

# Interpretation for sustainable development

## STORIES AND HISTORIES OF NON-INDIGENOUS GINNINDERRY PEOPLE AND PLACES

### PART 4

DR MARY HUTCHISON

#### GINNINDERRY LOCAL HISTORY STUDY REPORT MAY 2024

PART 1 – Introduction

PART 2 – Ginninderry Local History Study (GLHS)

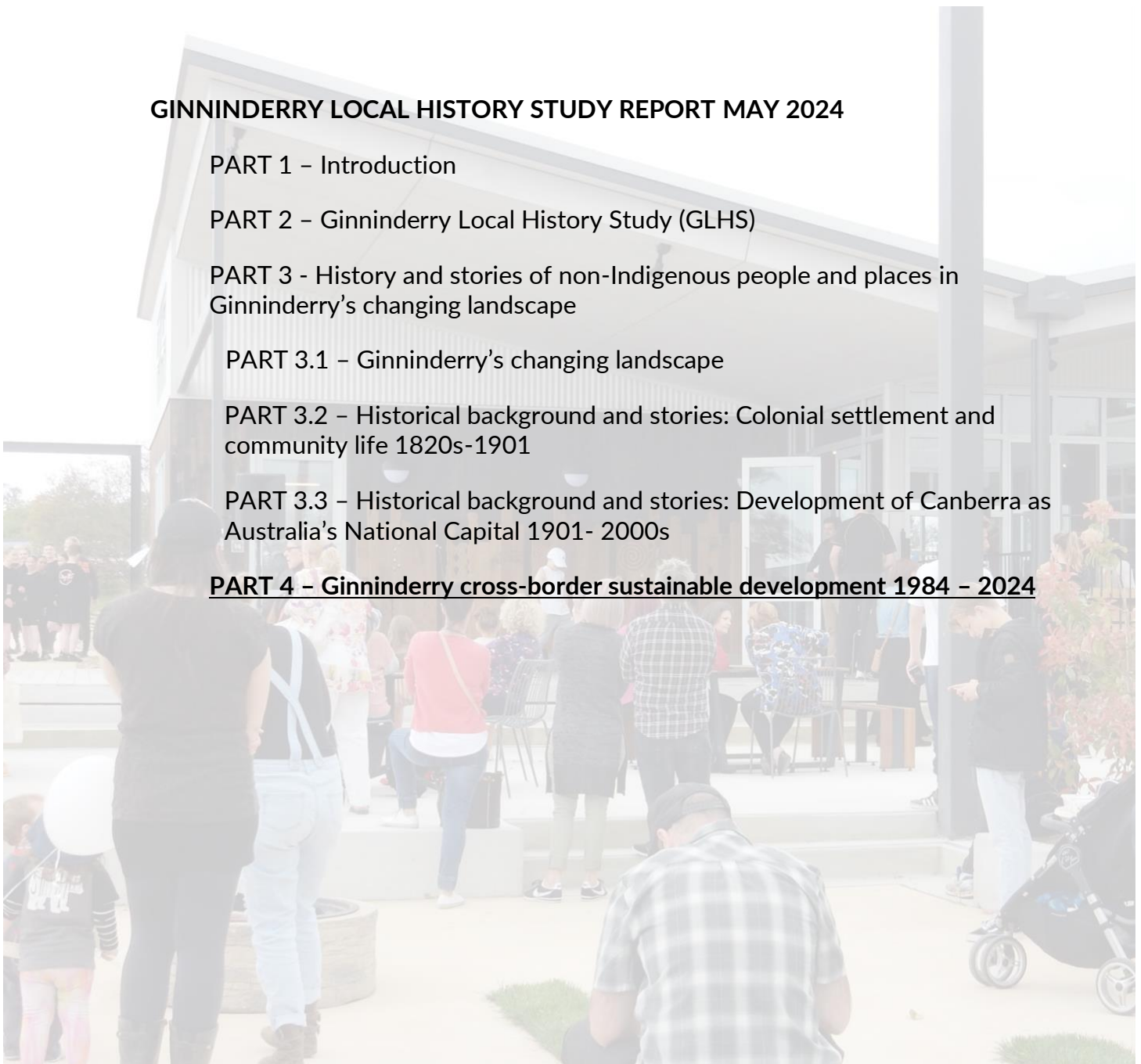
PART 3 - History and stories of non-Indigenous people and places in Ginninderry's changing landscape

PART 3.1 – Ginninderry's changing landscape

PART 3.2 – Historical background and stories: Colonial settlement and community life 1820s-1901

PART 3.3 – Historical background and stories: Development of Canberra as Australia's National Capital 1901- 2000s

**PART 4 – Ginninderry cross-border sustainable development 1984 – 2024**



**Cover page image:** Community gathering for Springfest, October 14th 2017, at The Link. Source: Ginninderry <https://ginninderry.com/inspire-news-insights/community/ginninderry-blossoms-amidst-springfest-spirit/>

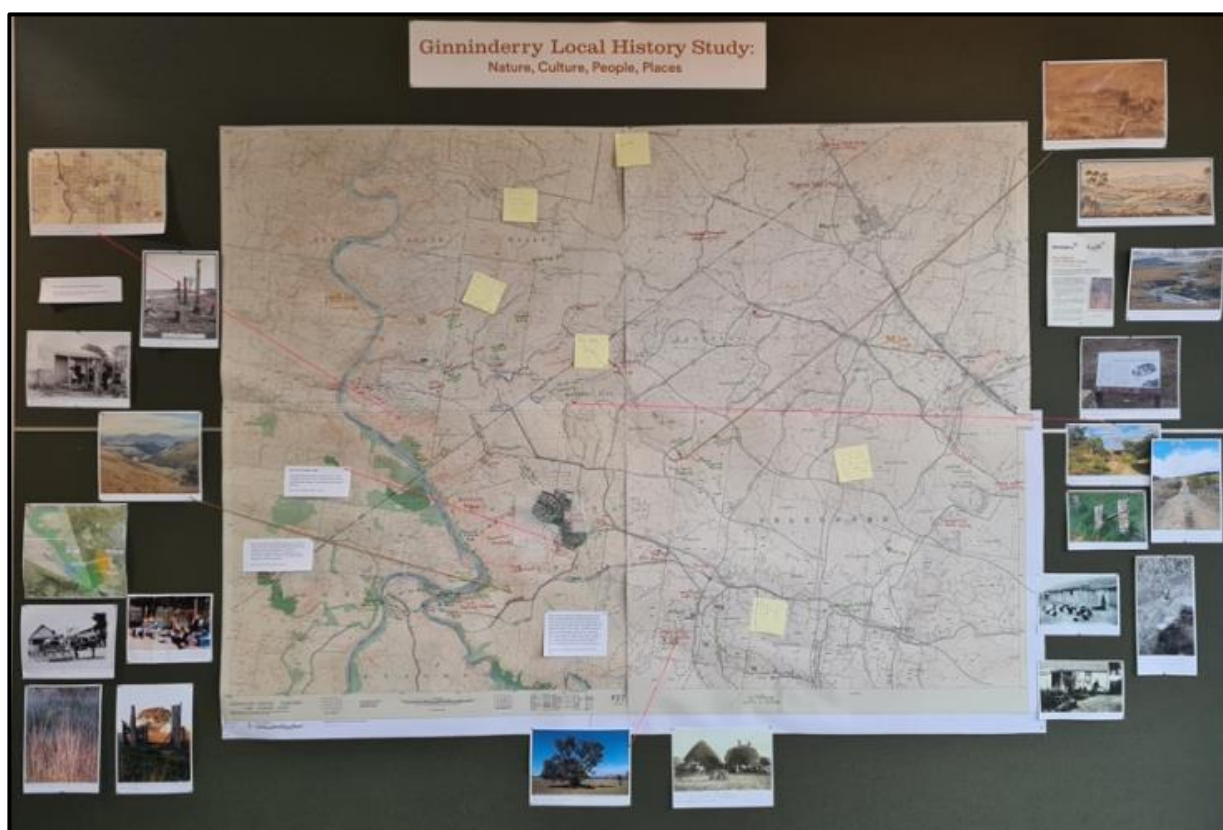
**Following page, Acknowledgement of Country image:** Murrumbidgee River and landscape from Shepherds lookout. Photo: Ginninderry

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

*Ginninderry proudly acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.*

*We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to Australian life and how this enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.*





Ginninderry Local History Study, GLHS Story Map, The Link, June 2020. Photo: Tulitha King.

