

Ginninderra Falls Assoc President's Report 2022-3



ACT Planning Bill and new Territory Plan

Numerous groups made submissions on this bill, but environmental issues need to be highlighted. In our submission, we said that the new bill gives too much discretion to the minister and the chief planner. Outcomes-focussed assessment is too vague, and gives developers too much freedom. The emphasis is on approving developments, with a token gesture to endangered species, not on preserving and enhancing the natural environment with all its species and ecosystems.

EPBC non-compliance

We realized early this year that Ginninderry had not fulfilled its federal environmental approval conditions. The main issue is that the Conservation Corridor was not reserved in full (including Ginninderra Falls) within two years of the approval, i.e. by September 2019, and a management plan was not prepared for the entire area. We have written to ACT and federal environment ministers to alert them to this error, and to ask them to take action to correct it, with no response. Land has been rezoned appropriately, but this is not sufficient to guarantee preservation in perpetuity, as required. We will contact the media for publicity.

New West Belconnen Green Waste Facility

A temporary facility is to be built south of Drake-Brockman Drive, so that Ginninderry can develop the existing site for housing. We objected to this because the site is unsuitable due to its steep slope in rugged terrain, and will facilitate spread of weeds into nearby bushland and sediment into the Molonglo. It is also a waste of public money to build a temporary facility.

Biodiversity Certification Assessment Report to NSW government for Parkwood development.

Development approval for the NSW part of Ginninderry requires the developer to submit a report, and to seek public comment. We mentioned the EPBC non-compliance of the development, and the effects of neighboring urban areas on natural areas and drainage channels. Key's Matchstick grasshopper is a species in the area listed as endangered in NSW since the EPBC approval process in 2017. It is not clear whether this has been considered properly.

NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act Review

This act is reviewed every 5 years. Our submission highlighted the inability of the process to identify and protect areas of high biodiversity and scenic value such as Ginninderra Falls.

Ginninderry's Riverside Park

We made a submission on the development application, claiming that a building of 1000 sq. meters with parking for 63 vehicles and buses is inappropriate for the Murrumbidgee's banks, since throughout the ACT there are no major building developments close to the river. The natural ambience of the river must be preserved, and passive recreation would be compatible with this, but not such a development.

Environmental Defenders Office

EDO has continued to support us in our campaign, and we made a donation to them. Frances Bradshaw has left the ACT office and is being replaced by Isobel Brinin.

The Future:

The Federal Government's Green Wall St bill will be contentious, and needs to be opposed.

The New federal Environment bill is likely to sound good, but will probably lack teeth, just like the old one.

The Western Edge Investigation is ongoing, and if development proceeds, there will be many environmental issues to consider, especially its effect on the Murrumbidgee valley.

David Kelly
President
Ginninderra Falls Association