



**ACT**  
Government

# Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment

## Annual Report 2022 – 2023

Annual report for the Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance  
(NES Plan) for the period of 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

November 2023

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, ACT Government

## Acknowledgements

The Plan Implementation Team would like to extend appreciation to the contributions made to the Annual Report by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, the Suburban Land Agency, Transport Canberra and City Services and the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	i
List of abbreviations.....	iii
1 Introduction .....	1
2 Background .....	1
3 Implementation of the NES Plan .....	3
3.1 Development completed in 2022-23 .....	5
3.2 Report on performance by outcome/commitment.....	5
3.3 Other NES Plan requirements and actions.....	13
3.4 Ecological Outcome.....	15
3.5 Corrections to information and data .....	15
Molonglo River Reserve Boundary Adjustments .....	15
3.6 Impacts on MNES .....	18
3.7 Independent Audit .....	21
First independent audit.....	21
Second independent audit.....	21
4 Deviation or non-compliance .....	22
Appendix A – Previously completed commitments.....	23

## List of abbreviations

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AMS	Adaptive Management Strategy
ANU	Australian National University
BGW	Box-Gum Woodland. White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland
CAR	Corrective Action Request
CEMP	Construction Environment Management Plan
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
DA	Development Application
DAWE	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (formerly the Department of the Environment and Energy until February 2020)
EDP	Estate Development Plan
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)</i>
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
ESA	Emergency Services Agency
ILRP	Indicative Land Release Program
JGD	John Gorton Drive
LMA	Land Management Agreement
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
MVIS	Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer
NES Plan	Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance
NSW	New South Wales
NTG	Natural Temperate Grassland of the Southern Tablelands of NSW and the ACT
PCS	ACT Parks and Conservation Service
PDF	Planning and Design Framework
PTWL	Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, <i>Aprasia parapulchella</i>
RMP	Reserve Management Plan
SBMP	Strategic Bushfire Management Plan
SLA	Suburban Land Agency (Established 1 July 2017), formerly the Land Development Agency (LDA).
TCCS	Transport Canberra and City Services (formerly Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS))

Note: References to Department and Directorate names in the body of this report are accurate as at the end of the reporting period, 30 June 2023.

## 1 Introduction

This Annual Report is prepared in accordance with Section 6 of the Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance ([NES Plan](#)), September 2011. It reports on the implementation of the NES Plan from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

Section 6 of the NES Plan requires the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government to monitor and report annually on the implementation of the NES Plan. The primary purpose of monitoring and reporting is to ensure that the conservation outcomes described in the NES Plan are achieved.

## 2 Background

In September 2008, the ACT and Commonwealth governments entered into an Agreement to conduct a strategic assessment under Part 10 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The strategic assessment included all of East Molonglo except for the suburbs of North Weston, Wright and a portion of Coombs. These suburbs have prior approval under the EPBC Act (Reference numbers: 2009/5041, 2009/4752 and 2009/5050). Refer to **Figure 1** for the strategic assessment area.

The NES Plan, which details the ACT Government's commitments to protect Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) in the Molonglo Valley, was assessed by the Commonwealth and endorsed in October 2011. Actions associated with urban development within East Molonglo (not including the West Molonglo area) were approved by the Commonwealth in December 2011.

West Molonglo was included in the scope of the strategic assessment as it contained MNES and was part of the same overall process to establish the Structure Plan. However, annual reporting for the Molonglo NES Plan ceased to report on West Molonglo since 2019-20, following approval of the West Belconnen Strategic Assessment on 1 September 2019. Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd has been reporting on West Molonglo as part of the West Belconnen Strategic Assessment, which is now referred to as Ginninderry.

The NES Plan established a set of conservation activities to protect MNES. These are broadly based around the following hierarchy of steps:

- avoidance of impacts on MNES;
- mitigation of impacts on MNES including on-ground management to provide maintenance and improvement of MNES values in important areas; and
- establishing offset areas to compensate for unavoidable impacts on MNES.

The MNES that require protection through the NES Plan are:

- White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland (Box-Gum Woodland);
- Natural Temperate Grassland of the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales (NSW) and the ACT (Natural Temperate Grassland);
- *Aprasia parapulchella* (Pink-tailed Worm-lizard);
- *Polytelis swainsonii* (Superb Parrot); and
- *Lathamus discolor* (Swift Parrot).

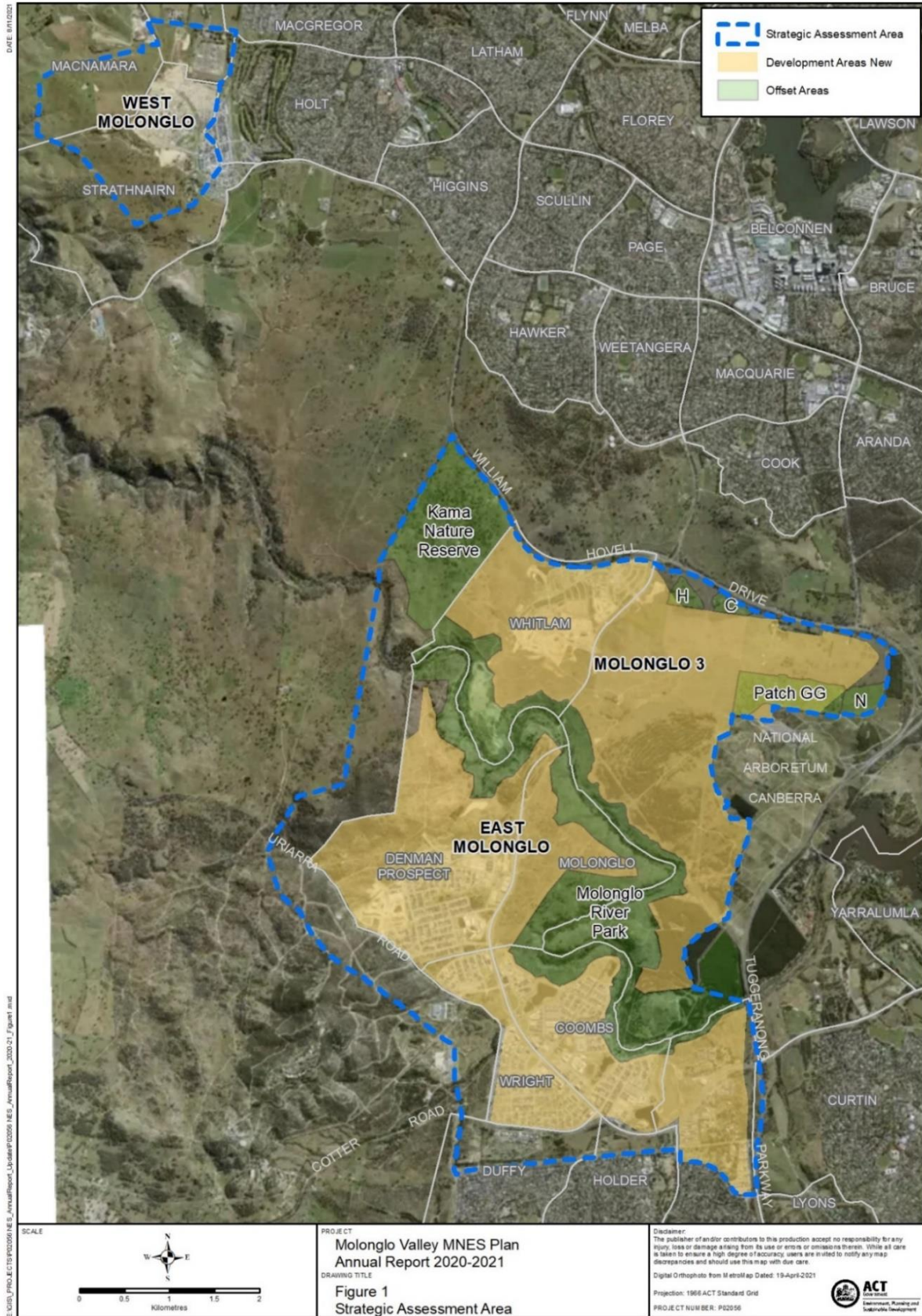


Figure 1 Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment Area

Note: West Molonglo (now Ginninderry) is reported under West Belconnen Strategic Assessment since 2019-2020.

### 3 Implementation of the NES Plan

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) currently has responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the delivery of the NES Plan on behalf of the ACT Government.

The NES Plan specifies conservation outcomes that the ACT Government will deliver to protect MNES and the actions that will be undertaken to achieve those outcomes. Section 4 of the NES Plan provides 44 specific actions related to conservation outcomes for Box-Gum Woodland (BGW), Natural Temperate Grassland (NTG) and Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (PTWL) within the Molonglo Strategic Assessment area.

The NES Plan does not set out specific conservation outcomes and actions in relation to the Superb Parrot and Swift Parrot. These species are therefore not included in the table. However, the NES Plan states that the most important conservation action for Superb Parrot and Swift Parrot is the protection and ongoing management of the Kama Nature Reserve which includes approximately 117 ha of BGW. Additionally, conservation outcomes detailed in Section 4.1 of the NES Plan for patches C, D, H, I, L, M, P, T, West Molonglo and Patch GG, refer to **Figure 2** below, will benefit Superb Parrots and Swift Parrots.

Achievements in 2022-23 include:

- Annual vegetation and PTWL habitat condition monitoring;
- Completion of Molonglo Vegetation Condition Monitoring 10-year expert panel report;
- Review and update of all six reserves operational plans;
- Completion and publication of research on non-target impacts of St Johns Wort control. Smith, A.L., Kanjithanda, R.M., Hayashi, T., French, J. and Milner, R.N., 2023. Reducing herbicide input and optimising spray method can minimise non-target impacts on native grassland plant species, Ecological Applications, p.e2864;
- Detection of Pink-tailed Worm-lizards (PTWLs) at both research translocation sites in Crace and Mulanggari Nature Reserve;
- Completion of 2 hectares of PTWL habitat restoration, including the placement of approximately 160,000 habitat rocks;
- Completion of over 5000 Box-gum woodland tree, shrub and ground storey plantings;
- Commencement of 0.6h of forb enhancement (scrape) in NES Patch N.
- Extensive weed control works, including African Lovegrass, Chilean needlegrass, Serrated tussock, Blackberry and Willows; and
- Extensive vertebrate pest control works, including deer and wild pigs.

