
REJECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION - CX11248 - CORIN DAM EROSION CONTROL (ESO 202600032)

In accordance with section 140 (4) of the *Planning Act 2023* (the Act), I have decided to reject the application for an environmental significance opinion:

APPLICANT

Icon Water LTD, as represented by Mr Henry Grogan, Senior Environmental Scientist.

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 that the development proposal described in the application is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact (the application).

As described in the submission, the development proposal aims to address the erosion issues and access matters below Corin Dam associated with the existing plunge pool.

LOCATION

Block 21 Cotter River District, Corin Dam within Namadgi National Park

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

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

OPINION

Having considered the information submitted in support of the application, I am not satisfied that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse environmental impact. I have therefore decided to reject the application for an environmental significance opinion. The application for an ESO must therefore be rejected.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision, including Appendix A which provides considerations for an Environmental Impact Statement.



Bren Burkevics
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

21 August 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 following have been recorded and/or are known to occur within an approximate 500m radius of the proposed development:

Threatened Ecological Community

One Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) listed Matter of National Environmental Significance (MNES):

- Endangered Alpine Ash forests of mainland Australia

Fauna

Several animal species records which are listed as threatened under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* (NC Act):

- Gang-gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)
- Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*)
- Two-Spined Blackfish (*Gadopsis bispinosus*)
- Yellow-bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*)

In addition, mapped habitat for several animal species listed as threatened under the NC Act:

- Macquarie Perch (*Macquaria australasica*)
- Smoky Mouse (*Pseudomys fumeus*)
- Spotted-Tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculates*)
- Southern Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*)

Flora

Two plant species records listed as threatened under the NC Act, including:

- Long-leaf Wax Flower (*Philotheca myoporoides subsp. myoporoides*)
- Multiple Orchid species (*Caladenia sp.* and *Bunochilus sp.*)

In addition, mapped habitat for several protected or threatened native plant species:

- Orchidaceae sp.
- Austral Moonwort (*Sceptridium australe*)
- Mountain needlewood (*Hakea lissosperma*)
- Slender Pomaderris (*Pomaderris phyllifolia*)
- Annual bitter cress (*Cardamine paucijuga*)
- Baeuerlen's Gentian (*Gentiana baeuerlenii*); and
- Brindabella Midge Orchid (*Corunastylis ectopa*).

Part 1.2, item 17 – proposal involving -

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

the clearing of more than 5.0ha of native vegetation in a native vegetation area on land in a future urban area

The proposal would involve the clearing or disturbance of up to approximately 1.5 hectares of native vegetation in a native vegetation area.

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 located at Corin Dam, situated within Namadgi National Park.

Part 1.2, item 25 - *proposal that is likely to result in a key threatening process under the Nature Conservation Act 2014*

The proposed works are expected to result in the removal, or loss of viability, of a substantial number of native trees, including mature native trees. This may contribute to the key threatening process of loss of mature native trees and lack of recruitment.

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 likely to have a significant environmental impact, based on the documentation submitted and known values of the site.

Project description

Namadgi National Park is in the southwest of the ACT and covers 106,095 hectares or approximately 46% of the ACT. Namadgi protects Canberra's main water supply catchment with Corin and Bendora Dams located within the Park and the expanded Cotter Dam immediately downstream. Corin Dam, constructed in 1968, is the upper of the three dams and is situated directly north of the Bimberi Wilderness area.

Original construction of Corin Dam spillway did not include a plunge pool, meaning any flow through the spillway has been causing erosion along the Eastern riverbank. As outlined within the application, to reduce rock and soil movement, the plunge pool stabilisation works include excavation of loose material, stabilisation of the plunge pool wall, installation of rock anchors, application of shotcrete, and excavation of exposed quartzite. Riverbank erosion is proposed to be addressed throughout the site, with a primary focus on repairing the Eastern riverbank using salvaged river rock and riprap armouring. Additionally, realignment of the existing river channels is also proposed to divert flows away from the Eastern riverbank to reduce further erosion.

To ensure infrastructure is suitable during 1:100 AEP flood events, sections of the access track would be raised, including the construction of a causeway downstream of the plunge pool and replacement of gauging weir to enable accurate measurement of water flows under all flow conditions.

