



Response to DLO Request

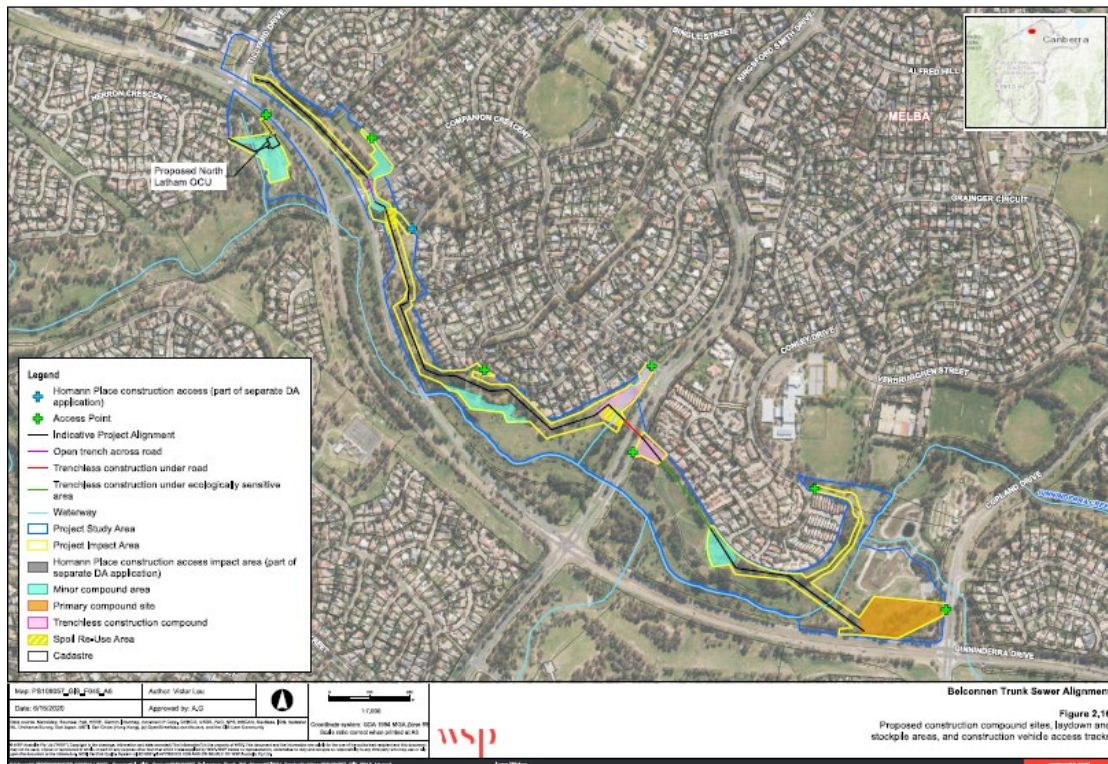
*** All information provided should be factual.**
EGM clearance email to be saved in the Objective file and forwarded to the EPSDD DLO inbox and copy in the relevant EO.

Subject: Construction of Odour Control Units in Umbagog District Park Latham

Response:

Background:

A concurrent Environmental Impact Statement (EIS-201800022) and development application (DA-201935509) was lodged in the Impact Track on 21 May 2019. The proposal was for the construction of a new trunk sewer main and associated odour control units (OCUs) in Latham and Melba. The proposal was assessed by the independent planning and land authority (the Authority) in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Act) and approved on 23 December 2020. The proposal is depicted below:





On 17 December 2019, a development application was lodged in the merit track (DA-201935629) for an OCU and associated infrastructure. The proposal was assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Act and was conditionally approved on 27 March 2020. The proposal is depicted below:



1. What proper government committee and community consultation process did the erection of the OCUs go through, as meetings with local residents reveal that they had not been made fully aware of their actual sites and construction, rather than being advised simply that there were sewerage upgrades works being done?

The proponent of the development is Icon Water. The proponent underwent consultation and the final design/location was applied for through the development application process.