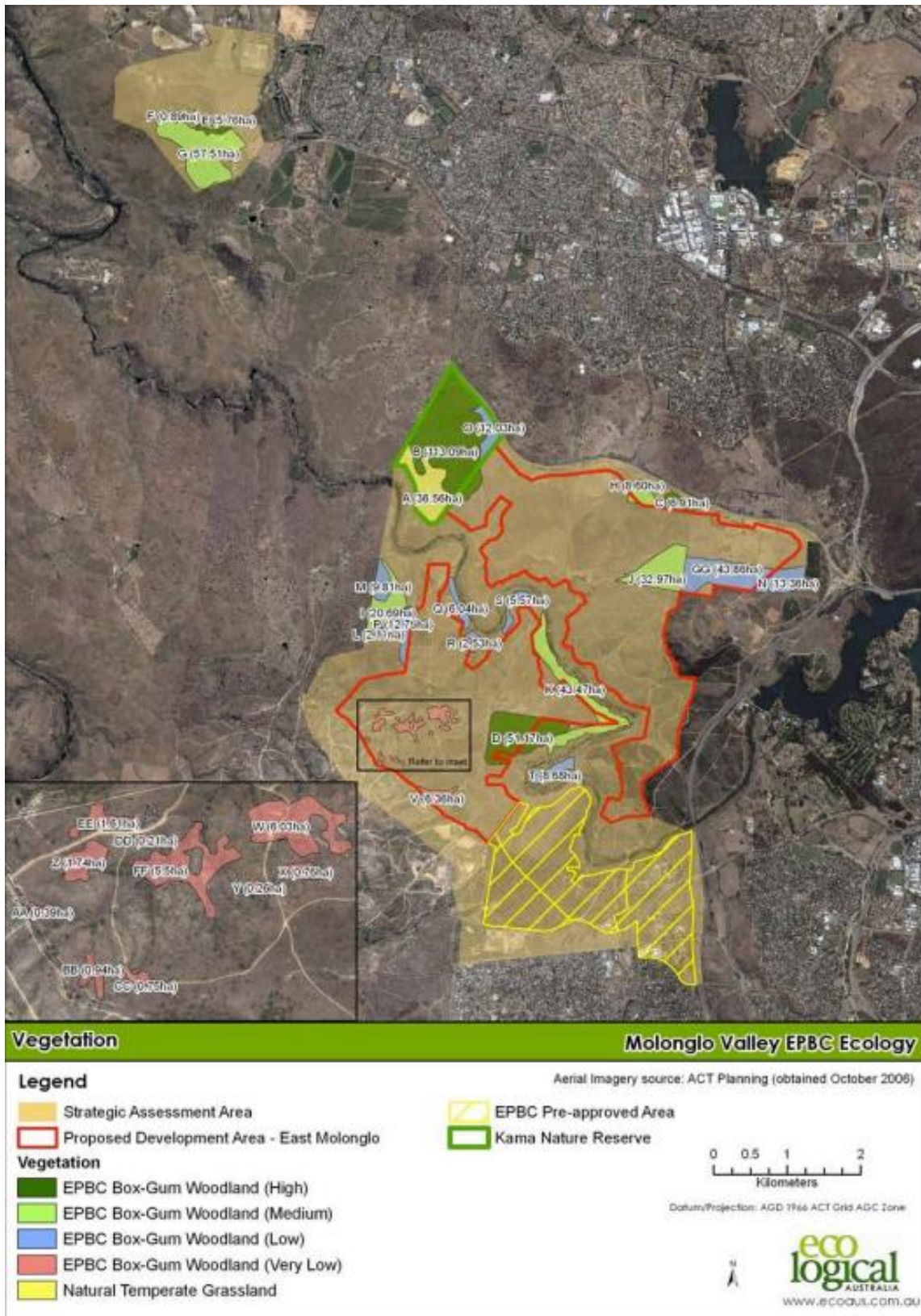


Figure 2 Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment Area patches identified in NES Plan

*Note: Figure 3 in the NES plan, prepared by Eco Logical Australia Pty Ltd, June 2011*

### 3.1 Development completed in 2022-23

The following development was undertaken or approved in the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment Area in 2022-23:

- completion of Whitlam Stage 3A;
- commencement of Whitlam Stage 3B; and
- commencement of Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer Odour Mitigation Works and commencement of the 132kV electricity transmission line relocation project.

The published targets in the ACT Government's 2022-23 Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) indicated the release of 434 residential dwelling sites and 62,000m<sup>2</sup> of community facility zoned land.

The actual land release outcome for Molonglo Valley included:

- 434 residential dwelling sites in Whitlam; and
- 62,000m<sup>2</sup> of community facility zoned land (comprised of 12,000m<sup>2</sup> in Coombs and 50,000m<sup>2</sup> in Whitlam).

### 3.2 Report on performance by outcome/commitment

Table 1 describes the commitments from the NES Plan and the status of each commitment.

See **Appendix A** – Previously completed commitments, for commitments that were completed in previous years.

Table 1 Commitments, delivery, and timing

NES Plan Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Current status
<b>Actions to achieve the conservation outcomes for Box Gum Woodland</b>				
Impacts to Box-Gum Woodland will be limited to a maximum of 110 ha and a range of measures will be implemented to minimise this area of impact.				
1	Ensure that the combined impacts on Box-Gum Woodland (BGW) from development within East Molonglo and construction of infrastructure within the river corridor do not exceed 110 ha.	EPSDD	Throughout and on completion of the final Planning and Design Framework (PDF) for both stages 2 and 3 and through the approval of Estate Development Plan (EDP) (subdivision) Development Application (DA).	See Section 3.5 Impacts on MNES, <b>Table 3</b> and <b>Figure 4</b> which show that the amount of BGW that has been impacted to date does not exceed this limit. In 2022-23, there was no increase in area of BGW being impacted by specific development.
2	Amend the East Molonglo river corridor boundary, in stages 2 and 3 respectively with a view to reducing the impacts to BGW. This process will ensure that connectivity within the river corridor is maintained.	EPSDD	Progressively, on completion of the final EDPs for stages 2 and 3, respectively.	Ongoing. <a href="#">Stage 2 PDF</a> was finalised in 2012. The <a href="#">Stage 3 PDF</a> was finalised in February 2019. The river corridor boundaries were also adjusted under <a href="#">Territory Plan Variation 360</a> in January 2020 following approval of the <a href="#">Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan</a> in 2019. However, it should be noted that the formal mechanism for finalising river corridor boundaries is through the approval of final EDPs as it allows minor refinements as a technical amendment to the Territory Plan (e.g. for Suburbs 2 and 3 within Molonglo Stage 3 PDF). Minor refinements would only be made if they were required to enable a functional estate and would be assessed for any potential impacts to biodiversity to ensure consistency with the NES Plan. See <b>section 3.5</b> of this report for more information about amendments to river corridor boundaries.
3	Design the infrastructure that will occur in the river corridor to minimise impacts to BGW.	CMTEDD and EPSDD (PCS, Infrastructure Projects)	Prior to the construction of infrastructure.	Ongoing. Works are continuing to progress, on the range of infrastructure projects within the river corridor, that are needed to support urban development in Molonglo. This includes work on John Gorton Drive (JGD) Stage 3C (that includes a major road bridge crossing over the Molonglo River), structural protection works to the Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer (MVIS) bridge piers at Deep Creek associated with the Deep Creek Dam works (Environmental Impact Statement under assessment), relocation of existing 132 kV electricity transmission lines, sewer odour control facilities and the East-west arterial road. Of the overall budget of 110 hectares impact to BGW allowed for in the NES Plan, the impact from projects completed and proposals in design remains unchanged to 11.18 hectares of impact for this reporting year. The extent of recreational infrastructure proposed in the <a href="#">River Park Concept Plan</a> was reviewed through the draft Plan of Management process, with two significant refinements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- where practicably possible, the trunk cycle path will be relocated within the Inner Asset Protection Zone to utilise the lighting corridor of the edge road and minimises fragmentation of the River Park; and</li> <li>- recreation facilities such as parks, nature playgrounds, lookouts, seats and walking trails will be centralised to the two special purpose reserves – Namarag Reserve (Sludge Pits) and Ryans Hill. The first of the two special purpose reserves – Namarag, was completed in 2021/22 (<a href="#">Namarag - Parks ACT</a>).</li> </ul> The Molonglo Group Centre and Surrounds Concept Plan took effect in October 2022 which provide guidance on the design and assessment of the Molonglo Group Centre and Surrounds. The Concept Plan confirmed the urban edge and included requirements of urban edge design to minimise bushfire risk associated with the Molonglo River Reserve. <a href="#">John Gorton Drive 3C</a> Prior to submitting a DA, Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) completed early design of the JGD approach roads and bridge over the Molonglo River in consultation with ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) to minimise impact and risk to BGW and PTWL habitat. During 2020-21, the DA for JGD Stage 3C, including the bridge over the Molonglo River, was approved. The total approved impact was to 0.05ha of BGW Patch S and 0.02 ha of moderate quality PTWL habitat. The exact clearance amounts will be reported once detailed design is complete and construction commences, which is currently scheduled for late 2023. A contractor has been engaged to undertake the design and construction of the bridge and associated infrastructure. The design is still scheduled to be completed in late 2023. <a href="#">Relocation of existing 132kV transmission lines</a>

