



ACT
Government

2019

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL REPORT 9 - Draft Variation to the
Territory Plan No 360 Molonglo River Reserve changes to the public
land reserve overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustment**

**Presented by
Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Planning and Land Management**

Introduction

The Government thanks the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal for the recommendations put forward in Report 9 regarding *Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 360 - Molonglo River Reserve: changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustment* (DV360).

DV360 was prepared by the ACT Government in response to a request by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to amend the reserve overlay boundaries on the Territory Plan Map for the area of the new Molonglo River Reserve. The Conservator also requested the inclusion of part of Block 485 Stromlo into the reserve system as it contains an important Aboriginal cultural site.

In summary, the changes to the reserve boundaries on the Territory Plan Map proposed in DV360:

- align the Territory Plan Map with the boundaries of the new Molonglo River Reserve that resulted from the strategic assessment of the greater Molonglo Valley; and
- enable the finalisation of the Molonglo River Reserve Management Plan (the MRRMP) so that it may take effect.

The new reserve follows the Molonglo River from Scrivener Dam downstream to the intersection with the Murrumbidgee River Corridor Reserve. It includes three current reserves – Kama Nature Reserve, Lower Molonglo River Corridor Nature Reserve and Molonglo River Special Purpose Reserve and brings them together with some new areas to create the Molonglo River Reserve. The Molonglo River Park in East Molonglo is also included in the Reserve.

DV360 also proposes to rezone part of Block 485 Stromlo from non-urban NUZ2 rural zone to NUZ4 river corridor zone as this zoning better reflects the management of the area as part of the Molonglo River Reserve.

The preparation of the MRRMP is a statutory requirement arising from the establishment of the reserve. The plan is required by the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and defined as a ‘reserve management plan’ in the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.

The purpose of the MRRP is to give clear direction on how the biodiversity, land and waters of the reserve will be used and managed to satisfy both nature conservation and recreation objectives.

Figure 1 shows the current Territory Plan public land reserve overlays, using colours to represent the various public land reserves, rather than showing the Territory Plan symbols, to assist with clarity.

Figure 2 shows the changes to the Territory Plan Map as proposed by DV360, again with colours used to assist with clarity.

