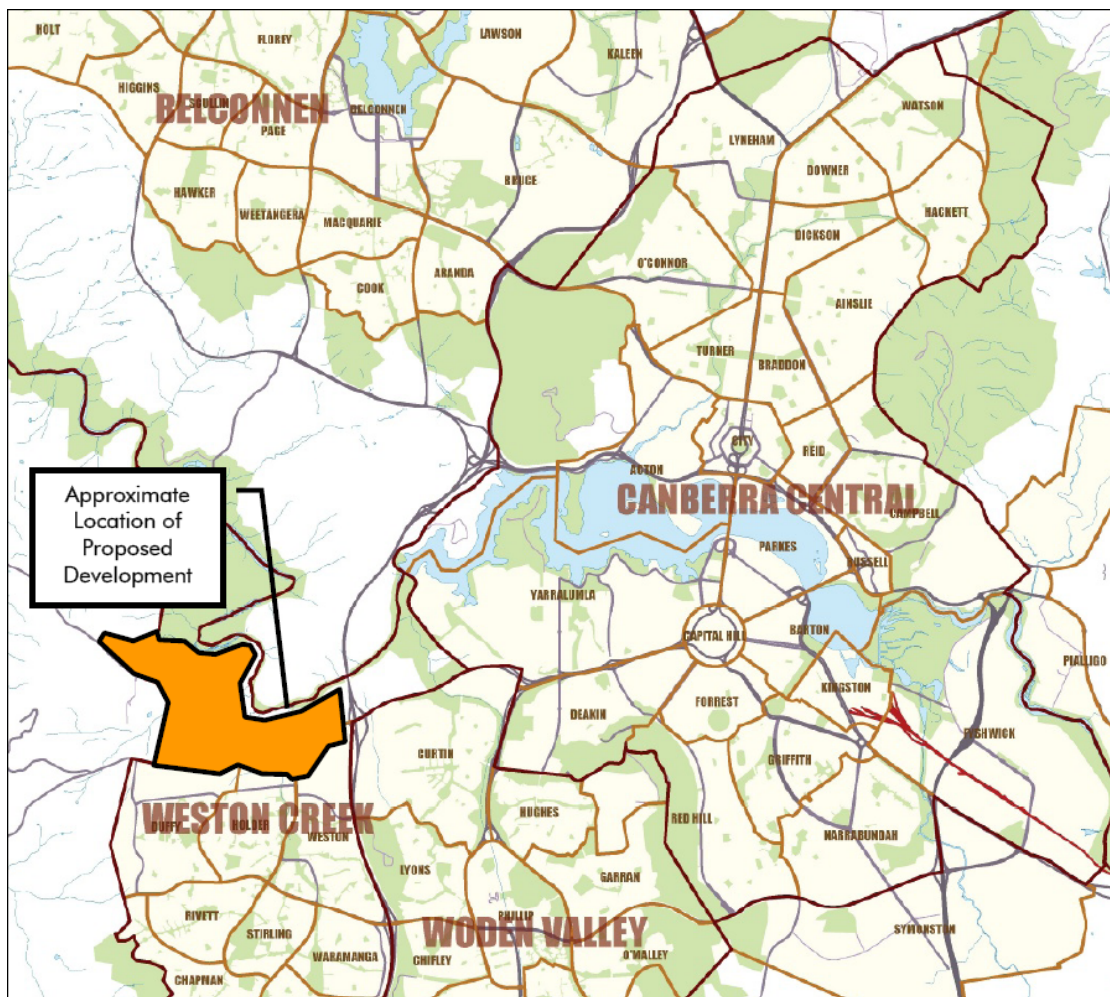


**Report to the Minister for Planning**

**EIS scoping & Section 211 consideration**

**Molonglo urban land development and associated works  
(North Weston-Wright-Coombs)**

**Prepared by  
ACT Planning and Land Authority  
July 2009**



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## Introduction

This document is a report to the ACT Minister for Planning on the assessment of the Molonglo Urban Land Development and associated works project proposed by the Land Development Agency (LDA). The project encompasses the future suburbs of North Weston, Wright and Coombs.

The LDA identified the development of North Weston, Wright and Coombs suburbs as key components in their land release program to ensure long term residential land availability in the National Capital. The LDA has prepared an EIS scoping/s211 exemption application which identifies the potential impacts of the proposed development that provides information to support their request for Ministerial exemption under s211 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the P&D Act).

### 1.1 ACT EIA Requirements

#### 1.1.1 The Environmental Impact Statement Process

Impact track assessment applies to proposals under Section 123 of the P&D Act. The Molonglo Urban Land Development is a proposal that meets Section 123 of the P&D Act as it involves a process or activity mentioned in Schedule 4 of the P&D Act, and therefore requires an EIS. An EIS must be completed in accordance with the requirements of the P&D Act before a development application can be lodged in the impact track. Table 1 below lists the applicable EIS triggers for the project.

**Table 1 – EIS triggers per Schedule 4 of the P&D Act 2007**

| <b>Part 4.2</b> | <b>Activities</b>  | <b>Project component</b>   |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 1               | proposal for a linear transport system corridor (for example, construction of new corridor or realignment outside existing corridor) intended to result in a major road, bus way, railway, light rail or tramway, and that is likely to have a significant impact on air quality or ambient noise or cause a significant level of vibration, significant visual intrusion or significant impact on a residential area  | Triggered by proposed arterial road.   |
| 3               | proposal for construction of a dam that will—<br>(a) be at least 10m high, with a storage capacity of at least 20 000m <sup>3</sup> ; or<br>(b) be at least 5m high, with a storage capacity of at least 50 000m <sup>3</sup>  | Triggered by proposed Weston Pond.<br><br>Triggered by proposed Weston Pond  |
| 5               | proposal for construction of a sewage treatment plant (other than a septic tank that services residential premises), or sewer reticulation system, designed to service a residential subdivision that—<br><br>(d) is to be within 100m of a body of water, whether natural or artificial, waterway or wetland; or<br>(g) is to be within 2km of a residential zone and, taking into consideration the topography and local weather conditions, is likely to significantly affect the amenity of the neighbourhood because of noise, odour, dust, vermin attracted, lights, traffic or waste. | Triggered by proposed trunk sewer.<br><br>Triggered by proposed trunk sewer. |
| <b>Part 4.3</b> | <b>Areas &amp; processes</b>   | <b>Project component</b>   |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | proposal that is likely to adversely impact on the conservation status of—<br>(a) a species or ecological community that is endangered; or<br>(b) a species that is vulnerable; or<br>(c) a species that is protected; or<br>(d) a species with special protection status; or<br>(e) a species or ecological community if the flora and fauna committee has specified criteria for assessing whether the committee should recommend the making of a declaration under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1980</i> , section 38 (Declaration of species, community or process) in relation to the species or ecological community; or<br>(f) an endangered species, an endangered population, an endangered ecological community, a critically endangered species, a critically endangered ecological community or presumed extinct under the <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i> (NSW), if the potential impact of the proposal will be on the species or community in New South Wales. | Triggered by clearing of land to be a known Pink Tailed Worm Lizard habitat. |
| 3 | proposal involving—<br>(a) the clearing of more than 0.5ha of native vegetation;  | Triggered by clearing in excess of 75% of vegetative cover.                  |
| 7 | proposal with the potential to have a significant impact on the heritage significance of a place or object registered, or nominated for provisional registration, under the <i>Heritage Act 2004</i>  | Triggered by the disturbance of potential heritage sites.                    |
| 8 | proposal involving—<br>a) land registered in the register of contaminated sites kept under the <i>Environment Protection Act 1997</i> ; or<br>b) land potentially contaminated in a way that is causing, or is likely to cause, a significant risk of harm to people's health or the environment.   | Triggered by disturbance of land known to be contaminated.                   |

The EIS scoping/s211 exemption request application was submitted by the LDA to ACTPLA on 28 May 2009. In accordance with ACTPLA requirements, the application contained information to inform the consideration of the s211 component of the application.

Information on the comments received from prescribed entities as part of the referral process can be found in Section 4 of this report. Further information on the key findings of the LDA's assessment with regards to the potential impacts can be found in Section 4 – Evaluation.

### **1.2 Commonwealth EIA Requirements**

The proposal has discussed with the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) and is currently being assessed under the strategic assessment process of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) being undertaken for the entire Molonglo Valley urban development area (East, Central and West Molonglo). It is anticipated that the strategic assessment process will be finalised by mid August 2009. The completed strategic assessment will preclude subsequent development areas of the Molonglo Valley requiring referral under the EPBC Act.