NES Plan Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Current status
				<p>The existing 132kV overhead electrical transmission line in the Molonglo Valley will be replaced by an underground 132kV transmission line on an alignment that is more conducive for urban development in the Molonglo Valley. A DA was approved in 2021-2022. Demolition of the existing overhead transmission line and construction of the new underground transmission line will not impact any BGW in the river corridor.</p> <p><u>Odour control units</u></p> <p>In 2019-2020, Suburban Land Agency (SLA) took responsibility for the design and construction of four odour control units attached to the Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer. These units are located both adjacent to and within the river corridor and have been sited to minimise impacts on MNES. Geotechnical investigation works for the odour control units were undertaken in 2020-21. Works are complete for the 11kv electrical lines along the river reserve interface to power the odour control units. Works on the odour control units are underway with completion expected at the end of 2023-24.</p> <p><u>Deep Creek Dam</u></p> <p>The SLA took responsibility for the design and construction of Deep Creek Dam. The majority of the works lie outside of the river corridor except for structural protection works to 3 of the MVIS pipe bridge piers. These works require construction of concrete blade walls in front of existing concrete piers to provide protection to these piers from increased flood impact in the unlikely event of a dam failure. These works in the river corridor do not impact any BGW.</p>
4	Develop, implement and independently monitor Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) to ensure that unforeseen direct or indirect impacts from construction activities within the development area and the river corridor are avoided.	EPSDD	Development of CEMPs prior to construction. Implementation of CEMPs during construction.	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>CEMPs have been prepared for all approved estate developments within the Strategic Assessment area.</p> <p>EPSDD has incorporated the requirement for CEMPs in all capital works infrastructure documentation for Molonglo and has engaged a site surveillance officer to monitor capital works projects in Molonglo, generally.</p> <p>During 2022-23, six CEMPs were approved for construction work in Molonglo Valley:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer;</li> <li>- Whitlam Stage 3B;</li> <li>- Denman North Package 1 and 2 – Updated CEMP;</li> <li>- Denman Prospect Stage 2E – Updated CEMP;</li> <li>- Denman Prospect Stage 2 Estate Development – Updated CEMP; and</li> <li>- Denman North Stages 4 &amp; 7.</li> </ul> <p>To date, 67 CEMPs have been prepared and approved for construction work in Molonglo Valley. This has been done for minor preliminary works such as geotechnical investigations, fencing and utility relocations, as well as all major construction activities such as roadworks, bridges and ponds.</p>
Three offset sites will be established within the strategic assessment area (Kama Nature Reserve, Molonglo River Park, Patch GG) that will provide for the long-term protection of 234 ha of BGW (see Figure 6 of NES Plan). The three offset sites will be adaptively managed to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of the BGW that occurs there.				
6	Implement the management plan for the Kama Nature Reserve to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of BGW within the reserve.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 5.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Management is being undertaken in line with the Kama operational plan.</p> <p>Management actions undertaken over 2022-23 to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of BGW include management of the understorey condition through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- three ecological burns;</li> <li>- St John's Wort control;</li> <li>- African Lovegrass control;</li> <li>- Woody weed control;</li> <li>- Saffron thistle control;</li> <li>- conservation grazing targeting wild oats; and</li> <li>- continuation of Kama forb enhancement program.</li> </ul>
7	Establish a buffer outside the Kama Nature Reserve between the reserve and the proposed development area and allow for appropriate uses consistent with nature conservation uses of the reserve. The buffer will be developed to ensure that fire management	EPSDD (PCS, Strategic Planning and Due Diligence)	As part of the final PDF for stage 3 and confirmed through the approval of EDP (subdivision) DAs.	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>On 8 May 2018, the ACT Minister responsible for Planning granted the <a href="#">Molonglo Stage 3 Urban Development project an exemption</a> from the requirement to undertake an environmental impact statement under the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i>.</p>

NES Plan Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Current status
	is undertaken outside of the Kama Nature Reserve and will provide protection against urban edge effects.	and Land Investigations)		The exemption included several conditions for development approval including that the treatment and boundary to Kama Nature Reserve must be consistent with the recommendations of the <a href="#">Kama Interface Management Strategy</a> (Capital Ecology 2016). This condition has been incorporated into and represented in the PDF for Stage 3, which was approved in February 2019. The Whitlam stage 4 EDP was approved in July 2023. The EDP proposal includes the provision of a NUZ3 Hills Ridges and Buffer Zone to the west of the development adjacent to the Kama Reserve and allows for the inclusion of future land into the reserve at a future stage.
10	Implement the management plan for the Molonglo River Park to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of BGW within the park.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 9.	Ongoing. From 2012, EPSDD has undertaken a number of restoration works within the river corridor consistent with the Molonglo River Park operational plans and the <a href="#">Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan</a> . Management actions undertaken during 2022-23 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2ha of PTWL habitat restoration;</li> <li>- 5000 BGW tree, shrub and groundstorey plantings;</li> <li>- Vertebrate pest control, including deer and wild pigs;</li> <li>- African Lovegrass control;</li> <li>- St John's Wort control;</li> <li>- Chilean needle grass control;</li> <li>- woody weed control;</li> <li>- Serrated tussock control;</li> <li>- willow control;</li> <li>- maintenance of box gum woodland restoration plantings;</li> <li>- continuation of Box Gum Park forb enhancement program;</li> <li>- continuation of the Barrer restoration program; and</li> <li>- various public engagement activities, ranging from ranger guided walks to promotional videos, conference field trips and university field trips.</li> </ul>
13	Implement the management plan for Patch GG to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of BGW.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 12.	Ongoing. Management is being undertaken consistent with the operational plan. Management actions undertaken in 2022-23 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ecological burn;</li> <li>- Chilean needlegrass control;</li> <li>- St John's Wort control;</li> <li>- Pattersons curse control;</li> <li>- Woody weed control; and</li> <li>- continuation and maintenance of the Arboretum woodland conservation area forb enhancement program.</li> </ul>
Adaptively manage 28 ha of BGW within the strategic assessment area to maintain and enhance its ecological condition. This will be made up of patches C, H and N.				
15	Implement management plans for BGW patches C, H, and N to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of BGW within these areas.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 14.	Ongoing. Management is being undertaken consistent with the operational plan including the maintenance of BGW restoration plantings. Management actions undertaken in 2022-23 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- commencement of 0.6ha forb enhancement node in NES Patch N;</li> <li>- Maintenance of BGW tree and shrub plantings;</li> <li>- African lovegrass control; and</li> <li>- Blackberry control.</li> </ul>
Adaptively manage 45.4 ha of BGW within the strategic assessment area to maintain its ecological condition. This will be made up of patches I, L, M and P.				
17	Undertake fuel hazard management in patches I, L, M and P with the management and protection of BGW as a critical consideration (within the constraints of ensuring the safety of the urban population).	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 16.	As above. The <a href="#">Bushfire Risk Strategy</a> (Strategy) undertaken by the SLA, sets out the management requirements both within and immediately outside the future urban development boundary in Denman Prospect taking into account BGW. This Strategy is supported by Emergency Services Agency (ESA) and the Fire Management Unit of TCCS. Fuel management is being undertaken consistent with the Strategy and with protection of BGW as a critical consideration.

NES Plan Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Current status
18	Annually monitor the condition of the BGW patches I, L, M, P (total area of 45.4 ha) on the western boundary of East Molonglo to ensure that fuel hazard management is not negatively impacting on the BGW values.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 16.	Ongoing. A <a href="#">Monitoring Procedures Manual for Molonglo</a> was prepared by EPSDD in 2013 in accordance with the Adaptive Management Strategy (AMS) for this ongoing process. EPSDD has undertaken annual vegetation monitoring since 2013, in accordance with the monitoring procedures manual. The 10-year expert panel review of vegetation condition monitoring data was completed in June 2023.
19	Should the monitoring in Action 18 show that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for a period of two consecutive years;</li> <li>• more than 30% of the combined area of patches I, L, M, P (total area of 45.4 ha) no longer meets the EPBC Act listing criteria for BGW;</li> </ul> then the ACT Government will establish an offset site within two years of those monitoring results that meets the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the offset will be in the Molonglo Valley; and</li> <li>• the offset will include a minimum of 90.8 ha of EPBC Act listed BGW.</li> </ul>	EPSDD	If required.	The 10-year expert panel review was completed in June 2023. Vegetation condition in NES patches I, L, M and P have all been maintained or enhanced. Management actions undertaken in 2022-23 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ecological grazing;</li> <li>- BGW tree and shrub plantings</li> <li>- Vertebrate pest control, including deer and wild pigs</li> <li>- African Lovegrass control and</li> <li>- Serrated tussock control.</li> </ul>
20	Should an offset site be required under Action 19, then the offsite site will be established as a Nature Reserve and managed consistently with the other offset sites (Kama Nature Reserve, Molonglo River Park, Patch GG).	EPSDD (PCS)	If required.	Not required.
<b>Actions to achieve the conservation outcomes for Natural Temperate Grassland</b>				
No direct or indirect impacts to Natural Temperate Grassland (NTG).				
24	Protection of the NTG within the Kama Nature Reserve.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing.	As of June 2022, there have been no impacts to Natural Temperate Grassland in the strategic assessment area (see <b>Table 3</b> ). See Action 26 for actions undertaken to provide for the protection of Natural temperate grassland within the Kama Nature Reserve.
Adaptive management of the Natural Temperate Grassland that occurs within the Kama Nature Reserve to maintain and enhance its ecological condition.				
26	Implement the management plan for the Kama Nature Reserve to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of NTG within the reserve.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 25.	Ongoing. Management is being undertaken in line with the Kama operational plan. Management actions undertaken over 2022-23 to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of NTG include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ecological burn</li> <li>- African Lovegrass control;</li> <li>- Serrated tussock control;</li> <li>- Blackberry control;</li> <li>- Chilean Needlegrass control;</li> <li>- continuation of Striped Legless Lizard translocation trial;</li> <li>- continuation of Kama forb enhancement program;</li> <li>- continuation of grassland restoration research project testing the effectiveness of ecological burns for restoring grassland habitat; and</li> <li>- Completion and publication of Smith, A.L., Kanjithanda, R.M., Hayashi, T., French, J. and Milner, R.N., 2023. Reducing herbicide input and optimising spray method can minimise non-target impacts on native grassland plant species. <a href="#">Ecological Applications, p.e2864.</a></li> </ul>
27	Establish a buffer outside the Kama Nature Reserve between the reserve and the proposed development area and allow for appropriate uses consistent with nature conservation uses of the reserve. The buffer will be developed to ensure that fire management is undertaken outside of the Kama Nature Reserve and will provide protection against urban edge effects.	EPSDD (PCS, Strategic Planning and Due Diligence and Land Investigations)	As part of the final PDF Stage 3 and confirmed through the approval of EDPs.	Refer response to commitment 7.