Once the application was lodged, the Authority publicly notified EIS-201800022 and DA-201935509, in accordance with the Act, for 35 working days between 3 June 2019 and 22 July 2019. An amendment was submitted to DA-201935509 and the revised EIS and amendment was publicly notified for a further 15 working days (between 27 July 2020 to 17 August 2020).



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Environment, Planning and
Sustainable Development

EPSDD Ref No.: 22/13804

DA-201935629 was publicly notified for 15 working days from 9 January 2020 to 30 January 2020.

2. How do these OCUs actually function and what is their output in terms of emissions after filtering, ie. how much of the noxious gasses are filtered and how clean are the emissions in terms of odour and environmental impact?

Queries regarding the actual operation of the OCUs should be directed to the proponent.

3. What is the risk management plan for the units in case of malfunction? If one does malfunction, what would be the hazards and/or health effects in terms of emitting noxious gasses into the atmosphere (particularly during still winter conditions with their frequent temperature inversions) and what would be the immediate response plan to fix the problem? Also, what would be the consequences to the units from very high flood levels coming through the 'Kippax Creek' flood plain?

During the operation of the OCUs, the proponent has committed to a continuous maintenance regime and regular monitoring of the facilities. The environmental standards for pollutants are regulated under ongoing operational management plans, an Environmental Agreement and the *Environment Protection Act 1997*.

The proponent will be able to provide further information on what they will do in the event of a malfunction.

4. Can the units be properly disguised in terms of their design, visual impact and loss of native vegetation and with being built so close to built up areas, a guarantee provided that they will not result in devaluation of house and land values?

Any recommend amendments to the development or preferred locations for the tree replacement planting should sent to Icon Water for their consideration.

5. Could a moratorium be put on the project until the possibility of constructing the OCUs in more appropriate and isolated areas along with the above concerns are properly considered by appropriate MLAs, Legislative Assembly committees (with public hearings) and the ACT Environment Protection Authority? This is important given that the construction of the OCUs result from the increased sewerage flows from Gungahlin for which Umbagog District Park seems to be the casualty.

The DAs for the OCUs have already been approved by the Authority who is an independent body. ACT politician, including Legislative Assembly committees and Ministers, are unable to interfere or overturn the Authority's decision.

6. Umbagog District Park should be recognised as a significant level Belconnen nature reserve, along with the Ginninderra Creek corridor, with its bush walking trails and native grasslands.



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The Conservator of Flora and Fauna, in response to environmental values, would need to request the land be rezoned. Umbagog District Park and the Ginninderra Creek corridor currently have an Urban Open Space overlay. While they contain a number of significant ecological values, a previous assessment identified a number of considerations which would make some management actions difficult to undertake. These considerations include the landscape position and shape of the park, the amount of recreation infrastructure and service utilities in the park, public access, and proximity of houses. These issues need to be carefully assessed to determine if changing the overlay would be beneficial to the ecology and recreation amenity of the site.

Opening Statement

Annual Report Hearings 2020-21

- Over the past two years, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate has been continuing to progress the ACT Planning System Review and Reform Project.
- EPSDD has worked to understand what changes could create a better planning system for Canberra. This has involved benchmarking our planning system against other systems around the world, consultation with the community and technical work to explore options for an improved system for the ACT.
- Canberra is growing each year and the ACT Government is carefully planning for this growth and the economic opportunities which come with it. A modern planning system is important to deliver on our vision of a liveable and sustainable city. We want a system that is clear, easy to interact with and understand and which encourages participation in planning.
- The reformed planning system will be focused on liveability, prosperity, and the wellbeing of the residents of the ACT. We will be putting people at the heart of the planning system. This means recognising and protecting those aspects of the city that make it an attractive place to live, managing sustainable growth and development without compromising the ACT's valued character.
- It also means a planning system which continues to facilitate a strong economy in the Territory, attracting and creating jobs and the right kind of investment.

