
ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - SSAA Majura - Main Range Upgrade (ESO 202600019)

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

APPLICANT

D Group Civil Pty Ltd, as represented by Mr Patrick Caitcheon, Project 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 for expansion of the main rifle range at the SSAA Majura Gun Club, with works involving removal of vegetation, recontouring, and the construction of safety earth mounds as described in the submission.

LOCATION

Block 559 Section 0 of Majura district

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

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

OPINION

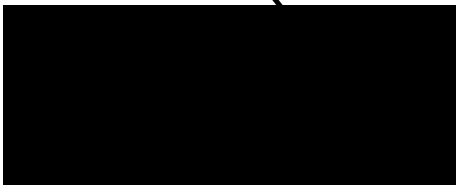
Provided the works are undertaken in accordance with the following conditions, and the mitigation measures contained in the supporting application for an ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

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

1. The works must be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation measures and commitments set out in the application and supporting documentation, except where varied by these conditions.
2. Access to the site must be granted to Conservation Officers if a random compliance inspection is requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

3. Impacted threatened Box Gum Woodland, meeting criteria under either the NC Act or EPBC Act, must be replaced at a ratio of at least 3:1, in consultation with the Office of the Conservator.
4. Threatened Box Gum Woodland within 20m of work areas must be protected with temporary fencing or star pickets with bunting before any works commence on site, and must remain in place until all works are complete. "No-entry - environmentally sensitive area" signs must be placed along the fence at regular intervals.
5. All threatened ecological communities and threatened species habitat must be clearly marked as 'no go zones' on all maps and construction drawings.
6. All vehicles, machinery and equipment must be clean and free of soil and plant propagules prior to entering the works area.
7. Post-construction weed control must be undertaken across the entire project area and access routes for a minimum of 24 months.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.



Bren Burkevics
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

30 June 2026

STATEMENT OF REASONS REASONS FOR THE DECISION

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

Part 1.2, item 16 - proposal that is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact on 1 or more of the following:

- (a) a critically endangered species;*
- (b) an endangered species;*
- (c) a vulnerable species;*
- (d) a conservation dependent species;*
- (e) a regionally threatened species;*
- (f) a regionally conservation dependent species;*
- (g) a provisionally listed threatened species;*
- (h) a listed migratory species;*
- (i) a threatened ecological community;*
- (j) a protected native species;*
- (k) a Ramsar wetland;*
- (l) any other protected matter.*

The proposed works will require removal of approximately 0.80ha of *White Box–Yellow Box–Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland*, a Critically Endangered Ecological Community listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), and 0.85ha of *Yellow Box – Blakely’s Red Gum Grassy Woodland* listed under the ACT’s *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act).

Part 1.2, item 17 – proposal involving -

- (a) the clearing of more than 0.5ha of native vegetation in a native vegetation area, other than on land in a future urban area; or*
- (b) the clearing of more than 5.0ha of native vegetation in a native vegetation area on land in a future urban area.*

The proposal will impact on 2.81ha of native vegetation.

The proponent is seeking an environmental significance opinion to remove the requirement for an environmental impact statement on the grounds that the proposal is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, and has applied to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna for an opinion to that effect.

Meaning of *significant* adverse environmental impact

An adverse environmental impact is ***significant*** if—

- (a) the environmental function, system, value or entity that might be adversely impacted by a proposed development is significant; or

- (b) the cumulative or incremental effect of a proposed development might contribute to a substantial adverse impact on an environmental function, system, value or entity.

In deciding whether an adverse environmental impact is **significant**, the following matters must be taken into account:

- (a) the kind, size, frequency, intensity, scope and length of time of the impact
- (b) the sensitivity, resilience and rarity of the environmental function, system, value or entity likely to be affected

In deciding whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact it does not matter whether the adverse environmental impact is likely to occur on the site of the development or elsewhere.

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

Project description

The development proposal is for expansion of the main rifle range at the SSAA Majura Gun Club, with works involving removal of vegetation, recontouring, and the establishment of additional safety earth mounds. Beneficial Reuse Material (BRU) and Virgin Excavated Natural Material (VENM) will be imported to the site to build up the safety earth mounds, and grading and levelling works will be undertaken to improve infrastructure functionality.

The development footprint is approximately 4.79ha and is zoned 'NUZ1: Broadacre' under the Territory Plan. The block is situated at the NSW/ACT border, between the Federal Highway and Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve to the west, and the Majura Military Training Area to the east.