NES Plan Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Current status
<b>Actions to achieve the conservation outcomes for Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (PTWL)</b>				
Impacts to high and moderate quality PTWL habitat will be limited to a maximum of 27 ha and a range of measures will be implemented to minimise this area of impact				
28	Ensure that the combined impacts on high and moderate quality PTWL habitat from development within East Molonglo and construction of infrastructure within the river corridor do not exceed 27 ha.	EPSDD (PCS, (Infrastructure Projects), SLA	Progressively, on completion of the final EDPs for stages 2 and 3, respectively.	Ongoing. <a href="#">PDF Stage 2</a> and <a href="#">PDF stage 3</a> are both complete. The river corridor boundaries were adjusted under <a href="#">Territory Plan Variation 360</a> . Any further adjustments will be confirmed once EDPs are approved. As of 30 June 2023, combined impacts on high and moderate quality PTWL habitat total 3.6 hectares (see Table 3).
29	Amend the East Molonglo River corridor boundary in stages 2 and 3 respectively with a view to reducing impacts to high and moderate quality PTWL habitat. This process will ensure that connectivity within the river corridor is maintained.	EPSDD (PCS, Strategic Planning)	Progressively, on completion of the final EDPs for stages 2 and 3, respectively.	Ongoing. <a href="#">PDF Stage 2</a> and <a href="#">PDF stage 3</a> are both complete. The river corridor boundaries were adjusted under <a href="#">Territory Plan Variation 360</a> . Any further adjustments will be confirmed once EDPs are approved.
30	Design the infrastructure that will occur in the river corridor to minimise impacts to high and moderate quality PTWL habitat.	EPSDD & CMTEDD	Prior to the construction of infrastructure.	Ongoing. Design work being progressed for infrastructure projects within the river corridor include the projects described in the response to Commitment 3 (Table 1). There are 18.52 ha of PTWL habitat in the Molonglo development area. Molonglo Sewer Pedestrian Bridge (Butters Bridge) and Cravens Creek Pond projects were completed in April 2017 and September 2016 respectively. They were designed and constructed to minimise impacts on PTWL habitat. Refer to the response to Commitment 3 (Table 1) above for more details on design and siting of infrastructure projects within the river corridor.
31	Develop, implement and independently monitor CEMPs to ensure that unforeseen direct or indirect impacts from construction activities within the development area and the river corridor are avoided.	EPSDD & (PCS, Infrastructure Projects), SLA, CMTEDD	Development of the CEMPs prior to construction. Implementation of the CEMPs during construction.	Refer response to commitment 4.
Two offset sites will be established within the strategic assessment area (Kama Nature Reserve and the Molonglo River Park) that will provide for the long-term protection of 66 ha of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat (see Figure 6 of the NES Plan). These areas will be adaptively managed to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of the PTWL habitat that occurs there.				
33	Implement the management plan for the Kama Nature Reserve to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of all PTWL habitat within the reserve.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 32.	Ongoing. Management is being undertaken in line with the operational plan. Management actions undertaken over 2022-23 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ecological burn</li> <li>- Serrated tussock control;</li> <li>- African Lovegrass control;</li> <li>- Blackberry control;</li> <li>- Chilean Needlegrass control; and</li> <li>- continuation of Kama forb enhancement program.</li> </ul>
34	Establish a buffer outside the Kama Nature Reserve between the reserve and the proposed development area and allow for appropriate uses consistent with nature conservation uses of the reserve. The buffer will be developed to ensure that fire management is undertaken outside of the Kama Nature Reserve and will provide protection against urban edge effects.	EPSDD (PCS, Strategic Planning and Due Diligence and Land Investigations)	As part of the final PDF for stage 3 and confirmed through the approval of EDP (subdivision) DAs.	Ongoing. Refer response to commitment 7. Stage 4 of Whitlam was approved in July 2023 and incorporates a buffer consistent with that outlined in the <a href="#">Kama Interface Management Strategy</a> (Capital Ecology 2016).
37	Establish a 20 m buffer around high and moderate quality PTWL habitat (other than, for example the areas to be impacted by the bridge crossings and strategically placed walking tracks) within the East Molonglo River corridor. Manage these areas to ensure the maintenance of their conservation value. Management measures (as	EPSDD (PCS)	On completion of the final PDF for stage 2 and completion of the Park Concept Plan.	Ongoing. Buffer zones were identified in the <a href="#">Molonglo River Park Concept Plan</a> . Management measures (including establishment of 20m buffers around high and moderate PTWL habitat) are incorporated into the <a href="#">Molonglo River Reserve – Reserve Management Plan (Disallowable Instrument DI2019-192)</a> .

NES Plan Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Current status
	outlined in Section 3) will be incorporated into the management plan for the river corridor.			
38	Implement the management plan for the Molonglo River Park to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat within the park.	EPSDD (PCS)	Ongoing, after completion of Action 36.	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Operational plans are being implemented. Other management actions undertaken during 2022-23 to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of PTWL habitat include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 ha of PTWL habitat restoration, including placement of 160,000 habitat rocks;</li> <li>- ecological grazing;</li> <li>- ecological burns;</li> <li>- vertebrate pest control, including wild pigs;</li> <li>- African Lovegrass control;</li> <li>- St John's Wort control;</li> <li>- Chilean needle grass control;</li> <li>- Woody weed control;</li> <li>- Serrated tussock control;</li> <li>- continuation of Box Gum Park forb enhancement program;</li> <li>- continuation of the Barrer restoration program;</li> <li>- continuation of PTWL trial translocation research project;</li> <li>- continuation of the PTWL low impact monitoring research project;</li> <li>- continuation of the PTWL habitat extension research project; and</li> <li>- various public engagement activities, ranging from ranger guided walks to promotional videos, conference field trips and university field trips.</li> </ul>
Continued protection of 28.1 ha of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat within the Lower Molonglo Nature Reserve (see Figure 4 of the NES Plan). These areas will be adaptively managed to maintain the ecological condition of the PTWL habitat that occurs there				
40	Continued implementation of the Plan of Management for the Lower Molonglo Nature Reserve to provide for the maintenance of the ecological condition of the high and moderate quality PTWL habitat that occurs there (approximately 28.1 ha).	EPSDD	Ongoing.	<p>The <a href="#">Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan</a> was approved in July 2019, revoking the previous Lower Molonglo River Corridor Plan of Management.</p> <p>Annual vegetation condition monitoring was undertaken in 2022-23. The 10 year expert panel review of vegetation condition monitoring data was completed in June 2023 and showed that vegetation condition has been maintained. The following management actions have been undertaken in the Molonglo River Reserve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ongoing strategic ecological cattle grazing to reduce exotic grass biomass and reduce fire risk from surrounding fuel loads;</li> <li>- blackberry control;</li> <li>- African lovegrass control;</li> <li>- ongoing monitoring and management of vertebrate pest species, including deer; and</li> <li>- ongoing strategic grazing and weed control requirements on properties with PTWL habitat that are managed under the Land Management Agreement (LMA) process.</li> </ul>
Protection of an additional 23.3 ha of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat within the strategic assessment area outside of the development and offset areas (see Figure 4 of the NES Plan). These areas will be adaptively managed to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of the PTWL habitat that occurs there.				
42	Implement management plans for the other areas of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat that occurs within the strategic assessment area and outside of the development and offset areas (approximately 23.3 ha) to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of the PTWL habitat within these areas.	EPSDD (PCS)	Commencement on completion of Action 41. Implementation ongoing.	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Management actions undertaken in 2022-23 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- African lovegrass control;</li> <li>- Chilean needle grass control;</li> <li>- blackberry control;</li> <li>- feral pig and deer control;</li> <li>- continuation of the PTWL trial translocation research project;</li> <li>- continuation of the PTWL habitat extension research project; and</li> <li>- continuation of the PTWL low impact monitoring research project.</li> </ul>

NES Plan Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Timing	Current status
Improving and applying the knowledge about the management of PTWL.				
43	Undertake a research project examining the effects on PTWL of disturbance and proximity to urban areas.	EPSDD (PCS)	Commencement within 6 months of endorsement and incorporated into the PDF for both stages 2 and 3.	<p>Stage 1a (Mt Taylor habitat disturbance case study) - complete.</p> <p>Stage 1b - ongoing. The PTWL low-impact monitoring research project commenced in 2014 and was completed in 2021-22. The results of the project have been written up as a scientific manuscript and submitted for publication.</p> <p>Stage 2a (population monitoring) – ongoing. Population monitoring and habitat condition monitoring is being undertaken as part of Stage 1b and the Molonglo vegetation condition monitoring program.</p> <p>Stage 2b (PTWL translocation trial) – Trial PTWL translocation commenced in 2021-22 in collaboration with the Australian National University (ANU) and Ginninderry Conservation Trust. 30 animals were translocated from Denman and Ginninderry development areas to Crace and Mulangarri Nature Reserve. In 2022, one PTWL was detected at the Crace translocation site.</p> <p>Stage 2c (PTWL habitat restoration) – ongoing. 9ha of habitat restoration has been undertaken since 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2014, 11 habitat islands were established across the former Blewitts pine plantation. The objective of the restoration works was to improve habitat connectivity between the two genetically distinct populations. Over the past eight years, 10 of the 11 habitat islands have been colonised leaving only one island to be colonised before the two populations are effectively reconnected. A scientific manuscript is currently being prepared for this project.</li> <li>- Development of a PTWL habitat restoration method in collaboration with the ANU (McDougall, A., R.N. Milner, D.A. Driscoll &amp; A.L. Smith (2016)). <a href="#">Restoration rocks: integrating abiotic and biotic habitat restoration to conserve threatened species and reduce fire fuel load. <i>Biodiversity and Conservation</i> 25 (8), 1529-1542</a>, 5 ha of PTWL habitat restoration has been undertaken within fire management zones adjacent to PTWL habitat. The objective of the restoration works is to reduce fire fuel loads and provide habitat for the PTWL.</li> </ul> <p>PTWL have been detected in five of the seven PTWL habitat restoration sites surveyed and a second threatened species, Perunga grasshopper (<i>Perunga ochracea</i>), has also been found in one of the restoration sites.</p>

### 3.3 Other NES Plan requirements and actions

In addition to the specific MNES related commitments, the NES Plan contains a number of implementation requirements and actions. Table 2 details each action or requirement and provides a status update as of 30 June 2023.

See [Appendix A – Previously completed commitments](#), for commitments that were completed in previous years.

