

**Portfolio/s:** Environment

Planning and Land Management

## ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSETS MONITORING REPORTS

### Talking points:

- The ACT Government is committed to the collection of ecological information for monitoring and reporting requirements for species and ecological communities that are Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). This is a requirement under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- In December 2021, the ACT Government published two Environmental Offsets Monitoring Reports covering the 2018-19 and the 2019-20 monitoring seasons across a number of sites managed or monitored by the ACT Government. Publication of these reports supports compliance requirements under the EPBC Act.
  - These reports were published together at a delayed date due to the extensive nature of the offsets monitoring and data evaluation program and resourcing issues from the beginning of COVID-19 in 2020.
- Further monitoring reports will be completed as required to support meeting compliance requirements under the EPBC Act and guide decisions under the Environmental Offsets Adaptive Management Strategy. The report will be published once data has been suitably analysed in relation to meeting commitments and conservation targets.
- The monitoring reports detail declines in ecological conditions and populations for some MNES at some sites, primarily attributed to the impacts of weather and extended dry conditions:
  - Reduction in grass height and below average rainfall during the 2018 and 2019 monitoring years are the likely reasons for the recorded declines in MNES at some sites in 2018 to 2020.
  - Declines in grass height have been attributed to the prolonged drought conditions combined with high numbers of herbivores, including stock and kangaroos, on these sites.
- Results from 2018-19 and 2019-20 for MNES were positive in a number of other areas, for example:
  - All EPBC grassland sites recorded values above Commonwealth requirements for EPBC listing, with some suggestion that EPBC grassland extent has expanded since previous mapping occurred.
  - Golden Sun Moth were recorded in increased numbers across many sites.
  - Declines in grass height also enabled improved effectiveness of weed management across the estate.

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- Offset sites are being managed by strategic grazing from stock and kangaroos, woodland enhancement, relocations or breeding of significant species, and intensive invasive plant management programs.
- Preliminary results from data collected in the 2020-2021 monitoring seasons indicate some improvements in some areas, likely due to the increase in rainfall and associated increase in grass heights, as well as changes in management to some sites.
  - Preliminary data from Spring 2020 shows improvement in vegetation condition at grassland and woodland sites across Canberra, bringing condition of plant community types to ideal conditions and above. This increase includes a need for increased management of weed incursions across the estate.
  - Following favourable Spring conditions and increases in grassland vegetation conditions in 2020, preliminary data indicates an increase in the number of striped legless lizard recorded across most monitoring sites.

### Key Information

- Significant MNES that are protected and monitored across the offset estate include: Striped Legless Lizard, Grassland Earless Dragon, Golden Sun Moth, Superb Parrot, Scarlet Robin, Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Ginninderra Peppercross, Button Wrinklewort, Perunga Grasshopper, and the Box-gum Grassy Woodland and Natural Temperate Grassland ecological communities.

### Background Information

- The ACT Government has made commitments to the Australian Government under the EPBC Act to establish and manage environmental offset areas associated with land development approvals. These land development approvals sit with the ACT Government as primary proponent.
- The approval conditions under the EPBC Act commit the ACT Government to the protection and ongoing management of MNES.
- Monitoring across current and proposed offset sites will continue in line with the Offsets Monitoring and Research Plan (an internal document), which supports the ACT Government in achieving its offset commitment. Monitoring informs adaptive management practices which allows offset management to be altered to achieve improved results over time.
- The ACT Parks and Conservation Service officially manages 23 Environmental Offset areas with commitments to protect these areas in perpetuity. At least 16 offset areas are currently zoned as Nature Reserves giving them full protection in perpetuity.
- The ACT Government provides ongoing funding for actions across all current offset sites, including approximately \$590,000 to the annual monitoring program (this amount excludes funding for the Molonglo Strategic Assessment).

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- In the 2021-22 budget, \$6.2 million was allocated to supporting new and ongoing offset projects.