## Research and content development

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Maureen Cummuskey: Additional editing

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## Recommended non-Indigenous interpretation location index

The historical information in this report provides context and stories relevant to the GLHS 'blueprint' report, *Stories of Ginninderry Places: Recommended non-Indigenous interpretation locations* (Hutchison & Skitmore, 2021). An index to information concerning these locations is provided in the preliminary pages of each Part. The locations are mapped in Figure 3-1 (see Part 3). Most are referred to in Parts 3.2 and 3-3.

### **Recommended Interpretation Hubs:**

Belconnen Farm heritage Interpretation Hub, 9, 13, 15

Ginninderra Falls Interpretation Hub, 1, 10

Cusack's Crossing Track Active Travel Hub, not mentioned

### **Recommended Interpretation Locations**

Pine Ridge Corner School bus stop, not mentioned

Elioth Gruner's easel, not mentioned

The Junction Fords, not mentioned

Balconnel gold mine, not mentioned

Lower Molonglo Water Quality Control Centre, not mentioned

Cusack's Crossing, not mentioned

The Falls Homestead, Courting Ford and Sturt-Campbell Boundary, 10

Picnic Paddock, not mentioned

Federal Corner, ACT Border and Sturt-Campbell Boundary, not mentioned

Old Weetangera Road, not mentioned

Old Parkwood Road, not mentioned

### **Possible Interpretation Locations**

Possible shepherd's hut, not mentioned

1945 stockyard, not mentioned

## Part 4 Ginninderry cross-border sustainable development 1984-2024

### Corkhill Family – Riverview Group

The Ginninderry development has its origins in Brian and Patrick Corkhill's purchase of NSW land on the northwestern ACT/NSW border at the Freedman/Custom Credit auction in 1984 (see 'Developments on the border: Ginninderra Falls Park'). By this time, their sand and gravel and farming business had grown to include rural and Canberra city properties (see 'From Riverview Dairy to Lake Burley Griffin'). At the auction, Corkhill Brothers' farming company, Reid and Stevens, purchased the 629-acre block that had once been the Moore family's 'Belconnen paddock'. Before that, it had been the portion of Sturt/Campbell land that had remained in NSW when the ACT was created<sup>1</sup>. The Corkhill auction purchases are shown in Figure 4-1 as lots 1, 2 and 7.

About a year after the auction, the subdivision of the block initially sold to 'Tarlington' (Figure 3-100) provided the opportunity for Reid and Stevens to purchase 200 additional acres with Murrumbidgee river frontage on the once J.K. Kilby property, The Falls, later amalgamated with Parkwood (see 'Ginninderry's new landowner' and 'James and Beatrice Kilby family'). The Corkhills' new lot 3 is shown in Figure 4-1 as the green hatched area next to lot 2. The wider green area within the Ginninderry boundary is the entire Falls property. Other historical landmarks in Figure 4-1 are The Falls homestead, Parkwood church, Cusack's Crossing Track, the western land boundary of the Sturt/Campbell pastoral property and 'Federal Corner', so named by the Kilby family when that corner of The Falls became part of the ACT.

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<sup>1</sup> For details of changing landownership see Parts 3.2 and 3.3)

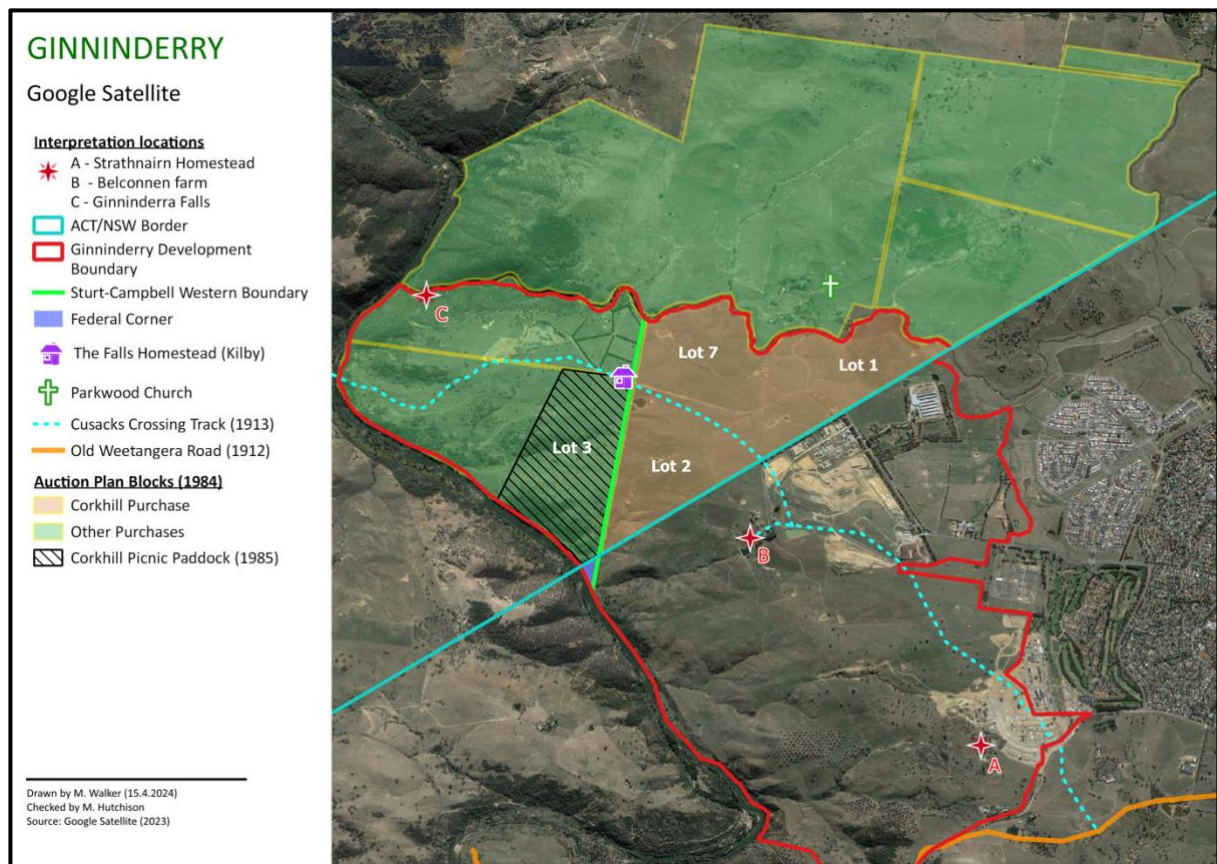


Figure 4-1 Corkhill Brothers' first purchases of Ginninderry with historical landmarks. Auction map courtesy of Robert and Elizabeth Caldwell.

