

# **Memorandum of Understanding**

**Between**

**Territory and Municipal Services  
Directorate**

**and**

**The Bicentennial National Trail Ltd**

**and**

**The ACT Equestrian Association Inc.**



## 1. PREAMBLE

The Bicentennial National Trail (the Trail) was established in 1988 as a long distance trail for use and enjoyment, in whole or in part, by the community as a recreational route. The Trail is available for use by trekkers using various modes of *non motorised* transport – including walkers, horse riders and cyclists. The Trail stretches from Cooktown in Queensland to Healesville in Victoria through a variety of terrain and land tenures along the Great Dividing Range.

The Bicentennial National Trail Limited (BNT Ltd) is the body responsible for administering the Bicentennial National Trail in collaboration with the relevant private property owners and land management agencies in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The Australian Capital Territory, currently represented by the Parks and City Services Division and Roads ACT within the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, is a party to the MOU.

The ACT Government is the manager of those lands which accommodate the Trail in the ACT. In the ACT the Trail passes through Namadgi National Park, nature reserves, urban open space, lease and agisted land and along some public roads.

The ACT Equestrian Association is the peak body representing recreational and sporting equestrian clubs in the Australian Capital Territory.

## 2. PARTIES TO THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding is between:

- The Bicentennial National Trail Ltd (BNT Ltd); and
- ACT Government Territory and Municipal Services Directorate currently represented by the Parks and City Services Division and Roads ACT; and
- the ACT Equestrian Association Inc.

Collectively these 3 organisations are described as 'the Parties'.

## 3. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to:

- Acknowledge that Territory and Municipal Services Directorate is a partner in managing and maintaining a Trail of national dimensions and significance through its lands;
- Articulate fundamental guiding principles for management and use of the Trail; and
- Establish a framework for a cooperative working relationship between the Parties.

#### 4. OUTCOMES

The MOU seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- Good communication, cooperation and partnership between the Parties;
- Improved understanding by the Parties of the issues associated with managing a multi-use trail on public land, road ways and within conservation reserves;
- The location, use and management of the Trail and associated facilities within ACT lands remain ecologically sustainable, culturally appropriate and consistent with the purpose for which those lands were reserved or dedicated;
- Security of access and certainty in planning for the Trail;
- Enhanced capacity of the three Parties to adapt to changes in environmental, cultural, economic or social conditions, and to new scientific knowledge and planning directions, whilst maintaining the overall integrity of the Trail;
- The Trail and the ACT land through which it travels are recognised and addressed in the respective policy and planning frameworks of the Parties.

#### 5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Parties agree that the following guiding principles should inform decision-making with respect to the Trail and the land through which it passes.

##### **Statutory and policy obligations**

All activities must be in accordance with the *ACT Planning and Development Act 2007* (ACT) and policies in the *Territory Plan* (ACT), the *National Capital Plan* (Commonwealth) and statutory plans of management for public lands through which the trail passes.

The Trail passes through Namadgi National Park. There may be particular management needs to protect the values with respect to the use of the Trail in some areas of the Park. Use of the Trail in Namadgi is subject to the Namadgi National Park Plan of Management and may also be subject to the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

##### **Trail integrity**

It is important that the Trail retains its integrity as a long distance multi-use recreational trail. There are two aspects to integrity – continuity and authenticity.

Continuity is maintained where the Trail, and the capacity to use it, remains unbroken.

Authenticity is maintained when the original vision for the Trail and its core tenets are sustained. Core tenets include a quality trekking experience, non-

motorised multi-use, overnight camping, natural and cultural heritage, bushmanship, adventure, and a philosophy of cooperation and partnership with the community.

### **Trail route**

The Trail is a documented and published route located to meet the needs of long distance trekking, and to link highlights of our cultural and natural heritage generally along the Great Dividing Range. In the ACT the Trail travels from the northern border of the Territory at Mulligans Flat to the southern border via Namadgi National Park. This part of the Trail is described in the publication *The Bicentennial National Trail. A Multi-Use Recreational Trail from Cooktown to Healesville. Jenolan Caves to Yaouk. Guidebook No. 10. Edition 3, 2005.* Route updates are available from the BNT Office Email: [info@nationaltrail.com.au](mailto:info@nationaltrail.com.au) or Website: [www.nationaltrail.com.au](http://www.nationaltrail.com.au).

In the ACT the long term future northern route of the Trail has been documented in the attached September 2009 Map *Bicentennial National Trail existing and proposed routes*.

Changes to the route may be required to maintain its integrity in the face of urban development, pressing safety, legal or environmental issues, to reflect changing management objectives or to provide an improved trekking experience in a particular location, but with a view to always having a through route.