**Table 2 Other NES Plan requirements and actions**

No	NES Plan Page Ref	Commitment	Responsible Entity	Comment/Status
3	9	<p>Infrastructure within the river corridor comprises the following activities and will be staged to be most cost effectively developed (in the following order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JGD which includes the construction of dual bridges crossing the Molonglo River;</li> <li>East-West Arterial Road bridge crossing of the Molonglo River;</li> <li>Water quality control ponds; water mains; sewer mains and sewer pump stations; and</li> <li>A combined sewer / pedestrian / cycle bridge.</li> </ul>	EPSDD (PCS, Infrastructure Projects), TCCS, CMTEDD (Civil Infrastructure Delivery), SLA (Molonglo Valley)	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>On 27 April 2012, the ACT Government advised the Commonwealth that the ACT Government required a change to the order of this infrastructure to effectively manage the sequencing of land release. The following infrastructure has been completed within the river corridor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sewer Pedestrian Bridge (Butters Bridge) over the Molonglo River, and associated sewer main approaches; and</li> <li>Cravens Creek Pond.</li> </ul> <p>The East West Arterial has been constructed west of JGD for approximately 1.1 km.</p> <p>Two sections of JGD construction have been recently completed in Molonglo 3. The first section (JGD3A) is south from William Hovel Drive and has been constructed for a distance of approximately 900m. The next 500m JGD3B is also complete and opened mid-2020.</p> <p>The final section of JGD includes a dual carriageway bridge crossing of the Molonglo River and another 1.7km of dual carriageway road approaches. The early design stage for this is complete and a DA was conditionally approved in January 2021. Funding for the project has been approved. A contractor has been engaged for the design and construction of these works. Design is expected to be completed in late 2023 and construction completed in late 2025.</p> <p>In 2018-19 EPSDD completed construction of minor recreation facilities in the River Reserve at Barrer Hill, opposite to Coombs including a pedestrian trail, signage and low impact lookouts. These facilities were constructed using low environmental impact methods and will help to control pedestrian movement through the reserve and away from areas of high conservation value.</p> <p>In 2018-19 EPSDD progressed design of the first of two special purpose reserves, Namarag, that will manage access to the Molonglo River Reserve and provide focused areas for recreation and river access. The project will also restore critically endangered BGW and threatened PTWL habitat.</p> <p>In 2019-20 SLA took responsibility for the design and construction of four Odour Control Units attached to the Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer. These units are located both adjacent to and within the river corridor and have been staged to coincide with the occupation of Whitlam and Denman Prospect 2. The project is currently under construction and expected to be completed in 2023-24.</p>
5	10	<p>Designing infrastructure that will occur in the river corridor to avoid or minimise impacts to MNES. This process includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>re-aligning the location of the major bridges (as compared to the original location proposed in the Molonglo Structure Plan) to minimise impacts on moderate and high-quality PTWL habitat; and</li> <li>aligning other infrastructure to avoid moderate and high-quality PTWL habitat and BGW where this can be achieved.</li> </ul>	EPSDD (PCS, Infrastructure Projects), TCCS, CMTEDD (Civil Infrastructure Delivery), SLA (Molonglo Valley).	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Refer response to Table 1- Commitment 3.</p> <p>In 2019-2020 SLA took responsibility for the design and construction of four Odour Control Units attached to the Molonglo Valley Interceptor Sewer. These units are located both adjacent to and within the river corridor and have been staged to coincide with the occupation of Whitlam and Denman Prospect 2.</p>
8	11, 35-36	The ACT Government will ensure that all construction activities (whether in the urban area or in the river corridor) will be subject to CEMPs. These CEMPs will help to ensure that unnecessary impacts from construction (e.g. through the uncontrolled movement of machinery) are avoided. A detailed description of the content of CEMPs is provided in Section 4 of the NES Plan.	EPSDD (PCS) SLA (Molonglo Valley), CMTEDD (Civil Infrastructure Delivery)	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Refer response to Table 1- Commitment 4.</p>
9	12	<p>Within the strategic assessment area fire management will be aimed at the protection of both built assets and MNES values. This will be achieved through the identification of appropriate asset protection zones and the application of hazard reduction techniques that will both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that the standards for fuel loads in the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SBMP) are met; and</li> <li>protect MNES values through the use of sympathetic management techniques.</li> </ul>	EPSDD (PCS) ESA, SLA (Molonglo Valley)	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Asset protection zones have been identified as part of the operational plan for the river corridor and the Bushfire Risk Strategy prepared by the SLA. ESA and the Fire Management Unit, TCCS, support the fire management plan, which sets out the management requirements both within and immediately outside the future urban development boundary in Denman Prospect, taking into account BGW. In addition, controls for asset protection and management are to be included in future EDPs.</p>

No	NES Plan Page Ref	Commitment	Responsible Entity	Comment/Status
12	18	The ACT Government, as the proponent, will ensure that all development concerning MNES in the Strategic Assessment area is incorporated into any future DA and associated documentation to ensure any Commonwealth requirements are reflected in the decision by the EPSDD.	EPSDD (Statutory Planning)	Ongoing. For consideration/application at development assessment stage. Any development in the Strategic Assessment area concerning MNES refer to relevant agencies within ACT Government for advice/comment.
13	41	The ACT Government will monitor and report annually to the public on the implementation of the NES Plan. An annual report highlighting the conservation outcomes achieved in the previous year will be published by the ACT Government and provided to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE). The Report will include the monitoring results on the condition of the MNES, conservation outcomes (as listed in Section 4) and the outcomes of enhancement projects.	EPSDD (Statutory Planning)	Ongoing. Annual report to be finalised by the end of November each year. All Annual Reports are published on the <a href="#">Environmental Offsets Register</a> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2021-22</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2020-21</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2019-20</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2018-19</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2017-18</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2016-17</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2015-16</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2014-15</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Molonglo Valley NES Plan - Annual Report 2012-13</a></li> </ul>
15	44	The NES Plan and its associated actions will be audited by an independent, third-party expert every five years, for a 30-year period. The audit reports are to be provided to the DAWE for their consideration.	EPSDD	Ongoing. The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment completed the first <a href="#">Independent Audit of the NES Plan</a> in April 2018. A <a href="#">second independent audit</a> of the Molonglo Strategic Assessment was completed in 2021-22 By Arup Australia Pty Ltd.
16	44	Appoint an independent, third-party auditor and develop a customised audit protocol to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• commitments made by the ACT Government in the NES Plan are being adhered to; and</li> <li>• conservation outcomes for the MNES are being achieved.</li> </ul>	EPSDD	As above. Required every 5 years. The next independent audit is due on 31 May 2027.
17	44	The Treasury Directorate will ensure that commitments and actions in the NES Plan are funded.	CMTEDD	Ongoing. PCS completed two Capital Works projects in 2018-19 in the Molonglo River Reserve delivering on NES Plan actions. These programs saw the completion of the Barrer Restoration project (a key NES action) and other NES actions related to research, restoration and reserve establishment. In the 2018-19 ACT Budget \$3.182M <a href="#">Budget Paper 3 - Budget Outlook 2018-19 (act.gov.au)</a> was allocated over four years for the Capital Works project Establishing the Molonglo River Reserve to be delivered by PCS. This project will continue to protect native species and habitats in the Molonglo River Reserve through ecological conservation works. Importantly, it will deliver detailed design of the first of two special purpose reserves within the Molonglo River Reserve. In the 2019-20 ACT Budget \$7.165M was allocated over four years for the Capital Works project <i>Remediating the former Molonglo sewerage treatment facility</i> to be delivered by PCS. This project will deliver the construction of the first of the two special purpose reserves within the Reserve. This will be a focus area for residents and visitors to manage access into the Reserve protecting other areas within the Reserve with sensitive ecological values. In 2021-22, the remediation of the Molonglo sewerage treatment facility commenced to assist in the establishment of the Namarag special purpose reserve which was allocated \$1.413m under the capital budget. At the end of the financial year 2022-23, the total recurrent budget for implementing the commitments and actions in the NES Plan was \$1.272M from across five initiatives. These initiatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Molonglo Riverside Park (secured in 2012-13) - \$0.510M</li> <li>- Implementation of NES Plan – Stage 2 (secured 2014-15) - \$0.265M</li> <li>- Establishing the Molonglo River Reserve – Stage 3 (secured 2016-17) - \$0.05M</li> <li>- Establish Molonglo River reserve (secured 2018-2019) - \$0.062m</li> <li>- Implementation of the Namarag reserve (secured 2021-22) - \$0.385m.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Ecological Outcome

Annual vegetation condition monitoring was undertaken in 2022. As per the Molonglo AMS and 5 yearly Molonglo Strategic Assessment audit, vegetation and habitat condition monitoring data were analysed and reviewed by an expert panel in 2022-23. This report was submitted to the Commonwealth in June 2023. Results of the vegetation condition report indicate that at the offset site MNES/vegetation community level:

- Ecological condition of BGW across all Molonglo offset sites has either been maintained or enhanced and remains in 'moderate' to 'good with some concerns' condition.
- Ecological condition of NTG within Kama Nature Reserve has been maintained and remains in 'good with some concerns' condition.
- Ecological condition of PTWL habitat within Molonglo River Reserve, Kama Nature Reserve and Spring Valley Farm has been maintained or enhanced and remains in 'good with some concerns' condition.
- BGW and NTG across the Molonglo Valley offset sites continues to meet or improve towards meeting the listing criteria under the EPBC Act.

### 3.5 Corrections to information and data

#### **Molonglo River Reserve Boundary Adjustments**

The NES Plan's primary aim is to protect MNES within the Molonglo Valley to minimise impacts and maximise conservation outcomes. Conservation outcome (actions 2 and 29) require the East Molonglo river corridor boundary in stages 2 and 3 to be amended with a view to reducing impacts to BGW and PTWL habitat and ensuring connectivity within the river corridor is maintained.

The [Molonglo Valley Stage 3 Planning and Design Framework](#) (2019), which was required by the NES Plan (section 3.2) incorporates NES actions and commitments. The PDF:

- illustrates the boundary line between the Molonglo Stage 3 development area and the NES Offset area of the river corridor on the northern (right bank) side of the Molonglo River;
- recognises NES Plan conservation outcomes, action numbers 2 and 29 requiring amendment of the river corridor boundary;
- requires the interface between Molonglo Stage 3 and the Molonglo River Reserve to be consistent with the Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan; and
- notes that as development proceeds and practical issues arise in determining the urban edge, there may be a need to review the boundary to the Molonglo River Reserve.

Where the land is unleased Territory land and the change is consistent with both the apparent intent of the original boundary line and the objective for the Territory Plan zone, this may be achieved by making a technical amendment to the Territory Plan, under the *Planning and Development Act 2007*. Such changes in boundaries must also be consistent with the objectives of the Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan and must not compromise the capacity to protect threatened species and communities and meet the intent of the NES Plan.

The [Molonglo River Reserve \(Reserve Management Plan\(RMP\)\)](#) (2019) is a disallowable instrument made under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*. The long-term objectives of the Molonglo River Reserve RMP include a policy which recognises that future changes in boundaries and management zones must be consistent with the Molonglo River Reserve RMP and must not compromise the capacity to protect threatened species and communities.