The new Corkhill lots became an extension of the Corkhill cattle farming enterprise at Gundaroo. As a result, weekends were often taken up by the chore of moving cattle between the properties. On the plus side, lot 3 gave the family access to the river flats where they found an ideal place for summer holiday camping and swimming. They called it the 'Picnic Paddock' (David Maxwell, GLHS conversation, 22/2/2024; Brian Corkhill, GLHS conversation, 5/5/2017). It was the beginning of new stories about the land below the hill and steep valley, known by Jim Kilby (grandson of J. K. Kilby) as Green Hill and Voodoo Gully. Another Parkwood Kilby landmark, next west to Picnic Paddock, is Sawyers Gully. Jim spent a lot of time around Voodoo and Sawyers as a teenager in the 1950s, cutting briars for his father and sometimes camping out at Federal Corner. On the more even land of Sawyers, amongst various disused structures, are remnants of a small building Jim identified as a 'yard' he constructed for a student project when he was at Wagga Agricultural College (Figure 4-2) (James Kilby, GLHS conversation, 27/2/2018)<sup>2</sup>. Figure 4-2 combines photos of Corkhill and Kilby landmarks. Jim's 'Green Hill' is a typical element of the landscape above Picnic Paddock and Sawyers Gully in Ginninderry's Conservation

<sup>2</sup> Jim described his project as a 'yard', but the remnants he identified suggest a shed. While memory may blur specific details, Jim's early experiences of farm management and construction are part of the Sawyers landscape

Corridor. The mark up of Ginninderry locations on Elioth Gruner's 1937 painting, 'Weetangera, Canberra', shows Picnic Paddock and Green Hill in the wider context of the Corridor's landscape.

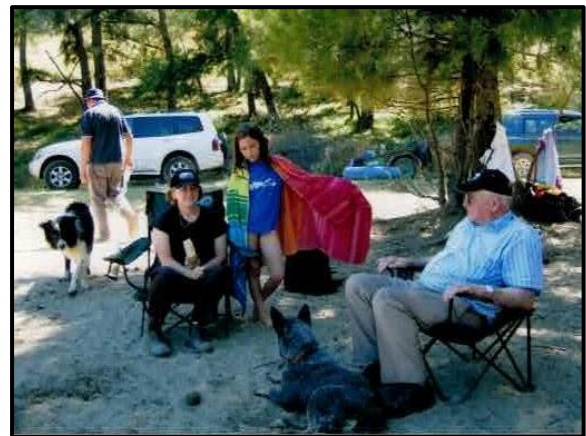
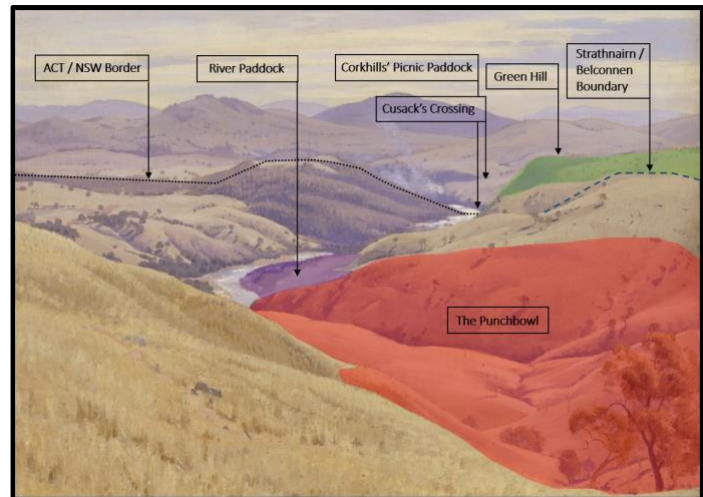
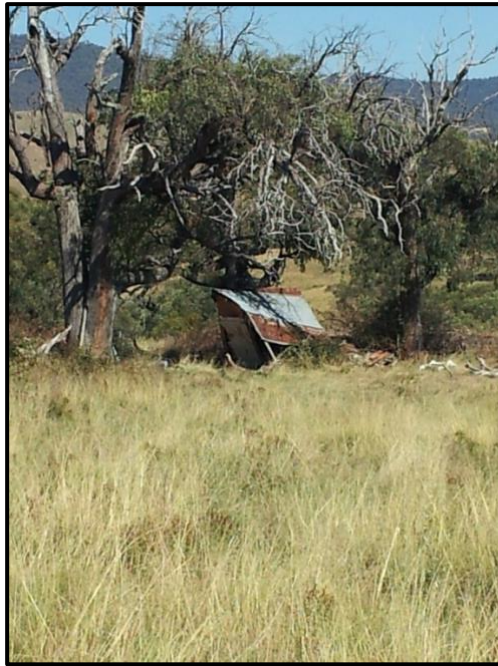


Figure 4-2 **Top Left:** Remains of Jim Kilby's college project, Sawyers Gully, visit to Sawyers Gully with James Kilby and Ted Shaw, 27/2/2018). Photo: Mary Hutchison; **Top Right:** Action Heritage, 'Identifying the location of Elioth Gruner's 'Weetangera, Canberra' painting in Ginninderry Conservation Corridor Stage 1'. GLHS, February 2019, p. 8.; **Bottom Left:** Green Hill Track; **Bottom Right:** Relaxing at Picnic Paddock. Brian Corkhill, with his grandchildren.

In 2002, Reid and Stevens purchased two ACT 99-year rural leases. These were Belconnen Farm, excluding the ACT landfill, and Strathnairn, excluding the Strathnairn Arts homestead lease. From the mid 1970s to around 2001, both rural leases had been managed by Peter Canham (Eric Martin and

Associates, 2020, p. 66). The ACT leases made a significant addition to the Corkhills' property portfolio. They sold the Gundaroo farm and made the border area of north-west Belconnen their farming centre. Riverview Group was established as their property company. Together with the NSW lots, the large ACT lease purchases were the basis for the development of Ginninderry. Later, the master plan for the concept identified additional land in NSW and the ACT to complete the project area. Figure 4-3 shows the NSW lots in brown, the historical extent of the ACT leases in yellow, with the hatched areas as the 2002 purchases. The landfill is the yellow area at the eastern end of Belconnen Farm. The homestead block is shown in black around the Strathnairn homestead. The Ginninderry project boundary is in red.

