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<p><i>Rosemary Blemings document</i> 22.04.21</p>	<p><i>Ginninderry responses</i></p>
<p>The West Belconnen Project's Sustainability Vision document states, in part:</p> <p>"under Ecological Principles:</p> <p>Eco 1. Acknowledging the intrinsic value of all species and the special role and regional significance of the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek.</p> <p>Eco 2. Respecting and supporting the ecosystem functions of air , soil and water, recognising the importance of living and non-living environmental resources.</p> <p>Eco 7. Fostering a deep sense of respect for, and connection to the land, flora and fauna."</p>	<p><i>The document correctly cites three of the ecological principles included in the West Belconnen (now Ginninderry) vision statement. It neglects to also highlight the triple bottom line approach embodied in the vision statement. The Vision established for Ginninderry, when planning for the new community began, is for it to be a “sustainable community of international significance in the Capital Region”. This Vision has formed the backbone of all decisions made at Ginninderry – ensuring that social, environmental and economic factors are taken into consideration in a triple bottom line approach.</i></p> <p><i>In keeping with this approach all land with conservation significance has been included within the conservation corridor. Urban development is limited to land that is currently used as farmland – largely low-intensity cattle grazing.</i></p>

A care program for the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek Conservation corridors is very welcome. However

Describing the custodianship and management regime established for the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor simply as a “care program” is understating the level of resourcing that has been committed to the custodianship of the reserve in perpetuity.

The Ginninderry project will create a 596 hectare conservation corridor along the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek. 240ha of this are already in place. In addition to its role in protecting important endangered species and ecological communities, the corridor will be a great asset for nature based recreation for the Belconnen community; it will cross the border and include land in both the ACT and NSW.

Local community input to the management of the corridor will be important and to ensure that this happens The Conservation Corridor Management Trust has been established, the trust will manage all of the land in the corridor and be run by a board of directors that includes elected representatives from the local community. The Board members are:

<i>David Coutts</i>	<i>Chair and Community Representative</i>
<i>Rod Griffiths</i>	<i>Treasurer and Community Representative</i>
<i>Roz Chivers</i>	<i>Secretary and Community Representative</i>
<i>Leesa Croke</i>	<i>ACT Government</i>
<i>Wally Bell</i>	<i>Ginninderry Aboriginal Advisory Group</i>
<i>Alice Williams</i>	<i>Ginninderry Aboriginal Advisory Group</i>
<i>Jennifer Finlay</i>	<i>ACT Government</i>
<i>Alistair Henchman</i>	<i>Community Representative</i>
<i>David Maxwell</i>	<i>Ginninderry Joint Venture</i>
<i>Jasmin Jones</i>	<i>Yass Valley Council</i>
<i>Daniel Iglesias</i>	<i>ACT Government</i>

The Ginninderry Conservation Trust's primary objective and responsibility is delivering the commitments outlined in the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor Management Plan. Funding to implement these commitments comes primarily from the Ginninderry Joint Venture Partners - Riverview Developments and the ACT Government. In order to undertake this work the Trust has an employee team as follows:

<i>Dr Jason Cummings</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>Angela Calliess</i>	<i>Program Director - Conservation Corridor</i>
<i>Tyson Powell</i>	<i>Aboriginal Project Officer - Conservation Corridor</i>
<i>Rachel Eland</i>	<i>Project Officer - Conservation Corridor</i>

Full details, including the management plan and FY20/21 annual report are available at: <http://www.Ginninderry.org>

The Conservation Corridor Trust is actively engaging the community in events and activities in the Corridor and have a base of keen community members on an email list who are notified when land management activities that could use a few extra hands are planned. This will develop into a more robust volunteer engagement program targeting Ginninderry locals as well as the broader Belconnen community (and beyond).