## Portfolio/s: Planning and Land Management

### AGRICULTURAL SUBDIVISION – BLOCK 5 SECTION 103 SYMONSTON

#### Talking points:

- A development application (DA-202139206) for the proposed subdivision of Block 5 Section 103 Symonston was made to the independent planning and land authority (the authority) in the merit track on the basis the proposal does not involve the clearing of more than 0.5 ha of native vegetation.
- Notwithstanding this, I am satisfied that the cumulative or incremental effects from the development, particularly through the intensification of agricultural and residential uses across the block, might contribute to a substantial adverse environmental impact.
- On 17 November 2021, in accordance with section 124 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, I declared that the impact track applies to the development proposal.
- I made the declaration to provide a clear statutory assessment pathway for the proposal whilst ensuring the cumulative or incremental environmental impacts from the development are considered through an environmental impact assessment process.
- If asked about the impact track declaration: The impact track declaration of the development proposal is currently under review in the Supreme Court, and it would be inappropriate for me to comment at this time.

#### Key Information

- In November 2019, an application for an environmental impact statement (EIS) exemption (EIS-201900005) and a concurrent impact track DA (DA-201835065) was lodged to the planning and land authority (the Authority) for the proposed subdivision of Block 5 Section 103 Symonston.
- You, as Minister for Planning and Land Management, refused to grant the EIS exemption in May 2021 as the expected environmental impacts had not been sufficiently addressed in a recent study.
- In June 2021, the applicant filed an application for review in the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) (AT 55/2021) of your decision to refuse to grant the EIS exemption.
- On 2 September 2021, the applicant submitted a new merit track DA (DA-202139206) for the same proposal on the basis the proposal does not *involve* the clearing of more than 0.5 ha of native vegetation and therefore does not trigger the requirement for an EIS.

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- The ACAT matter is currently paused while the Authority considers the new merit track DA.
- On 1 October 2021, the new merit track DA passed completeness check, but following the declaration that the impact track applies to the proposal, the DA was subsequently taken to be withdrawn.
- On 10 January 2022, the lessee submitted an originating application for judicial review with the Supreme Court for the impact track declaration of this DA.

## **Background Information**

- The proposal is to subdivide the 35.8 ha site into eight parcels with a median size of 4 ha, to permit agriculture, a residential dwelling and one horse for personal use.
- The 35.8 ha site contains approximately 2 ha of critically endangered Box Gum Woodland and 21.48 ha of native vegetation.

## Portfolio/s: Planning and Land Management

### UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA (UC) SUBDIVISION PROPOSAL

#### Talking points:

- The announcement on 22 November 2021 of the agreement between University of Canberra (UC) and PEET Limited (PEET) to develop 15 hectares of the UC campus will boost the tertiary sector while driving growth in the city and regional economy through the development of commercial, retail and residential developments.
- UC has commenced discussions with the ACT Government to subdivide the 15 ha parcel of land from the UC main campus. A separate Crown lease will be required.
- The ACT Government is conscious of the impact of such subdivisions and associated residential development, and the need to consider the environmental values of a site such as this. It is important the environmental values and potential impacts, as well as any proposed avoidance and mitigation measures, are considered at an early stage.
- To address this, UC has applied for an environmental significance opinion (ESO) from the Conservator of Flora and Fauna. The Conservator is currently considering the environmental impacts associated with the subdivision.
- The Conservator will need thoroughly consider the ESO and determine the application prior to a merit track development application can be lodged.
- The ACT Government has an ongoing and important role in any future development proposals across the subdivided block and on the UC campus.
- Through the consideration of any future development application under the *Planning and Development Act 2007*, the planning and land authority will further consider land use, planning and environmental issues with a view of ensuring the best interests of the community are met.

#### Key Information

- In their announcement on 22 November 2021, PEET highlighted that the acquisition of the 15 ha parcel of land was subject to the ACT Government granting a Crown lease. This is also a condition of the Contract of Sale between UC and PEET.
- The 15 ha parcel of land has the potential to deliver more than 1,600 residences through a mixture of apartments and townhouses.
- The 15 ha parcel of land is located on the western edge of the UC main campus and is approximately bounded by Thirriwirri Street to the north, Pantowora Street to the east and Aikman Drive to the west.
- Previous environmental assessments conducted across the UC main campus indicated a number of ecological values that are potentially present, including Golden Sun Moth, Natural Temperate Grassland, Box-Gum Woodland and native vegetation.

