



**CONSERVATION  
COUNCIL**  
ACT REGION

## **Submission: DV379 Nature Reserve - Kenny Environmental Offset Site**

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**JANUARY 2021**

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 1981. Our mission is to achieve an ecologically sustainable and zero net carbon society through advocacy, education and engagement with the community, the private sector and with government.

We represent more than 45 member groups who in turn represent over 20,000 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.

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## Draft Amendment 379: Nature Reserve - Kenny Environmental Offset Site

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The Conservation Council ACT Region welcomes the opportunity to comment on Draft Amendment 379 which proposes to rezone Gungahlin rural block 820 and part of the Old Well Station Road Track to a Non Urban NUZ3 Hills Ridges and Buffers Zone, and replace the Future Urban Area Overlay with a Nature Reserve Public Land Overlay.

The Conservation Council supports the proposed changes to the Territory Plan to enhance protection of critically endangered box-gum woodlands and threatened species such as the Striped Legless Lizard. The proposal will also result in protection of mature native trees that play a crucial role in urban biodiversity, providing breeding and foraging habitat for species such as the Regent's Honeyeater and Superb Parrot.

DV379 provides a unique opportunity to enhance connectivity in the region between the Goorooyarroo and Mt Majura nature reserves. Whilst rezoning rural block 820 and Old Well Station Road Track and changing their overlay will protect a substantial portion of Kenny's conservation values, the Conservation Council supports extending the rezoned area to further enhance the corridor.

A 2011 report by Briggs, Boak and Edmonds<sup>1</sup> identified part of Gungahlin rural block 792, which is currently zoned as RZ1 Suburban and RZ4 Medium Density Residential, as a potential corridor between Kenny and Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve. The report suggested that a 100m corridor between the northern end of Kenny and the southern end of Goorooyarroo, while currently made up of "scattered paddock trees", could provide further connection between the woodland habitats. Planting and enhancement would need to be undertaken, but this would allow woodland species to move more easily between Goorooyarroo and Mt Majura. If this section were rezoned with a Nature Reserve Public Land Overlay, the proposed Kenny Nature Reserve could bridge the existing gap between these two reserves and effectively create a corridor that extends from the ACT's north-eastern border to Lake Burley Griffin.

Connectivity could also be enhanced within Kenny by adopting the suggestion put forward by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to extend the nature reserve overlay to surrounding blocks 739, 655, 821 and 822. This would protect the threatened Striped Legless Lizard (SLL) population, considered one of the largest remaining populations in the ACT.<sup>2</sup> Incorporating these blocks into the nature reserve overlay will also increase the representation of SLL habitat within Canberra's reserve system more generally, addressing a concern flagged in the 2019 ACT State of the Environment report that 46% of SLL habitat remains unreserved.<sup>3</sup>

The Conservation Council also supports the recommendation put forward by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna for the Ngunnawal name to be used for the reserve.

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<sup>1</sup> Briggs, J., Boak, M. & Edmonds, T. (2011) 'Yellow Box Woodland at Kenny, ACT: Why it should be protected', Report.

<sup>2</sup> ACT Government (2017). '*Striped Legless Lizard Delma impar Action Plan*', (p. 245).

<sup>3</sup> Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, 2019. *ACT State of the Environment - 2019 Report*, (p.209).

Consideration should also be given to managing the urban edge effects that future suburban zones might have on the proposed Kenny Nature Reserve - in particular, strong enforcement of cat containment areas in all surrounding suburbs and an adequate buffer between future development areas and the new reserve.

**In summary, the Conservation Council recommends the the Draft Variation be amended to:**

- include the identified section of Gungahlin rural block 792 into the rezone, to ensure it also has a Nature Reserve Public Land Overlay;
- extend the nature reserve overlay to surrounding blocks 739, 655, 821 and 822;
- use the Ngunnawal name for the reserve; and
- consider management of future urban edge effects on Kenny, including full cat containment and an appropriate buffer zone between the reserved boundary and urban areas.