocks Flat to Curiosity Rocks, Snowy Mountains, Sue Feary and Gerard Niemoeller August 2015</i> attached to the REF is considered to meet the OEH guidelines. An AHIMS search for Aboriginal site records was been completed. The report provides adequate details on survey methodology, or map survey locations. An approach to avoid sites is supported.</p> |
| <p>Are all aspects identified adequately described with supporting information where appropriate?</p> | Yes    | <p>Adequate documentation is provided to support the proposal</p>  |

#### DESCRIBE THE IMPACTS

| Criteria  | Yes/No | Comments   |
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| <p>Has each possible impact listed in the REF Format been addressed (listed as either</p> | Yes    | <p>The critical impacts in the REF discussed are potential impacts on water quality clearing of native vegetation, weed spread and potential</p> |

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| applicable or n/a)   |     | <p>impacts on flora and fauna.</p> <p>The total estimated vegetation disturbance is 4.1 ha for the proposed route. This figure is considered to be an over estimate to account for any additional clearing that may occur to avoid mature trees and other natural obstacles.</p> <p>After the project is complete, NPWS will calculate the final area of the impacted zone that the track passes through. NPWS is to implement rehabilitation measures at alternative locations within KNP to achieve a maintain and improve outcome.</p> <p>Water quality and controlling runoff is a major issue. An Environmental Management Plan is to be developed and reviewed by NPWS prior to works. This is to include an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP). Sediment controls, including the sediment filters / sediment retention traps are to be installed consistent with Section 6.3 of "Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction" (4th Edition Landcom, 2004, aka the Blue Book). This will ensure that there is no escape of turbid plumes into the adjacent aquatic environment.</p> <p>These are outcomes are reflected in the conditions of the determination.</p> |
| Are the possible cultural heritage impacts adequately described? | Yes | <p>The Aboriginal Cultural heritage survey and assessment report adequately describes the possible cultural heritage impacts of the project.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Heritage Unit - South East has reviewed the REF and identified that a number of actions are required. These are included in Schedule 1 Conditions of Approval.</p>   |
| Are the possible flora and fauna impacts adequately described?   | Yes | <p>The Threatened Species Evaluation Appendix 5 by Envirokey S. Sass August 2015 attached to the REF adequately addresses the existing EEC vegetation and biodiversity issues. A Part 5A assessment under the EP&amp;A Act was conducted on threatened flora and threatened fauna species, with the conclusion that a significant impact is not likely to occur.</p> <p>The Ecosystem and Threatened Species Section - South East has reviewed the REF and provided the following comments:</p> <p><i>OEH considers the flora and fauna assessment undertaken for the project to be adequate.</i></p> <p>An additional comments is provided that:</p>   |

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|  |     | <p><i>A pre-clearance survey for works be undertaken for the Pink Robin Petroica rodinogaster during the nesting season between November and January, with particular focus at the two localities where birds were recorded during the REF surveys. Any nests found in the shrub layer should be protected and no works within 100 m of the nest be undertaken until after young fledge. Likewise, if the nests of Olive Whistlers are located during pre-clearance surveys in the shrub layer, no works should be conducted within 100 m of the nest until young have fledged.</i></p> <p>This is reflected in attached conditions of consent that <i>A pre-clearance survey will occur to identify Pterostylis oreophila, Discaria nitida, Leucochrysum albicans var. tricolor and nests of Olive Whistlers and Pink Robins. The track would be realigned to avoid any species that is located. The realigned area is to be contained within the corridor that was assessed during previous field surveys.</i></p> <p>This survey has been organised for 24 November 2015 by threatened species staff in this regard.</p> |
| Does REF describe how possible likely impacts were determined?           | Yes | The documentation is adequate.  |
| Does REF address the cumulative affect of all likely impacts?            | Yes | <p>The REF concludes that this activity could have low/medium impacts.</p> <p>The potential impacts of the proposal identified within the REF can be mitigated through appropriate safeguards to reduce these to acceptable levels.</p>   |
| Does REF address any potentially adverse impacts in sensitive locations? | Yes | <p>The REF identifies that within the study area vegetation communities of particular significance include bogs and EEC vegetation communities.</p> <p>The final track routing will avoid wet areas, environmentally sensitive areas, and mature trees.</p> <p>The Thredbo River has a high natural water quality which provides habitat for a range of aquatic species including platypus (<i>Ornithorhynchus anatinus</i>), water-rats (<i>Hydromys chrysogaster</i>) and several species of freshwater crayfish and native and introduced fish (Trout). The route alignment and the REF is conditioned such that the activity avoids impacting on the river both at construction and</p>   |



