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## **ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - Casuarina Planting Project (ESO 202500057)**

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

### **APPLICANT**

ACT Parks and Conservation Service, as represented by Leith Collard, Ranger in Charge.

### **APPLICATION and DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

The applicant has applied under section 140 (4) of the Act to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna for an environmental significance opinion to the effect that the development proposal set out in the submission is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact (the application).

The development proposal is to suppress weeds and provide food and habitat for the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo by densely planting Drooping She-oak on Sammy's Hill within Gorooyayoo Nature Reserve as described in the submission.

### **LOCATION**

Block 741 Gungahlin

### **MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES**

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

### **OPINION**

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

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

1. Conditions of approval including mitigation measures as stated in the application.
2. Access to the site must be granted to Conservation Officers if a random compliance inspection is requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
3. Appropriate vehicle hygiene measures must be undertaken to prevent the spread of weeds into and within the nature reserve.
4. Morning and end of day inspections must be undertaken if excavations must be left open overnight, to detect and remove any entrapped fauna.

5. The proponent is to submit an Unexpected Finds Protocol for endorsement by the Conservator prior to construction, to manage and minimise potential impacts during construction. This is to include fauna and flora related finds.
6. Existing access tracks must be used to access the site.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Burkevics', with a large 'X' over the top part of the signature.

Bren Burkevics  
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

9 February 2026

## STATEMENT OF REASONS REASONS FOR THE DECISION

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

*Part 1.2, item 18 - proposal for development in a reserve, unless the proposal is for minor public works to be carried out by or for the Territory in accordance with a minor public works code approved by the conservator of flora and fauna under the Nature Conservation Act 2014, section 318A;*

The proposed works are within Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve.

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

### **Meaning of *significant* adverse environmental impact**

An adverse environmental impact is *significant* if—

- (a) the environmental function, system, value or entity that might be adversely impacted by a proposed development is significant; or
- (b) the cumulative or incremental effect of a proposed development might contribute to a substantial adverse impact on an environmental function, system, value or entity.

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

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

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

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

### **Project description**

Sammy's Hill is a small hill located in Goorooyaroo Nature Reserve and is home to one of the few breeding colonies of the endangered Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) as well as being part of the largest Box-gum woodlands in Australia. This area has rich European and

indigenous history, with remnants of an old homestead that was constructed in the 1890's at the base of the hill, and evidence of the area being utilised as a stone quarry dating back pre-colonisation.

The location in which the works will be implemented is at the peak of the hill and is currently inhabited by a multitude of weeds. The aim of this project is to suppress the weeds by densely planting Drooping She-oak (*Allocasuarina verticulata*) to increase the nitrogen in the soil and provide food and habitat for the critically endangered Glossy black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*).

500 trees will be planted on the hill, and tree guards and coir mats will be erected around and under individual plants. The project will include ongoing maintenance including weeding and watering when required.

### **Documentation Submitted**

- Explanatory note regarding supporting documentation for the application for an Environmental Significance Opinion;
- Letter(s) of Authorisation;
- Form 1M.

### **Natural conservation values present**

Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve is a protected area located in north-eastern Canberra, adjoining Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve to form a contiguous protected area of critically endangered Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland in the ACT. This ecological community is listed under both the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and *ACT Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act). Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve protects the largest remaining area of box gum grassy woodland in the ACT and the largest discrete extent in any reserve nationally.

At least 11 species listed under the NC Act have been recorded in the reserve:

- Perunga Grasshopper (*Perunga ochracea*)
- Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans subsp. tricolor*)
- Varied Sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*)
- White-winged Triller (*Lalage tricolor*)
- Large Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus orianae oceanensis*)
- Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*)
- Flame Robin (*Petroica phoenicea*)
- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*)
- Speckled Warbler (*Pyrrholaemus sagittatus*)
- Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail Bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*)
- Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*)

Various orchids have been recorded, including the critically endangered Canberra Spider Orchid (*Caladenia actensis*). All orchids are protected under the NC Act.

The project area contains a weedy groundcover with sparse or no overstorey, dominated by exotic species including Paterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*) and Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*). Drooping She-oaks are present on Sammy's hill in sparse numbers and occurs in stands on the Old Joe Hill to the west of the site. The species naturally forms pure stands and is a known feed tree of Glossy Black Cockatoos.

### **Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts**

Threatened species including Golden Sun Moth and Superb Parrot occur adjacent to the project area. These species can be sensitive to disturbance especially during their breeding season (September to December). The project managers are aware of this and will mitigate this disturbance by conducting works outside of the breeding season.

The project area is surrounded by threatened box gum woodland, and there is potential to introduce weeds through vehicle access. Project managers must ensure appropriate vehicle hygiene measures are undertaken to prevent this.

Conditions have been included to ensure that works will minimise disturbance to threatened box gum woodland habitat on-site and within the reserve.

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

1. Conditions of approval including mitigation measures as stated in the application.
2. Access to the site must be granted to Conservation Officers if a random compliance inspection is requested by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna.
3. Appropriate vehicle hygiene measures must be undertaken to prevent the spread of weeds into and within the nature reserve.
4. Morning and end of day inspections must be undertaken if excavations must be left open overnight, to detect and remove any entrapped fauna.
5. The proponent is to submit an Unexpected Finds Protocol for endorsement by the Conservator prior to construction, to manage and minimise potential impacts during construction. This is to include fauna and flora related finds.
6. Existing access tracks must be used to access the site.

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