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- Recent environmental assessments indicate that the 15 ha parcel of land contains approximately 0.35 ha of Box-Gum Woodland and in excess of 0.5 ha of native vegetation.

### Background Information

- The UC is the lessee of Block 1 Section 3 Bruce (also known as Blocks 9 and 10 Section 3 Bruce), otherwise identifiable as the UC main campus.
- The Crown lease for the UC main campus was granted in perpetuity and may be used for any purpose permitted pursuant to the Territory Plan.
- The site is more than 113ha and zoned *CFZ Community Facilities Zone*.
- The Bruce Precinct Map and Code covers the land. The Precinct Code facilitates a broad range of uses to reflect the evolving nature of higher education campuses within the ACT and includes a residential yield allowance of 3,300 dwellings in the UC campus.
- The proprietary rights and tenure of the UC in relation to this lease are complex, and subject to a mix of Commonwealth and Territory law.
- The *Planning and Development Act 2007* continues to apply to UC. Accordingly, any development proposed on the UC campus requires development approval by the planning and land authority.

## Portfolio: Planning and Land Management

### WESTERN EDGE INVESTIGATIONS

#### Talking points:

- To provide greater certainty about where future greenfield development may occur once Gungahlin and the Molonglo Valley are developed, the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 identifies the need to investigate land to the west of Canberra's metropolitan area – that is, the Western Edge.
- The Western Edge investigation area is approximately 9,800 hectares in area and includes land generally bordered by the Murrumbidgee River and the existing urban areas of Belconnen, Molonglo Valley, Weston Creek and Kambah. The investigation area includes Mt Stromlo.
- We already know that the Western Edge contains significant environmental values and as such, only parts of the Western Edge may be suitable for development.
- Over the last two years, the ACT Government has completed a range of preliminary background investigations that are necessary to provide a complete and informed picture of the environmental issues associated with the area.
- Over 2021-2022, with funding of \$477,000, we will be assessing the capability and suitability of parts of the Western Edge for potential urban uses and for environmental conservation.
- In 2022-2023, with a budget of \$230,000, we will move into preliminary strategic land use planning phases with ongoing environmental and aquatic surveys.
- Substantial work is still required before options and recommendations can be put to the community and to the Government for consideration to inform any future statutory environmental or planning process.
- This work is critical and requires investment and effort over many years. Development in the Western Edge may be at least 10 years away and will be subject to the outcomes of future detailed studies and investigations; Government decisions; community engagement; budget funding; and Commonwealth and ACT statutory planning and environmental approvals.

#### Key Information:

- The Western Edge investigation area does not extend west of the Murrumbidgee River, towards the ACT border. The border itself is not being considered in the context of the Western Edge investigations.
- The preliminary investigations and due diligence in the area are tenure neutral – they are undertaken without regard to the nature or status of leaseholds in the Western Edge, so as to provide a comprehensive view of the potential urban capability of the area as a whole.

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- The Western Edge is home to a substantial array of flora and fauna, in some cases requiring study and assessment over multiple years to understand habitat use over lifecycles and connection and movement through the habitat.

## Background Information:

- The ACT Planning Strategy (2018) contained the following strategic direction and action:

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1.2

- Investigate the potential for new residential areas to the west of the city to meet future housing need.

#### Action 1.2.1

- Undertake environmental, infrastructure and planning studies for the western edge of the city to identify suitable areas for:
- potential urban areas (excluding Central Molonglo);
- nature reserves;
- environmental offset and potential environmental offset areas;
- the consideration of cultural and heritage values; and
- other uses, for example rural, broadacre, major infrastructure, transport and services.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.5

- Protect biodiversity and enhance habitat connectivity to improve landscape resilience.

