

ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION

An application for an Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO) has been received under section 138 of the *Planning Act 2023* (the Act). In accordance with section 140(4) of the Act, I provide the following environmental significance opinion:

APPLICANT

Canberra Town Planning, as represented by Jolien van Rensburg.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

The proposal subject to this opinion seeks to subdivide a city block into two separate blocks and includes minor works to enable the independent operation of the resulting blocks. The affected block is already developed with an eleven-story building currently in use as a commercial establishment. Minor works will be required to facilitate the independent operation of the resulting blocks. Proposed works will include:

- Provision of a new building entry and façade modifications;
- Installation of new building services infrastructure, including generators, plant rooms, communications rooms, and vertical risers;
- Basement reconfiguration, including shuttle lifts and plant areas;
- Plant room extensions and acoustic enclosures; and
- Minor ground floor and external works, including fire services and utilities infrastructure

LOCATION

Block 5, Section 89 CITY

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

This opinion applies only to the development proposal as described in the application.

OPINION

Provided the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the following conditions, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

This opinion is granted subject to the following conditions made under section 140(4) of the Act.

- The site and development works must be managed in accordance with the “*Environmental Management Plan, Section 89 Civic, ACT*”, dated 22 October 2008, prepared by Coffey Environments Pty Ltd.
- All spoil identified at the site must be managed in accordance with EPA Guidelines for *Spoil Management in the ACT* available at Environment Protection Policies & Guidelines.
- All soil subject to disposal from the site must be assessed in accordance with EPA *Information Sheet 4 - Requirements for the reuse and disposal of contaminated soil in the ACT* available at Contaminated Sites.
- No soil is to be disposed from the site without EPA approval.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.



George Cilliers

Territory Planning Authority

8 July 2026

STATEMENT OF REASONS

The proposed development is a proposal mentioned in Schedule 1 of the *Planning (General) Regulation 2023* – development proposals requiring environmental impact assessment, being:

Part 1.2 item 23 -proposal involving land included on the register of contaminated sites under the *Environment Protection Act 1997*.

The proponent is seeking an environmental significance opinion to remove the requirement for an environmental impact statement on the grounds that the proposal is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, and has applied to the Territory Planning Authority for an opinion to that effect.

Meaning of *significant* adverse environmental impact – *Planning Act 2023*, section 104

An adverse environmental impact is ***significant*** if—

- (a) the environmental function, system, value or entity that might be adversely impacted by a proposed development is significant; or
- (b) the cumulative or incremental effect of a proposed development might contribute to a substantial adverse impact on an environmental function, system, value or entity.

In deciding whether an adverse environmental impact is ***significant***, the following matters must be taken into account:

- (a) the kind, size, frequency, intensity, scope and length of time of the impact;
- (b) the sensitivity, resilience and rarity of the environmental function, system, value or entity likely to be affected.

In deciding whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact it does not matter whether the adverse environmental impact is likely to occur on the site of the development or elsewhere.

CONSULTATION WITH ENTITIES

In deciding whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact the Territory Planning Authority consulted with entities, in accordance with section 139 (1) of the Act. Entity responses are provided below:

Work health and safety commissioner

The Work Health and Safety Commissioner does not have any comments on the proposed works identified in this application for an Environmental Significance Opinion (reference ESO202600021).

This response has been provided on the basis of the information contained in the application document which was provided to WorkSafe ACT for the Work Health and Safety Commissioner's consideration by the Impact Assessment unit at 10.10 am on Wednesday 20 May 2026.

This response does not take into account any subsequent changes to that document, nor any other information held by the Impact Assessment unit.

In providing this response, the Work Health and Safety Commissioner is not approving or endorsing any proposed work arrangements or any proposed risk control measures, and nothing in this response affects the safety duties of persons who may be involved in carrying out the proposed work under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Environment Protection Authority

Thank you for referring the attached Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO) application ESO-202600021-Block 5 Section 89 City to the Office of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for review.