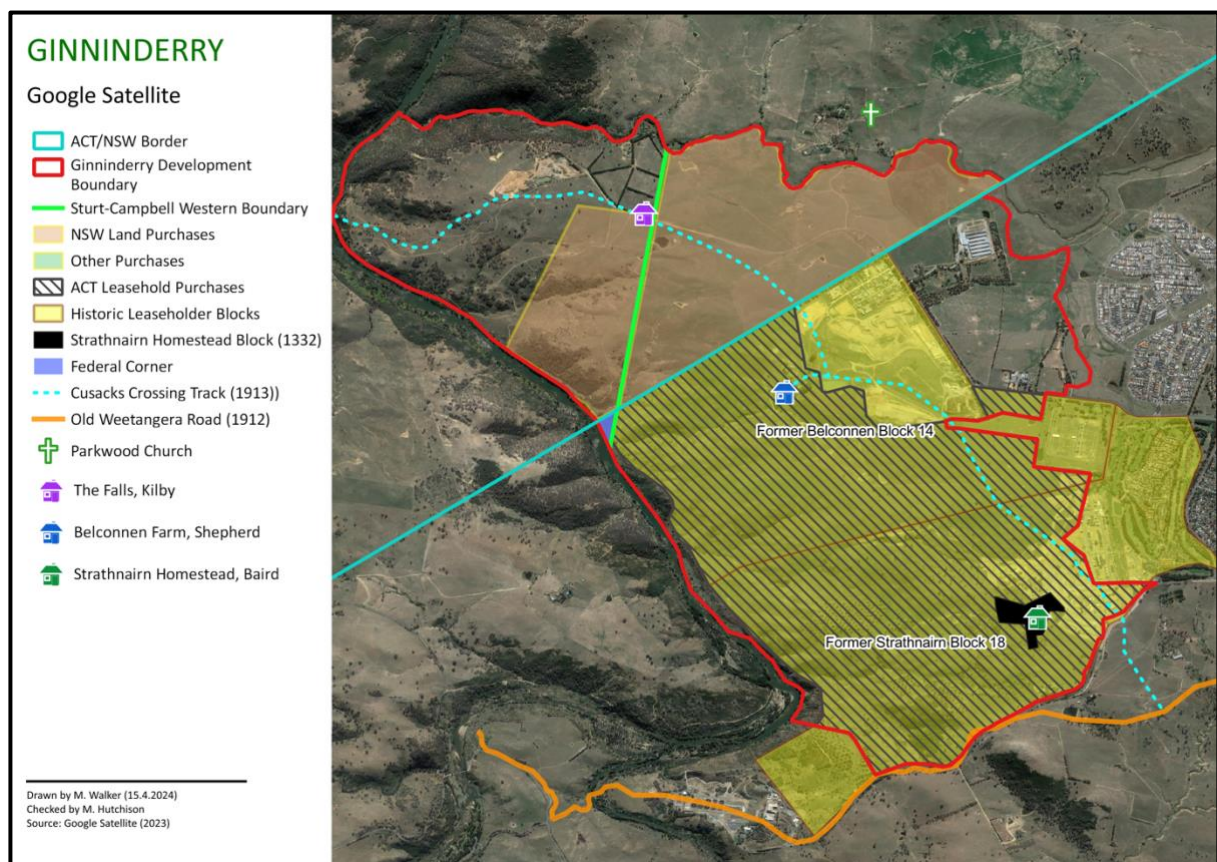


Figure 4-3 Riverview's NSW and ACT purchases 2002 on Ginninderry satellite map.

With the establishment of the Riverview-ACT Ginninderry Joint Venture in 2016, ACT land such as the Landfill and part of the former soldier settlement Block 13, minus the poultry farm, became part of Ginninderry (see Part 3.3, 'Block 13'). Figure 4-4 shows Ginninderry land in 2024. It includes further acquisitions and remaining private ownership in NSW. It also shows the completed Strathnairn suburb, its northern neighbour the in-progress suburb of Macnamara, and the 'Strathnairn' part of the Conservation Corridor.

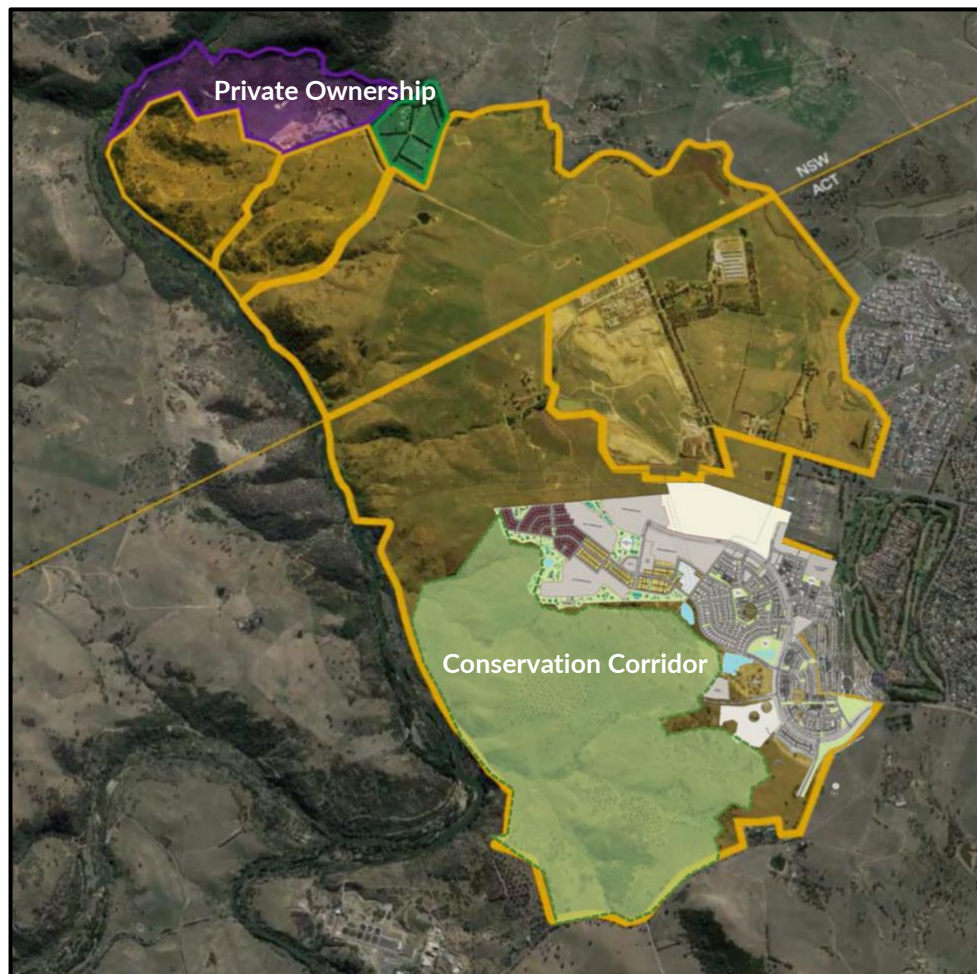


Figure 4-4 Current development and landownership map, 2024 Yellow regions indicate Ginninderry Joint Venture land. Purple and green blocks are privately owned. Provided by Ginninderry 17/04/2024

The creation of Riverview Group came about through discussion between Brian Corkhill and a member of the Corkhill family by marriage, David Maxwell. David had been working in corporate property management and by the early 2000s was looking for a different approach to development. Brian's invitation to contribute to the management of the Corkhill property portfolio was the beginning of a significant new direction.

Like the Corkhills, David's family has a long history in farming and other rural enterprises in and around the ACT. The growing interest in sustainable building and development in the early 2000s attracted David and the Corkhills. It offered a way of putting into action, rather than words, a more people-and-environment-oriented approach to development. They saw it as an opportunity to give something back to the community in which generations of their families had lived and worked.

Brian Corkhill and David Maxwell (Brian Corkhill, GLHS conversation, 5/5/17; David Maxwell, Managing director, GLHS conversation, 19/2/2024).

## Towards a sustainable community development

With a substantial amount of land in West Belconnen and across the NSW border, and David as Project Director and Tony Adams as Planning Consultant, Riverview began work on a cross-border development concept for 'West Belconnen/Parkwood'. An important aspect of this process was a workshop with Chris Walton and Kerry Shepherd who had developed the award-winning Currumbin eco-village near the Gold Coast (<https://theecovillage.com.au/>). As a result, the concept was framed by a 'triple bottom line' approach to environmental, economic and social-cultural sustainability (David Maxwell, GLHS conversation, 20/2/2024). The concept also supported environmental sustainability by integrating urban development with the creation of a conservation corridor along the Murrumbidgee river<sup>3</sup>.

Riverview first raised the concept with the ACT Government, and Yass Valley Council in 2006 (David Maxwell, GLHS conversation, 20/2/24). A positive response led to testing support for the concept through detailed discussion of all aspects of West Belconnen/Parkwood with ACT and NSW Government agencies, the National Capital Authority, other Federal Government agencies, and associated stakeholders. The outcome in 2010 was a decision by the ACT Government to make a rigorous assessment of the potential for a Joint Venture with Riverview (Ellis and Adams, 2015, pp. 11-12). This step included the ACT's Land Development Agency (LDA) becoming involved in the development process. It also opened the way for applications to rezone the land for urban development in the ACT and NSW. For further details about the development's timeline to 2018, see 'History of the Ginninderry project', <https://ginninderry.com/inspire-news-insights/community/history-ginninderry-project/>.