#### Action 3.5.1

- Identify and establish environmental offset areas within planning processes to mitigate any unavoidable impacts of development on ecosystems and biodiversity of national significance and other protected matters.

#### Action 3.5.2

- Incorporate consideration of natural habitat and conservation areas into urban planning and design processes to promote habitat connectivity and support the establishment of biodiversity refuges.
- A recommendation from the ACT Auditor-General Report No.8 of 2018: Assembly of Rural Land West of Canberra was for the Chief Planning Executive to undertake a planning study, to define the long-term future urban form and identify the Territory's future development fronts to guide the update of the ACT Planning Strategy (2012).
- The Government response to the audit report's recommendation was - *Agreed. Studies underway as part of the current Planning Strategy Refresh will be used to determine the timing of a study into the long-term future urban form.*

## Portfolio: Planning and Land Management

### EASTERN BROADACRE AND THE MAJURA VALLEY

#### Talking points:

- The supply of land in Canberra's industrial estates is very limited. The continuing supply of industrial and employment lands over the coming decades in strategic locations is critical to support Canberra's future employment, economic growth and diversity.
- The ACT Planning Strategy 2018 has identified the Eastern Broadacre area for investigations into establishing new industrial and employment opportunities. Eastern Broadacre is in close proximity to national freight routes and extends from Hume in the south to the Federal Highway in the north and includes land around Fyshwick and Canberra Airport.
- Eastern Broadacre also includes a part of the Majura Valley, in the vicinity of Majura Road and Majura Parkway. Some of this land, closest to Canberra Airport, contains expired leases with continuing occupancy rights. The reason these leases have expired and have not been able to be renewed by the ACT Government, is that part of each block is National Land administered by the Department of Defence (i.e. the split blocks).
- EPSDD and the Department of Defence are working together to resolve the complex land tenure arrangements in this area. Negotiations with Defence to degazette the National Land are active and ongoing.
- Once resolved, the leases for these blocks will be solely on Territory land for the ACT Government to further consider the use and tenure of the land.
- Parts of the Majura Valley could have an ongoing role in agriculture, environmental conservation, rural tourism, and recreation.
- The Eastern Broadacre areas contains critically endangered flora and fauna, such as natural temperate grassland, striped legless lizard and the grassland earless dragon.
- On this basis, the ACT Government has entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to undertake a strategic assessment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Public notification on the draft strategic assessment documents is expected to commence later this year.

#### Key Information:

- The Eastern Broadacre strategic assessment will assess the potential impacts on environmental values from potential development in parts of the area and recommend an environmental offsets, avoidance, and conservation strategy. This will include the establishment of new nature reserves.

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- Under the 10th ACT Legislative Assembly's Parliamentary and Governing Agreement, ACT Greens policy platform No.23.2, productive farmland including in the Majura Valley is to be rezoned to rural zoning and long term leases issued.
- The affected rural lessees will be engaged through these processes.

### **Background Information:**

- The Department of Defence has indicated its support for degazettal of National Land in the Majura Valley. The Department of Defence wishes to progress land transfers for sites in South Pialligo in tandem with the Majura Valley transfer. EPSDD is finalising environmental assessments on the South Pialligo land, which has been found to be contaminated, to enable these negotiations to be progressed.

