

In the matter of Casey Planning Scheme Amendment C228 (Amendment)

Minta Farm Precinct Structure Plan

Permit Application No PInA00384/17

Planning Panels Victoria

Expert Witness Statement of Ian John Smales

1 Name and address

Ian John Smales
Biosis Pty. Ltd.
38 Bertie St.
Port Melbourne
Vic. 3207

2 Area of expertise

- (a) I hold the degree of Master of Science from the University of Melbourne. My Masters dissertation was on the demography of a critically endangered bird, the Helmeted Honeyeater.
 - (b) I hold the position of Principal Zoologist with Biosis Pty. Ltd. Since 1978 I have been professionally engaged in management, research and assessment of south-eastern Australia's fauna. This has included completion of multiple investigations of amphibians, reptiles and birds. I have substantial experience in the ecological requirements of those groups. I have authored numerous consultant reports, including flora and fauna assessments, Environment Effects Statements, targeted fauna surveys, significance assessments and species management plans.
 - (c) My qualifications and experience are detailed in Annexure A.
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3 Significant contributors

Biosis Senior Zoologist, Daniel Gilmore, prepared advice to Alluvium Consulting with regard to biodiversity values within Minta Farm PSP. The advice was provided to assist Alluvium in development of drainage assets in a manner that would maintain and, where possible enhance ecological values for key species. His advice was set out in a letter report to Mr Jonathon Mclean dated 20 November 2017. Mr Gilmore's expertise is as follows:

- (a) He holds the degree of Bachelor of Conservation Ecology from Deakin University.
 - (b) He holds the position of Senior Zoologist with Biosis Pty. Ltd. Daniel has specialised in the ecology, conservation and management of the vertebrate fauna of south-eastern Australia. He has authored numerous consultant reports, including flora and fauna assessments, Environment Effects Statements, targeted fauna surveys, significance assessments and species management plans.
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4 Scope

4.1 Instructions

I have been asked by Harwood Andrews, acting for the Victorian Planning Authority, to prepare this witness statement and to:

- (a) Provide a summary, and include an annexure, of the ecological assessment completed that has facilitated the concept drainage options for the exhibited Minta Farm PSP area; and
- (b) Consider the submissions made to the Amendment including any drainage and environmental assets of the Minta City Proposal. Copies of submissions were included in the brief to me, as well as summary tables prepared by the VPA in respect of the submissions.

5 Findings

5.1 Summary of opinions

Advice to Alluvium Consulting is contained in a letter report (Biosis report) dated 20 November 2017, addressed to Mr Jonathon Mclean. It is titled *Input into the Minta Farm Drainage Strategy*. A copy of the letter report is provided as an annexure to my statement. I adopt that letter report as the basis for my expert witness statement.

The primary biodiversity values of the site are within a zone along Cardinia Creek and adjacent artificial wetlands. This zone will be subject to some works for the purposes of improved drainage and surface water management. Nonetheless, design options will permit the retention or enhancement of the majority of habitat for significant species.

The most important values are the Dwarf Galaxias and Growling Grass Frog, both of which are listed as vulnerable under provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)* (EPBC Act) for threatened species; and Latham's Snipe which is listed under provisions of the EPBC Act for migratory species. Other values are a number of species of waterbirds that are listed as threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988)* and/or on the *Advisory List of Threatened Vertebrate Fauna in Victoria* (DSE 2013).

The Biosis report lists areas within the Minta Farm PSP that provide high habitat values and those that are of lower quality. The high habitat value areas are all associated with wetlands, and are principally concentrated on Cardinia Creek and ponds in its immediate environs.

The Biosis report also makes recommendations for retention and enhancement of native vegetation and habitat values for key species or groups of species identified within the PSP. The recommendations offer principles and some specific guidance for management of wetlands intended to retain and enhance identified ecological values.

5.2 Review of submissions

I have reviewed submissions that were provided to me.

A small number of the submissions mention their general interest in retention of 'green' space and trees but not significant biodiversity values addressed by the advice of the Biosis report.

A submission from DELWP notes the importance of Cardinia Creek and adjacent Swamp Scrub as habitat for Dwarf Galaxias and Growling Grass Frog. The advice of the Biosis report related to management of wetlands is in overall agreement with the principles outlined in the DELWP submission.