## **2 Project Details**

### **2.1 The Project**

#### **2.1.1 Project Description**

The site comprises the south east corner of a larger area known as East Molonglo. The developable area is intended for various urban uses including residential, commercial, institutional, recreational and reserve. Infrastructure components of the project include, three large storm water management ponds, arterial road and trunk sewer line.

#### **2.1.2 Project Proponent**

The Land Development Agency (LDA) is the proponent.

## **3 EIS Process**

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is a systematic process to identify, predict and evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed project. This process is applied before major decisions and development commitments are made. The main objective is to prevent, reduce and off-set significant negative impacts on the environment.

The purpose of the EIA process is to ensure that the decision maker (i.e. ACTPLA) is fully informed of the environmental aspects and consequences prior to making a final decision on the DA.

### **3.1 Impact Track**

As the project is captured by the Impact assessment track the EIS process must be completed before a DA can be lodged.

Section 211 of the P&D Act allows an applicant to seek exemption from the requirement to complete an EIS. The Minister responsible for the P&D Act has discretion under this section to grant exemption based on the information in previous studies. If exemption is granted then the EIS process is regarded as complete and allows an applicant to lodge a DA for assessment in the impact track.

### **3.2 Controlled Action**

Under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (EPBC Act), a person must not take an action that has, will have, or is likely to have a significant impact on any of the matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) without approval from the Commonwealth Environment Minister. It is the responsibility of the proponent to refer the project to the Commonwealth Government.

An SEA is currently being undertaken by the Commonwealth Government (DEWHA) and the ACT Government with a view to identifying matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) in the Molonglo Valley.

### 3.3 Referral

As required by the P&D Act and the *Planning and Development Regulation 2008* the LDA's application for an EIS scoping document was referred by ACTPLA to the following prescribed entities. While there is not statutory requirement to refer a section 211 exemption request, that request was included within the referral for entity consideration:

- ActewAGL Distribution, referred 5 Jun 2009, no comments received at time of drafting this report
- ACTEW Corp, referred 5 Jun 2009, no comments received at time of drafting this report
- the Chief Executive municipal services, referred 5 Jun 2009, no comments received at time of drafting this report. However comments have been received from individual branches within the Department of Territory and Municipal Services.
- the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, referred 5 Jun 2009, comment received 29 June 2009
- the Environment Protection Authority, referred 5 Jun 2009, comment received 29 June 2009
- the Emergency Services Commissioner, referred 5 Jun 2009, comment received 26 June 2009
- the Chief Executive, health policy, referred 5 Jun 2009, comment received 26 June 2009
- the Heritage Council, referred 5 Jun 2009, comment received 3 July 2009

and the following non-prescribed entities:

- Belconnen Community Council, referred 5 June 2009, no comment received at time of drafting this report;
- Weston Creek Community Council, referred 5 June 2009, no comment received at time of drafting this report;
- Woden Community Council, referred 5 June 2009, no comment received at time of drafting this report;
- Conservation Council South East Region and Canberra, referred 5 June 2009, no comment received at time of drafting this report;
- National Capital Authority - referred 5 Jun 2009, comment received 3 July 2009

Comments received from the above referral entities were generally supportive of the project being exempted from the need to complete an EIS provided that any subsequent DA was conditional upon those matters listed in Section 5 – Development Application Considerations, of this report.

## **4 Evaluation**

This section provides a summary of the issues identified as triggering the need for an Impact assessment of the project. For each issue, the results are summarised under the following three headings:

- **Impacts**

Details the potential impacts of the project as identified by Schedule 4 of the P&D Act.

- **Previous studies**

Information supplied by the applicant in support of their s211 exemption, including the PA evaluation report dated 18 February 2008 prepared in response to Territory Plan Variation 281.

- **Conclusion**

Result of ACTPLA evaluation of previous studies.

### ***4.1 Item 1 Part 4.2 Schedule 4 - Arterial Road***

#### **Impacts**

A component of the project is the construction of the first portion of a major arterial road. This arterial road, identified as John Gorton Drive, will service the suburbs of Wright and Coombs, with eventual extension to the north bank of the Molonglo River as the development front moves outwards.

This proposed arterial road has triggered application of Item 1, Part 4.2, Schedule 4 as it has the potential to have a significant impact on air quality, ambient noise, vibration, visual intrusion and impact on residential areas (Duffy, Holder and Weston).

#### **Previous studies**

The applicant has supplied two reports in support of the s211 exemption:

- Molonglo Roads Feasibility Study, SMEC, 2008; and
- Report on Molonglo Infrastructure Stage 1, Preliminary Sketch Plans, GHD, 2008 (incorporating Traffic Report and Road Traffic Noise Assessment).

#### **Conclusion**

The two supporting reports have adequately identified the issues associated with the EIS trigger. The reports demonstrate that there will be impacts on air quality due to increased traffic. However, other issues of ambient noise, vibration and visual intrusion can be mitigated to acceptable levels through sympathetic design.

It is concluded that further environmental assessment of this issue is not required for this project. However, air quality modelling as recommended by the Preliminary Assessment evaluation should be carried out for subsequent stages of development in the Molonglo Valley prior to lodgement of any EDP DA.

## **4.2 Item 3 Part 4.2 Schedule 4 – Weston Pond**

### **Impacts**

A component of the project is the construction of three in-stream storm water management ponds. The largest of these, known as Weston Pond has a surface area of 11 ha and involves the ponding of an unnamed watercourse. The other two ponds do not trigger the need for EIS in their own right.

### **Previous studies**

The original concept plan for East Molonglo includes in stream damming and detention of the Molonglo River to create a lake. However due to the high ecological impact of this design it was abandoned in favour of smaller ponds located in stream of water courses that feed into the Molonglo River. The benefit of this approach is twofold: 1) it avoids the inundation of a reach of the Molonglo River that has pockets of high quality Pink Tailed Worm Lizard (PTWL) habitat; and 2) ponding and detaining water prior to entering the Molonglo River will improve the quality of the water entering the Molonglo River system. Supporting information submitted by the applicant reinforces this approach.

Creating a large lake in the Molonglo river also had implications for the 1:100 ARI and the Scrivener Dam Hazard Failure Area.

Siting of the ponds has been carried out in conjunction with Parks Conservation and Lands (PCL) who have made recommendations on design and siting of the required dam walls.

### **Conclusion**

Issues surrounding Weston Pond and to a lesser extent, the two smaller ponds, have been satisfactorily addressed by locating the ponds in areas of low ecological value and by redesigning the concept plan to abandon the idea of a large central lake created by damming the Molonglo River.

It is concluded that further environmental assessment of this issue is not required for this project. Detailed design issues can be addressed at individual the DA stage.

## **4.3 Item 5 Part 4.2 Schedule 4 – Trunk Sewer**

### **Impacts**

A component of the project is the construction of a trunk sewer. The trunk sewer will be approximately 2.7km in length. The initial proposal incorporated a pump station. However, the sewer has since been redesigned and a pump station is no longer required. This has reduced the impact of this component significantly. The alignment of the trunk sewer is adjacent to the Molonglo River and passes thorough minor areas of low quality PTWL habitat.

### **Previous studies**

- Habitat mapping and conservation considerations for the Pink-tailed Worm Lizard with respect to the alignment of the proposed Molonglo Trunk Sewer, W Osborne 2007.

The original sewer concept for East Molonglo had identified the need for this trunk sewer. However, because of the need to avoid the PTWL habitat the sewer line was place high on the bank of the river.

Therefore a full gravity sewer could not be constructed and the need for a pump station was identified. Since this original servicing concept was developed continued ecological sampling in the area of Wright and Coombs that was previously identified as high to medium quality PTWL habitat has now been reassessed as low quality PTWL habitat. This has allowed the sewer line to be moved to an alignment lower on the river bank and negates the need for a pump station.

Removal of the pump station reduces the need for land disturbance significantly.

### **Conclusion**

Supporting information on the location of the trunk sewer line has adequately identified the impacts associated with its construction and operation. On going investigations and design refinement of the alignment has allowed a less significant impact to be achieved while not compromising the required level of service.

By locating the sewer line in what will be public lands, will also reduce the impact of odour from vents and encroachment by private structures that could impeded effective operation and maintenance.

It is concluded that further environmental assessment of this issue is not required for this project. Detailed design issues can be addressed at individual the DA stage.

