



ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - Monaro Highway Upgrade - Upstream Dog Trap Creek Works (ESO 202500037)

In accordance with section 140 (4) of the *Planning Act 2023* (the Act), I provide the following environmental significance opinion:

APPLICANT

Stantec Australia Pty Ltd, as represented by Mr Joshua Tracey, Senior Environmental Engineer.

APPLICATION and DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The applicant has applied under section 140 (4) of the Act to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna for an environmental significance opinion to the effect that the development proposal set out in the submission is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact (the application).

The development proposal is for flood mitigation works over Dog Trap Creek for the Monaro Highway northbound bridge as part of the wider Monaro Highway Upgrade Package 1 Works as described in the submission.

LOCATION

Works are located in Block 8 Section 17 Hume.

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 in addition to the mitigation measures contained in the supporting application for an ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

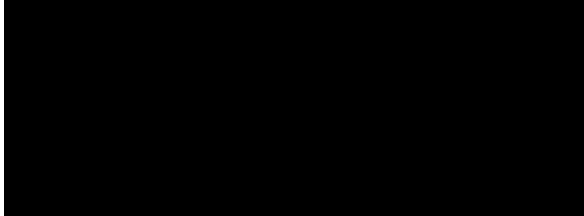
This opinion is granted subject to the following conditions made under s140 (4)(b) of the Act:

1. Conditions of approval including mitigation measures as stated in the application.

2. Access to the site must be granted to Conservation Officers if a random compliance inspection is requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
3. Develop a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be endorsed by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna prior to commencement of works. The CEMP is to address the following issues:
 - a) The *Nature Conservation (Protection of Burrowing Animals During Development) Conservator Guidelines 2025* is to be applied where works may impact on relevant fauna.
 - b) A Nature Conservation License to interfere with the nest of a native animal must be obtained prior to damaging any nests (including animal burrows).
 - c) Include mitigation measures listed in Table 7.1 of the ESO to outline biosecurity, erosion and sediment controls, flora and fauna management, etc.
 - d) A qualified ecologist is required to conduct regular checks and active searches of the creek during de-watering and relocate any fauna (e.g. Eastern long necked turtles) to nearby suitable habitat away from works and roads. Checks during/after rain may also be necessary.
 - e) A restoration subplan for Dog Trap Creek is required and is to include details such as where compensatory plantings will be planted, species used, and numbers.
 - f) Compensatory plantings are to adopt the following ratios. An emphasis of shrubs rather than trees as compensatory plantings is required, given the proximity to the Jerrabomberra Grasslands.

DBH class (cm)	REPLACEMENT RATIOS
<5	1:1
5 - 20	1:3 + relocate as native mulch or at Conservator discretion
21 - 30	1:8 + relocate as coarse woody habitat
31 - 40	1:13 + relocate as coarse woody habitat
41 - 50	1:40 + relocate as coarse woody habitat

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.



Bren Burkevics
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

01 September 2025

STATEMENT OF REASONS REASONS FOR THE DECISION

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

Part 1.2, item 25 - proposal that is likely to result in a key threatening process under the Nature Conservation Act 2014

The proposed works will result in the removal of 43 mature native trees out of the 91 total trees on site, and may result in the key threatening process of Loss of mature native trees and lack of recruitment.

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 Conservator of Flora and Fauna for an opinion to that effect.

Meaning of *significant* adverse environmental impact

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.

It has been determined that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant environmental impact, based on the documentation submitted, known values of the site, and provided the works and ongoing management are carried out in accordance with the conditions attached to this ESO.

Project description

The development proposal is for flood mitigation works over Dog Trap Creek for the Monaro Highway northbound bridge as part of the wider Monaro Highway Upgrade Package 1 Works. The Project aims to stabilise the banks of the creek and provide flood mitigation for the proposed replacement of the Monaro Highway northbound bridge over Dog Trap Creek which is immediately downstream and to the east of the proposed creek works. The Project is required to ensure that the Monaro Highway northbound carriageway is flood immune in the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood event, in accordance with design criteria.

The site is located within Block 8 Section 17 Hume, and is zoned *IZ1: General Industrial* and *NUZ1: Broadacre*. The block is under private lease to the ACT Heritage listed Woden Homestead and Environs approximately 500m northwest of the site and is used for stock grazing. The site is adjacent to the West Jerrabomberra Nature Reserve and proposed Jerrabomberra East Grasslands Nature Reserve, and is bound by the Monaro Highway to the East and South.

