

---

**ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - New Holland Mice Safe Haven Fencing Program (ESO 202400014)**

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 Joel Patterson, Area Manager.

**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 to build a mini safe haven fence structure in Gorooyaroo Nature Reserve for experimental reintroduction of New Holland mice.

**LOCATION**

The location of the works is in Gorooyaroo Nature Reserve, Blocks 12 and 741 of Section 0 in Throsby.

**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 submission.
2. No work is permitted on site when a Total Fire Ban is declared.
3. On days of High fire danger rating (FBI 25 or greater) all hot works and works that could emit a spark must cease, and defer the activities to be undertaken under less risky conditions and consideration must be given to what mitigations measures such as fire suppression equipment can be implemented. Hot works includes; welding, cutting, grinding, or other works involving open flames or which emit a spark such as excavating hard rock, slashing and brush-cutting.
4. The grassland / open woodland fuel will need to be maintained when the grassland fire hazard rating is  $\leq 50$  when grassland curing  $\geq 70\%$  & Overall fuel hazard  $\leq$  high.
5. All works must align with the approved translocation plan and approvals for this project.
6. The proposed works may be subject to random compliance inspection by Conservation Officials 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

May 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;*

The proposed works are within Gorooyarroo 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 project is proposing to build a new fence structure in Gorooyarroo Nature Reserve as a continuation of the experimental reintroduction of the New Holland

mouse (*Pseudomys novaehollandiae*, NHM) into Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary (MFWS), using the mini safe haven approach.

A Translocation Plan for this project was approved by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna on 7 December 2023.

The following works will be conducted in this project:

- Construction of a new fence structure to form a mini safe haven for New Holland mice. The structure consists of 2 pens, linked together with the ring tank stepping stones.
- Design of the fence as follows:
  - 40m x 40m square netting stock fence with a floppy netting top.
  - The area will have one 900mm wide pedestrian gate installed.

#### **Documentation Submitted**

- Supporting documentation for the application for an Environmental Significance Opinion;
- Form 1M.

#### **Natural conservation values present**

Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve is a protected area located in north-eastern Canberra, adjoining Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve to form a contiguous protected area of critically endangered Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland in the ACT. This ecological community is listed under both the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1996* (EPBC Act) and ACT *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act). Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve protects the largest remaining area of box gum grassy woodland in the ACT and the largest discrete extent in any reserve nationally.

At least 19 species listed as threatened have been recorded in Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve:

- Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*)
- Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus*)
- White-bellied Cuckooshrike (*Coracina papuensis*)
- Varied Sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*)
- White-throated Nightjar (*Eurostopodus mystacalis*)
- Black Falcon (*Falco subniger*)
- Eastern Shrike-tit (*Falcunculus frontatus*)
- Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*)
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)
- White-winged Triller (*Lalage tricolor*)

- Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata*)
- Large Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus orianae oceanensis*)
- Little Lorikeet (*Parvipsitta pusilla*)
- Perunga Grasshopper (*Perunga ochracea*)
- Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*)
- Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail Bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*)
- Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*)
- Little Button-quail (*Turnix velox*)
- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*)

The proposed fence is to be constructed within a clearing, adjacent to, but outside the mapped Box-Gum grassy woodland ecological community and Golden Sun Moth habitat. The site is covered by native *Rytidosperma* tussocks and includes some disturbed soils and vegetation from historic clearing, fence and vehicle track infrastructure.

#### **Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts**

The site has been carefully chosen to minimise environmental impact as it is situated in a clearing outside the areas mapped as box gum woodland and Golden Sun Moth habitat, with no requirement to remove vegetation. The site does not support any known protected matters.

The following mitigation measures have been noted in the submission:

- Vehicle access to the site will be highly limited and use an existing track.
- The work will be undertaken and supervised by Parks staff to ensure minimal impact on the surrounding areas. All people accessing the site will be briefed on access restrictions and how to minimise impact.
- All materials of the fence (posts, fencing wire, gate) will be placed in a manner that avoids impact to trees and grass tussocks. Should a threatened species be identified during construction, work will be stopped, confirmation of the identification will be reported and appropriate management of the species implemented.
- The site will be monitored for erosion and weed infestation and managed appropriately. The minor disturbance and short time of use is unlikely to have any significant impact on the site.

Conditions have been included to ensure that impact of works are minimised and will not increase risk of fire.

1. Conditions of approval including mitigation measures as stated in the submission.
2. No work is permitted on site when a Total Fire Ban is declared.
3. On days of High fire danger rating (FBI 25 or greater) all hot works and works that could emit a spark must cease, and defer the activities to be undertaken under less risky conditions and consideration must be given to what mitigations measures such as fire suppression equipment can be implemented. Hot works includes; welding, cutting, grinding, or other works involving open flames or which emit a spark such as excavating hard rock, slashing and brush-cutting.
4. The grassland / open woodland fuel will need to be maintained when the grassland fire hazard rating is  $\leq 50$  when grassland curing  $\geq 70\%$  & Overall fuel hazard  $\leq$  high.
5. All works must align with the approved translocation plan and approvals for this project.
6. 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.