



Comment on National Capital Plan Proposed Changes 2015

13 November 2015

If you have any queries regarding this submission please contact: Clare Henderson Executive Director on 6229 3202 or director@conservationcouncil.org.au.

The Conservation Council ACT region is the peak non-government environment organisation for the Canberra Region. We have been the community's voice for the environment in the Canberra region since 1979.

Our mission is to achieve an ecologically sustainable and zero net carbon society through advocacy, education, research and engagement with community, the private sector and with government.

We represent more than 40 member groups who in turn represent over 15,000 supporters. We harness the collective expertise and experience of our member groups and networks. We work collaboratively with Government, business and the community to achieve the highest quality environment for Canberra and its region.

The Conservation Council is active in a number of campaign areas. Our current focus includes:

- **Biodiversity Conservation** – protecting our unique ecological communities and the Bush Capital
- **Climate Change** – a regional, national and global challenge
- **Planning** – the right things in the right places
- **Transport** – connecting people and places
- **Waste** – being efficient through closed-loop systems
- **Water** – smart use of a scarce resource
- **Governance** – for a Smarter, Sustainable Canberra

The Conservation Council ACT Region welcomes the opportunity to comment on the National Capital Plan Proposed Changes as promulgated on the NCA website.¹

We have already commented on the National Capital Plan Exposure Draft² and ask that these comments be taken into account.

With regard to the proposed changes we have particular concern with part 12 *Land*

¹ <https://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/index.php/commitment-to-community-engagement/national-capital-plan-draft-amendment-86/proposed-changes>

² <http://conservationcouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/150722Comment-Exposure-Draft-NCPlan.pdf>

use policy for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

This is a proposal that the land use policy – 'General Policy Plan – Metropolitan Canberra' – for the CSIRO Ginninderra site (Blocks 1426, 1427, 1545, 1609 and 1603 Belconnen) be changed from 'Hills, Ridges and Buffer Spaces' to 'Urban Areas'.

It is not in the national interest, it is not in Canberra's interest, it is not in the environment's interest that this land use policy be changed as proposed.

The NCA's role includes: "Conservation and enhancement of the landscape features which give the National Capital its character and setting, and which contribute to the integration of natural and urban environments."

The transfer of the entirety of this area to 'future urban area' would be in breach of this conservation role of the NCA.

***Recommendation 1.
Land use policy for the CSIRO Ginninderra site (Blocks 1426, 1427, 1545, 1609 and 1603 Belconnen) SHOULD NOT be changed from 'Hills, Ridges and Buffer Spaces' to 'Urban Areas'.***

The CSIRO has itself stated that "approximately 150 hectares of the land is unlikely to be developable due to its topography, heritage and ecological values, and will likely remain open space".³

However, the CSIRO has not identified this area through its website, consultations or in response to questions from the Conservation Council and others. It is not appropriate to change this area to 'future urban area' and then to later go back to identify environmental values.

The CSIRO proposal should also take account of broader environmental factors including nearby areas especially with regard to ecological connectivity including wildlife corridors and riparian areas along Ginninderra Creek.

As a general position planning in Canberra, including for the CSIRO, should start with working out what areas might be suitable for urban development, before we start planning the urban development, and then undertake investigations to establish what environmental values are to be protected.

***Recommendation 2.
Before we start planning urban development investigations should take place to establish what environmental values are to be protected***

³ <http://ginninderraproject.com.au/faqs/>