The proposed works to be undertaken within the site include:

- Formalisation of an approximately 240m long section of Dog Trap Creek with installation of scour rock along the creek line and landscape rehabilitation following construction.
- Widening of Dog Trap Creek adjacent to the existing northbound carriageway bridge (west of the Monaro Highway).
- Building of a permanent access track at the south-eastern portion of the site.
- Establishment of temporary material laydown areas to be located within 15m of the top of the creek bank for the duration of construction.
- Works will require removal of 43 mature native trees.

Documentation Submitted

- Explanatory note regarding supporting documentation for the application for an Environmental Significance Opinion;
- Letter(s) of Authorisation
- Form 1M.

Natural conservation values present

The Jerrabomberra Grasslands lie on both sides of the Monaro Highway. These grassland reserves include some of the ACT's most significant remnant Natural Temperate Grasslands and provide important habitat for many threatened grassland

species. The following species listed under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* are known / recorded in proximity to the site:

- Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon (*Tympanocryptis lineata*)
- Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans subsp. tricolor*)
- Button Wrinklewort (*Rutidosia leptorhynchoides*)
- Perunga Grasshopper (*Perunga ochracea*)
- Southern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*)
- Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)
- Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*)
- Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)
- Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*)

Dog Trap Creek runs west to east under the Monaro Highway and into Jerrabomberra Creek, which runs parallel to the Monaro Highway flowing in a northerly direction, eventually flowing into the Jerrabomberra Wetlands and Lake Burley Griffin. Dog Trap Creek is a fourth order ephemeral creek, and has been highly modified and realigned for flood mitigation purposes for the Monaro Highway. Within the site, the Creek provides limited aquatic and riparian habitat due to increased levels of nutrients and erosion and weed invasion. The riparian corridor of Dog Trap Creek provides temporal corridor value to aquatic species during periods where there is water present.

The site contains 91 mature native trees, mostly River She-oaks (*Casuarina cunninghamiana*) which were planted in the early 1990s after realignment of Dog Trap Creek. The trees provide some foraging and connectivity habitat for native arboreal and cover for terrestrial species. The groundcover is mostly exotic dominant, with some emergent aquatic vegetation within the creek.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts

The main ecological values for this site are the adjacent Jerrabomberra Grasslands which is a known habitat for threatened grassland species, the mature native trees, and the Dog Trap Creek riparian corridor.

The works footprint is mainly within the riparian corridor of Dog Trap Creek and will not extend past identified homestead plantings or into the grassland reserves. Threatened grassland species are not expected to occur within the riparian corridor and are unlikely to be impacted by the works.

While works will result in the removal of 47% of mature native trees on site, these trees were all planted during the early 1990s and are yet to develop any habitat

features such as hollows. Overall, the trees provide limited habitat value, with similar resources readily available in the surrounding landscape. The loss of these trees is unlikely to have a significant impact on a threatened species or significantly contribute to a key threatening process, however it will contribute to a cumulative loss of habitat values associated with the overall Monaro Highway Development Program.

To address the loss of mature native trees, the proponent has committed to replanting native trees and shrubs to achieve 30% canopy cover across the whole Monaro Highway Development. As part of approval conditions under the related ESO 202400056 for the wider Monaro Highway Package 1C Early Works, a restoration subplan for Dog Trap Creek is required as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). An emphasis of shrubs rather than trees as compensatory plantings is required, given the proximity to the Jerrabomberra Grasslands. The proponent is required to adopt Conservator recommended replanting ratios as compensatory plantings.

Compensatory plantings may be situated in nearby areas outside of the construction footprint (e.g. land managed by ACT Parks and Conservation Services) if design constraints limit planting options on-site. The proponent would need to arrange the location and/or funding with the relevant land custodian.

The proponent has committed to well-maintained sediment and erosion controls, which are critical for this project. These are supported and required to be further outlined in the CEMP.

Conditions have been included to ensure that sufficient compensatory plantings and sediment and erosion controls are implemented via a Construction Environmental Management Plan and endorsed by the Conservator prior to commencing of works.

This opinion is granted subject to the following conditions made under s140 (4)(b) of the Act:

1. Conditions of approval including mitigation measures as stated in the application.
2. Access to the site must be granted to Conservation Officers if a random compliance inspection is requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
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It has been determined that if the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the above conditions attached to the ESO in addition to the mitigation measures contained in the supporting application for an ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.