Similarly, to the PDF, the Molonglo River Reserve RMP recognises that reserve boundaries of unleased Territory land can be amended under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* when the change is consistent with the intent of the original boundary. Minor technical variations may occur as a result of EDP approvals where minor practical changes are needed to achieve a practical urban edge. Changes to boundaries must be consistent with the objectives of the Molonglo River Reserve RMP and must not compromise the capacity to protect threatened species and communities.

The Molonglo River Reserve RMP includes actions agreed in the NES Plan to ensure protection of threatened species and communities. This includes reiterating the specific NES Plan action to *'amend the East Molonglo river corridor boundary in stages 2 and 3 respectively with a view to reducing impacts to high and moderate quality PTWL habitat. This process will ensure that connectivity within the river corridor is maintained.'*

[Territory Plan Variation 360 – Molonglo River Reserve](#) (2020) was the legislative mechanism which formally varied the public land reserve overlay boundary of the Molonglo NES Plan strategic assessment area. Territory Plan Variation 360 was prepared in response to the request of the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to amend the Molonglo River Reserve public land reserve overlay boundary for the area of the reserve. This is consistent with the requirement of the NES Plan and the Molonglo River Reserve RMP to amend the boundary to protect MNES within the strategic assessment area.

As a result, the new river corridor boundary (see Figure 3, below) increases the Molonglo River Reserve area from 489.66 hectares to 503.87 hectares with an increase of 1.01 hectares of BGW and 0.46 hectares of PTWL habitat within the reserve area. The boundary changes have also resulted in an increase in the area of PTWL habitat located in development areas, from 18.18 hectares to 18.52 hectares. These figures are consistent with the clearance budgets in the NES Plan.

Minor technical variations may be required to the reserve boundary as EDPs for the remaining areas are finalised. These variations will be cognisant of practical issues which arise in determining the urban edge and consistent with the intent of the Strategic Assessment and NES Plan. The assessment of EDPs includes an assessment of any biodiversity impacts and compliance with the NES Plan to ensure conservation outcomes are maintained.



### 3.6 Impacts on MNES

The NES Plan specifies limits for impacts on MNES from any development within the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment area. The following limits apply:

- a maximum of 110 ha of BGW can be impacted;
- a maximum of 27 ha of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat can be impacted\*; and
- no direct or indirect impact to Natural Temperate Grassland is allowed.

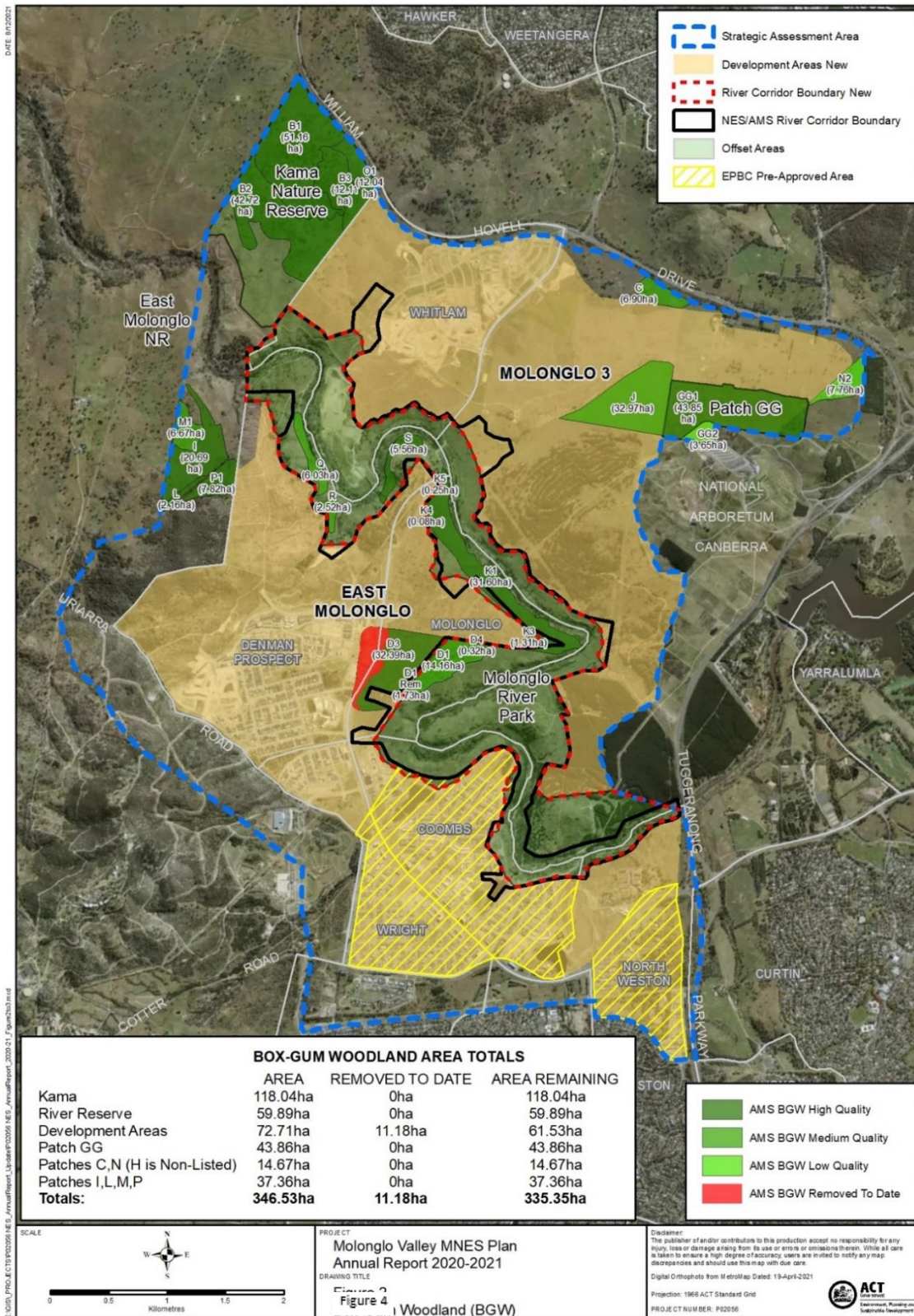
*\*There is 18.52 ha of PTWL habitat present in development areas. The remainder of the PTWL habitat occurs in nature reserves. Therefore, although the maximum total budget for PTWL habitat is 27 ha, PTWL impacts are expected to be limited to the development area (18.52ha).*

The NES Plan does not specify an allowable impact on the Superb Parrot and Swift Parrot.

Table 3 summarises the impacts on MNES from all developments completed in the Strategic Assessment area since the NES Plan was endorsed as well as projects that were being progressed in 2021-22. Figures 4 and 5 show the location and areas of BGW and PTWL that have been cleared respectively at 30 June 2022.

**Table 3 Impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance (ha)**

<b>Impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance (ha)</b>			
	<b>Pink-tailed Worm-lizard (limit 27 ha of high and moderate quality habitat)</b>	<b>Box Gum Woodland (limit 110 ha)</b>	<b>Natural Temperate Grassland (no impact)</b>
<b>Total cleared at 30 June 2023</b>	3.6 ha	11.18 ha	0 ha
<b>Available balance</b>	23.4 ha	98.82 ha	0 ha



**Figure 4 BGW areas that have been cleared to date (no change from last year)**

NB: In 2013, TCCS completed a Baseline Condition Assessment of BGW in the Strategic Assessment Area. The Assessment divided Patch P into 3 sub-patches based on condition: P1 (7.8 ha BGW), P2 (3.2 ha other vegetation), P3 (1.7 ha other vegetation). Patch M was also divided into subpatches: M1 (6.7 ha BGW), M2 (3.1 ha other vegetation). This was reflected in the AMS endorsed by the Commonwealth in August 2013.

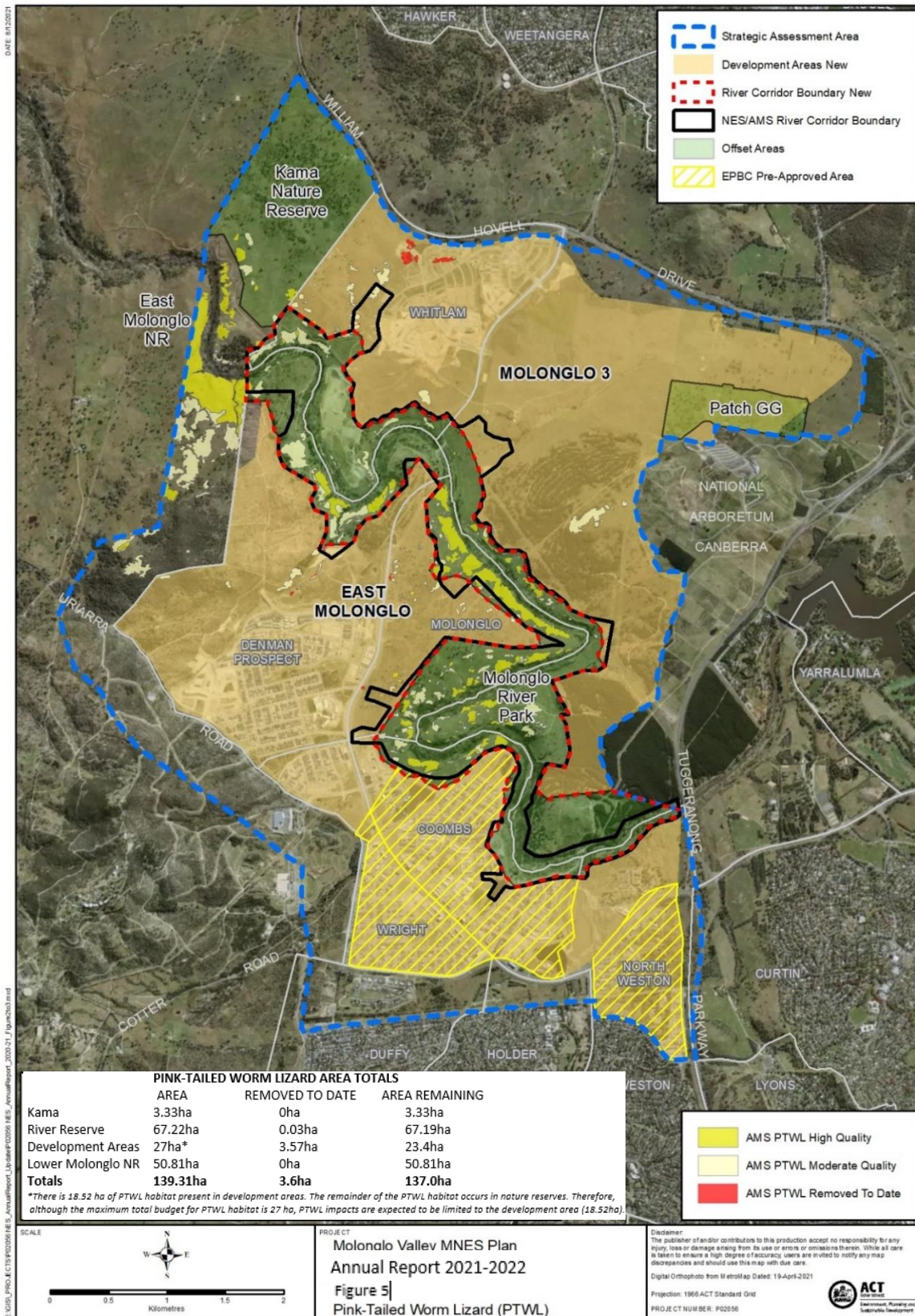


Figure 5: PTWL areas that have been cleared to date

### 3.7 Independent Audit

The independent audit ensures accountability and verifies that ACT Government is delivering to its commitments in the NES Plan to protect MNES.