Mick Gentleman MLA

- In 2022, EPSDD will be progressing reforms to three key elements of the planning system: a new Planning Bill, preparing draft District Strategies and a new draft Territory Plan.
- Each element will be open for public consultation to allow for the reformed planning system to reflect community and industry views and to build trust and confidence in it going forward.
- EPSDD has prepared a consultation draft of the Planning Bill, which will deliver a new Planning Act to set the foundation for our new system.
- The consultation draft of the Planning Bill has been developed in conversation with community and industry stakeholders, with targeted stakeholder engagement occurring throughout 2021.
- Public consultation on the draft Planning Bill is proposed to commence following Cabinet agreement, where the consultation draft will be released for a period of three months.
- The purpose of public communication and engagement activities in 2022 is to capture input from the community and industry more widely on the proposed policy positions within the legislation.
- This is an opportunity to inform the community and industry of the proposed changes and benefits to the planning system that will be delivered through the provision of a new Act
- EPSDD are also working on a new Territory Plan and draft District Strategies to deliver our reformed planning system and will consult with stakeholders and the wider community on these proposed changes in the second half of 2022.

Mick Gentleman MLA

- As the reform journey continues, engagement and consultation will continue to be at the heart of the Project.
- This is an exciting time for planning in the ACT as EPSDD continues this important work to build a planning system that responds to the need of Canberrans in a growing city including important elements such as the environment, mitigation against the effects of climate change and the appropriate recognition of our first nations peoples.

ENDS

Minister Gentleman - Meeting with SEARMS – Thursday 17 February 2022

Background:

1. You have agreed to meet with Ms Kim Sinclair, Chief Executive Officer, SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation (SEARMS) on Thursday 17 February 2022 at 3.30pm.
2. SEARMS is currently operating in NSW and established a presence in Canberra in 2021. SEARMS is recognised as a Tier 3 provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (https://www.nrsch.gov.au/national_register).
3. SEARMS has been delivering culturally appropriate Aboriginal housing services in South Eastern NSW and the Canberra region since 2003. As of April 2021, SEARMS were managing over 245 properties and of these, 37 were located in Queanbeyan and Yass. SEARMS is now looking to strengthen its presence and expand its services to the ACT.
4. Ms Sinclair would like to discuss SEARMS plans for expansion into Canberra. Ms Sinclair would also like to brief you on SEARMS approach to the provision of culturally appropriate Aboriginal community housing.
5. SEARMS advise that they are currently working with the Australian Government's National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) on a funding application for property acquisition in Canberra. They are also involved in Canberra based housing-first initiatives that intersect with the areas of justice and women and children.
6. Minister Berry met with SEARMS on 12 April 2021, the purpose of the meeting was also to discuss SEARMS planned expansion into Canberra.
7. Advice from the Community Services Directorate (CSD) is that Minister Stephen-Smith has also met with SEARMS, however details about the timing or purpose of the meeting are not known.

ACT Housing Strategy:

8. The ACT Housing Strategy (the strategy) was launched in October 2018 and establishes an overarching policy framework to guide decisions about policy, planning and delivery of housing across the ACT over its ten-year lifespan.
9. The strategy is structured around five goals with linked objectives and 74 priority actions. It is supported by a complementary Implementation Plan, which identifies timeframes for the delivery of actions and allocates delivery responsibility within government.
10. While the strategy aims to improve access to safe, secure and affordable housing for all Canberrans, it includes a particular focus on low to moderate income households and those experiencing and vulnerable to homelessness.
11. Through the strategy, the ACT Government has introduced a range of reforms, programs and funding initiatives which span the full housing continuum. This comprises initiatives that provide affordable home purchase and affordable rental opportunities, strengthen social housing assistance, respond to homeless and increase innovation equity in the housing market.
12. The strategy contains specific actions to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the domains of housing and homelessness. The ACT Government is committed to working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (Elected Body) and undertaking meaningful consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to co-design, implement, expand and deliver culturally appropriate accommodation and support options.