Figure 3 is a location map indicating the location of the Coombs peninsula

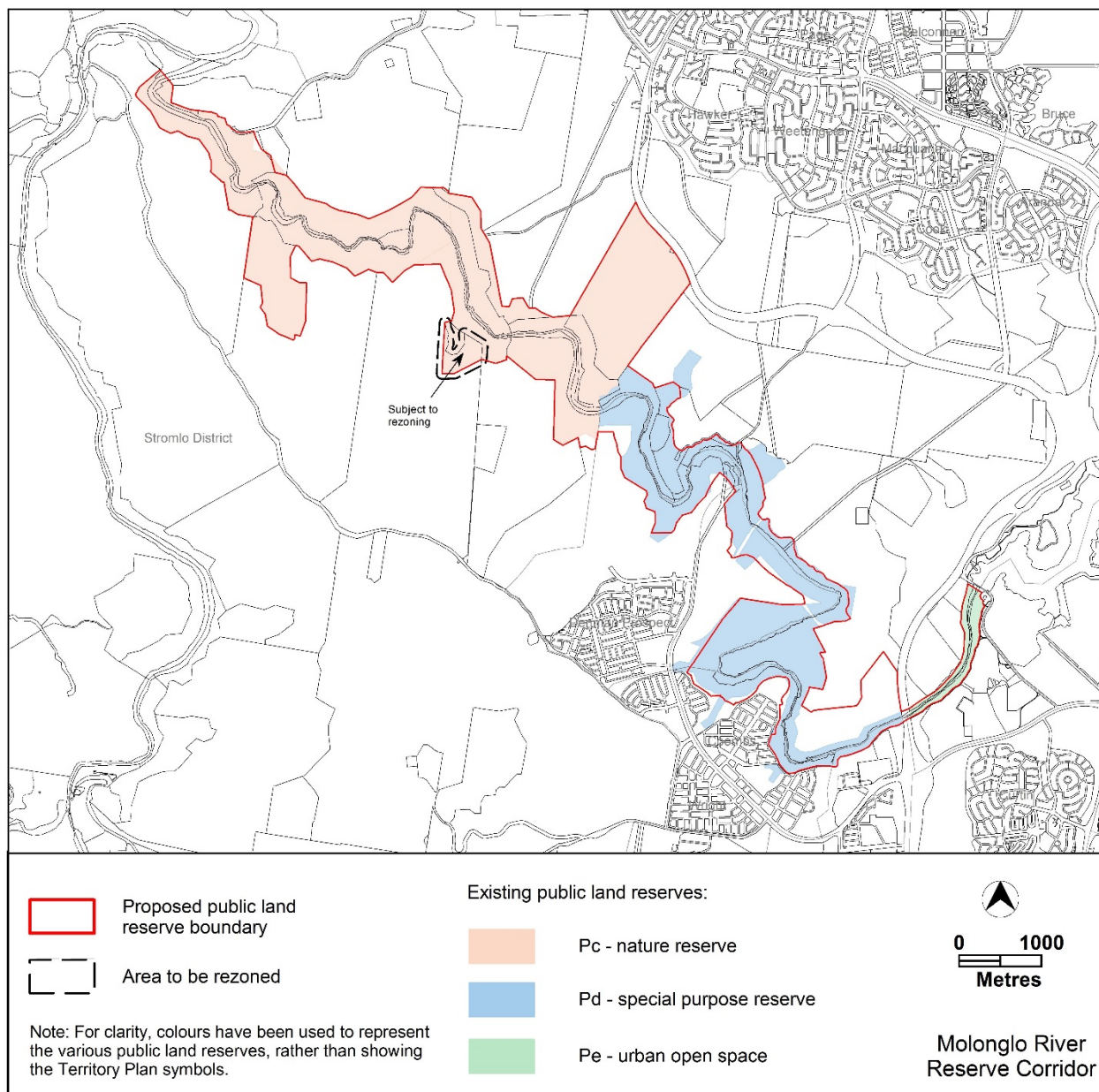


Figure 1 Current Territory Plan Map using