Documentation Submitted

- CX11248 – Corin Erosion Control;
- Aquatic Impact Assessment Report - Pre-Work Surveys;
- Letter of Authorisation
- Form 1M.

Natural conservation values present

Namadgi National Park conserves a wide variety of ecosystems and contributes to regional ecological connectivity through its links to reserves within NSW. It is also an important water catchment area and supplies the ACT as its main source of water.

The areas of native vegetation surrounding Corin Dam and along the river consists of Ribbon Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), Narrow-leaved peppermint (*E. radiata*), Mountain Gum (*E. dalrympleana*) and Broad-leaved Peppermint (*E. dives*), with a dense mid-storey of Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Hop Bush (*Cassinia longifolia*), and an understorey of Alpine Spear-Grass (*Austrostipa nivicola*), Wallaby Grass (*Rytidosperma* sp.), Lomandra, Poa and riparian sedges and rushes.

The provided ESO Vegetation Assessment outlined the occurrence of Alpine Ash (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*) which supports the implication of the EPBC Act listed Endangered MNES 'Endangered Alpine Ash forests of mainland Australia' being present within the proposed native vegetation clearing.

Several animal species listed as threatened under the NC Act are known or are likely to occur within close proximity to the development:

- Two-Spined Blackfish (*Gadopsis bispinosus*)
- Trout Cod (*Maccullochella macquariensis*)
- Smoky Mouse (*Pseudomys fumeus*)
- Southern Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*)
- Spotted-Tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculates*)
- Yellow-bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*)
- Gang-gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)
- Pilotbird (*Pycnoptilus floccosus*)
- Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*)

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts

The proposal would disturb up to approximately 1.5 hectares of native vegetation, including vegetation that may correspond to the EPBC Act-listed endangered Alpine Ash forests of mainland Australia ecological community. The disturbance would also occur in an area that provides, or may provide, habitat for threatened fauna. The application material identifies 349 trees as unlikely to remain viable under the current design, including mature native trees. The affected area is known or likely to provide habitat resources for threatened fauna, including hollow-dependent and forest-dependent species. The loss of mature trees and associated habitat features may contribute to the key threatening process of loss of mature native trees and lack of recruitment.

The works also involve river modification and stabilisation within habitat occupied by Two-spined Blackfish. The application material records the species throughout the study reach and identifies the reach as having significant aquatic conservation value. The works have the potential to mobilise sediment and affect water quality, aquatic habitat and fish movement if not carefully managed.

For these reasons, I am not satisfied that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse environmental impact. I have therefore decided to reject the application for an environmental significance opinion.

Appendix A: EIS Considerations

The following matters would need to be considered as part of any future assessment process (please note this is not a comprehensive list).

Ecological

1. Spotlight searches for arboreal mammals have been completed but do not meet the requirements outlined in the [Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened mammals](#). The ESO surveys were undertaken by two people in a vehicle travelling at 10km/hr. The survey guidelines state that vehicles are a poor alternative (to walking the transect) and transects should be traversed at 10m/minute. The spotlight surveys would need to be redone, on foot at the appropriate speed.
2. No bird surveys were undertaken and would be required. Gang-gang Cockatoo, Pilotbird and Scarlet Robin have all been recorded within approximately 500m of the proposed works area. Surveys must be undertaken for these species and habitat on site must be mapped.
3. The presences, abundance and sizes of tree hollows have not been assessed. Any future proposal must specify how many hollow bearing trees will be removed and retained. An estimate of how many large and small hollows will be removed and retained and record any evidence of fauna use of hollow bearing trees (e.g. chewing, scratches) must also be provided.
4. The works area is poorly defined, clear mapping of proposed impact areas would be required.
5. Several orchids have been recorded in the area. An orchid survey would be required to assess the impact on these values.
6. While it is acknowledged that the works may improve the downstream habitat for Two-spined Blackfish, further consideration of potential impacts is recommended due to declining populations.

Bushfire management

7. A comprehensive assessment of bushfire management of the site would need to be prepared, accounting for the ACT Bushfire Management Standards required for a development in a Bushfire Prone Area.