13. Under the strategy, goal 3 focuses on ‘strengthening social housing assistance’, and includes an action (3B.4) which commits to ‘working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to expand the range of culturally appropriate housing options for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and enhance the capacity of the community housing sector.’
14. CSD is responsible for implementing this action and activities are underway to recruit two new identified positions to facilitate this commitment.

Sensitivities:

15. It is also important to note CSD advice that there are sensitivities for Government in relation to encouraging a specific Aboriginal community housing provider (CHP) to establish in the ACT, as any involvement in this regard should be led by the Elected Body and the Aboriginal community more broadly.

ACT Government support for the community housing sector:

16. Under the strategy, goal 4 commits to ‘growing and diversifying the community housing sector’. This commitment is reinforced through the ACT Government’s COVID economic stimulus measures and under the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement and is being achieved through a range of initiatives, policies and programs to support CHPs, these include:
 - Under the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund*, facilitating a project to develop community rental housing on (some) underutilised leased community facility land.
 - Ensuring the planning and housing system continues to deliver affordable housing.*
 - Establishing an Affordable Rental Real Estate Management model as a pilot under the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund.
 - Working with community housing providers to develop more affordable rental properties.
 - Expanding further the existing land tax exemption program for affordable rental housing by increasing the cap to 250 properties and removing the time limit for this exemption.
 - Facilitating a project to develop community rental housing on underutilised leased community facility land.*
 - Lease Variation Charge (LVC) Remissions*:
 - In December 2020, Government announced a further continuation of the LVC remission (further to the original 50 per cent remission announced as part of the Construction Sector Recovery Package) at a reduced rate of 25 per cent.
 - The CHP-specific disallowable instrument made under section 278 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (that commenced on 1 October 2019), which permits a LVC to be reduced in whole or in part, subject to circumstances, remains in effect until June 2022.
 - Build to Rent (BtR)*:
 - The strategy commits to an Expression of Interest process to build affordable rental properties under a BtR model. This action is being implemented through a BtR development as part of the demonstration housing initiative, however other BtR projects will also support the action.
 - Separately, a collective of CHPs has submitted a proposal to the ACT Government to establish a BtR development on a site in Turner. Consideration of the proposal and appropriate next steps is underway. It is noted that due to the nature and value of the proposal it may need to be considered as an unsolicited bid.

Mechanisms to facilitate CHP access to land:

17. There are also a range of mechanisms that support CHPs to access to land for social and affordable housing, these include:
- Housing targets: allocation of 15 per cent of the Indicative Land Release Program each year to community, public and affordable housing.
 - Community housing tenders: for example, sites in Scullin, Giralang and other suburbs in 2020.
 - Purchase of land from the Suburban Land Agency: for example, over the counter, auctions, ballots.
 - Affordable Home Purchase Scheme: if the database of eligible applicants is exhausted, dwellings are then offered to CHPs at the affordable price thresholds.
 - Direct sale*: CHPs can apply to the government for a direct sale of land at full market value. This involves submitting a business case and meeting legislated criteria.
 - Private sector: CHPs can purchase land and dwellings from the private sector.

* These programs and initiatives overlap or fall within your portfolio as Minister for Planning and Land Management.

From: EPSDD DLO
Sent: Tuesday, 22 February 2022 10:28 AM
To: Ebsworth, Imogen
Cc: Elliston, Ben
Subject: ADVICE FOR MO - Automatic Mutual Recognition Occupational Registrations Omnibus Bill 2022

Categories: 02. For Tash - Action

OFFICIAL

Hi Imogen

Please see below advice received from EPSD. Let me know if you need further information.

[REDACTED] *doesn't materially change things in terms of next steps for EPSD, as per what the office had been advised in the discussion last week.*

We do recommend however that the offer of a briefing be taken up. It would be good to discuss with the taskforce, along with the regulator, the next steps for the construction occupations including the current identified issues relating to disciplinary actions and the proposed approach to seek a significant risk exemption for the construction occupations.

