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MEDIA RELEASE

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ACT National Trust concerned about proposed underground electrical cabling across the Jerrabomberra Wetlands

The National Trust has grave concerns about the proposal by the ACT Government to install underground electrical cabling across the heritage listed area of Jerrabomberra Wetlands.

The wetlands are classified by the National Trust (1997) and the ACT Government (1998).

Heritage officer, Dr Peter Dowling, said today, "The Wetland area is one of the most valuable wetland habitats in the ACT. It provides a series of habitats which support a rich and diverse bird fauna including most of the wetland species occurring in southern Australia."

"As well as being important for birds the Wetlands provides a habitat for platypus, water rats, amphibians, reptiles and fish."

Sections of the Wetlands are used as a stopover for migratory waders, including Latham's Snipe which is the subject of international protection agreements between Australia, Japan and China. The Snipe breeds in northern Japan and the southern Kurile Islands and migrates to south-east Australia for the southern summer.

These international agreements require the signatory nations to protect the habitats of the species as well as the birds themselves.

This proposal which will require extensive excavation across the wetlands will put these habitats and the species which rely upon them at high risk.

Dr Dowling said that a requirement by the ACT Government under the heritage listing for the Wetlands is to protect the habits and not to damage them or put the species at risk.