#### **4.4 Item 1 Part 4.3 Schedule 4 – PTWL Habitat**

##### **Impacts**

This area of East Molonglo is known PTWL habitat. The potential for the disturbance and loss of PTWL habitat as a result of this project was identified early in the Territory Plan Variation and design process.

##### **Previous studies**

Two studies are key to understanding the PTWL habitat of this area of the Molonglo Valley.

- Habitat mapping and conservation considerations for the Pink-tailed Worm Lizard with respect to the alignment of the proposed Molonglo Trunk Sewer, W Osborne 2007; and
- Environmental planning principles for the protection of the Pink-tailed Worm Lizard in the Lower Molonglo Valley, ACT, W Osborne 2008.

These documents were supplied in support of the s211 exemption consideration. These studies achieved two things:

- identifying the quality/extent of PTWL habitat; and
- provide recommendations for land use planning in the vicinity of the PTWL habitat to mitigate or avoid impacts from urban development.

##### **Conclusion**

The concept plans for Wright and Coombs have been developed with reference to the above mentioned studies. The concept plans have identified a land use pattern

that is sympathetic to the PTWL habitat areas. These will be carried forward to the individual EDP DAs.

PCL has agreed that the recommendation of the reports have been addressed through the design and subsequent adoption of the concept plans for Wright and Coombs. PCL have provided wording of a possible condition that should be attached to any subsequent EDP DA approval. It is concluded that further environmental assessment of this issue is not required for this project.

#### **4.5 Item 3 Part 4.3 Schedule 4 – Clearing greater than .5ha**

##### **Impacts**

The project requires the clearing of more than .5ha of native vegetation. Ecological studies, and peer review of those studies confirm that whilst indeed the area proposed for urban development will be clear felled and terra forming carried out, the impacts on vegetation are minimal.

##### **Previous studies**

A review of environmental studies undertaken to inform DA63 and Dv281 was carried by *NGHenvironmental* on behalf of the NCA to inform the NCA's deliberations on amending the NCP to identify the Molonglo Valley as future urban. This independent review was comprehensive and resulted in recommendations being put forward for the mapping of urban boundaries, preservation of raptor habitat, preservation of PTWL habitat, and effects upon vegetation communities present in the Molonglo Valley.

A key recommendation and action that was implemented as a result of this review was the removal of the area known as Central Molonglo from the identified future urban area.

##### **Conclusion**

Environmental studies supplied in support of this s211 application, including the review by *NGHenvironmental*, have identified the impacts of urban development of the areas of North Weston, Wright and Coombs. Recommendations given in those reports have been reinforced in the adopted concept plans and the indicative land use pattern of the Territory Plan.

It is concluded that further environmental assessment of this issue is not required for this project. Detailed design issues can be addressed at the individual EDP DA stage.

#### **4.6 Item 7 Part 4.3 Schedule 4 – Heritage**

##### **Impacts**

Potential heritage impact relate to the possibility of disturbance to both known and unknown sites of Aboriginal and European heritage.

##### **Previous studies**

This was identified early on the planning process for the project area. As such a comprehensive study of the project area was undertaken. The ACT Heritage Council has ratified that all components of the Aboriginal cultural assessment have taken place and that no further investigation is required.

The Heritage Council has also confirmed that given the extensive survey of the area already carried out, the quality of the reports submitted to date, including the draft survey of the historic heritage, Council is confident that no additional useful heritage information would be obtained were an EIS to be required.

### **Conclusion**

It is concluded that further assessment of this issue is not required for this project. However, the requirement for an unanticipated discovery plan must still be attached to any EDP DA or other DA approval, as a standard condition.

## ***4.7 Item 8 Part 4.3 Schedule 4 – Contaminated land***

### **Impacts**

This trigger is activated as the area for development contains known contaminated sites. These sites include the former Weston Sewage Treatment Facility, night soil depot, builders land fill and former pine plantation.

### **Previous studies**

This issue has been identified early and addressed accordingly. Phase 1 ESA's studies have been completed for all contaminated sites, with Phase 2 and remediation action plans already lodged with an independent land contamination auditor for endorsement and subsequent submission to the Environment Protection Authority's Environment Protection Unit for sign off, which is expected by 31 July 2009.

### **Conclusion**

The EPA has confirmed that contamination issues have been adequately identified and the process for remediation is well in hand. It is recommended that should an EDP DA be lodged prior to EPU signing off on the remediation action plans that approval be conditional upon obtaining the required EPU clearance of the final remediation plans.

It is concluded that further assessment of this issue is not required for this project.

## ***4.8 Entity comments***

### **EPA**

Conditional support of s211 exemption.

The comments submitted by the EPA are concerned with the possible contamination associated with past land uses and how this impacts upon future use of the land for residential, commercial, recreational and reserve purposes.

The proponent is aware that site contamination is an issue in need of address. As such they have provided statements and supporting documentation that identified that contamination issues have been thoroughly investigated. Further clarification was sought and provided (23 June 2009) by the proponent as follows:

- i) The EPU has endorsed the Phase 1 ESA report for the areas of Wright and Coombs. A copy of the EPU endorsement dated 12 February 2009 was provided as requested confirming the proponents original statement.

Advice from an independent contamination auditor is not required for this area as a Phase 1 ESA does not require sign off by an independent auditor only the EPU.

- ii) A final Phase 2 ESA was submitted to an independent contamination auditor for review and endorsement on 27 March 2009. This Phase 2 ESA relates to the area of the former pine plantation on Blocks 1204 and 1180 Weston Creek. The auditor's response is expected by 31 July 2009. The auditor's response will then be submitted to the EPU for sign off. However, in an email dated 7 July 2009 the EPA have stated that they would be acceptable to receiving interim advice from the auditor thereby allowing development to proceed on a conditional basis that the EPU sign off must be obtained prior to approval of any subsequent EDP.
- iii) A final Phase 2 ESA was submitted to an independent contamination auditor for review and endorsement on 12 May 2009. This Phase 2 ESA relates to the area of the former sewage treatment plant, landfill, night soil depot on parts Blocks 1196, 1179 and 1203 Weston Creek. The auditor's response is expected by 31 July 2009. The auditor's response will then be submitted to the EPU for sign off. However, in an e-mail dated 7 July 2009 the EPA have stated that they would be acceptable to receiving interim advice from the auditor thereby allowing development to proceed on a conditional basis that the EPU sign off must be obtained prior to approval of any subsequent EDP.
- iv) In addition to the final ESA reports, the proponent has prepared and submitted to the independent land contamination auditor short term environmental management plans and remedial action plans for all investigated sites. These are also expected to obtain sign off by the auditor in concurrence with the respective ESA reports by 31 July 2009.

### **Conclusion**

Interim advice from the independent auditor is not required to allow the s211 request to be granted. ACTPLA is satisfied that the level of investigation and documentation provided by the proponent in relation to contamination has demonstrated that the issue is acknowledged and efforts to address the matter are and have been carried out in accordance with legislated requirements, and that the land is suitable for the intended land uses.

### **Recommendation**

That any subsequent DA for an EDP in the area of land that is the subject of this EIS scope/s211 request must provide documentary evidence of EPU sign off on all documents associated with the land contamination investigations and remediation, including;

- Final ESA Phase 2 Report – Pine Plantation, Blocks 1204 and 1180 Weston Creek;

- Short Term Contamination Environmental Management Plan – Pine Plantation, Blocks 1204 and 1180 Weston Creek;
- Final Phase 2 Report – Former Weston Creek Sewerage Treatment Plant, Builders Landfill and Night Soil Depot, Blocks 1196, 1179 and 1203 Weston Creek;
- Short Term Contamination Environmental Management Plan – Builders Landfill and Night Soil Depot, Blocks 1196, 1179 and 1203 Weston Creek;
- Short Term Contamination Environmental Management Plan – Grease Trench and Sludge Bed, Part Block 1210 Weston Creek;
- Remedial Action Plan - Builders Landfill and Night Soil Depot, Blocks 1196, 1179 and 1203 Weston Creek; and
- Remedial Action Plan – Block 1210 Weston Creek.

### **Conservator**

Conditional support of s211 exemption.

The comments submitted by the Conservator are concerned with:

- i) Increased recreational use of the Molonglo River Corridor; and
- ii) Indirect impacts to PTWL habitat.

The proponent is aware that impacts on the Molonglo River Corridor and the PTWL habitat are potential significant issues that must be addressed before development of the area can proceed. As such numerous studies have been commissioned and completed over many years to obtain an understanding of the areas ecology and potential impacts of the proposed urbanisation of the Molonglo Valley.

