ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - FADDEN- AMENDED ALIGNMENT FOR 11KV UNDERGROUND TRANSMISSION PROJECT, WANNIASSA ZONE SUBSTATION TO TUGGERANONG ELECTRIC BUS DEPOT (ESO 202400013

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

APPLICANT

EVO Energy, as represented by Mr Thomas Atkins, Senior Environment Officer.

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 the amended alignment for 11kv underground transmission project, to connect the Wanniassa zone substation to Tuggeranong electric bus depot as described in the submission.

LOCATION

Block 4, Section 349, Fadden within the Wanniassa Hills Nature Reserve.

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. Temporary fencing should be installed along the boundary between the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and ACT Parks and Conservation Services (PCS) managed land.

2. Signage must be erected on the temporary fencing at a spacing of no more than 100m indicating that no construction activities are to occur beyond the fences and that the area is a nature reserve.
3. PCS must be contacted prior to accessing the PCS managed land.
4. If the boring machine unintentionally disturbs any part of the PCS managed land, construction must cease immediately and the proponent must contact the Office of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
5. The proposed works may be subject to random compliance inspection by Conservation Officers as requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.

Bren Burkevics
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

April 2024

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;*

Parts of the proposed works are within Wanniassa Hills Nature Reserve.

The proponent wants the application for the development approval assessed in the merit track 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 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 proposed works are for the installation of new underground 11kV cable and conduit from the Wanniassa Zone Substation to the future electric bus charging infrastructure at the Tuggeranong Bus Depot. The project has been previously approved under DA 202341983. However, a very minor portion of the feeder alignment of approximately 350m is proposed to be re-positioned due to constraints associated with existing underground utility services.

The re alignment will involve 100m of trenching and 250m of under boring passing through a very small section on the western side of Wanniassa Hills Nature Reserve. The majority of the Nature Reserve is managed by PCS with a very small portion running parallel to Erindale Drive managed by TCCS. Trenching will be used for the TCCS managed portion of land and under boring used for the section that passes through PCS managed land.

Documentation Submitted

- EACT Preliminary advice
- Project Report - Report prepared by Evoenergy Environment Team
- Letter(s) of Authorisation PCS and TCCS
- Form 1M.

Natural conservation values present
The Wanniassa Hills Nature Reserve consists of open forest and woodland plant species including the critically endangered Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland (BGW). The area also contains rare and threatened plant species such as Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans*) and Austral Toadflax (*Thesium austral).*

The reserve also provides important habitat for threatened and regionally declining woodland birds such as the Scarlett Robins (*Petroica Boodang)* and White Winged Triller (Lalage tricolour). It also includes rocky areas that provide habitat for the vulnerable Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*).

The small portion of the Nature Reserve affected by the works does not contain any of these important ecological values or communities. The project footprint is located along a strip of grassed area almost entirely dominated by African Lovegrass.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts
The works as proposed are unlikely to result in any significant impacts. The location chosen for the works avoids any significant ecological values supported by the Nature Reserve and no trees (regulated or registered) will be removed as part of project works. All plant and equipment will remain outside of the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) of nearby trees. Trenching will be used for a small portion of the works with the

remaining works to be completed using under boring to minimise ground disturbance in the Reserve.

Further potential risks to the Reserve such as bushfire, weed spread, soil erosion and sediment runoff have been well mitigated in the proposal.

The following conditions have been included to further protect the values of the Reserve:

1. Temporary fencing should be installed along the boundary between the TCCS and PCS managed land.
2. Signage must be erected on the temporary fencing at a spacing of no more than 100m indicating that no construction activities are to occur beyond the fences and that the area is a nature reserve.
3. PCS must be contacted prior to accessing the PCS managed land.
4. If the boring machine unintentionally disturbs any part of the PCS managed land, construction must cease immediately and the proponent must contact the Office of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
5. The proposed works may be subject to random compliance inspection by Conservation Officials as requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

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.