## Community and specialist participation in the development process

With the process of working towards approvals for statutory requirements from government agencies in place, the achievement of ACT Government interest in a joint venture, and the involvement of LDA, Riverview decided to further its 'not just talk' sustainability intentions by signing up to the Green Building Council of Australia's pilot for sustainable communities (David Maxwell, GLHS conversation, 19/2/2024; Tony Adams, GLHS conversation, 25/3/24). The intention was to attain the Council's accreditation for *an innovative, sustainable community of international significance* (Ellis and Adams, 2015, p. 11). It was a move that had a significant impact on the involvement of a range of community and specialist interests in the masterplan process. As Ellis and Adams write, assessment for community and stakeholder Green Stars, as in other categories, is based on best practice benchmarks. *The master plan was refined*

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<sup>3</sup> The corridor was later extended to include Ginninderra Creek which brings it to 600 hectares of the 1600-hectare project area.

*progressively over a period of close to 12 months in light of stakeholder and community engagement and supporting technical studies* (Ellis and Adams, 2015, p. 11).

To facilitate and support community engagement and consultation over 2013-15, Riverview appointed Michael Pilbrow, from Strategic Development Associates, as Community Liaison Officer. Initial meetings, forums and workshops included local landholders, community groups, community services, experts in relevant fields, government and non-government agencies, and stakeholders from the wider community. As well as significantly informing the master plan, the participation of local people and groups at this level also prepared the ground for community participation in the future, and in decision-making concerning more specific sustainable projects and issues (Ellis and Adams, 2015, pp. 27-28). In 2024, two groups formed in the first years of community engagement, continue as specific advisers to Ginninderry. Community representatives on 'People and Places' provide a wide ranging sounding board for community ideas and concerns. 'Bush on the Boundary' continues with co-ordination by Ginninderry partner, Ginninderra Catchment Group (CCG). The CCG partnership involves joint environmental projects and Ginninderry sponsorship of other initiatives. For further details see Partnerships Ginninderry, <https://ginninderry.com/our-vision/partnerships/>

Along with scientific studies, community input, including consultation with Aboriginal Knowledge Holders, also contributed to planning the conservation corridor. Field research (ground truthing) was an important element of the research that finalised the corridor boundary and provided advice on future management of habitats, endangered species, and human activities (Figure 4-5). Both the Conservation Council and Ginninderra Falls Association provided written support for the corridor plan (Ellis and Adams, 2015, appendix 4 & appendix 3 newsletter pp. 30-31). In 2017, Ginninderra Falls Association withdrew their support and challenged Ginninderry in the ACT Administrative Tribunal. Their case was dismissed (ACT Civil and Administrative Review, 2017, online).

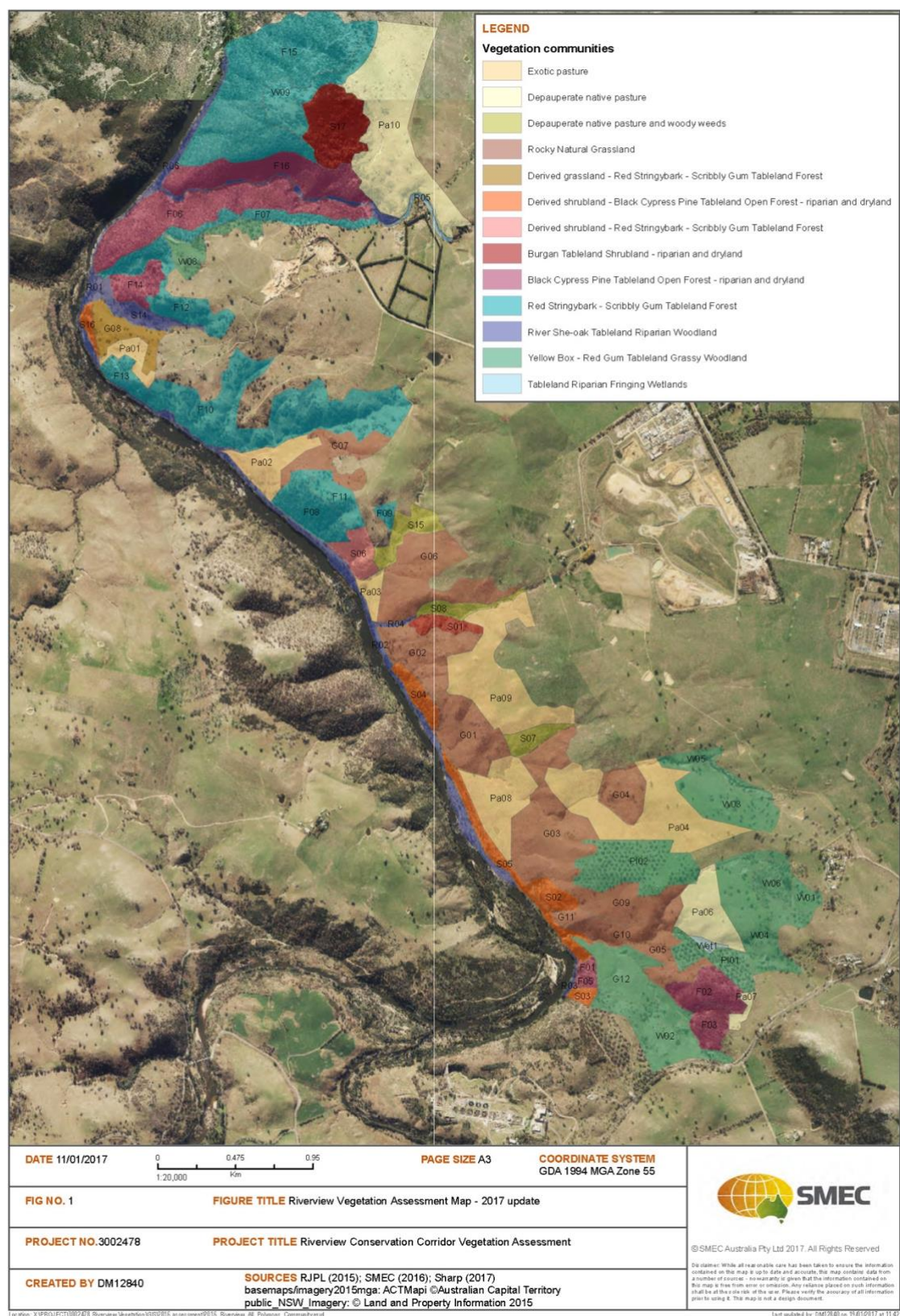


Figure 4-5 Conservation corridor vegetation assessment, 2017 Provided by Ginninderry.

A further important community consultation took place with Aboriginal Stakeholders. This involved Registered Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) and Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) who nominated Knowledge Holders to participate in Waters Consultancy's Aboriginal Cultural Values Assessment. The redacted public report was published in 2017. In 2018, The eight Knowledge Holders who worked on the report became the Ginninderry Aboriginal Advisory Group (GAAG) in 2018 (see <https://ginninderry.com/our-vision/aboriginal-advisory-group/>). GAAG has provided extensive advice on interpretation in the Conservation Corridor (Waters Consultancy, 2017; Cummings, Hutchison and Waters, 2019).

Ginninderry's work with local Aboriginal organisations, Knowledge Holders and Stakeholders is informed by policy and guidelines for Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management established in Australia's Burra Charter (2013) by the Australian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). It has also taken place with reference to the ACT Heritage Council and the Indigenous Heritage Act (ACT) enacted in 2004 and 2021. For further details on Indigenous cultural heritage management in the Ginninderry context see the references above.

In 2015, with the finalisation of the masterplan through community consultation, and studies concerning environment and heritage completed or in progress, Ginninderry was in a position to apply for Green Building Council assessment as a sustainable community. Green star accreditation professional at LDA, Jessica Stewart, was seconded to Riverview to put the application together. In September 2016, the development was certified as a 6-star international sustainable community in economic, environmental and social categories. Since then, Ginninderry has participated in five-yearly audits of its status against all relevant green star criteria to ensure that its certification is up to date (Jessica Stewart, GLHS conversation, 5/3/2024; Tony Adams, GLHS conversation, 25/3/2024).