## Portfolio: Planning and Land Management

### LAND AND PROPERTY TRENDS

#### Talking points:

- The ACT's residential property market remains upbeat, defying the impact of the pandemic and finishing strongly in 2021. While some slowdown is seen in the property market as evident in latest data, the opening of international borders from 21 February 2022 will start inflow of overseas students and overseas migrants, putting pressure on housing through increasing demand for rental properties.
- Canberra's property market responded positively to the ACT Government's policy decisions to stimulate the economy as part of the *Economic Survival Package*.
- Housing related incentives in the Package included stamp duty concessions for owner occupiers and a 50 percent reduction in Lease Variation Charge for those developments requiring a lease variation.
- As part of the ACT Government's tax reform program, stamp duty for off-the-plan apartment and townhouse purchases up to \$500,000 was abolished, effective from 1 July 2021.
- Monitoring land and property trends in the Canberra's housing market is an important part of informing the ACT Government's Indicative Land Release Program.
- Monitoring these trends is the function of the ACT Land and Property Reports. The Reports are prepared on a six-monthly basis and provide the community and industry with a valuable snapshot of land supply and release across Canberra, from what's in the pipeline for development to the number and price of houses and units sold.
- The latest edition of the report is available on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate website. This edition of the report covers activity during the **January to June 2021** period. The next edition of the report, covering activity during **July to December 2021** is expected to be released by June 2022<sup>1</sup>.

#### Key Information:

- The building approval data has not reflected any potential impact of COVID-19 related lockdown restrictions in the ACT which commenced on 12 August 2021. While the January 2022 recorded a negative growth in the month, and also fell over the year, January data is historically low due to most of January is holiday season.
- The last 6-month period saw record land sales as buyers took advantage of the stimulus on offer. These sales will soon translate into approvals. While the ACT lockdowns have had some impact on construction work, builders continued to have their building projects approved to be ready for construction as restrictions eased.

<sup>1</sup> There is a delay in the data sourced from the SLA. This is due to changes been made to SLA's data storing system.

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- The value of total construction work done increased by 17.5% in the December quarter 2021 and was 7.6% higher than its level in the December quarter 2020.

### **Multi-unit development activity**

- Development activity across Canberra for new units, townhouses and apartments remains steady with an estimated 13,444 units in the planning pipeline across 105 development sites as at the December quarter 2021.
- An estimated 7109 units across 67 sites are currently under construction across Canberra. The majority of activity in terms of the number of units and the number of development sites in the pipeline is in the Inner North of Canberra, followed by Molonglo, Woden and Gungahlin.
- An estimated 202 unit completions on 6 development sites were recorded in the December quarter 2021. The recent lockdown appears to have had some impact on multi-unit completions.

### **Prices and auction clearance rate**

- In December 2021 the *median transaction house* price increased slightly by 0.3% to \$950,000, while the *median transaction unit* price increased by 0.9% to \$534,900. Both the median house and unit prices were 25.1% and 1.1% higher than its level a year ago, respectively.<sup>2</sup>
- In December 2021 the *average transaction house* price was \$1,098,140 (increase of 2.6%) while the *average transaction unit price* was \$606,235 (increase of 0.7%)<sup>2</sup>.
- Data from *CoreLogic* shows that median house prices rose by 0.3% to \$1,031,410 in February 2022 while the median unit prices rose by 1.0% to \$602,475. Both the median house and unit prices were 25.4% and 17.5% higher than its level a year ago, respectively.
- Domain data on *auction clearance* showed auction clearance rates of 68% for the week ending 5 March 2022. In comparison, auction clearance rates declined to 39%<sup>3</sup> through March and early-April 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 related restrictions that were in place in the ACT at that time. However, there doesn't seem to be much impact on auction clearance rate from the recent lockdown in August 2021 with the lowest clearance rate recorded during this period was 79% in the week ending 4 September 2021, which is higher than the current rate.

### **Housing finance and first home buyers**

- *Housing finance for owner occupation* slowed in January 2022, decreasing by 17.7% to 877 commitments. The number of housing finance commitments for owner occupation was 4.3% lower than the same period last year. However, the value of

<sup>2</sup> Access Canberra Property settlements data.

<sup>3</sup> Domain auction clearance rate for the week ending 4 April 2020.

housing finance commitments for owner occupation increased by 33.5% to \$641 million in January 2022 and was 12.3% higher than its level in January 2021.<sup>4</sup>

- The number of investor finance commitments decreased by 14.1% to 384 commitments in January 2022. The number of commitments from investors was 23.9% higher than its level a year ago.<sup>4</sup>
- There were 308 *owner occupier first home buyer* housing finance commitments in January 2022 and a further 17 *investor first home buyer* commitment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ABS Lending Indicators Publication, January 2022.