Statements and documents provided by the proponent in support of the EIS scope/s211 request demonstrate that the issues have been thoroughly investigated with the results informing the Territory Plan Variation, concept plans/strategic land use pattern indicated by the Territory Plan.

Clarification was sought and provided (3 July 2009) by the proponent as follows:

- i) It is conceded by the proponent that increased recreational use of the Molonglo River corridor will occur as a result of urban development within the Molonglo Valley. However, studies commissioned to investigate the valley as the next major development front for the ACT have mapped areas of significant conservation value and proposed strategies for minimising impacts. This is reflected in the Territory Plan by identification of the river corridor as NUZ4- River Corridor and restricting the limits (size and shape) of the FUA to be sympathetic to the receiving environment.

The limits of the development area will be further refined at the EDP DA evaluation assessment stage by referencing the recommendations of the previous studies and by ensuring that the indicative land use pattern of the Territory Plan is adhered to.

- ii) Indirect impacts on PTWL habitat will occur as a result of the development of the valley. As with the issues associated with the river corridor, the studies commissioned to investigate this issue were used to inform the strategic land use pattern in the Territory Plan which avoids those areas of high PTWL habitat value.

It has also been confirmed by the proponent that a sewer pump station is no longer required for the trunk sewer line. This further reduces the impact upon PTWL habitat.

In relation to the location of the dam wall for the proposed Coombs Pond, it was chosen to ensure minimal impact by locating in an area of former pine plantation of very low ecological value. However, the Conservator will have an opportunity to comment on the DA for the pond during the referral process which will include TaMS.

### **Conclusion**

The comments submitted by the Conservator contain a level of detail that the EIS process is not intended to address. Whilst the comments have proven valuable in identifying issues early in the development process there are more appropriate tools to ensure they are implemented.

By way of the comments being noted in this report they will be carried forth into the EDP DA assessment for the various other DA's associated with the development of this area of the Molonglo Valley. The comments may also be given effect through any relevant Deed of Agreement.

The issues raised by the Conservator have been thoroughly investigated by the proponent as is evidenced by the numerous studies referenced in the s211 request. ACTPLA is satisfied that the level of investigation and documentation has demonstrated that further environmental assessment is not required.

At a 6 July 2009 meeting with the Conservator and key staff, it was agreed that the issues raised by the Conservator could be addressed by this report making a recommendation to the Minister that that the Conservators comments be addressed at the EDP DA assessment stage.

### **Recommendation**

That any subsequent DA for an EDP must include:

- A Molonglo River Corridor Master Plan. The plan is to be prepared in consultation with Parks Conservation and Lands, and include the implementation of the principles for the protection of Pink-tailed Worm Lizard habitat as contained in the report *Environmental planning principles for the*

*protection of the Pink-tailed Worm Lizard (Aprasia paraulchella) in the Lower Molonglo Valley, ACT – William S Osborne February 2008.* The plan will include the requirement for a 20m buffer zone and an additional Inner Asset Fire Protection Zone that is to be within the development area, not within the river corridor or urban open space. Locations of cycle paths, walking tracks, roads and other infrastructure are to be located in the inner asset protection zone n, not within the 20m buffer zone. The plan must contain provision for the appropriate fencing of PTWL habitat adjacent to the urban development area;

- A statement addressing how the EDP has considered and addressed findings and recommendations of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- A statement addressing how the design of the ponds has considered and addressed PCL advice regarding the locations of the dam walls.

#### **TAMS – Asset Services Group**

Unconditional support of s211 exemption.

#### **National Capital Authority**

Unconditional support of s211 exemption.

#### **ACT Heritage Council**

Conditional support of s211 exemption.

The ACT Heritage Council have confirmed that a cultural heritage assessment and subsurface investigations have already been undertaken in both North Weston and environs and Coombs, Wright and environs. The outcome of these investigations is the production of three reports which have been approved by the ACT Heritage Council as satisfying all components of the required Aboriginal cultural assessment.

The Heritage Council is currently awaiting submission of a final report in relation to this matter for ratification. Final clearance of the historic heritage assessments therefore remains outstanding. However, the Heritage Council has confirmed that given the extensive survey of the area already carried out, the quality of the reports submitted to date, including the draft survey of the historic heritage, the Council is confident that no additional useful heritage information would be obtained were an EIS to be required

#### **Recommendation**

That no further assessment is required in relation to these matters.

That any subsequent DA for an EDP must include:

- Documentary evidence of the ACT Heritage Councils ratification and clearance of the final report re: historic heritage places in the areas of Coombs and Wright; and

- A statement addressing how the EDP has considered and addressed findings and recommendations of the final report re: historic heritage places in the areas of Coombs and Wright.
- An unanticipated discovery plan be developed for each area that is subject to an EDP DA or other DA approval.

### **ACT Health**

Conditional support of s211 exemption.

Whilst ACT Health supports the s211 exemption they have identified several matters that will need to be addressed prior to or in conjunction with development of the site:

- i) Identification and remediation of any site contamination;
- ii) Assessment and mitigation of the decommissioned sewage treatment facility adjacent to the site;
- iii) Provision of appropriate recreational space to encourage healthy living activities; and
- iv) Management of odours from nearby sewage vents.

All of the above issues raised by ACT Health have been addressed or are currently being addressed.

Site contamination issues are in hand as evidenced by the response to the EPA comments above. Similarly the assessment and mitigation of the decommissioned sewage treatment facility is well advanced with a Remedial Action Plan currently being evaluated by an independent land contamination auditor with final approval by the EPU expected by 31 July 2009.

The concept master plans and the Territory Plan zoning of the site address the issue of appropriate recreational open space to encourage healthy living.

Management of sewage systems must comply with all relevant Australian Standards and work practices. Amongst these standards is the requirement for odour control. This matter is more appropriately addressed at the design approval stage of the sewer trunk and reticulation system.

### **Recommendation**

That conditions requiring documentary evidence of EPU approval for all site contamination reports be provided at the EDP DA submission stage.

### **ACT Emergency Services Agency – ACT Fire Brigade, ACT State Emergency Services**

Conditional support of s211 exemption.

Whilst ACT ESA supports the s211 exemption they have identified several matters that they believe will need to be addressed prior to or in conjunction with development of the site:

- i) Fire station response area; ACT FB
- ii) Water supplies; ACT FB
- iii) Infrastructure – roadways standards; ACT FB
- iv) Street furniture; ACT FB
- v) Construction requirements; ACT FB
- vi) Bush fire risk; ACT FB
- vii) Drowning risk; ACT SES

ACTPLA considers that the matters listed above are concerned with a level of detail that is beyond the scope of the EIS process. They are more appropriately addressed during the DA assessment stage of the EDP and or the individual infrastructure project DA's.

### **Recommendation**

That no further assessment is required in relation to these matters.

### **5 DA Considerations**

Any development application related to the MVUD will include the consideration of appropriate conditions of approval such as those outlined below. Issues which are identified during the assessment of the subsequent impact track development application may be addressed through further conditions not included in this section or as a variation of these conditions. Many of the conditions of approval involve the implementation or management of mitigation measures.

The following possible conditions of approval have been identified during the consideration of the s211 request for the proposal:

#### **Construction Environmental Management Plan**

That a *Construction Environmental Management Plan* (CEMP) be submitted to ACTPLA for approval prior to the commencement of works on site. The CEMP shall include as a minimum, the following sub-plans and mitigation measures:

- (a) **Vegetation Management Plan and Mitigation Strategy**  
A plan that details management and/or removal of native and exotic vegetation before, during and after construction and endorsed by PCL, TAMS.
- (b) **Map of areas of Environmental Significance**  
A map that identifies areas of environmental significance, including areas identified for rehabilitation, offsets and for special consideration.
- (c) **Work Method Statements**  
Work method statements endorsed by PCL, TAMS.
- (d) **Conservation Management Plan and Unanticipated Discovery Plan – Heritage**  
*A Conservation Management Plan and an Unanticipated Discovery Plan*, that include the discovery of human remains, developed and endorsed by the ACT Heritage Council.
- (e) **Noise Management Plan**  
*A Noise Management Plan* including mitigation measures to be endorsed by EPA.

- (f) Molonglo River Corridor Master Plan  
A Molonglo River Corridor Master Plan endorsed by PCL
- (g) Sediment and Erosion Control Plan  
A *Sediment and Erosion Control Plan* to be endorsed by the EPA.