## Commencement of the Joint Venture and beginning of 'Ginninderry'

Finalisation of Government approvals, and the rezoning of ACT land, paved the way for another 2016 milestone - the formal commencement of the Joint Venture between the ACT Government and Riverview as the 'Ginninderry' development. Deciding on the name 'Ginninderry', before the Ginninderry Aboriginal Advisory Group was established, involved extensive community and expert consultation that included First Nations Elders, People and Places Group, and linguists. For information about the origins of the name, see Ginninderry's newsletter, *Inspire News & Insights* online, 27/3/2022.

The Ginninderry Joint Venture (GJV) continued Riverview's role as manager of the development with David Maxwell as Managing Director. In 2016, the completion date of the project was estimated as 2048. In a step towards this, NSW rezoning was approved in 2020. In 2024, GJV controls all the ACT land currently identified for development under the Ginninderry Masterplan. It also has control of, or agreement to purchase, three of the land holdings that make up the full NSW portion of the planned

development area (Matthew Frawley, Ginninderry Urban Design and Land Manager, GLHS email, 10/4/2024).

When land sales in Ginninderry's first suburb, Strathnairn, began in 2017, the Ginninderry office moved from Kippax to a new, purpose-built, sustainably designed and constructed, multi-purpose facility at the centre of the action. It was built on the 1970s community lease known as the Strathnairn homestead block, across the dam from the homestead. In 2017, the long-term ACT lessee was Strathnairn Arts, and the homestead was Strathnairn Art Gallery (see Strathnairn - from sheep and cattle to community arts). Both Strathnairn Arts and the ACT Government's agency, Arts ACT, were involved in the building's design. The design included recreating the dam as a small lake habitat for turtles and frogs with a specially constructed frog habitat (Tony Adams, GLHS conversation, 25/3/24). The Link houses the Ginninderry project team, a sales information display area, meeting rooms, and an art exhibition space. Since its opening it has been the site for a number of community events (Figure 4-6). The plan is that the building will be passed on to community management when Ginninderry moves to the centre of the northern suburbs development<sup>4</sup>.



Figure 4-6 Community gathering for Springfest, October 14th 2017, at The Link. Source: Ginninderry <https://ginninderry.com/inspire-news-insights/community/ginninderry-blossoms-amidst-springfest-spirit/>

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<sup>4</sup> For further information about the building and its uses see <https://ginninderry.com/living-here/the-link/>.

## Sustainability in the long term

In the context of a 40-year development, reaccreditation of Ginninderry's environmental, economic and social sustainability practices through five-yearly audits, is critical to Ginninderry's success and identity as a world-leading sustainable development. In management terms, maintaining the sustainability rating involves meeting key requirements through the planning, design and construction phases of the project to ensure a holistic, 'triple bottom line' approach to sustainability is achieved. The following background and examples of Ginninderry programs provide a snapshot of Ginninderry's sustainability practices from the first certification in 2016.

Jessica Stewart's role as Green Star Accredited Professional on the Ginninderry team began in 2015 with her six-month secondment from LDA to Ginninderry to manage the project's Green Star certification. She was then appointed to the broader, continuing position of Sustainability Manager. In this role, her responsibility for ensuring that Ginninderry continues to achieve its 6-star Green Star Community status means that she has oversight of 'everything' in the project concerning sustainability. Her work covers research and implementation of innovative sustainable programs, projects and initiatives across the board of Ginninderry activities. It includes contributing to the overall vision for planning, design, and construction; providing information about sustainable practices to builders and residents; and turning her hand to a wide and varied range of tasks from exploring low-carbon construction materials to designing the first all-electric community in the Capital Region. In the context of a long-term development, it also involves keeping up with emerging sustainable technologies and possibilities for innovation and refinement of Ginninderry practice. Overall, the Sustainability Manager position combines a holistic, overview position with management of specific issues and projects that break new ground in development practice and provide a model for others to follow.

One of the first significant investigations on Jessica's plate in 2016 was to look at how renewable power could be utilised by the development. At much the same time, the Joint Venture decided to become the first all-electric community in the ACT. That decision, and Jessica's further analysis of gas and electricity was a catalyst for the ACT Government's new energy efficiency 'pathway to electrification' policy. It also set the ground for Strathnairn stage 1 to become a trial project in the process, enabled by an interim variation to the Territory Plan to waive the mandatory regulation to supply natural gas to all new homes (Bushnell, 2018 online)<sup>5</sup>.

In the trial context, Jessica's challenge was to bring the first purchasers along with the new approach to domestic power. This involved implementing an extensive analysis of community attitudes through telephone surveys of local ACT residents and follow-up workshops to explore whether future residents would be willing to live in a suburb with no gas. Discussion of the cost advantages of electric appliances

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<sup>5</sup> The pathway's aim to supply electricity from renewable resources was achieved in 2020.

with roof top solar, as well as demonstrations of induction stovetop cooking were important elements of the program. Chef-led demonstrations, and recipes, for electric cooking of dishes often seen as best cooked on gas - including Indian and Chinese cuisines relevant to many prospective residents - were particularly popular. The trial was a clear success. Most people went away confident that they could live in a suburb with no gas. Some new residents shared recipes and expressed an appreciation for an 'environment-friendly' way of life.

Strathnairn has grown up with mandatory solar PV (photovoltaic panels), solar or heat pump hot water, efficient reverse cycle air conditioning and home energy management system requirements. It has also been designed with future proofing in mind, with locations for community batteries and EV charging included in its Estate Development Plans. A model for liveability in a new suburb, and sustainability generally, is that Strathnairn has also grown up with public transport - usually only provided when the population reaches 2,000. Since the first day the first resident moved in in 2019, Strathnairn residents have been able to catch a free, frequent shuttle bus to and from Kippax Group Centre and to local schools. The 'little blue buses' were purchased by the Ginninderry Joint Venture. In 2024, they are operated by Transport Canberra and run from 7am - 7pm, 7 days a week at 30 minute intervals and 15 minute intervals at peak times.

One of Ginninderry's environmental projects in the Sustainability Manager's portfolio revolutionises the standard development practice of leaving a very low percentage of the existing trees on a development site. In 2016-17, Ginninderry committed to achieving a target of 80% retention of all trees within each suburb. In 2019, this led to a suburb design-based project with forest ecologist and native vegetation specialist, Professor Philip Gibbons, and his team at the Australian National University's Fenner School of Environment and Society. As result, Ginninderry has been able to retain 80% of the trees in Strathnairn and 92% in the new suburb of Macnamara. The project's methodology is based on a series of landscape treatments around existing mature trees that have increased both human and wildlife well being. It includes strategies such as planting native shrubs and grasses around trees to protect humans from falling limbs as well as providing safe habitat for small wildlife and pollinators.

In 2024, the project's implementation, including the ongoing management and research project associated with it, is outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding between Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd, the Australian National University, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, Transport Canberra, and the City Services Directorate. At the completion of the research project, it is hoped that the findings will be used to inform the relevant ACT Government agencies on how large, existing mature trees and the areas beneath and adjacent to them within the urban area can be managed in the future for the benefit of the community and the environment.

*Jessica Stewart and Matthew Frawley, Urban Design and Land Manager (GLHS conversations and emails 5/3/24-9/4/24).*

## Community engagement

Community engagement and participation as a sustainability principle and practice has developed with Ginninderry. In 2016, community engagement was established as a program managed by a dedicated Ginninderry staff member. The first community engagement appointment was Community and Cultural Planning Manager, Susan Davis. Her work included the development of a community arts program (Create) and the ongoing Ginninderry public art program. Early public artworks included G.W. Bot's Little Eagle, Bronwyn Berman's Circle of Stones and several sculptures situated around The Link's dam.