EPA supports the preparation of an ESO, for the proposed development, subject to the following conditions:

- *The site and development works must be managed in accordance with the "Environmental Management Plan, Section 89 Civic, ACT", dated 22 October 2008, prepared by Coffey Environments Pty Ltd.*
- *All spoil identified at the site must be managed in accordance with EPA Guidelines for Spoil Management in the ACT available at Environment Protection Policies & Guidelines.*
- *All soil subject to disposal from the site must be assessed in accordance with EPA Information Sheet 4 - Requirements for the reuse and disposal of contaminated soil in the ACT available at Contaminated Sites.*
- *No soil is to be disposed from the site without EPA approval.*

Emergency Services Commissioner

The proposed site is in an area that may become inundated should a dam infrastructure failure occur at Googong Dam.

While an incident of this type is rated by the ACT Government as RARE and of MEDIUM risk, it is recommended that the project risk assessment consider this risk and that specific risk control measures are detailed in the Emergency Plan for this development.

Technical Regulator

Assessment of the proposed development

UTR considers that the nature of the project does not involve works covered by Planning (General) Regulation 2023 under items:

- 1) Item no 2 – Electricity transmission lines, generation, and storage
- 2) Item no 3 – water storage dams
- 3) Item no 7 – wastewater treatment plants

The project will therefore not have a significant adverse environmental impact in relation to these matters.

UTR position

UTR supports the Environmental Significance Opinion, subject to advice from other relevant agencies on matters outside UTR's remit, including Item 23 – proposals involving land included on the register of contaminated sites the Environment Protection Act 1997 noting the block is listed on the EPA Register of Contaminated Sites.

Director-General of ACT Health

Thank you for the documentation received on 20 May 2026 regarding the ESO for variation to the current lease arrangements and building modifications to Block 5, Section 89, City.

The Health Protection Service (HPS) notes that the Development includes the separation of the building, minor façade changes and installation of additional new building services infrastructure, including generators, plant rooms, communications rooms, and vertical risers.

The proposed basement reconfiguration, including shuttle lifts and plant areas, plant room extensions and acoustic enclosures; and minor ground floor and external works, including fire services and utilities infrastructure.

There are no further public health concerns in relation to the ESO

POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The proposed site is within an area affected by known hydrocarbon (petrol) groundwater plume associated with the historical storage of fuel of a nearby service station previously located in the Bunda Street area. As such, the site is listed in the register of contaminated sites under the *Environment Protection Act 1997* and triggers the requirement for environmental impact assessment under the *Planning (General) Regulation 2023*.

The site is located within the now well-established commercial precinct of the City. It historically housed the Griffin Centre and Youth Centre until its redevelopment in 2005 to its current configuration. The site is zoned as CZ1 and is comprised of a mix of commercial, retail and service-based developments. The proposal for subdivision is compatible with the surrounding land uses and is considered suitable for the site. The site does not contain any significant or sensitive environmental or heritage values and its use will remain compatible with the objectives of the Territory Plan.

The block sits within a known fault line which can potentially affect groundwater movement, however, the site is regularly monitored and groundwater levels observed during recent investigations remained consistent. These investigations confirmed the ongoing presence of hydrocarbon impacts within the broader groundwater system of Block 5, however, environmental management systems implemented at the time of the sites redevelopment in 2005 appropriately manage any potential risks associated with plume and, the highly urbanised nature of the site and full coverage of buildings limits any direct exposure to soils by groundwater runoff.

Subsurface water conditions at the site have also been periodically tested, with most recent results indicating the conditions beneath the site are not impacted by detectable petroleum hydrocarbon contamination and remain within acceptable environmental thresholds. There are no natural water bodies on the site and surface water runoff flows to the stormwater system.

The proposed subdivision and related works are minimal in nature, EPA have confirmed their support for the proposal and no impacts to public health, emergency management, or utility regulation were identified. ACTSES, and the Technical Regulator also raised no objections. Provided the works are carried out in accordance with the Environmental Management Plan submitted with the application and consistent with the above conditions attached to the ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.