Thanks

Tash

Anastasia Hartwig | Directorate Liaison Officer | ACT Legislative Assembly
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate | ACT Government
Office of Minister Vassarotti | Environment and Heritage | Sustainable Building and Construction
Phone: 6207 0701 | Email: epsddlo@act.gov.au

From: Ebsworth, Imogen <Imogen.Ebsworth@act.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 18 February 2022 9:01 AM
To: VASSAROTTI <VASSAROTTI@act.gov.au>; Vassarotti, Rebecca <Rebecca.Vassarotti@act.gov.au>; Elliston, Ben <Ben.Elliston@act.gov.au>; EPSDD DLO <EPSDDDLO@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Correspondence from Minister Tara Cheyne

Thanks Emily

Tash, can you pass this on to Erin and Bethel and request their advice on whether a briefing would be beneficial (ie if this changes anything in our understanding of progress on this item from our briefing this week)

Cheers, Imogen

From: VASSAROTTI <VASSAROTTI@act.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 17 February 2022 5:11 PM
To: Vassarotti, Rebecca <Rebecca.Vassarotti@act.gov.au>; Ebsworth, Imogen <Imogen.Ebsworth@act.gov.au>; Elliston, Ben <Ben.Elliston@act.gov.au>; EPSDD DLO <EPSDDDLO@act.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Correspondence from Minister Tara Cheyne

Hi all

Please see below and attached from Minister Cheyne.

Thanks
Em

From: Argy, Nicholas <Nicholas.Argy@act.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 17 February 2022 4:45 PM
To: VASSAROTTI <VASSAROTTI@act.gov.au>
Cc: CHEYNE <CHEYNE@act.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Correspondence from Minister Tara Cheyne

Hi Emily

[REDACTED] noting media communications and guidance material produced by the Territory's regulation authorities will provide individuals wishing to rely on AMR in the ACT with the necessary information about the scheme. Access Canberra has already been established as an online hub for AMR-related information and the Taskforce and CMTEDD Media and Communications team are working together to produce additional guidance in a phased approach.

[REDACTED]

The AMR Scheme will become fully operational in the ACT on 1 July 2022. To assist your Minister and office to understand the specific issues related to your registrations, the Taskforce offer of a joint briefing with policy and regulatory officials remains open. Please contact the Head of the Better Regulation Taskforce, Sam Engele, at Sam.Engele@act.gov.au or on 6205 0230 to arrange this briefing.

Kind regards

Nick Argy
Adviser | Office of Tara Cheyne MLA

Member for Ginninderra
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Business and Better Regulation
Minister for Human Rights
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Assistant Minister for Economic Development

02 6205 4018



From: CHEYNE <CHEYNE@act.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 January 2022 11:45 AM

To: VASSAROTTI <VASSAROTTI@act.gov.au>

Subject: Correspondence from Minister Tara Cheyne

Dear Emily

Please find attached correspondence from the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Tara Cheyne MLA.

Kind regards

Anna

Anna Taxis

Office Manager | Office of Tara Cheyne MLA

Member for Ginninderra

Minister for the Arts

Minister for Business and Better Regulation

Minister for Human Rights

Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Assistant Minister for Economic Development

T 02 6205 0100



Portfolio: Planning and Land Management

CURTIN HORSE PADDOCKS

Talking points:

- On 28 October 2020, the National Capital Plan Amendment 95 – North Curtin Diplomatic Estate and Urban Area took effect. Amendment 95:
 - changed the land use policy of Block 4 Section 106 and part Block 5 Section 121 Curtin to facilitate the development of a new diplomatic estate
 - created a new urban area adjacent to this estate for future ACT residential use
 - includes the whole area (both Commonwealth and ACT Government land) within Designated Areas to permit the National Capital Authority (NCA) to have planning and development approval responsibilities.
- The NCA is undertaking detailed site investigations and estate development planning for the diplomatic estate. This process will determine subdivision layout, infrastructure requirements, access arrangements, the location of open space, and block sizes within the estate.
- Detailed Conditions for Planning and Development for the ACT residential land (associated with the horse paddocks) will be prepared by EPSDD, in consultation with the NCA. Opportunities for appropriate urban intensification will be considered, given the sites location along the City to Woden light rail corridor and proximity to services.
- Six small site survey related consultancies are underway for the ACT land within the horse paddocks. The outcomes of these surveys will also be used to the draft Detailed Conditions for Planning and Development
- Once the Conditions for Planning and Development are drafted, the NCA will undertake a community consultation process before final conditions are approved by the NCA Board or NCA Chief Planner.
- A consultant has undertaken a Light Rail Stage 2B Urban Infill Capability Assessment along the stage 2B corridor, including the Curtin Horse Paddocks residential site. The outcomes of this assessment will be used to inform strategic planning work in the light rail corridor.

Key Information:

- On 5 March 2020, the Commonwealth Government exercised its planning powers under the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* by declaring Block 4 Section 106 Curtin and approximately 70% of Block 5 Section 121 Curtin as National Land for the purposes of a new diplomatic estate.
- In recognition of the impact that this change will have on the existing horse paddock agistees on Block 5 Section 121 Curtin, the ACT Government sought agreement from the National Capital Authority (NCA) to provide for an appropriate transition period

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Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 76842
Contact Officer name: Steven Gianakis Ext: 71741
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

for the horse paddocks. The NCA has committed that the horse paddocks will continue to operate with the same capacity for a period of time.

- The strategy for how the agisted horses will be moved off the land is a decision between the paddock contractor and the agistees.
- A new horse paddock complex is being investigated at Pialligo. However, it may not be fully operational for at least two years, if it is to proceed. EPSDD has commenced initial site preparation and pasture establishment over some of the land. Further resources and work in the coming years will be required to fully establish the new paddocks. The Government will consider providing for this through the normal budget process in consideration of other Government priorities.
- As part of the land agreement between the Commonwealth and the ACT, approximately 2.8 hectares of land in Lake Burley Griffin's West Basin area has become Territory Land for the purposes of new public open space.
- NCA works approval was granted on 4 September 2020 for the land reclamation and boardwalk extension. Works have commenced, with the entire project expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2022.
- EPSDD is also considering any necessary augmentation for the potential new horse paddock site at Pialligo, such as to the trail network, associated paddock facilities, provision of water and vehicle access to and through the site.
- The ACT Planning Strategy contains a specific action relating to the City to Woden light rail, being:
 - *Action 1.1.3 - Undertake preliminary land use investigations for the potential City to Woden light rail line to determine the opportunities for urban intensification afforded by increased transport accessibility.*
- The emphasis of the action is to determine the opportunities for urban intensification in the area. This does not mean that all land will have zoning changes or be redeveloped.

Background Information:

- Australia's obligations with respect to diplomatic missions are defined under the Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations. This includes a commitment to facilitate the acquisition of premises for the establishment of foreign missions. The National Capital Authority is responsible for the creation and management of diplomatic sites on national land in Canberra and is therefore now responsible for the management of the land that has been transferred to the Commonwealth.

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 planning phases with ongoing environmental surveys expected. This will include the identification of:
 - potential location and size of development and conservation areas;
 - potential development types;
 - road and infrastructure connections; and
 - bushfire threat and mitigation measures.
- 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.

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Contact Officer name: Steven Gianakis Ext: 71741
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

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.
- 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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Contact Officer name:	Steven Gianakis	Ext: 71741
Lead Directorate:	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development	

- 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:

- Canberra's property market has responded positively to the ACT Government's policy decisions to stimulate the economy as part of the *Economic Survival Package*.
- Housing related stimuli 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 ACT Land and Property 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 April 2022.

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. The November 2021 recorded a positive growth in the month, however fell over the year.
- 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 current ACT lockdown had paused construction work, builders continued to have their building projects approved to be ready for construction as soon as the lockdown restrictions eased.