*NOTE: the CEMP may contain plans and management strategies listed elsewhere within the conditions of approval. Where these plans can be integrated into the CEMP, it must be clearly identified to which condition of approval the plan or management strategy applies.*

### **Environmental Authorisation/Agreement**

That prior to the commencement of works, the following requirements be sought, submitted to and approved by the EPA:

- (h) Environment Authorisation under the provisions of the *Environment Protection Act 1997* for any activity on the site which is listed under Schedule 1 as a Class A activity;
- (i) A Waterways Works licence under the provision of the *Water Resources Act 2007* for any diversion of or any works within a natural waterway; and
- (j) Environment Protection Agreement with the EPA for any activity on the site which is listed under Schedule 1 as a Class B activity of the *Environment Protection Act 1997*.

### **Works on Territory Land**

That in accordance with the *Roads and Public Places Act 1937* no work should be undertaken on road verges and other unleased Territory Land without the approval of the Manager, Asset Acceptance, Community & Infrastructure Services (AA, C&I), TAMS. The approval is to be obtained prior to the commencement of any work on site.

### **Traffic Management Plan**

That a *Traffic Management Plan* be submitted to and approved by the Manager, AA, C&I, TAMS, and evidence of this approval be submitted to ACTPLA prior to the commencement of works.

### **Construction (Temporary) Parking Management Plan**

That a detailed construction parking plan for the construction phase be submitted to and approved by the Manager, AA, C&I, TAMS, prior to the commencement of any works on site. This plan shall take into account all construction/demolition vehicles and equipment, and construction workers vehicles, and how and where they will be accommodated within the site to the satisfaction of the Manager, AA, C&I, TAMS.

### **Traffic Control Device Drawings**

That Traffic Control Device drawings for all new and amended works be submitted to the Manager, AA, C&I, TAMS for approval prior to the installation of such devices.

### **Landscape Management Protection Plan (LMP)**

That during construction, all existing vegetation (trees, shrubs and grass) located on the verge and unleased Territory land immediately adjacent to the development be managed, protected and maintained in accordance with the LMP submitted to and approved by the Manager, AA, C&I, TAMS prior to the commencement of works. This plan is to be implemented before the commencement of works, including the demolition/earthworks on the site and is to be in accordance with *City Management Guidelines for the Protection of Public Landscape Assets Adjacent to Development Works-REF-04*.

### **Notice of Commencement of Construction**

That a Notice of Commencement of Construction be submitted to the Manager, AA, C&I, TAMS, one week prior to the commencement of works. The Notice shall also include the confirmation of any protective measures installed in accordance with the approved *Landscape Management Protection Plan* and programmed implementation of the *Temporary Traffic Management Plan*.

### **Waste Management Plan**

That a *Waste Management Plan* be prepared in accordance with the Development Control Code for Best Practice Waste Management in the ACT which includes demolition, construction and ongoing operational phases.

### **Bushfire Risk Management and Mitigation Plan**

That a bushfire risk assessment and recommendations be endorsed by the Commissioner, Emergency Services Authority and be submitted to ACTPLA prior to commencement of works on site, in accordance with the Planning for Bushfire Risk Mitigation General Code, the Territory Plan.

### **Table of Associated works and details of associated works**

Details of associated works including off site works be submitted to ACTPLA including the location of alternative recreation areas, parking areas and public viewing areas. Details shall include requirements for approval (DA/BA) and proposed intended timeframes for implementation.

### **Audit of requirements of conditions of approval**

That prior to the commencement of works, the applicant/Lessee shall nominate an independent person, who will be approved by ACTPLA, to audit and ensure that all conditions of approval set out in the decision by ACTPLA, or under the EPBC Act are fully completed in accordance with the next condition of this decision.

That prior to the completion of work, the applicant/Lessee shall submit a report prepared and endorsed by the person identified under the previous condition of this decision to provide demonstrated evidence that the mitigation measures set out in the approval have been fully completed to the satisfaction of ACTPLA.

## **Compliance Monitoring and Tracking**

That a Compliance Tracking Program be developed and implemented to track and audit the requirements and compliance of conditions of the approval. The Program shall be submitted to and approved by ACTPLA prior to the commencement of construction or operation as appropriate. The program shall relate to both the construction and operational stages of the project and shall include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- (k) Provisions for periodic review of the compliance status of the development against the requirements and conditions of approval;
- (l) Provisions for periodic reporting of compliance status to ACTPLA; and
- (m) Mechanisms for rectifying any non-compliance identified during auditing or review of compliance.

## **Implementation of revisions for approval**

That prior to the commencement of works, revised drawings, based on the relevant drawings submitted as part of the application, showing any changes required as a result of the implementation of the conditions of approval set out in this decision, shall be submitted to ACTPLA for assessment and decision;

## **Hazardous Materials**

That a *Hazardous Materials Management Plan* be submitted to the Manager, EPA, DECCEW, in accordance with the *Hazardous Materials Environment Protection Policy*.

## **Emergency and Incident Response Management Plan**

That an *Emergency and Incident Response Management Plan* endorsed by the ESA shall be submitted to ACTPLA for approval prior to the commencement of works on site.

## **Community Information, Consultation and Involvement**

That prior to the commencement of construction, the proponent shall ensure that the following are available for community enquiries and/or complaint for the life of the project (construction stage)

- (n) A telephone number on which complaints about construction and operational activities at the site can be registered
- (o) A postal address to which written complaints may be sent; and
- (p) An email address to which electronic complaints can be transmitted

The telephone number, the postal address and the email address shall be displayed on the signs, placed in appropriate locations as defined in Condition 11 “Temporary Disruption Signage Plan” and Condition 18 “Table of Associated works and details of associated works”. A register of complaints shall be made available for inspection by ACTPLA upon request.

## **6 Conclusion**

Previous studies have demonstrated that those issues which triggered the requirement for an EIS have been satisfactorily identified and addressed. This has been confirmed by referral entities who have given unconditional and conditional support for the granting of an s211 exemption.

## **7 Recommendation**

ACTPLA has assessed the EIS scope/s211 exemption request as meeting the requirements of Chapter 8 of the P&D Act.

The supporting documentation has provided sufficient information to the ACT Government to allow an informed evaluation of potential environmental impacts which could be attributed to the proposal. The LDA has proposed a range of mitigation and management measures to reduce or avoid potential environmental impacts arising from construction and operational activities associated with the project. It is considered that any potential adverse impacts can be adequately addressed through implementation of these measures and the development application conditions specified in this report.

ACTPLA's recommendation is that the previous studies submitted with the application have adequately identified and considered those matters of potentially significant impact and that further environmental assessment is not required.

ACTPLA's recommendation is that the Minister grant exemption from the requirement to complete an EIS in accordance s211 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007*.

## **Appendix J**

### **Waterways Code WSUD Checklist**

## Water sensitive urban design estate development checklist

Note: This checklist may be completed for each stage of development as well as for the total development area.

DA No. .... Estate Name COOMBS .....

Stage EDP ..Suburb/District MOLONGLO ..Nearest Streets COTTER ROAD .....

Applicant Name STUART CHALKER .. Company LDA .....

Developer Name LDA .....

**WSUD Concept Plan required as 1:1000 scale. Plan No** 292347-C-WSUD 01 x0 03  
1:2500

### Mains water use

Mandatory provisions for rating plumbing fittings and appliances for individual dwellings, such as in Lease and Development Conditions?  Y  N

Estimated mains water use reduction using the Design Response Report, BASIX, Green Star or other assessment tool/spreadsheet: 40 %

Mains water savings proposed in the design of the public realm?  Y  N

Description: IRRIGATION OF STREET TREES & RAINGARDENS

### Stormwater management

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Development area <u>TOTAL</u> / <u>TOTAL EXCL. MU</u>                                  | <u>108.75</u> m <sup>2</sup> HA / <u>83.4</u> HA                        |
| Impervious areas – Roof areas  |   |
| Roof connected to rainwater storage  | <u>9.63</u> HA m <sup>2</sup>   |
| Roof area not connected to storage <input checked="" type="radio"/> ①                  | <u>NA</u> m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total  | <u>9.63</u> HA m <sup>2</sup>   |
| Impervious areas - Paved areas <input checked="" type="radio"/> ②                      | <input checked="" type="radio"/> ① + <input checked="" type="radio"/> ② |
| Hard paved areas   | <u>44.48</u> m <sup>2</sup> HA  |
| Permeable / porous paving  | <u>0</u> m <sup>2</sup>   |
| Total  | <u>44.48</u> m <sup>2</sup> HA  |
| Total impervious areas (with a 50% reduction applied to permeable/porous paving areas) | <u>54.11</u> m <sup>2</sup> HA  |

**Analysis / modelling results for sediment, nutrient and runoff volumes**

|  | Existing conditions | Development with no WSUD measures | Development with WSUD measures | % Reduction with WSUD measures |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Suspended solids export (kg/yr)          | 17550               | 84,900                            | 20,579                         | 76 +                           |
| Phosphorus export (kg/yr)                | 25.8                | 122.9                             | 59                             | 52 +                           |
| Nitrogen export (kg/yr)                  | 308                 | 1464                              | 925                            | 37 + Δ                         |
| Peak flow for 3 months ARI storm (m³/s)  | NA *                | 6.5                               | NA *                           | NA *                           |
| Peak flow for 5 years ARI storm (m³/s)   | NA *                | 20.01                             | NA *                           | NA *                           |
| Peak flow for 100 years ARI storm (m³/s) | NA *                | 44.5                              | NA *                           | NA *                           |

REFER OVER

**Pond / Wetland proposals**

The following details are to be completed for all proposed pond / wetland designs to allow for the basic elements to be checked for sizing and adequacy.