#### **First independent audit**

The Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment completed the first [independent audit](#) of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment in April 2018. A range of commitment-specific risks with associated Corrective Action Requests (CARs) are identified in the audit report.

The 2018 Independent audit of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment identified the following 4 CARs. The majority of commitments rated as non-compliant and then developed into CARs were due to the required timeframe not being met.

**Table 4: 2018 Independent Audit review**

No.	Corrective Action Requests	Commitment	Due Date
CAR 1	Provide the final draft Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan to the Minister.	9 & 36	31 July 2018
CAR 2	Finalise the Operational Plan for patch P to ensure appropriate management is occurring.	16	31 December 2018
CAR 3	Incorporate actions and monitoring requirements into relevant Land management Agreements for the protection of the ecological condition of MNES within Patches I, L & M.	16	31 December 2018
CAR 4	Finalise the Operational Plan for the PTWL Conservation Area in the Molonglo River Reserve.	41	30 April 2018

Source: 2018 Audit report, EPSDD

#### **Second independent audit**

On 30 May 2022, the [second independent audit](#) of the Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment was prepared by Arup Australia Pty Ltd on behalf of EPSDD. It was confirmed during May 2022 audit report that all the CARs identified in 2018 have been addressed and closed by the nominated due dates. The second report included the following CARs in relation to commitment-specific risks. The audit report recommended the ACT Government complete all the CARs identified in this report within the indicated timeframes.

**Table 5: Corrective Action Requests for Commitment-Specific Risks**

No.	Corrective Action Requests	Commitment	Ranking	Due Date
CAR 1	Expired Operational Plans.	6, 10, 13, 26, 33, 38 & 42	H	30 April 2023
CAR 2	Physical establishment of Buffer Zones.	7, 27, 34	H	31 March 2023
CAR 3	CEMP auditing, monitoring and reporting compliance.	4 & 31	M	30 November 2023

Source: 2022 Audit report, EPSDD

CAR 1: Expired Operational Plans (Commitments 6, 10, 13, 26, 33, 38 and 42)

Review the currency, form and function of the management and operational plans, tools, technology and resources that are available to best deliver the outcomes required. If after the review amendments to the commitments regarding the implementation of Operational Plans are recommended, then undertake the formal process to seek

change. If no amendments to the commitments are required, then the Operational Plans should be updated to ensure compliance with the commitments.

Current Status – Expired operational plans have been reviewed and updated. Updated plans were provided to the Commonwealth in June 2023.

#### CAR 2: The Physical Establishment of Buffer Zones (Commitments 7, 27 and 34)

The funding and resource provisions for the buffer zones be separated from the timing and delivery of the urban developments and EDPs to facilitate the physical site-based implementation and development of the buffer zones before urban edge effects are experienced.

CAR 2 Delivery – 31 March 2023

#### CAR 3: CEMP auditing, monitoring, and reporting compliance (Commitment 4 and 31)

The approach, frequency and effectiveness of auditing, monitoring, and reporting compliance with the CEMPs be independently reviewed.

Current Status – Ongoing.

## **4 Deviation or non-compliance**

Compliant for 2022-23 period.

## Appendix A – Previously completed commitments

Completed commitments from Table 1: Commitments, delivery and timing.

Year Completed	NES Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Current status
<b>Actions to achieve the conservation outcomes for Box Gum Woodland</b>				
Three offset sites will be established within the strategic assessment area (Kama Nature Reserve, Molonglo River Park, Patch GG) that will provide for the long-term protection of 234 ha of Box-Gum Woodland (see Figure 6 of NES Plan). The three offset sites will be adaptively managed to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of the Box-Gum Woodland that occurs there.				
2015	5	Develop a management plan for the Kama Nature Reserve to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of Box-Gum Woodland within the reserve (approximately 117 ha).	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> An <a href="#">Operational Plan for Kama Nature Reserve</a> was completed in 2015. Note: A statutory Reserve Management Plan is in preparation for the reserve. Management plans for specific areas within the reserve have been called Operational Plans to avoid confusion with the statutory Management Plan for the entire reserve. Therefore, this commitment refers to the completion of an Operational Plan for the specific area of Kama Nature Reserve.
August 2012	8	Develop a Park Concept Plan for the “Molonglo River Park” which will occur along the East Molonglo river corridor. This Plan will establish management zones within the Park, specifically identifying areas to be designated for conservation as well as identifying recreation areas and resolving public access. A key focus of this plan will be the protection of Box-Gum Woodland.	EPSDD	<b>Complete.</b> The <a href="#">Molonglo River Corridor Concept Plan</a> prepared by EPSDD was endorsed on 28 August 2012.
June 2014	9	Develop a management plan for the Molonglo River Park to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of Box-Gum Woodland within the park (approximately 73 ha).	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> An <a href="#">Operational Plan for Molonglo River Park</a> was completed in June 2014.
February 2014	11	Establish Patch GG as an offset site by incorporating the area into the National Arboretum.	EPSDD	<b>Complete.</b> On 22 January 2013 the ACT Government purchased ‘Glenloch’ from its former long-term lessees. In 2014 Patch GG was transferred for incorporation into the National Arboretum to enable management as an offset site.
August 2014	12	Develop a management plan for Patch GG to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of Box-Gum Woodland within the park (approximately 44 ha).	EPSDD (PCS)/TCCS	<b>Complete.</b> Patch GG has been incorporated into the National Arboretum. An <a href="#">Operational Plan for Patch GG</a> was completed in June 2014.
Adaptively manage 28 ha of Box-Gum Woodland within the strategic assessment area to maintain and enhance its ecological condition. This will be made up of patches C, H and N.				
2018	14	Develop management plans for Box-Gum Woodland patches C, H, and N (see Figure 3 of the NES Plan) to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of Box-Gum Woodland within these areas.	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> An Operational Plan for patches C and H was completed in December 2018. An Operational Plan for Patch N was developed in 2014, as part of the Arboretum Woodland Conservation Area. The land has been under the custodianship of the LDA. PCS are now managing Patch N and Land custodianship is to be transferred to PCS in 2018-19.
Adaptively manage 45.4 ha of Box-Gum Woodland within the strategic assessment area to maintain its ecological condition. This will be made up of patches I, L, M and P.				
December 2018	16	Develop management plans for Box-Gum Woodland patches I, L, M and P (see Figure 3 of the NES Plan) to provide for the maintenance of the ecological condition of Box-Gum Woodland within these areas.	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> An Operational Plan for patch P was completed in December 2018 Patches I, L and M are managed under a rural lease with a Land Management Agreement.
Maintenance and enhancement of the Box-Gum Woodland that occurs within the West Molonglo component of the strategic assessment area.				
N/A	21	Manage the Box-Gum Woodland that occurs in West Molonglo in accordance with the terms of a Land Management Agreement	EPSDD (PCS)	Not required. See Commitment 22 below.

Year Completed	NES Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Current status
		(LMA). LMAs are required by Part 9.7 of the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i> for all non-urban leases. The LMA covering the BGW in West Molonglo contains a Land Action Plan which ensures that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the ecological functioning and integrity of BGW on the lease is retained and improved;</li> <li>• the extent and character of the BGW is preserved; and</li> <li>• there is an Action Plan which details the activities, timeframes and performance measures put in place to ensure the conservation outcomes are met.</li> </ul>		
October 2015	22	West Molonglo is zoned broadacre and is not part of the ACT Government's current land release program. In the event that West Molonglo is developed in the future for broadacre uses or residential development then, subject to confirmatory ecological assessment of Box-Gum Woodland, the area of EPBC Act Box-Gum Woodland that occurs there will be set aside as a Nature Reserve.	EPSDD	<b>Complete.</b> Box-Gum Woodland in West Molonglo was set aside as nature reserve through Territory Plan Variation 351 approved on 23 October 2015. The area of Box-Gum Woodland originally mapped for the strategic assessment was refined through an ecological assessment undertaken by David Hogg Pty Ltd in 2013. The current reserve boundaries were set based on the later ecological assessment.
Improving and applying the knowledge about the management of Box-Gum Woodland.				
2019	23	Establish and manage an off-site restoration project, as an indirect offset, for Box-Gum Woodland.	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> The use of Barrer Park which is on site was supported by the Commonwealth as meeting this commitment. EPSDD started BGW restoration work in 2014. A total of 15,607 plants, 1,505 trees and shrubs and 14,102 groundcovers were planted. EPSDD completed Stage 3 of the BGW restoration in 2016-17. As part of Stage 3, ten vertical habitat structures, 400 CWD logs and 80 tonnes of surface rock was placed into the restoration area to provide habitat for threatened and non-threatened BGW species. The vertical habitat structures project is an innovative restoration initiative currently being trialled in the Molonglo River Reserve. The project installed a total of ten habitat structures, including 5 utility poles and 5 relocated mature trees, enriched with carved hollows and artificial bark providing habitat for invertebrate, bird, bat and marsupial species. In collaboration with ANU researchers at the Fenner School of Environment and Society, this study will shed light on the effectiveness of this restoration method for biodiversity in modified landscapes. In 2017-18 visitor infrastructure including signage, trail upgrades, seats and lookouts were completed at Barrer Hill to inform visitors of the values in the area and manage access and recreational use to this important conservation site. A number of grassland restoration scrape sites were also completed, totalling 0.3 hectares. In 2019, an 11 <sup>th</sup> vertical habitat sculpture was constructed from a salvaged 400 year old yellow box remnant and resurrected as a habitat sculpture for wildlife and a focal point for community engagement and education. An additional 500 plants were planted around this structure, including as part of a community planting day and Ministerial launch. In collaboration with the ANU, a manuscript detailing the findings of this research was published in Biological Conservation <a href="https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0006320719300461">https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0006320719300461</a> In addition, an <a href="#">interactive web interface</a> was launched in partnership with the ANU, which collates remote camera data collected from the vertical structures allowing members of the public to access and tag information.
<b>Actions to achieve the conservation outcomes for Natural Temperate Grassland</b>				
Adaptive management of the Natural Temperate Grassland that occurs within the Kama Nature Reserve to maintain and enhance its ecological condition				
2015	25	Develop a management plan for the Kama Nature Reserve to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of Natural Temperate Grassland within the reserve.	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> Please see response to commitment 5. Operational Plan complete.
<b>Actions to achieve the conservation outcomes for Pink-tailed Worm Lizard</b>				
Two offset sites will be established within the strategic assessment area (Kama Nature Reserve and the Molonglo River Park) that will provide for the long-term protection of 66 ha of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat (see Figure 6 of the NES Plan). These areas will be adaptively managed to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of the PTWL habitat that occurs there.				
2015	32	Develop a management plan for the Kama Nature Reserve to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of all PTWL habitat within the reserve (approximately 6 ha which includes 3.33 ha of high and moderate quality habitat).	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> Please see response to commitment 5.