The Ginninderry Local History Study (GLHS) also formed an integral part of early community engagement work. Its aim was to welcome new residents with people and place stories of their new home. Many of the stories were researched and developed in collaboration with members of longstanding and local communities. Outputs from this study include a postcard set of illustrated stories, a physical Map Wall which has continued to draw and enthrall visitors to The Link, and events linking into the ACT Heritage Festival (see Part 2 of this document for details of GLHS activities).

As house and land packages in Strathnairn were sold in 2018, contact with new residents-to-be became part of the community engagement program. Some of them volunteered to participate in interviews with Jessica Smith as part of her honours' thesis research into multicultural perspectives on sustainability (Smith, 2018, Ginninderry online). Their contribution provided important information about new residents' interests in sustainable living. The research came about through Ginninderry's longstanding partnership with the Fenner School of Environment and Society at the Australian National University (ANU).

In 2019, Tulitha (Tuli) King was appointed as Ginninderry's Assistant Community Engagement Manager alongside Susan Davis whose role included both community management and cultural planning. It was later split between them with Tuli becoming Community Development Manager – a position she held until 2023 when she moved to the Suburban Land Agency. From the end of 2019, when the first residents started arriving at Ginninderry, the community engagement program developed activities that saw The Link become home to a range of weekly activities including choir, yoga, playgroup, dance and taekwondo. Many of these were run after work hours to engage residents during the times they were most likely to be in their neighbourhoods. As the population grew, events expanded to include Christmas in the Park, Paddy's Park Play Days, community Iftar Dinners, Kite Flying Festivals, Easter events, and

other activities to ensure regular opportunities for incidental meetings among neighbours<sup>6</sup>. During this time, Susan's dual role was split between them and Tuli became Community Engagement Manager.

Further events were developed in 2021-22 as a result of Ginninderry's partnership with University of Canberra (UC) researchers interested in improving people and place outcomes through community based initiatives. Tuli and Dr Cathy Hope, commenced work on their 2021 project with residents of the Strathnairn Flexihomes<sup>7</sup>. Initially they invited people to a meet and greet event in Tredwell Street. In response to participants, the next event was a movie night in the street. Residents were involved in creating the third street event. It was called the Tredwell Street Long Lunch. Everyone brought a plate, a Tredwell Street mosaic place sign was designed, face painting was organised by a resident. Another who was a singer song writer, provided music. About 30 people attended and all residents received a free plant.

The next step towards residents running their own initiatives was a Ginninderry small grants fund managed by Community Engagement. The first activities supported by the fund included the Ginninderry Jog, a local street party and some introductory Afrofusion dance classes. The fund continues in 2024. In Tuli's words, 'the fund is a key step in building the capacity of the community to take ownership of their own neighbourhoods'.

The U.C. team also contributed an activity-based approach to community consultation for Macnamara Park by running an intergenerational play workshop where insights from an older generation were provided to the design team for the space. For further details about Ginninderry and UC community initiatives see the Ginninderry website. <https://ginninderry.com/inspire-news-insights/community/the-slow-street-initiative-giving-power-back-to-the-people/>

*Tulitha King (GLHS emails 26/3/24- 17/4/24)*

### SPARK Training and Employment Initiative

Riverview's approach to economic sustainability started with awareness of the issues of employment in West Belconnen, and the capacity of residential developments to create and support local jobs from construction into the ongoing life of a community (Ellis and Adams, 2015 p. 30). In 2012-2013, David Maxwell and Tony Adams' research for models that met their interests led them to a presentation of SA Renewal's Training and Employment Initiatives Program in the new suburb of Playford, north of Adelaide. Emma Sckrabei's presentation provided the 'point of difference' David and Tony were looking

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<sup>6</sup> Iftar is the important 'breaking of the fast' dinner during Ramadan. Community Iftar dinners at Ginninderry have been provided for people of 'all ages, nationalities and faiths' (Ginninderry website, <https://ginninderry.com/event/community-iftar-at-ginninderry/>).

<sup>7</sup> Flexihomes are designed as affordable homes that fit the space between apartment and traditional home living.

for in relation to their internationally significant sustainability aims. Amongst the many infrastructure-based economic sustainability programs they had heard about, Emma's Renewal SA 'Works' program for the development project, Playford Alive, was a practical, people-oriented and development-embedded model focused on improving training and employment outcomes for diverse and often disadvantaged local people, as well as for local employers.

The next step was an invitation to Emma to talk about her program with stakeholders and local community groups in Canberra. When strong interest in a similar training and employment initiative in West Belconnen was voiced, Riverview offered her the job of developing it.

Emma's initial work was to develop a business case for approval by the LDA. Once it was approved, she moved to Canberra in October 2015 and started work to get the program up and running. This involved making connections with local training providers, industries, businesses, social services, and community groups as a framework for participants to explore opportunities, get experience and find pathways that were right for them. It also included establishing three key elements of the program: working with existing training and employment providers to develop pre-employment training programs; live training sites (not just classrooms); and ensuring that all Ginninderry procurement contracts for capital works and commercial land sales would include clauses obliging contractors to provide work experience and/or new paid employment positions for residents in the local area.

At the suggestion of the then Ginninderry Marketing Manager, Niva Pryor, the program was named 'Ginninderry's SPARK Training and Employment Initiative'. SPARK was a connection with the local Aboriginal meaning of Ginninderry as 'sparkling water'. It also became particularly appropriate for a program that ignites the spark of opportunity.

SPARK's first project in 2016 was a construction project with Strathnairn Arts Association that involved carrying out minor landscaping/building maintenance. It included concreting, paving, building and rebuilding walls, and veranda construction. It was a 'live' training site that involved working with materials under the supervision of a qualified construction trainer and assessor from a registered training organisation. Materials were provided by Strathnairn Arts. Emma, assisted by SPARK Administrative Co-ordinator, Ashleigh Johnston, found the funding for the project, managed stakeholder involvement and participant recruitment and oversaw the project daily. As a first SPARK initiative, it established the program's focus on participants by providing mentoring and ensuring the well-being of each person. It also became a showcase for a developer's capacity to give practical support to the local community as part of the development process.

Since 2016, SPARK's training and employment activities have expanded from the Strathnairn Arts landscaping project to include civil construction, construction, horticulture, conservation land management, aged care, home and community care, individual support services, early childhood education and care, business administration, and hospitality. They have included SPARK initiatives such

as the Women in Trades Program (2021), funded by the Australian Government's Job Trainer Initiative, and a range of partnerships with industry and training organisations. Social inclusion continues to be the program's hallmark with participants including, young, Aboriginal, mature aged, long-term unemployed and culturally and linguistically diverse people.

Riverview's decision to establish and fund SPARK's management has been repaid in outcomes for participants, local employment, and Ginninderry's own aims. SPARK has a strong place in the lives of its over 16,500 participants. Many are now alumni who value its impact on overcoming barriers that have held them back from achieving important outcomes such as qualifications, employment, work experience, self-confidence, a new direction, or some other turning point in their lives. Stories of SPARK alumni and details about the program are available on the Ginninderry website (SPARK Training and Employment, <https://ginninderry.com/spark-training-and-employment/>).

To date SPARK has delivered over 1672 training places, 707 work experience places and 845 jobs. In 2019, Emma was named ACT Woman of the Year for her *outstanding work in removing barriers for women within the male-dominated construction industry and providing training and employment initiatives which specifically support women in returning to the workforce* (Yvette Berry, 2019). In 2022, this was followed by the National Association for Women in Construction Australia Crystal Vision award for progressing and advancing women's careers in construction.