↓ REQUIRED DETENTION IN COOMBS IS PROVIDED BY COOMBS PONDS TO MITIGATE POST DEVELOPMENT INCREASE IN FLOWS

|  | RL | Surface area | Volume |
|--|----|--------------|--------|
| Pond invert                              |    | 0            | 0      |
| NWL <sup>(1)</sup>                       |    |              |        |
| TWL <sup>(2)</sup> – 3 months ARI storm  |    |              |        |
| TWL <sup>(2)</sup> – 100 years ARI storm |    |              |        |

- (1) NWL = Normal water level prior to storms
- (2) TWL = Top water level

|                    | Inflow | Outflow |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| 1 year ARI flow    |        |         |
| 5 years ARI flow   |        | N/A     |
| 100 years ARI flow |        |         |

Catchment area to pond for small storms up to 3 months ARI = .....Ha

Catchment area to pond for large storms up to 100 years ARI = .....Ha

Percentage urbanised = .....%      Percentage impervious = ..... %

Extended detention = Volume at TWL (target 3 months ARI flow) – Volume at NWL

= ..... m³

Retardation storage = Volume at TWL (100 years ARI flow) – Volume at TWL (3 months ARI flow)

= ..... m³

Macrophyte zone area (less than 600 mm depth at NWL) = .....%

Plant species proposed (list and include % of total planting area):

**Wastewater reuse (optional)**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Wastewater reuse proposed?                      | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Type of reuse                                   | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Untreated greywater (direct use on garden only) | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Treated greywater                               | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Community reuse facility (if available)         | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Uses for wastewater                             |  |
| Garden use                                      | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Toilet flushing                                 | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Laundry use                                     | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Other   | <del>Y/N</del> <del>A</del>                  |
| Estimated annual reuse                          | ..... <del>A</del> ..... m <sup>3</sup> (KL) |

**Summary of WSUD targets and achievements**

|                               | Target   | Achieved             |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Mains water use reduction     | 40%      | <del>40</del> .....% |
| Reduction in suspended solids | 60%      |                      |
| Reduction in total phosphorus | 45%      |                      |
| Reduction in total nitrogen   | 40%      |                      |
| Effluent reuse                | Optional | ..... KL/yr          |

**NOTE**

- + - POLLUTANT REDUCTION TARGETS IN COOMBS ARE DETERMINED BY DOWNSTREAM DISCHARGE CONDITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACTPLA'S 'STORMWATER QUALITY MODELLING OF WRIGHT & COOMBS'
- Δ - REFER SECTION 3.6 OF EDP REPORT. CONFIRMING DEVELOPER TARGETS AS REQUIRED BY ACTPLA'S 'STORMWATER QUALITY MODELLING OF WRIGHT & COOMBS' ARE EXCEEDED BY INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSED UNDER THE COOMBS EDP.

ACTPLA'S 'STORMWATER QUALITY MODELLING OF WRIGHT & COOMBS' IS CONTAINED AT APPENDIX D OF THIS REPORT.

## **Appendix K**

### **Molonglo Riparian Strategy**



# MOLONGLO RIPARIAN STRATEGY

## Coombs and North Weston

Prepared for  
Land Development Agency

28 January 2011



**DOCUMENT TRACKING**

| ITEM           | DETAIL   |
|----------------|--|
| Project Name   | Molonglo Riparian Strategy   |
| Project Number | 09SUTNRM-0016  |
| File location  | G:\Synergy\Projects\09SUTNRM\09SUTNRM-0016 Molonglo Riparian Strategy\Report                     |
| Prepared by    | Beth Medway, Peter Hemphill, Luke Geelan, Vivian Tan, Jo Daly, Tammy Haslehurst, Dr Will Osborne |
| Approved by    | Dr Ailsa Kerswell  |
| Status         | Final  |
| Version Number | 8  |
| Last saved on  | 28 January 2011  |

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# Abbreviations

| ABBREVIATION | DESCRIPTION   |
|--------------|---|
| ACT          | Australian Capital Territory  |
| ACTPLA       | ACT Planning and Land Authority   |
| DECCEW       | Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water                   |
| EDP          | Estate Development Plan   |
| EPBC         | Commonwealth <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> |
| LDA          | Land Development Agency   |
| NCA          | National Capital Authority  |
| TAMS (LMP)   | Territory and Municipal Services (Land, Management and Planning)                  |

# Executive Summary

The ACT Land Development Agency commissioned Eco Logical Australia Pty Ltd to prepare a strategy for rehabilitation of a section of the Molonglo River corridor. The study area is adjacent to Coombs and North Weston, which are some of the first suburbs to be developed in the Molonglo Valley, a greenfield urban development planned for 55,000+ people. The Strategy will be used by a range of ACT Government agencies to address urban interface issues, conservation objectives, recreation uses and land management requirements. This Strategy represents part of an ongoing process for the rehabilitation and management of the whole river corridor.

The environmental, recreational and amenity values of the riparian corridor and adjacent areas have been degraded by past land uses. Land use within the area prior to the bushfires in January 2003 included forestry (pine plantation) and rural grazing leases. The study area is heavily infested with pest plant species including Blackberries and Willows, a condition that has been exacerbated by the fires.

The study area is currently zoned Non-Urban 'NUZ4 River Corridor' and classified as 'Special Purpose Reserve' in the Molonglo and North Weston Structure Plan in the Territory Plan. Objectives of NUZ4 River Corridor are to:

- Conserve the ecological and cultural values of the ACT's major river corridors
- Protect stream flow, water quality and flood plains from adverse impacts
- Ensure that the type and intensity of development is sustainable
- Provide opportunities for a range of ecologically sensitive water and land based recreational activities
- Ensure compatibility between land uses, water uses and the general character of the rivers
- Provide opportunities for appropriate environmental education and scientific research activities
- Prevent development that would significantly increase fire hazard

The Territory Plan requires that a plan of management is prepared for public land reserves to describe how the objectives for the area are to be implemented and promoted. This Strategy provides the framework for subsequent development of a River Park Concept Plan and detailed plan of management.

It is recommended that proposed rezoning of the river corridor to 'nature reserve' be further investigated during subsequent planning phases. The rezoning would more accurately reflect the objectives of conserving and rehabilitating biodiversity, amenity and recreational opportunities described in this Strategy. Management objectives for this zone are listed in Schedule 3 of the Act as follows:

- To conserve and restore the natural environment
- To provide for public use of the area for recreation, education and research

The Strategy describes management principles, objectives and strategic actions to achieve the vision for the corridor, which is to:

*Enhance recreational opportunities and improve amenity, while conserving and rehabilitating aquatic and riparian ecosystems within the study area.*

Key strategic actions include:

- Staged programs of weed control, and native vegetation and fauna habitat rehabilitation, which will start in areas of best condition and highest conservation significance
- Protecting and enhancing Pink-tailed Worm Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) habitat. The Pink-tailed Worm Lizard is a threatened species listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. Actions identified in this Strategy relevant to *A. parapulchella* are consistent with the EPBC Referral Decision regarding the development of the suburb of Coombs dated 16 April 2010
- Maintain and improve recreational opportunities and amenity, including linkages with surrounding urban areas and regional recreational facilities such as Stromlo Forest Park
- Minimise ongoing threats to the values of the corridor, such as inappropriate fire regimes and water pollution

LDA is expected to implement some early actions as part of estate development (e.g. design and establishment of urban edge features such as the perimeter road). In the long term, responsibility for implementation of the Strategy lies with TAMS (LMP).