colours for information purposes

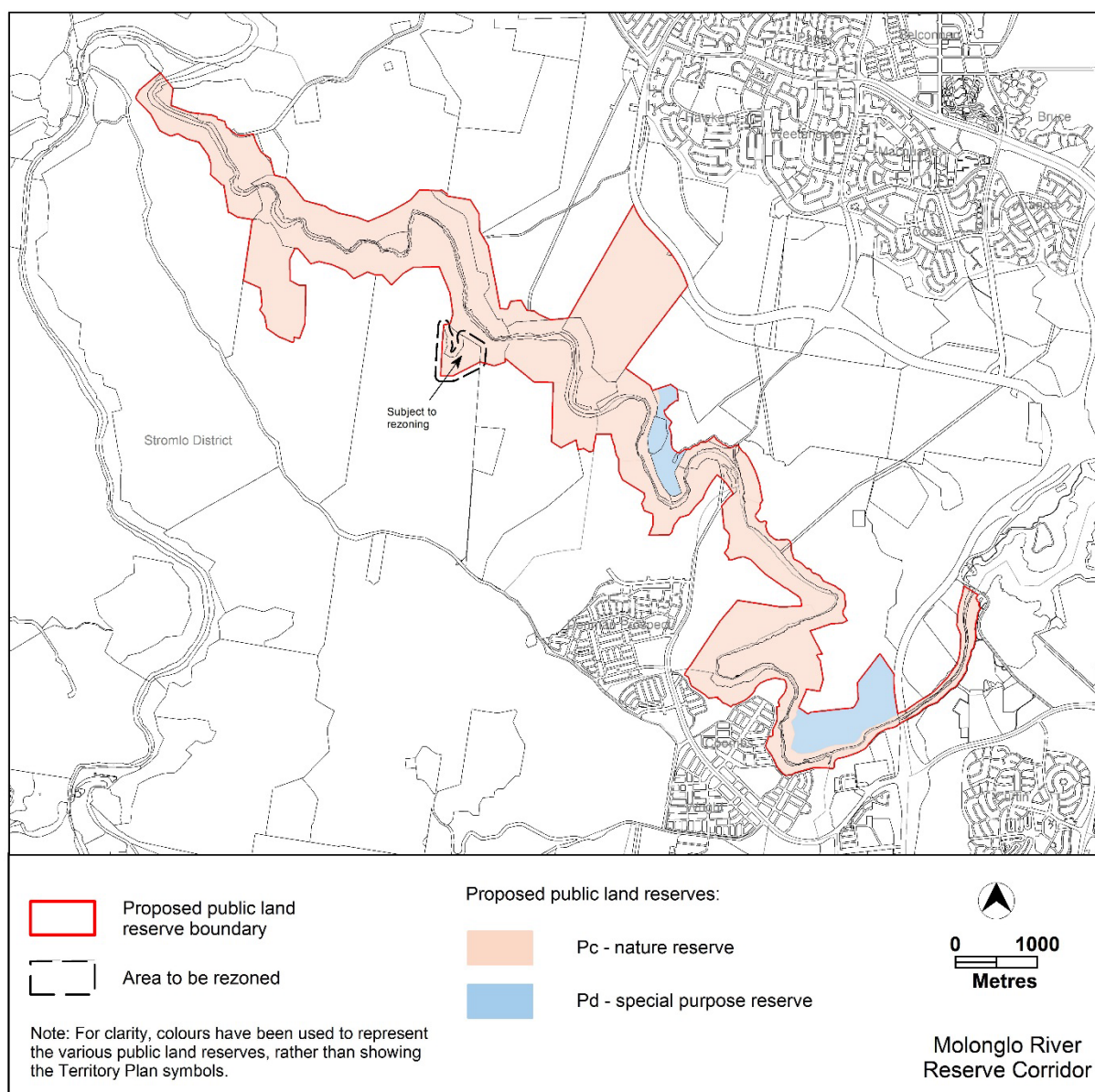


Figure 2 Proposed Territory Plan Map changes using colours for information purposes