Multi-unit development activity

- Development activity across Canberra for new units, townhouses and apartments remains steady with an estimated 14,070 units in the planning pipeline across 103 development sites as at the September quarter 2021.

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Contact Officer name: Jennifer Finlay Ext: 55289
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

- An estimated 6,325 units across 65 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 Inner North of Canberra, followed by Molonglo and Gungahlin.
- An estimated 365 unit completions on 10 development sites were recorded in the second quarter of 2021 (as at 30 September 2021). The recent lockdown appears to have had an impact on multi-unit completions.

Prices and auction clearance rate

- In November 2021 the *median transaction house* price decreased slightly by 0.3% to \$947,000, while the *median transaction unit* price also slowed decreasing by 1.9% to \$530,000. Both the median house and unit prices were 24.6% and 6.0% higher than its level a year ago, respectively.¹
- In November 2021 the *average transaction house* price was \$1,069,933 (decrease of 0.6%) while the *average transaction unit price* was \$601,749 (increase of 2.4%)¹.
- Domain data on *auction clearance* showed auction clearance rates of 79% for the week ending 29 January 2022. In comparison, auction clearance rates declined to 39%² 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 with the lowest clearance rate recorded during this period was 79% in the week ending 4 September 2021, which is on par with the current rate.

Housing finance and first home buyers

- *Housing finance for owner occupation* slowed in December 2021, decreasing by 2.6% to 1,066 commitments. The number of housing finance commitments for owner occupation was 7.1% lower than the same period last year. Moreover, the value of housing finance commitments for owner occupation decreased by 3.4% to \$480 million in December 2021 but was 1.8% higher than its level in December 2020.³
- The number of investor finance commitments was unchanged at 447 commitments in December 2021. The number of commitments from investors was 17.3% higher than its level a year ago.³
- There were 245 *owner occupier first home buyer* housing finance commitments in December 2021 and a further 32 *investor first home buyer* commitment.³

¹ Access Canberra Property settlements data.

² Domain auction clearance rate for the week ending 4 April 2020.

³ ABS Lending Indicators Publication, December 2021.

Portfolio: Planning and Land Management

UNIT TITLES REFORM

Talking points:

- The Unit Titles Reform Project is looking at unit title laws and policies and how they can be improved to better support stakeholders, and in particular deal capably with mixed-use developments. The reforms are being progressed in two stages with high priority and more straightforward matters proceeding in stage one.
- Stage one of the reforms, in the *Unit Titles Legislation Amendment Act 2020*, commenced on 1 November 2020, with transitional arrangements in place for some of the new requirements. The Act introduced a number of positive changes for unit owners and prospective buyers which include:
 - better decision making processes for owners corporations to deal with financial matters and rules;
 - improved disclosure requirements for buyers of off-the-plan units, including more information upfront and updates when important details in the development change;
 - new requirements for building maintenance to make it clearer to owners and buyers what their responsibilities are; and
 - encouraging more pet friendly units plans, with improved pet rules and streamlining arrangements for assistance animals.
- The *Planning and Unit Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2020* was passed on 31 March 2021 and makes minor amendments to unit titles legislation to support implementation of the stage one reforms.
- The *Planning and Unit Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2021* was passed on 11 November 2021 and makes minor amendments to simplify the process for lodging a Building Management Statement.
- A second stage of the project is underway to consider additional reforms to further improve unit titles laws and policies to make it easier for people that live and work in these buildings to efficiently manage them.

Key Information:

- Through the first stage of the project the Unit Titles Reform Consultative Group reviewed the draft legislation and provided feedback on implementing the reforms, they remain engaged through the second stage of the project.
- The Group includes representatives from the Owners Corporation Network, Strata Communities Australia, Law Society, Housing Industry Association, Planning Institute, Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute, Real Estate Institute, Property Council, Legal Aid ACT and Master Builders Association.