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|  |  | operational stage. An EMP is required to demonstrate how this is to occur. |
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#### ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS

| Criteria   | Comments  |
|--|---|
| What is the confidence in predicting impacts?              | <p>This REF concludes that the proposed activity will have a moderate but not significant impact on the environment if the recommendations and mitigation measures are implemented as documented in this REF.</p> <p>Table 11 summarises the extent of impacts of the activity. There are low/medium level impacts on the biological, physical and cultural values of the study area. The major potential impacts of the activity are from soil and vegetation disturbance during construction. There are also likely to be post construction impacts from weeds and feral animals however these can be reduced to low impacts with the proposed management and mitigating measures. These are to be addressed through the EMP.</p> |
| How resilient is the environment to cope with the impacts? | The natural heritage environment has a medium to high resilient level to cope with the impacts  |
| Can the impacts be reversed?                               | Yes, not in short term  |
| How well can the impacts be mitigated?                     | The impacts can be mitigated to a medium to high level  |
| Do the impacts comply with plans, policies?                | Yes   |
| What is the level of public concern?                       | Medium  |
| Are further studies required on impacts or mitigation?     | No  |

EVALUATE THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

| Criteria   | Yes/<br>No | Comments  |
|--|------------|---|
| Does information in table in REF accurately reflect results of Impact tables in REF? | Yes        | <p>This REF concludes that the proposed activity will have a moderate but not significant impact on the environment if the recommendations and mitigation measures are implemented as documented in this REF.</p> <p>Many of the impacts of the activity can be reduced or eliminated by avoidance (i.e. moving the track around sensitive locations) and mitigated by applying high standards of environmental management and offsetting of the vegetation disturbance through rehabilitation of degraded natural areas close by.</p> <p>No significant impacts were assessed on threatened species or species of conservation significance.</p> |
| Are the conclusions in this table appropriate?                                       | Yes        |   |

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

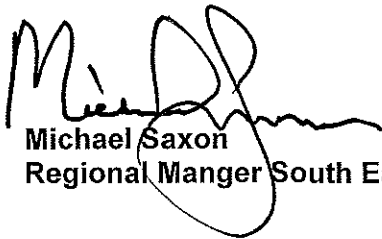
The proposed REF is unlikely to have significant adverse impacts on the environment. The proposal is therefore approved subject to the following conditions.



**Miles Boak**  
Conservation Planning Officer



**Allison Treweek**  
Senior Team Leader, Planning Section




**Michael Saxon**  
Regional Manger South East Region ROG

5/NOV/2015

**DETERMINATION NOTICE**

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| <b>REF Trim ref:</b>      | DOC 15/410452  |
| <b>Project Name:</b>      | Lower Thredbo Multi-use Track Bullocks Flat to Thredbo River Picnic Area |
| <b>Proponent:</b>         | OEH Southern Ranges Region   |
| <b>Reserve Name:</b>      | Kosciuszko National Park   |
| <b>Region/ Area:</b>      | Southern Ranges Region/ Alpine Queanbeyan Area                           |
| <b>Date REF received:</b> | 15 October 2015  |

I, Michael Saxon, Regional Manager, South East Region, Regional Operations Branch, acting as a delegate of the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage, having considered the proposed activity described above and, in accordance with Section 111 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, having taken into account to the fullest extent possible all matters likely to affect the environment as a result of the proposed activity, hereby determine the Review of Environmental Factors by the granting of approval subject to the conditions specified in the attached Schedule 1.



5/NOV/2015

**MICHAEL SAXON**  
Regional Manager South East  
Regional Operations Group  
Office of Environment and Heritage

## Schedule 1 Conditions of Approval

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| <b>REF Trim ref:</b>      | DOC 15/410452  |
| <b>Project Name:</b>      | Lower Thredbo Multi-use Track Bullocks Flat to Thredbo River Picnic Area |
| <b>Proponent:</b>         | OEH Snowy Mountains Region   |
| <b>Reserve Name:</b>      | Kosciuszko National Park   |
| <b>Region/ Area:</b>      | Snowy Mountains Region/ Alpine Queanbeyan Area                           |
| <b>Date REF received:</b> | 15 October 2015  |

### Description of Activity

1. The activity shall be undertaken in accordance with the REF for a *Proposed Lower Thredbo Track Bullocks Flat to Thredbo River Picnic Area EnviroKey August 2015* unless otherwise amended in the project revised commitments contained in *Report of Submission Proposed Lower Thredbo Valley Track NPWS October 2015* and then prevailing over all is the conditions of this determination.
2. Approval is deferred for the section of track past the Gaden Trout Hatchery that joins the Pallaibo Track and continues along to the Thredbo River Picnic Area. Approval is deferred until that section of the track is re-zoned from a walking track to a multi-use track under the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management and an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is obtained for the works.

