
ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - Crace Nature Reserve Dam Fencing (ESO 202600013)

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

APPLICANT

ACT Parks and Conservation Service, as represented by Mr Wade Fuller, Foreman.

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 construction of a new 100m fence to exclude cattle from a wet meadow and drainage line during high rainfall periods to reduce the risk of pugging as described in the submission.

LOCATION

Block 1 Section 55 Mitchell

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

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

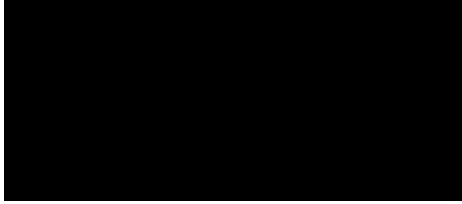
OPINION

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. Works to be undertaken consistently with the Conservator Guidelines for the Management of Burrowing Animals During Development.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.



Bren Burkevics
Conservator of Flora and Fauna
City and Environment

22 April 2026

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 18 - proposal for development in a reserve, unless the proposal is for minor public works to be carried out by or for the Territory in accordance with a minor public works code approved by the conservator of flora and fauna under the Nature Conservation Act 2014, section 318A;

The proposed works are within Crace Grassland Nature Reserve.

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 construction of a new 100m fence to exclude cattle from a wet meadow and drainage line during high rainfall periods to reduce the risk of pugging as described in the submission. This fence installation is part of a grassland restoration project

to improve/ maintain native grasslands in the ACT, and contributes directly toward the management objective stated in the Crace Grassland reserve profile in the Canberra Nature Park Reserve Management Plan. This project is funded by the Australian Government through ACTNRM as the regional delivery partner.

The key objectives of the fencing project are to:

- Separate the bushfire grazing area from the wet meadow to reduce pugging in wet periods.
- Create a fencing structure to permit grazing regime in the wet meadow during suitable drying periods. Strategic grazing will permit the creation of suitable habitat structure for the vulnerable Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*) in the wet meadow paddock, particularly as a drought refuge.
- Protect converted native Tall Sedge (*Carex appressa*) and River Tussock (*Poa labillardieri*) from stock impacts. These areas were initially dominated by exotic Phalaris (*Phalaris aquatica*) and converted to provide habitat and replace exotic pasture species within the wet meadow.

The fence will be sited across a small dam and separate the bushfire grazing area from the wet meadow, while permitting access to the dam as a stock water point. It will be a 4-strand fence consisting of three plain wires and barbed wire for the top strand. Gabion rock will be imported to create a hardened surface for access and reduce expected degradation from stock accessing the dam.

Documentation Submitted

- Maps showing existing and proposed fencing;
- Works plan and risk assessment;
- Explanatory note regarding supporting documentation for the application for an Environmental Significance Opinion;
- Letter(s) of Authorisation
- Form 1M.

Natural conservation values present

Crace Grasslands Nature Reserve is a 159ha grassland protected area in the Gungahlin Valley. The reserve protects a large remnant of Natural Temperate Grassland, listed as critically endangered under both the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the ACT's *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.

The following species listed under the NC Act have been recorded / known habitat within the reserve:

- Perunga Grasshopper (*Perunga ochracea*)
- Button Wrinklewort (*Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides*)
- Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*)
- Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*)

The fence will be in an exotic pasture with positioning for the shortest distance to adjacent fences, limiting impact on Striped Legless Lizard habitat, and still allowing stock water access to both blocks.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts

Given the site location and small scale of impact, it is unlikely there will be significant impact introduced by the installation of the fence. Following consultation with the Office of the Conservator, gabion rock will not be introduced to further minimise impacts to the site.

When installing it is recommended for careful placement of fence posts to avoid impacting native plants and aquatic flora. Installation should be done outside of winter to avoid injuring potentially hibernating turtles.

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. Works to be undertaken consistently with the Conservator Guidelines for the Management of Burrowing Animals During Development.

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.