The BNT Ltd and ACT Equestrian Association Inc will be consulted in regard to variations to the route with due consideration of all options.

### **Single route**

Within the ACT the Trail should, as far as possible, exist as a single route.

There may be circumstances where a side track, branch or 'spur' is desirable (for example to provide access to a nearby camp site or watering point) but such arrangements should be minimised in number and distance.

### **Quality experience**

Both the ACT Government, currently represented by the Parks and City Services Division and Roads ACT within the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, and BNT Ltd and ACT Equestrian Association Inc aim to provide a high quality, enjoyable experience for trekkers using the Trail.

The Trail should present a range of possible experiences over its full length so that all trekkers, regardless of ability, can find a challenging and rewarding experience.

Initiatives, facilities and management decisions designed to provide a quality experience to BNT trekkers must be equally balanced with those which serve the quality of experience of other users of the lands.

### **Ecologically sustainable and culturally appropriate**

All aspects of the Trail – its location, the level and intensity of use, interaction between its users, the provision of facilities and the maintenance of the trail and its assets – must remain ecologically sustainable and culturally appropriate.

This respect for the environment and cultural associations with the land should be demonstrated by the Parties and fostered in the users of the trail.

### **Consistency with conservation purpose of ACT Government lands**

The use of the Trail within ACT must be consistent with the purpose for which the land was reserved or dedicated. The lands will not be re-categorised without due consideration given to accommodating the continued existence of the Trail.

### **Relationship with other ACT Government agencies**

The Parties acknowledge that other ACT Government agencies have an influence on the Trail, particularly the Environment and Sustainability Development Directorate and the Land Development Agency (LDA) in the Economic Development Directorate. These agencies are not recognised as land custodians and therefore are not signatories to this MOU. However, the Parties agree to facilitate and support communication and consultation with these agencies, particularly in regard to changes to the Trail alignment.

## **6. OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

Operational arrangements for the Trail are outlined below and will be implemented in compliance with this Memorandum of Understanding.

Ideally the Trail will consist of long unbroken sections of trail with as few major road crossings as possible. Where busy roads intersect the Trail the safe crossing requirement for equestrians will be considered on a case by case basis and any measures put in place will also take into consideration the needs of other road users.

The Trail should be located generally on the periphery of residential areas, along river corridors and through open recreational spaces. In principle, the Trails should be kept away from schools, sportsgrounds, shops and playgrounds. Generally the route should be planned to provide reasonable distances between campgrounds.

The Trail should be clearly signposted to identify it on the ground and to increase public awareness of the system. The BNT Section Coordinator should be advised of any road work construction or obstructions blocking passage and temporary arrangements made for alternate safe passage around the area. The BNT Section Coordinator should also be advised of any

permission granted by the Parks and City Services Division to use any part of the Trail for events.

Trail infrastructure should generally follow the *Design Standards for Urban Infrastructure*, Edition 1 Revision 0, particularly section 20.12 Equestrian trails available at [www.tams.act.gov.au/work/](http://www.tams.act.gov.au/work/). This document provides standards for trail width, overhead clearance, fencing, underpasses and bridges. The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate as manager of the lands through which the Trail runs is responsible for the maintenance of the surface and structures.

Basic facilities of water, picnic shelter, fireplace and toilet are desirable at campsites. Horse paddock and tie rail are also desirable. Adequate maintenance of these facilities is necessary, along with control of weeds, including Paterson's Curse. When spraying occurs the BNT Section Coordinator should be notified to enable long distance travellers to be notified.

## **7. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Local issues should initially be discussed between Territory and Municipal Services Directorate and the BNT Section Coordinator and the ACT Equestrian Association Inc and any other interested parties. Only when there is a failure to resolve issues at this level should the BNT Ltd. Board become involved.

## **8. REVIEW OF THE MOU**

This document will be reviewed for its appropriateness, content and workability after a period of 24 months from the date of agreement.

## **9. LIAISON ARRANGEMENTS**

Meetings between the Board of BNT Ltd or its representative and Directors, the ACT Equestrian Association Inc and/or senior managers will be scheduled as required. The BNT will be a standing agenda item for the Inter-Government Agency meeting and the ACT Equestrian Association.

The parties have executed this Memorandum of Understanding on the

...19<sup>th</sup> Day of December 2011

Signed for Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

  
Gary Byles  
Director-General


Signed for the  
Bicentennial National Trail Ltd

  
Nick Jacomas  
Board Chairman

17/1/2012



Signed for the ACT Equestrian Association Inc

  
Christine Lawrence  
President