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In 2004, the Australian Capital Territory Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) prepared the Canberra Spatial Plan which identified the Molonglo Valley as a potential 'greenfield' area to accommodate future urban development. Subsequent investigations by ACTPLA in collaboration with the National Capital Authority determined that the area would be suitable for urban development, taking account of matters of National Capital Significance and environmental considerations. ACTPLA then prepared a Structure Plan (**Figure 1**) and a draft variation to the ACT Territory Plan for the new district of Molonglo - a new town of approximately 55,000 people.

In August 2008, Variation 281 to the Territory Plan was approved. The final variation includes Concept Plans for North Weston, Coombs and Wright, as well as the intended land use zones for the entire East Molonglo. Amendment 63 to the National Capital Plan passed through Commonwealth Parliament on the 12 December 2008. Land release commenced in 2010.

The National Capital Plan sets the general framework for the river corridor which seeks to ensure that the corridor is an integrated part of the national capital open space system. Its key objective is:

*To conserve the essential landscape and environmental character of the river and its natural and cultural values and to provide a balanced range of river and off-river recreation and other uses in a manner that reinforces and protects the river corridor as a unified system.*

The Molonglo River corridor is zoned in the Territory Plan as 'Public Land Reserve – special purpose reserve (Pd)'. Therefore the reserve must be managed in accordance with the management objectives stated in Schedule 3 of the Territory Plan for a 'special purpose reserve' which are:

*To provide for public and community use of the area for recreation and education.*

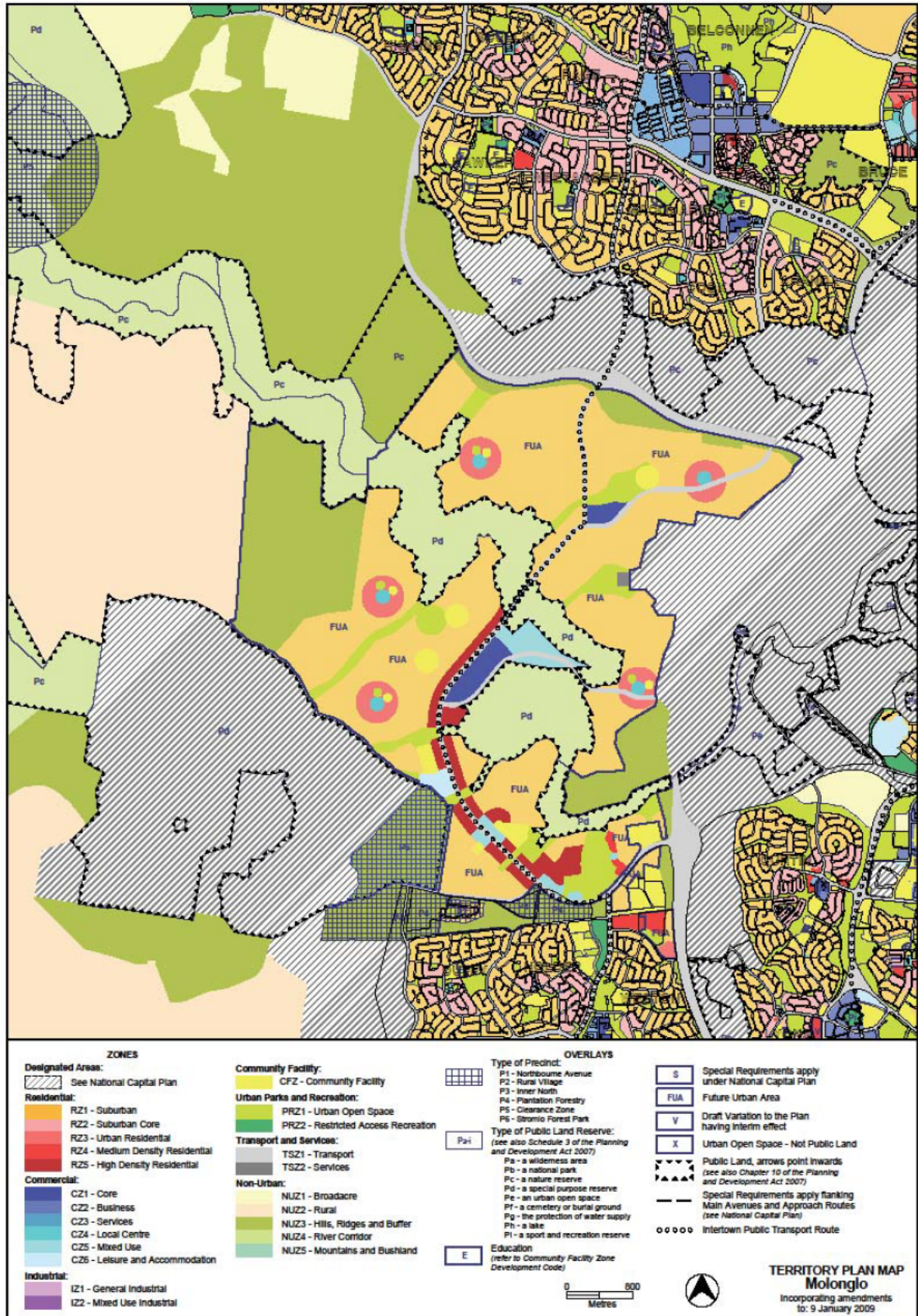
The Territory Plan requires that a *plan of management* is prepared for public land reserves to describe *how the objectives for the area are to be implemented and promoted*.

This Riparian Strategy provides a first step leading to the preparation of a plan of management. It also meets certain statutory requirements, including conditions of a referral decision made under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* regarding the development of the suburb of Coombs.

A diagrammatic summary of the planning context for the Riparian Strategy is given in **Figure 2**. This Strategy represents a first stage in an ongoing strategy for the river corridor which ultimately will extend from Scrivener Dam (Lake Burley Griffin) to the lower end of the future urban area downstream of Coppins Crossing.

The Land Development Agency (LDA) with ACTPLA and TAMS engaged Eco Logical Australia to prepare this Riparian Management Strategy for part of the Molonglo River corridor adjacent to Coombs and North Weston. The project is needed to provide a comprehensive strategy that can be used by a range of ACT Government agencies to address urban interface issues, conservation objectives,

recreation uses and land management requirements. The methodology used to prepare this report is outlined in **Appendix A**. A summary of the legislative, planning and policy framework is given in **Appendix B**.



Authorised by the ACT Parliamentary Counsel—also accessible at [www.legislation.act.gov.au](http://www.legislation.act.gov.au)