The shape and depth of the areas reserved for the Ginninderry Conservation Park are inadequate for "Acknowledging the intrinsic value of all species ... " The promoted Park designs, "from Shepherd's lookout to the confluence with Ginninderra Creek and up the creek past Ginninderra Falls.":

A report "Ecological Studies West Belconnen Australian Capital Territory", prepared in June 2014 by Kevin Mills & Associates (available at: <https://ginninderry.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/KMA.-2014-Flora-and-fauna-studies-summary.pdf>), includes a chapter which describes the science behind the delineation of the conservation corridor boundary for the ACT component of the project. The same methods were applied in NSW. The report says as follows:

"The ACT Territory Plan identifies a Public Land boundary for the Murrumbidgee River corridor that includes two zones: an inner zone along the riverbank (Nature Reserve) and an outer zone covering the steep land falling towards the Murrumbidgee River (Special Purpose Reserve). The boundary between the Special Purpose Reserve and adjacent grazing land to the east is generally a series of straight, fenced lines along the eastern Public Land boundary. A major objective of the current investigation is to identify a more realistic boundary to the river corridor and woodland conservation area that is based on ecological, habitat and management criteria.

Definition of the new eastern boundary of the proposed river corridor and woodland conservation areas is driven by the location and extent of (i) the Pink-tailed Worm Lizard habitat and (ii) the Box-Gum Woodland; less important criteria are (iii) topography and (iv) management practicality. Application of these criteria to define a new corridor boundary was undertaken in two steps based on ground-truthing of habitat features guided by expert ecological and management advice.

Initially, confirmed Pink-tailed Worm Lizard habitat (Osborne and Wong 2013) was marked out using aerial photography backed up by field

	<p><i>inspections. This was followed by careful testing of the entire boundary by on-ground inspections, first by the consultant team and later with ACT government officers from ESDD and TAMS. The proposed boundary and the ecological, habitat, and management criteria used to derive it were agreed to by all parties.</i></p> <p><i>The proposed Murrumbidgee River Corridor and Woodland Reserve covers 371 hectares; composed of 68.2 hectares of Box-Gum Woodland and 302.8 hectares of river valley. Note that the southern part of the existing river corridor land includes another 10.1 hectares of Box-Gum woodland. The eastern edge of the proposed river and woodland reserve was determined on site through agreement of the study team and ACT government officers (from ESDD and TAMS) and recorded using GPS equipment.”□</i></p>
<p>Are the Park's reserves too narrow and linear to allow for the recognised ranges and habitat needs of mobile native species known to be in the corridors' areas.</p>	<p><i>The ideal shape for a conservation reserve, in the absence of any other consideration, is circular, to minimise the edge-to-area ratio. The Ginninderry reserve, because it is a corridor that protects high conservation values along a river (and creek) valley is linear. The shape of the reserve is a consequence of the local geography.</i></p>
<p>Fragmentation of vegetation and the small sizes of habitats for native flora will continue to prevent the regular transfer of species' genetic material by pollinating species or even wind.</p>	<p><i>Native flora habitat areas at Ginninderry in the land included (and to be included in the future) in the conservation reserve are generally very highly degraded. Their inclusion in the conservation reserve, under the oversight of a professional and well-resourced management team will lead to very substantial improvement in both the quality and extent of native flora habitat areas over time. Indeed this is already happening. Refer to the Corridor management plan at: https://ginninderry.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Attach-A-Ginninderry-Corridor-POM-1.pdf</i></p>

<p>Vulnerable, rare and everyday native flora are threatened by suburban expansion into peri-urban rural areas. This is especially true for species needing the ancient hollow-bearing trees and Natural Temperate rocky Grassland remnants that are part of or close to the Ginninderry Conservation Park</p>	<p><i>The great bulk of trees at Ginninderry are in the Conservation corridor and will be preserved and supplemented with additional planting. In the urban area approximately 85% of existing remnant trees will be preserved (compared to an average of 25% on a “business as usual land development project in the ACT). The urban remnant trees are being managed under a cooperative project with the ANU Fenner refer to https://ginninderry.com/not-just-tree-home/.</i></p> <p><i>The great bulk of the area identified as temperate rocky grassland is contained within the conservation reserve and therefore protected.</i></p>
<p>The proposed urban areas are too close to the Park/corridorss boundaries and the waterways. The proximity of buildings and human activity (light, noise, movement, pets) is known to be detrimental to many species of fauna and flora.</p>	<p><i>The interface between the conservation areas and urban development will be carefully managed and includes at a minimum an asset protection zone of 40m.</i></p>
<p>Example: The West Macgregor development and its urban-edge housing has impacted threatened bird species such as the Hooded Robin and the Diamond Firetail which utilised Ginninderra Creek's corridor as recently as 2009.</p>	<p><i>Careful monitoring, and importantly, hands on management will ensure that habitat, including for birds, will be substantially improved over time in the conservation area – increases in numbers of all bird species are anticipated.</i></p>