The proposed works will require removal of approximately 0.80ha of *White Box–Yellow Box–Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland*, a Critically Endangered Ecological Community listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), and 0.85ha of *Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland* listed under the ACT's *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act). The proposal will further clear 2.81ha of native vegetation, as well as 3 remnant mature native trees. These removal impacts have been substantially reduced with redesign.

The project has been referred to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water for assessing impacts under the EPBC Act, and has been deemed an 'uncontrolled action' under decision notice EPBC 2026/10424.

Documentation Submitted

- General key plan of site;

- Ecological Impact Assessment for proposed works at the 'Main Range' at the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia facility at Majura, ACT. Capital Ecology project no. 3339, February 2026;
- EPBC decision notices;
- Letter(s) of Authorisation; and
- Form 1M.

Natural conservation values present

The site is in an important landscape for critically endangered Box Gum Woodland, with connectivity value between the Majura Training Area to the east and the Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve to the west. The project area contains remnant patches of Box-Gum Woodland, with successful regeneration and native dominated understorey.

Much of the project area was historically cleared of native upper and middle stratum vegetation for agriculture. Following the establishment of the project area as a firearms range approximately 50 – 60 years ago, a large proportion of the lower stratum vegetation of the project area has successfully regenerated and is presently largely dominated by native perennial grasses, including Red-leg Grass (*Bothriochloa macra*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), and Wallaby Grasses (*Rytidosperma spp.*) A mosaic of remnant and regenerating middle and upper stratum vegetation occurs throughout the project area and surrounds.

Two ACT Plant Community Types (PCTs) occur within the project area:

- ACT16 – *Eucalyptus melliodora* – *E. blakelyi* Tableland Grassy Woodland occurs throughout the western and central portions of the project area and is associated with flatter terrain and low, undulating hills over deep, fertile soils; and
- ACT25 – *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* Tableland Grass / Shrub Forest occurs towards the eastern edge of the project area and is associated with steeper, rocky hills over dry, skeletal soils.

One population of EPBC listed Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans subsp. tricolor*), was recorded approximately 50m north of the project area, however this species was not recorded within the project area during survey effort. The site is adjacent to a key area for Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*), with potential to support declining woodland birds as evidenced by the opportunistic record of a Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*) during the survey work for the proposal. A 'rare plant' listed under the *Nature Conservation Protected Species List 2023* – Tough Scurf-pea (*Cullen tenax*) – was also recorded approximately 20m south of the project area. The site has potential to support threatened invertebrates, and supports non threatened reptiles, frogs, and mammals.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts

The proposal will result in unavoidable loss of critically endangered Box Gum Woodland (BGW), which meets criteria for listing under both the EPBC Act and NC Act. This vegetation also provides known habitat value for threatened woodland birds. The distribution of this threatened community has been extensively reduced and fragmented due to historic clearing, grazing, and urban development, resulting in significant loss of ecological function

and habitat connectivity. The Nature Conservation (Native Woodland) Action Plans 2019 outline how the ACT Government will conserve and manage woodlands, and provide objectives to protect, maintain and improve BGW within the ACT. Under the NC Act, the Conservator must take reasonable steps to implement these plans.

As the project will result in an unavoidable loss of BGW values, it is recommended that replacement planting be included as a condition of approval to maintain or improve the extent of native woodland vegetation within the ACT and support the objectives of the Action Plans. Without restoration action for these impacts, incremental loss from small-scale developments can contribute to cumulative impacts that are inconsistent with conservation objectives for this ecological community. Consistent with previous conditions for these types of impacts, a 3:1 replacement ratio is required to account for the high conservation value and low natural recruitment success of BGW, to support no net loss of ecological function and align with the ACT's objectives for the recovery of this critically endangered community. The proponent is encouraged to consult with the Office of the Conservator and arrange for the works to be undertaken on the proponent's behalf.

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

1. The works must be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation measures and commitments set out in the application and supporting documentation, except where varied by these conditions.
2. Access to the site must be granted to Conservation Officers if a random compliance inspection is requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
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7. Post-construction weed control must be undertaken across the entire project area and access routes for a minimum of 24 months.

It has been determined that, if the works are undertaken in accordance with the above conditions and the mitigation measures contained in the supporting application for an ESO, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.