NI2008-27  
 Effective: 9 January 2009

Figure 1: Molonglo Structure Plan

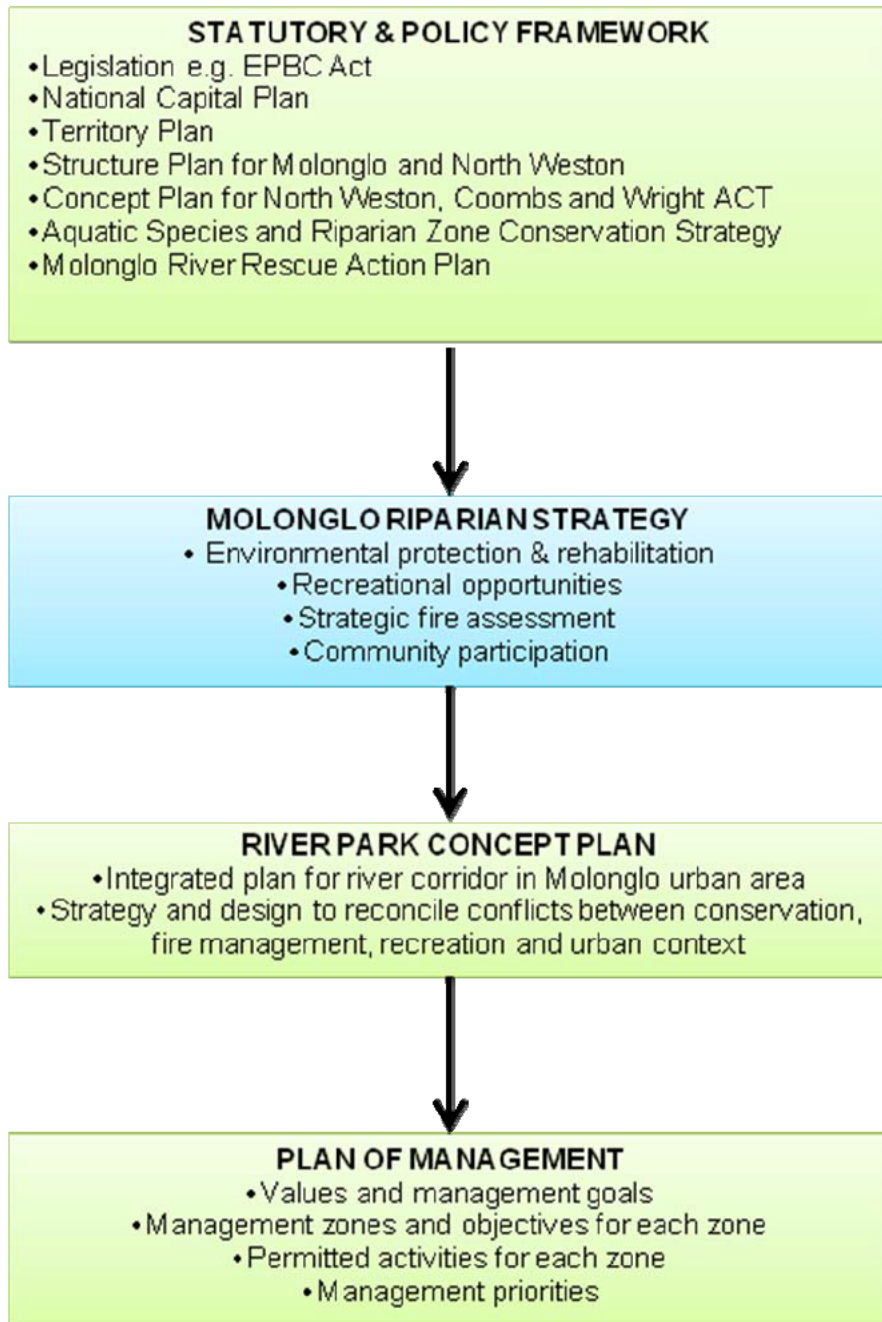


Figure 2: Planning context

## 1.2 STUDY AREA

The study area is approximately 110 ha and encompasses the Molonglo River corridor adjacent to the future suburbs of Coombs and North Weston. The study area is shown in **Figure 3**. Consideration is also given to the regional context, including:

- The river corridor immediately upstream of the study area, between Scrivener Dam and the Tuggeranong Parkway
- The downstream river corridor towards Coppins Crossing
- Adjacent future suburbs
- Misery Hill and Bald Hill
- Connectivity with Stromlo Forest Park to the west and the Arboretum to the north-east

## 1.3 VISION FOR THE STUDY AREA

The vision for the study area needs to be consistent with legislative requirements and current policies, and needs to align with the vision for the broader river corridor. These matters are outlined in **Appendix B**.

The vision for the study area recognises the history of modification of the landscape since European settlement from rural, to pine-plantation forestry, to weed infestation following the 2003 wildfires. The vision anticipates urban development of adjacent areas, and aims for rehabilitation and improvement beyond the current condition.

The vision for the study area is to:

***Enhance recreational opportunities and improve amenity, while conserving and rehabilitating aquatic and riparian ecosystems within the study area.***

The character of the future landscape will ultimately become a mix of good quality urban bushland, with appropriate vegetation communities and fauna habitats, and pockets of 'park-like' recreation areas and a well-maintained track network which will be the focus of recreational activity. There will be a staged, transition period as parts of the river corridor are enhanced prior to other areas.

Long-term active management by professionals and the community will be needed to improve and maintain conditions within the study area as adjacent areas become increasingly urbanised.

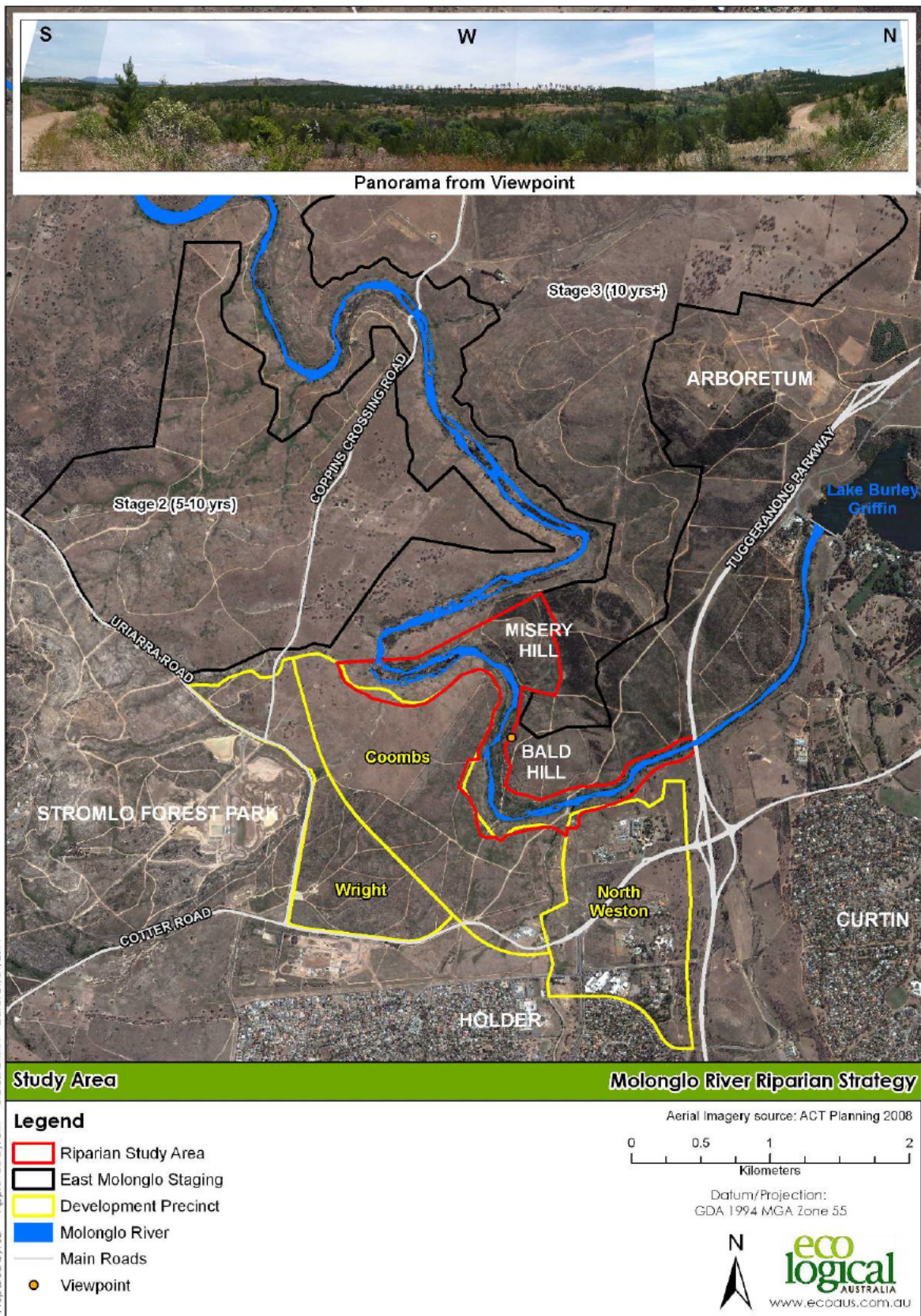


Figure 3: Molonglo riparian corridor study area

## 2 Current values

This section describes the strengths and weakness of the study area in terms of its recreational facilities, amenity, topography, drainage, terrestrial ecology, aquatic ecology and water quality. Opportunities to improve conditions are identified and possible future threats to these values are assessed. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis is summarised in **Appendix C**.

### 2.1 RECENT USE

In recent decades the study area has been subject to pine forestry and stock grazing. In the Molonglo Valley, pine plantations have had a more widespread and significant adverse impact than stock and farmland.

#### 2.1.1 Pine forestry

The majority of the study area and surrounds were cleared, planted and managed for pine forestry until the 2003 bushfires. This included construction and maintenance of unsealed roads suitable for logging operations. The forest was burnt in 2003, and since that time there has been no management of these areas. This has resulted in tracks becoming eroded and overgrown, and pine willings and weeds dominating regrowth of vegetation across the landscape.



**Pine regrowth and weedy understorey**