<p>How are migrating bird species being affected by the narrowing of their twice yearly, safe flyways through the riverine corridors as the Ginninderry and Molonglo Valley developments expand into land they have traversed for aeons?</p>	<p><i>As above</i></p>
<p>Residents of Ginninderry will demand that they and their dwellings are protected by Hazard Reduction Burns conducted in the Murrumbidgee and Ginninderra Creek riverine corridors. This, despite planned Asset Protection Zones beyond their fences and associated 'buffer' zones between homes and the corridors' wildness.</p>	<p><i>The “Parkwood Planning Proposal Bushfire Management Strategy”, August 2017” (https://ginninderry.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Eco-Logical-Aust-August-2017.-Parkwood-planning-Proposal-Bushfire-Management-Strategy.pdf) provides detail on the proposed bushfire management arrangements. At page 18 it says: “APZs should be wholly contained within the proposed lot or subject land for which they are benefitting or protecting.” There are no proposals for hazard reduction burns (to protect the urban area) within the conservation corridor; the corridor will be the subject of its own Bushfire management Plan, administered by the Conservation Corridor trust.</i></p>
<p>Hazard Reduction Burns are not appropriate for the Callitri forested slopes of the Ginninderra Falls area as these native pines are killed by fire. Frequent low-intensity burns in the Falls area are difficult to achieve and are detrimental to the unique and relatively undisturbed understorey flora even acknowledged and protected by first settlers in the 1850's.</p>	<p><i>There are no proposals for hazard reduction burns in Callitris forest areas.</i></p>

<p>Pale Pomaderris and <i>Crocea exalata</i> 'Ginninderra Falls' are among the rare plant species that need the protection of low visitor numbers in the Corridors but particularly around Ginninderra Falls area. It was once suggested that The Falls area would be a reserve that welcomed respectful contemplation and enjoyment of its scenery, Indigenous significance and nature by only permitting journeys deeper into the reserve if accompanied by a Ranger or Indigenous Ranger. Is this 'light-footprint' approach likely when the eagerly awaited reopening of the Falls occurs?</p>	<p><i>When the falls are reopened visitor management will be managed by the Conservation corridor trust (and its staff). Visitor numbers and access will be determined in accord with a future edition of the management plan.</i></p>
<p>No extensive Asset Protection Zones, buffers or Hazard Reduction Burns will protect native vegetation, people and infrastructure from the types of bushfires that we have seen in Canberra in '2003 and in the Black Summer of 2019 - 2020. Such fires are Australia's future as Climate Change progresses.</p>	<p><i>Climate change impacts are relevant to all Australian urban areas, not specifically to Ginninderry.</i></p>

<p>The gorges of the Ginninderra Falls area and the Murrumbidgee River, together with westerly prevailing winds, provide ideal conditions for Dynamic Bushfire Propagation. Will the increase in human activities and presence in the Murrumbidgee River's corridor increase the risk of bushfires in the area?</p>	<p><i>The Bushfire Strategy (cited above) makes specific provision for Dynamic bushfire propagation.</i></p>
<p>Will the nature-protection measures 'proposed by the Ginninderry Joint Venture Partners eventually provide habitat for the native species they acknowledge in their Vision Statement and through their plans for residents' gardens and the via the development's open spaces providing suitable habitat links to the Conservation Park corridor?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Taking habitat (shelter, breeding sites, foraging areas, territory) for humans' dwellings and infrastructure from native fauna in the 21st Century is ecologically destructive and unconscionable in the age of extinction crises.</p>	<p><i>Refer to the discussion above regarding the need for projects such as Ginninderry to adopt a triple bottom line approach.</i></p>
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