Year Completed	NES Ref	Action	Responsible Entity	Current status
August 2012	35	Develop a Park Concept Plan for the "Molonglo River Park" which will occur along the East Molonglo river corridor. This Plan will establish management zones within the Park, specifically identifying areas to be designated for conservation as well as identifying recreation areas and resolving public access. A key focus of this plan will be the protection of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat.	EPSDD	<b>Complete.</b> The Molonglo River Corridor Concept Plan prepared by EPSDD was endorsed on 28 August 2012.
June 2014	36	Develop a management plan for the Molonglo River Park to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat within the park (approximately 62 ha).	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> Please see response to commitment 9.
June 2012	39	Register a disallowable instrument under the <i>Domestic Animals Act 2000</i> to effect a cat containment policy for the Molonglo area.	TCCS & EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete.</b> <a href="#">DI-2015-58</a>
Protection of an additional 23.3 ha of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat within the strategic assessment area outside of the development and offset areas (see Figure 4 of the NES Plan). These areas will be adaptively managed to maintain and enhance the ecological condition of the PTWL habitat that occurs there.				
April 2018	41	Develop management plans for the other areas of high and moderate quality PTWL habitat that occurs within the strategic assessment area and outside of the development and offset areas (approximately 23.3 ha) to provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the ecological condition of the PTWL habitat within these areas.	EPSDD (PCS)	<b>Complete</b> The Operation Plan for the PTWL in the Molonglo River Reserve was finalised in April 2018.
Improving and applying the knowledge about the management of PTWL.				
December 2008	44	Amend the development boundary, adjacent to high and moderate quality PTWL habitat on the western edge to avoid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct impact from bushfire management – the Outer Asset Protection Zone (OAPZ) and Inner Asset Protection Zones (IAPZ) will be between the PTWL habitat and the development boundary; and</li> <li>• indirect impacts from urban development.</li> </ul>	EPSDD	Stage 2 development boundaries were set by the Territory Plan Variation 281. The development boundary on the north western edge has been adjusted to avoid impacts on the high and moderate quality PTWL habitat.

### Other NES Plan requirements and actions

Table B, Completed actions from Table 2: Other NES Plan requirements and actions.

Year Completed	No	NES Page Ref	Commitment	Responsible Entity	Comment/Status
February 2020	1	2	To ensure conservation outcomes and protect MNES adjacent to the development area in the lower Molonglo Valley, the ACT Government will make necessary amendments to the Structure Plan.	EPSDD (Strategic Planning, Territory Plan)	Whilst the commitment refers to the <a href="#">Structure Plan</a> , which is part of the <a href="#">Territory Plan</a> , it will be the Territory Plan (not specifically the Structure Plan) that will be varied in accordance with the <i>Planning and Development Act 2007</i> as development in Molonglo progresses. On 10 August 2012 <a href="#">Technical Amendment to the Territory Plan No. 2012-24</a> came into effect, which includes the applicable provisions arising from the Planning and Design Framework (PDF) for Molonglo Valley Stage 2. EPSDD and the former LDA (known as the SLA since 2017) commenced background planning investigations and assessments for Molonglo Valley Stage 3 in 2013-14. These investigations are now being undertaken by EPSDD and informed <a href="#">the PDF for Molonglo Valley Stage 3</a> which was finalised on 27 February 2019. On 23 November 2019, EPSDD released the Draft Variation to the Territory Plan 360 (Molonglo River Reserve: changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustment) for public consultation. On 22 March 2019, following the consideration of submissions received during the public consultation period, the Draft Variation was referred to the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal. The Standing Committee released their report on the Draft Variation. In February 2020, <a href="#">Variation to the</a>

Year Completed	No	NES Page Ref	Commitment	Responsible Entity	Comment/Status
					<a href="#">Territory Plan No 360</a> was approved and <a href="#">commenced</a> . Areas of high conservation value within the river corridor are protected in perpetuity with the appropriate land use overlays in accordance with the NES Plan under the Territory Plan.
December 2011	2	3	Following endorsement of the NES Plan under the EPBC Act, actions (or classes of actions) that will occur to implement the endorsed NES Plan may be approved by the Minister.	EPSDD	Complete. Commonwealth Minister provided approval on 20 December 2011. The approval has effect until 31 December 2041.
February 2020	4	10	Variations to the East Molonglo development boundary to minimise the impact on MNES values. A particular focus of this is the reduction of impacts on moderate and high-quality Pink-tailed Worm-lizard habitat.	EPSDD (Land Development Projects) & SLA (Molonglo Valley)	<p>Changes to the river corridor boundary occurred after the Molonglo Valley Stage 2 PDF was approved in 2012. EPSDD and the former LDA (known as the SLA since 2017) commenced background planning investigations for Molonglo Valley Stage 3 in 2013-14. These investigations are now being undertaken by EPSDD and have informed the preparation of the PDF, which has been finalised. The buffer to Kama Nature Reserve was considered in the Molonglo Stage 3 Urban Development project environmental impact statement exemption (s 211 <i>Planning and Development ACT 1999</i>). The exemption included a number of conditions for development approval including that the treatment and boundary to Kama Nature Reserve must be consistent with the recommendations of <a href="#">the Kama Interface Management Strategy</a> (Capital Ecology 2016). This condition has been incorporated into and represented in the <a href="#">PDF for Stage 3</a>, which was approved in February 2019.</p> <p>On 23 November 2018, EPSDD released Draft Variation to the Territory Plan 360 (Molonglo River Reserve: changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustment) for public consultation. On 22 March 2019, following the consideration of submissions received during the public consultation period, the Draft Variation was referred to the ACT Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal. The Standing Committee released their report on the Draft Variation. In February 2020, <a href="#">Variation to the Territory Plan No 360</a> was approved and <a href="#">commenced</a> to ensure areas of high conservation value within the river corridor are protected in perpetuity in accordance with the NES Plan.</p>
February 2018	6	10	A design principle to maintain ecological values within the East Molonglo development area where possible.		<b>Complete.</b> Design principles adopted by the Territory and incorporated in contracts for design and construction projects.
July 2016	7	10	A commitment to avoid impacts on MNES within West Molonglo.		<b>Complete.</b> MNES in West Molonglo, referred to as West Belconnen were considered through the variation to the Territory Plan and amendment to the National Capital Plan. This area is included in the West Belconnen Strategic Assessment.
June 2017	10	17	It is also important to note that under Division 3.3 of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1980</i> , Pink-tailed Worm Lizard has been declared a vulnerable species and Natural Temperate Grassland and Box Gum Woodland are declared endangered communities. The effect of these statutory declarations is that these species and communities need to be managed in accordance with a prescribed Action Plan, prepared by the Conservator for Flora and Fauna.	EPSDD	<b>Complete</b> The <i>Nature Conservation Act 1980</i> has been amended to reflect this requirement. An Action Plan for the Pink-tailed worm-lizard has been completed. <a href="https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1068281/Pink-tailed-Worm-lizard-Aprasia-parapulchella.pdf">https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1068281/Pink-tailed-Worm-lizard-Aprasia-parapulchella.pdf</a> .
February 2019	11	18	Construction in the Molonglo Valley stage 2 and stage 3 will not commence before completion of the respective Planning and Design Frameworks for both stages 2 and 3. The final Planning and Design Frameworks will incorporate NES actions and commitments.	EPSDD (Planning Delivery and Strategic Planning))	<p>Completed.</p> <p>The PDF for Molonglo Valley Stage 2 prepared by EPSDD was approved on 17 April 2012.</p> <p>The interim Limited Area PDF for Molonglo Valley stage 3 prepared by EPSDD was approved in March 2017.</p> <p>The PDF for Molonglo Valley Stage 3 prepared by EPSDD was approved on 27 February 2019. The framework supersedes the March 2017 Molonglo Valley Stage 3 Interim Limited Area Planning and Design Framework, which permitted the construction of certain capital works items to support future land release in Molonglo Stage 3.</p>
August 2013	14	41,42,43	Develop an Adaptive Management Strategy to set out the framework for achieving the NES Plan's commitments through monitoring, evaluation, experimental design, reporting, auditing and continuous improvement processes. The Strategy will inform the content and timing of specific management plans and actions to ensure a consistent, integrated and efficient application of adaptive management principles and practices to achieve long term conservation outcomes for MNES.  The approved Adaptive Management Strategy will be submitted for approval by the Minister (Commonwealth) or delegate.		<b>Complete.</b> The AMS was endorsed by the Commonwealth Government on 7 August 2013.