**Portfolio: Planning and Land Management****TERRITORY PLAN VARIATION – NORTH WATSON****Talking points:**

- Draft variation number 372 (DV372) to the Territory Plan was approved on 8 February 2022. The Territory Plan Variation number 372 (TPV372) is anticipated to commence on 1 April 2022. The variation provides for RZ4 Medium Density Residential, including Demonstration Housing; and PRZ1 – Urban Open Space protecting landscape and treed areas for wildlife on Watson Section 76.
- The Place Plan and Development Concept (PPDC) was publicly released in January 2022 on the project’s webpage. Based on the outcomes of community engagement, undertaken concurrently with the DV372, the PPDC sets the community’s place vision, themes and principles to guide the future development of the site, including a one-hectare park and new walking and cycling paths. EPSDD updated the Watson Community Association (WCA) when the final PPDC was publicly released.
- The detailed design of the one-hectare park has commenced. The detail design phase will include community information session(s) which will be coordinated with the Suburban Land Agency’s (SLA) community engagement on their estate plans for Section 76 Watson.
- EPSDD is coordinating the design of the park with Transport Canberra and City Services around the work for the Inner North Play Space that is proposed adjacent to Canberra Technology Park in Watson.
- Key stakeholders for Section 76 Watson, including the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee (DNCCC) and the WCA, will continue to play an important role in shaping the site as it progresses through the detailed design phases.
- EPSDD is working closely with the SLA around their preparation of the Estate Development Plan (EDP) for the subdivision of Section 76 Watson.
- A site audit, assessing the bioavailability of the naturally occurring heavy metals found in the northeast of the site, is currently underway. A Section A audit that provides the Environmental Protection Authority’s approval for residential use on larger part of the site unaffected by the heavy metals is expected to be available in March 2022. A Section B audit that includes the smaller portion of the north part of the site affected by the heavy metals will include a Remediation Action Plan to be implemented by the future developer of the site and is anticipated to be finalised in April 2022.
- EPSDD has prepared development options that consider the preliminary findings of the site audit and demonstrate that even without development in the northeast portion of the site, the 200 dwellings target, identified in the Indicative Land Release Program for 2022-23, can be achieved.

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- This project demonstrates Government’s commitment to addressing the significant economic, demographic, and environmental changes that are taking place in the ACT.
- The project also demonstrates ACT Governments commitment to creating a more compact, efficient and inclusive city, with a clear focus on limiting urban spread and making better use of the existing infrastructure.

### Key Information:

- Section 74 and 76 Watson are currently on the Indicative Land Release Program for 2022-23 for 200 dwellings on each site.
- Work on the proposed Territory Plan Variation for Section 74 is not proceeding at this time, while government undertakes analysis on the best use for the site. Education Directorate has advised they are investigating Blocks 11 and 12 Section 74 Watson for a school.
- A recent ecological assessment outlines that Section 74 contains 3.77 ha of Box-Gum Woodland under the *ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014 (ACT)*. ACT Parks and Conservation also advises that the site is important for movement for the vulnerable Superb Parrot.
- If Government decides to use Section 74 for a school, Education will take the lead in completing the necessary site investigations. With Education intending to use part of the Section 74 for a school, the remainder may be reserved to protect the ecological values.
- Further community consultation on the Demonstration Housing proposal for Section 76 will be undertaken if the proponent is found successful in the Stage 2 Request for Tender process.
- EPSDD has provided the SLA with an Assurance Package for S76 Watson in December 2021 to allow the SLA to commence their work, including the EDP. The SLA will be able to lodge the EDP after the commencement of TPV372 and when EPSDD has completed the site audit.
- In preliminary community consultation, issues raised related to:
  - environment/trees;
  - transport/parking;
  - overall planning for the North Watson area including provision of recreation and community facilities, and further shops; and,
  - limiting any residential development on site to an appropriate scale.