### Environmental Management Plan

3. Prior to the commencement of works, an Environment Management Plan (EMP) is to be prepared by the successful contractor consistent with the REF determination for the construction phase of the project. Separate documents can be prepared for the specific stages of construction.

*The level of detail required is not to the finalised design and drawing but adequate information to describe and show the design and construction techniques to be employed for all the terrain types to crossed in that section of the track.*

4. The REF states that a suitable Environmental Management Plan is developed and reviewed by NPWS prior to works be undertaken. This is detail the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) and is to include the installation of sediment controls, including the sediment filters / sediment retention traps consistent with Section 6.3 of "Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction" (4th Edition Landcom, 2004, aka the Blue Book). This is to ensure that there is no escape of turbid plumes into the adjacent aquatic environment.
5. The Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries) has advised their approval under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* is required for works in the riparian zone. The detailed EMP and associated ESCP is to be submitted for DPI consideration prior to any works commencing in these sections of the track.

## Track Management Plan

6. Prior to the opening of the track, a Track Management Plan (TMP) is to be prepared for the approval of the Regional Manager, Southern Ranges Region for the ongoing operation phase of the project. This would include the controls and methods for the ongoing maintenance of the track and the monitoring that is to take place.

The plan must also include proactive routine maintenance of the track, such as maintaining appropriate drainage so as to minimise erosion. Further details are required to be provided on the monitoring of the general condition of the track and that general maintenance issues will be responded to as described in Issue 23 of the Submissions report.

The Track Management Plan is to be submitted to Fisheries for comment prior to be finalised.

## Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

7. The applicant is to comply with recommendations contained in the archaeological survey report *Lower Thredbo Valley Shared Path: Bullocks Flat to Curiosity Rocks, Snowy Mountains Region NSW* Sue Feary and Gerard Niemoeller August 2015.
8. If Option 2 is chosen for the LTVT, an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) will be required to move or collect the Aboriginal artefacts recorded at sites Pallaibo 1 to 11.
9. Aboriginal sites are to be flagged and fenced off to ensure they are not inadvertently damaged during construction and to provide basic training for contractors in the recognition of Aboriginal artefacts.
10. Further investigation is required if there are significant deviations from the existing proposed alignment outside the survey area.
11. If artefacts are located during construction, work must cease within a 100m buffer zone of the location where the artefact was found and an AHIP applied for.

## Flora and Fauna safeguards and mitigation measures

12. A pre-clearance survey will occur to identify *Pterostylis oreophila*, *Discaria nitida*, *Leucochrysum albicans var. tricolor* and nests of Olive Whistlers and Pink Robins. The track is to be realigned to avoid any findings but it is to stay within the corridor that was assessed during previous field surveys.
13. The revised commitments outlined in Issue 21 of the Submissions report are to be amended and implemented as follows:

NPWS would complete the following, at a minimum to compensate for environmental impacts:

- Implement a weed management plan as part of a Track Management Plan;
- Ensure that the Lower Thredbo Valley is considered for inclusion in NPWS feral animal control plans;

- After the project is complete, NPWS will calculate the area of the impacted zone that the track passes through;
- NPWS is to implement rehabilitation at alternative locations within KNP to **achieve a maintain and improve outcome**; and
- The area to be rehabilitated will be additional to the rehabilitation that occurs within the corridor of the track.

### **Safety and OH&S compliance**

14. Southern Ranges Region is responsible for any compliance engineering and geotechnical aspects of the project.

### **Other Matters**

15. The Approval is given for the REF route as presented. Additional works to construct the bridge crossing the Thredbo River at Gaden would be subject to further approvals under a Development Application due to it being located off Park, with the exception of the footings on the Northern side of the river which are on Park.

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Foot Note: Southern Ranges Region is responsible for engineering, geotechnical, OH&S compliance