Cleared as complete and accurate: 31/01/2022
Cleared for public release by: Executive Branch Manager Ext: x50030
Contact Officer name: Amy Kingham Ext: x53398
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Background Information:

- The Unit Titles Reform Project commenced in 2016. Extensive consultation with stakeholder groups was undertaken in 2016-17 to identify key issues, followed by internal Government review.

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Contact Officer name: Amy Kingham Ext: x53398
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

Portfolio: Planning and Land Management

KOWEN AND WEST MURRUMBIDGEE

Talking points:

Kowen:

- The ACT Government supports the protection and maintenance of Kowen Forest in its current state. The area has been removed from consideration in Government's future land development planning processes.
- Having considered the Kowen Forest/Kowen Plateau in the context of Canberra's overall growth, it does not make sense to pursue development there given the importance of the forest as a natural buffer and recreation zone.
- The Government will instead seek to protect and maintain Kowen Forest in its current state.
- In a speech I made in this place on 30 July 2020, I reiterated this position to definitively exclude Kowen from future urban development. The Chief Minister also confirmed this position in a State of the Territory speech on 9 May 2019, stating "It is a special place that should be preserved for future generations, and we want to protect it from development".

West Murrumbidgee:

- Land to the west of the Murrumbidgee River has been excluded from consideration by this Government as a future urban investigation area, a position I reaffirmed in a speech I made in this place regarding land supply and planning strategy on 30 July 2020.
- Greenfield growth must represent a logical and cost-effective expansion of Canberra's urban area, while protecting or offsetting the environmental values in the areas concerned, and the landscape setting that is valued by the Canberra community. In addition to protecting important environmental values, growth areas must be in locations that facilitate accessibility to existing employment, services, social and urban infrastructure.
- The location of the west Murrumbidgee area means that it does not meet these important criteria for consideration and assessment as a future urban investigation area.
- In addition, land west of the Murrumbidgee River, historically named Freshford and envisaged to form part of Tuggeranong was abandoned by the National Capital Development Commission many decades ago due to landscape and water quality concerns.

Key Information:

- The ACT Planning Strategy 2018 establishes actions to plan for future greenfield housing supply by investigating the potential for new residential development to the west of the city in the area adjacent to the Molonglo Valley district (p 44).
- Within the scope of the 2018 Strategy, future potential greenfield areas, including West Murrumbidgee, Western Greenway and Central Molonglo were deferred from consideration due to the complexity of environmental, landscape and community values (p 44).
- The Kowen Plateau is not shown as a future urban investigation area on the 2018 policy plan map, having been removed from consideration due to significant infrastructure and sustainability considerations associated with the distance from urban Canberra (p 44).
- This position continues the policy direction contained in the 2012 ACT Planning Strategy, which did not identify Kowen as a future urban investigation area.
- West Murrumbidgee is not identified as a future investigation area in the ACT Planning Strategy 2018.
- To assist in the evaluation of greenfield sites, assessment criteria based on best practice in urban growth area planning and triple bottom line evaluation principles are used to help assess the suitability of sites for investigation. These include:
 - a. Location (e.g., proximity to existing urban areas, employment etc);
 - b. Physical attributes (e.g., biodiversity, topography/slope, heritage, etc); and
 - c. Infrastructure (e.g., ease of access/augmentation, indicative costs if known etc).

Background Information

- Over the past 20 years, consecutive spatial planning strategies have outlined the key directions for managing our population growth. Continuing to provide diversity in where and how people live is a fundamental component of the ACT Planning Strategy 2018, which establishes strategic directions to manage future urban growth. These are based on analysis of the social, economic and environmental implications of alternative options.
- Infill development to achieve a more compact and efficient city is the policy focus of the Strategy, with up to 70 per cent of new housing to be provided within the existing urban footprint. However, in recognition of the importance of continuing to provide housing choice through new development, by providing for a range of housing typologies and block sizes, the Strategy identifies that up to 30 per cent of new housing will be provided in greenfield areas.

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Cleared for public release by: Executive Group Manager Ext: 76842
Contact Officer name: Steven Gianakis Ext: 71741
Lead Directorate: Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development