The WCA undertook community consultation in 2018 to inform their ‘2019 Plan for Watson’. The WCA’s plan sets out community concerns outlined above, the importance of the local character of Watson, and the desire for future planning and development to be integrated within the existing built and natural environments.

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**Portfolio/s:** Planning and Land Management**EAST LAKE URBAN RENEWAL****Talking points:**

- The ACT Government is progressing the planning for the East Lake urban renewal area, in collaboration with key stakeholders and the community by:
  - working with key stakeholders on a Place Plan to establish the character and elements that will make East Lake unique and valued place. The Place Plan will also identify a vision and design principles to guide future changes;
  - preparing updated economic, environmental, heritage, sustainability and transport technical assessments; and
  - facilitating statutory planning changes to shape the future of this precinct.
- Ngunnawal representatives, lessees, businesses, residents, workers and the wider community will have the opportunity to be involved in shaping these outcomes, anticipated to occur in stages from mid-2022.
- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) is in the process of engaging a lead consultant to deliver this Place Plan, updated technical assessments, and a planning report. The Request for Tender (RFT) closed on 22 February 2022 ([RFT GS2988597](#)) and evaluation of responses is underway.
- In addition, EPSDD is in the process of engaging a consultant to deliver a Community Needs and Demographic Assessment for the East Lake renewal precinct and Canberra's Inner South to inform future planning including for provision of education and community facilities for East Lake. The Request for Quotation (RFQ) closed on 28 February 2022. Following completion of the procurement processes, this work is anticipated to be completed in June 2022.
- Site investigation work is also scoping suitable land areas within East Lake to meet the ACT Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) target for release of 650 residential dwellings in 2025-26, by finalising key environmental and geotechnical site investigations in the Causeway area.
- Many Causeway residents have a strong sense of connection to the area, in some cases going back generations. When a decision is made about what the future development of East Lake looks like, dedicated tenant relocation officers will work with current public housing tenants to find suitable replacement properties, including for those who wish to stay in the area.

**Key Information:**

- East Lake is identified in the *ACT Planning Strategy 2018* for urban intensification to create a more compact and efficient, diverse, sustainable and resilient, liveable, and accessible city.

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- The 2021-22 ACT Budget provided \$2.1m for finalising the East Lake site investigations and planning. This builds on the previous site investigations and Development Approvals delivered under the 2019-20 Budget initiative (Scoping for East Lake urban renewal \$608,000).
- This initiative contributes to the wellbeing domains of Housing and Home, Environment and Climate, and Access and Connectivity; as well as a range of planning, housing, transport, living infrastructure, climate change action and sustainability policy objectives.
- EPSDD is keeping residents informed prior to any site investigation activity occurring as part of the planning and site investigations. An update letter was sent out in the week commencing 1 February 2022.
- The East Lake urban renewal project is being coordinated with other key projects being delivered by ACT Government in 2022, including the ACT Planning System Review and Reform Project (PSRRP) and Kingston Arts Precinct (Suburban Land Agency).
- Planning for East Lake will consider future interstate passenger rail requirements for Canberra Railway Station and opportunities for improving connections with ACT's transport network (coordinated with Australian Government and NSW Government infrastructure planning and programs), and integration with surrounding uses.

### **Background Information:**

- The East Lake area (an area of approximately 100 hectares covering parts of Kingston, Fyshwick and Griffith) has been part of Canberra's planning since it was first identified as a site for residential intensification in the Spatial Plan (2004).
- ACT Government has continued to identify East Lake in our planning policies since 2004, however the timing for finalising plans, infrastructure delivery and commencing land development has remained subject to government urban renewal, housing, land release and budget priorities.
- Undertaking planning and land development in significant urban renewal infill locations such as Kingston Foreshore or East Lake, requires a range of significant planning, engineering, environmental and infrastructure issues be addressed.
- The scale and complexity of existing conditions in East Lake presents additional challenges to manage major overhead electrical infrastructure relocation works, remediation of contaminated land from past industrial and landfill uses, protecting and conserving the ecological values of Jerrabomberra Wetlands and the interstate railway.

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