6 Declaration

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.



4th April 2018

Annexure A - Curriculum Vitae of Ian John Smales

Position

Principal Zoologist, Biosis Pty. Ltd.

Qualifications

MSc. University of Melbourne

Professional associations

Member: IUCN Species Survival Commission, Re-Introduction Specialist Group

Member: Australian Society of Herpetologists

Member: Helmeted Honeyeater National Recovery Team (1989 -)

Honorary Life Member: Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater (bestowed 2015)

Past Member: Orange-bellied Parrot National Recovery Team (1994 – 2003)

Past Member: International Wader Study Group

Past member: Scientific Advisory Panel to the South-West Victoria Brolga Research Project

Employment history

2013–present	Principal Zoologist, Biosis Pty Ltd
2003–2013	Senior Consultant Zoologist, Biosis Research Pty Ltd
1990–2003	Conservation Biologist, Conservation and Research Department, Zoological Parks and Gardens Board of Victoria
1989	Contractor to Department of Conservation and Environment, Victoria for establishment of Recovery Team for the Helmeted Honeyeater.
1978–1987	Fisheries and Wildlife Division, Victoria (subsequently Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands).

Professional Experience:

Ian Smales, Principal Zoologist with Biosis Pty Ltd has over thirty years of professional experience in wildlife research and natural resource management with the public and non-government sectors. He has been with Biosis since 2003. Ian has broad field expertise investigating the ecology, distribution and habitat requirements of Australian vertebrate fauna and has undertaken comprehensive research projects for birds and reptiles. Ian has authored or co-authored more than eighty scientific papers and consultant reports in those fields.

Ian's career has included periods with the Wildlife Management Section of Victoria's former Fisheries and Wildlife Division (1978 - 87) and as Conservation Biologist with the Zoological Parks and Gardens Board of Victoria (1990 – 2003). He has been involved with research and management for threatened fauna throughout his career and has been a long-standing member of the national recovery teams for the Helmeted Honeyeater and the Orange-bellied Parrot.

Ian has designed and managed numerous flora and fauna assessments for multiple development projects including a number of major Government infrastructure projects.

Publications

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Smales, I. 2014. Fauna Collisions with Wind Turbines: Effects and Impacts, Individuals and Populations. What Are We Trying to Assess? Pp 23 – 40 in Hull, C., Bennett, E., Stark, E., Smales, I., Lau, J. & Venosta, M. (eds) *Wind and Wildlife: Proceedings from the Conference on Wind Energy and Wildlife Impacts, October 2012, Melbourne, Australia*. Springer Dordrecht.

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Menkhorst, P., **Smales, I.** and Quin, B. 1999. *Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Plan 1998 – 2002*. Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Melbourne.

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Smales, I. 2005. Modelled cumulative impacts on the Swift Parrot of wind farms across the species' range in south-eastern Australia. Biosis Research Pty. Ltd (for Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage)

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Smales, I. 2007. A review of collision risk modelling for Wedge-tailed Eagles at the Bluff Point Wind Farm, Tasmania. Biosis Research Pty. Ltd. (for Hydro Tasmania Consulting).

Smales, I. 2008. Assessment of marine mammals, birds and reptiles for the Victorian Desalination Project, Bass Coast, Victoria: Existing Conditions and Impact Assessment Report. Biosis Research Pty. Ltd (for GHD Pty. Ltd.)

Smales, I. 2009. Evaluating risk of Brolga collisions with powerlines for the proposed Dundonnell Wind Farm. Biosis Research Pty. Ltd (for Dundonnell Wind Farm Pty. Ltd.)

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Smales, I., Koehler, S., Venosta, M., Schnittler, N., Steer, R. & Bloink, C. 2008. Flora and Fauna Assessment: Desalination Project Desalination Plant Wonthaggi, Victoria: Existing Conditions and Impact Assessment. (for GHD Pty. Ltd.)

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Mueck, S. & **Smales, I.** 2004 Flora and fauna of the Point Lonsdale Residential and Golf Course Development, Point Lonsdale, Victoria. Biosis Research Pty. Ltd. (for Stockland (Development) Pty Ltd)

**Annexure B – Letter of advice from Biosis to Alluvium Consulting
dated 20 November 2017**