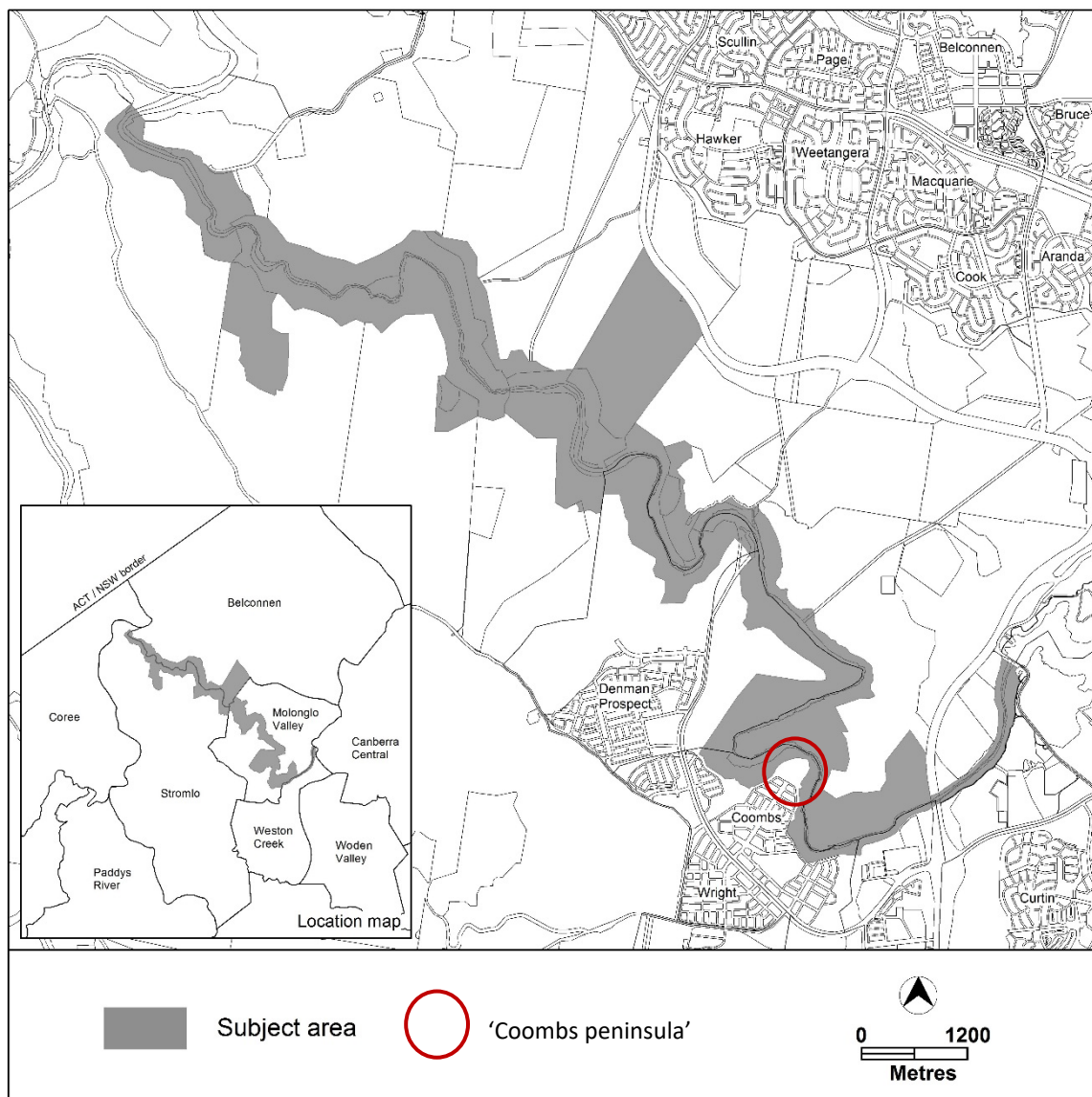


Figure 3 Location Map indicating the location of Coombs peninsula

Recommendations

No.	Recommendations
Recommendation 1	The Committee recommends that, subject to the following recommendations, Draft Variation 360 Molonglo River Reserve: Changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries be approved.
Recommendation 2	The Committee recommends that the Coombs Peninsula be considered for environmental and recreational purposes.
Recommendation 3	The Committee recommends that the Coombs Peninsula is withdrawn from the land release program while this consideration is completed.
Recommendation 4	The Committee recommends that Variation 360 rezones the bulk of the Coombs Peninsula to NUZ3 Hills, Ridges and Buffer Zone and the Future Urban Area Overlay is removed from the rezoned area.

ACT Government Response to the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal Report No. 9 - Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 360 Molonglo River Reserve: Changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustment

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that, subject to the following recommendations, Draft Variation 360 Molonglo River Reserve: Changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries be approved.

Response

NOTED.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Coombs Peninsula be considered for environmental and recreational purposes.

Response

NOT AGREED.

This site was originally zoned for urban development in 2008 through Variation to the Territory Plan No. 281 (Molonglo and North Weston) and Amendment to the National Capital Plan No. 63 (Molonglo Valley).

Future development of the Molonglo Valley has been the subject of numerous environmental and planning assessments under both ACT and Commonwealth legislation. Regarding the environmental quality of the Coombs peninsula, the impacts of its past land use as a commercial pine plantation has left the peninsula with low environmental value, with patches of Pink-tailed worm-lizard habitat of low quality. The peninsula is dominated by a mix of exotic and native grasses and therefore would require a significant effort to restore it to native grassland or Box-gum grassy woodland.

To finalise the use of the Coombs peninsula an Estate Development Plan (EDP) Development Application will need to be prepared and submitted to the planning and land authority for assessment. The EDP will set out the proposed development of the land, including the proposed zoning and associated land uses, subdivision pattern, number of residential dwellings, road layout, bushfire risk assessment and mitigation measures.

An EDP for the Coombs peninsula will also take into consideration the requirements of the Territory Plan including the Coombs and Wright concept plan, environmental values, tree assessment, slope, heritage, stormwater management and bushfire impacts when determining the most appropriate use for the land on the Coombs peninsula.

Given the environmental studies that have been undertaken that included the Coombs peninsula, it is unlikely that an EDP would seek this area to be zoned for possible environmental and recreational purposes for the peninsula.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Coombs Peninsula is withdrawn from the land release program while this consideration is completed.

Response

NOT AGREED.

The land has been previously assessed through various Commonwealth and ACT environmental approval processes as being suitable for urban development.

In relation to these environmental approvals, approval for the development of the Coombs peninsula was granted in 2009 under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and remains valid.

Given the environmental studies that have been undertaken that included the Coombs peninsula, it is unlikely that an EDP would seek this area to be zoned for possible environmental and recreational purposes for the peninsula. As such, it is not considered necessary to withdraw the Coombs peninsula from the land release program which proposes the release of the peninsula in 2020-21.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that Variation 360 rezones the bulk of the Coombs Peninsula to NUZ3 Hills, Ridges and Buffer Zone and the Future Urban Area Overlay is removed from the rezoned area.

Response

NOT AGREED.

The Government does not agree with the Committee's recommendation that the variation rezones the Coombs Peninsula to the non-urban NUZ3 Hills, Ridges and Buffer Zone and the future urban area (FUA) overlay be removed.

Draft Variation 360 was prepared to adjust the reserve boundaries on the Territory Plan Map in line with the management plan for the new Molonglo River Reserve. It was not prepared to finalise the zoning of any land under a future urban area overlay in the Territory Plan and therefore such a change was not part of public consultation on the draft variation. The appropriate way to remove a future urban area overlay and confirm the final zoning for land is through the EDP assessment process, in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act 2007*.