*Emma Sckrabei (GLHS conversations and emails, 5/3/23-26/3/23)*

### Ginninderry Conservation Trust

In the Ginninderry development plan, 600 hectares of land along the Murrumbidgee river and Ginninderra Creek is part of the Conservation Corridor. The staging of urban and corridor development is linked so that as each suburb is completed, its adjacent part of the corridor is handed over to the Ginninderry Conservation Trust for management. Stage 1, identified in Figure 4-7 as 1a, was handed over with the completion of Strathnairn (Neighbourhood 1). With Macnamara nearing completion, 2a, as shown in Figure 4-7 is 'in process'. In 2024, all areas of the Corridor from 1a-5a are available for handing over to the Trust as the suburbs are developed.

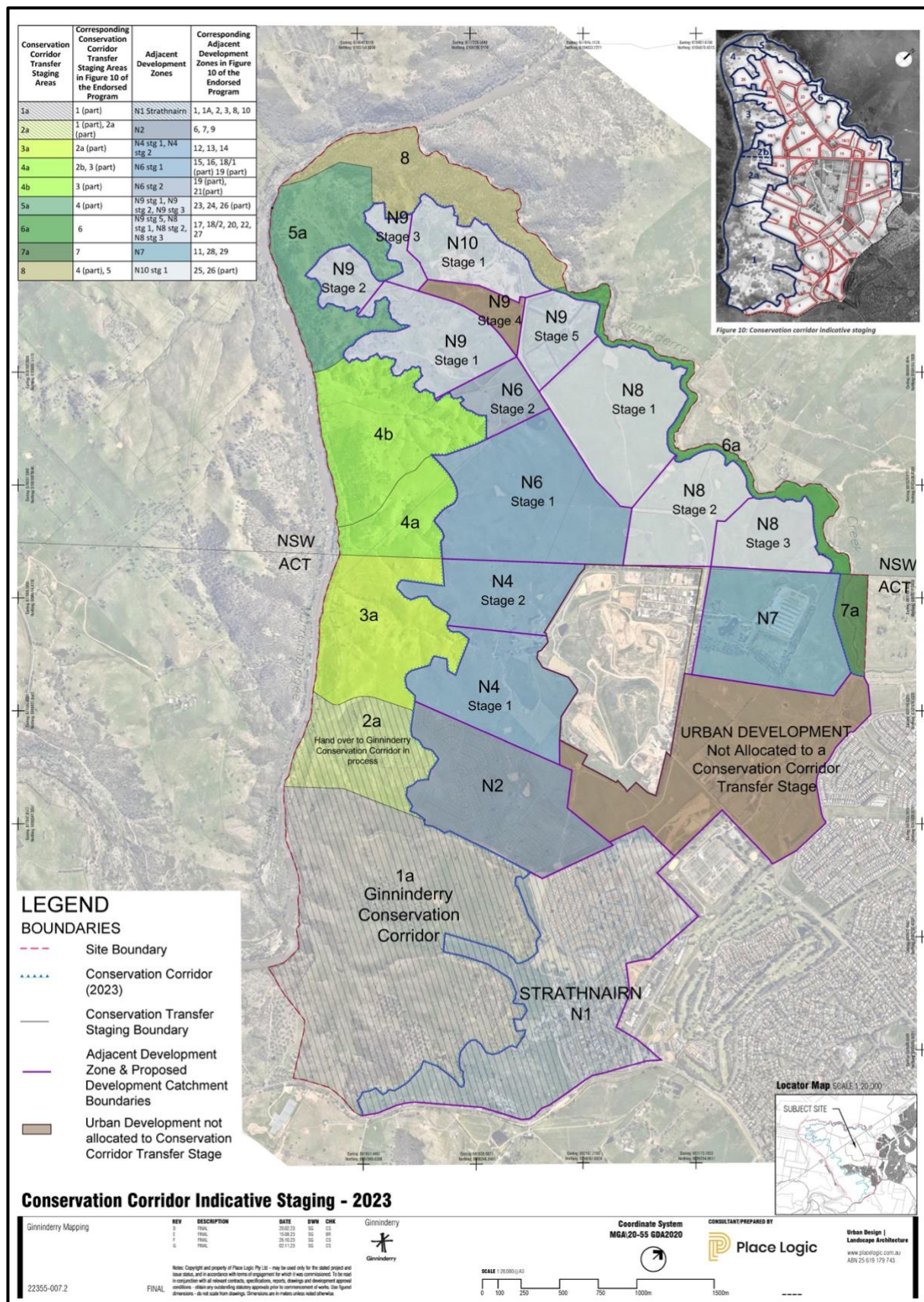


Figure 4-7 Ginninderry Conservation Corridor Indicative Staging, 2023. Supplied by Ginninderry

Ginninderry Conservation Trust was formally established in 2019 with Jason Cummings as CEO and, in 2020, Angela Callies as Program Director. The Trust is an independent body with its own board. Its mission integrates environmental and cultural values in the land. An important development activity is the creation of walking tracks with interpretive signage as well as audio stories and a booklet, to facilitate recreational usage. Protection of endangered Pink-tailed Worm-lizard habitat, Grassy Box Woodland and Natural Temperate Grassland, are high on the list of the Trust's conservation programs. The Trust encourages local residents to participate in its activities as volunteers, board members, visitors and citizen scientists. Art workshops are also a feature of community activities in the Corridor (<https://www.ginninderry.org/projects>).

Monitoring and managing biomass are important parts of the Trust's role as land managers. Biomass is the fuel load created by plant and animal material. Biomass monitoring includes looking at plant height, cover and level of curing (dryness). Surveys are undertaken twice yearly to ensure the fuel load is within the officially required parameters. Sites that fall outside these parameters are prioritised for management actions. Cattle are rotationally grazed across the Conservation Corridor to provide primary fuel management. Prescribed burning is also planned.

*The Ginninderry Conservation Trust team has grown significantly since the Trust was established four years ago. Along with our dedicated project officers and Caring for Country team, we now have six casual weekend rangers who walk the tracks, engage with visitors, do safety checks and run guided walks.*

*Three of our weekend rangers are local residents and speak Hindi, Punjabi and Nepalese, which is a reflection of the diversity of the local community. They are keen to get their cultural leaders and community out on the walking tracks and enjoying the natural values of the Corridor.*

*Our Caring for Country team leader is Tyson Powell, a Wiradjuri/Ngunnawal man, who supports and mentors two trainees, Leigh and Kye. Our trainees are now in their second year with the Trust and are developing strong land management and conservation skills, interwoven with First Nations culture and connection to country. This team is also part of the Murrumbung Rangers group and participate in cultural activities with that group and others on a regular basis.*

*Angela Callies, (Ginninderry conversations and emails, 23/2/24- 10/4/24)*

## Non-Indigenous/European heritage conservation

One of the studies that supported Ginninderry's green star status between 2013 and 2015, was a European heritage assessment conducted by Eric Martin and Associates (EMA). They concluded that the only site in Ginninderry that met the heritage assessment threshold was Belconnen Farm. Their conclusion also confirmed the Farm's 2011 listing on the ACT Heritage Register for its buildings from the colonial pastoral era and the 1920s ACT soldier settlement period, as well as its association with colonial explorer, Charles Sturt (Belconnen Farm Registration online). Their following 'Belconnen Farm Conservation Management Plan' for Ginninderry provided the basis for conservation and stabilisation works on the buildings in 2018-19 (Eric Martin and Associates, 2020; *Inspire News and Insights*, 1/3/18 online).

The aim of EMA's conservation work was to ensure the buildings on the farm were safe and watertight for the future. The oldest building was the c. 1850s two-room stone cottage built by pastoralist, Charles Campbell, as an overseer's cottage. It had been extended with some modifications over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly by soldier settler, Austin Shepherd (see Part 3.3, 'Block 14 Belconnen Farm'). The most significant of the more recent buildings was the Shepherds' new 1950 family home designed by architect, Ken Oliphant. Most of the farm buildings were put in by Austin Shepherd in the 1930s and, amongst others, included a woolshed, shearers' quarters, and later, a machinery shed. Based on conservation methods, they were repaired and made safe using original building materials and techniques from their particular periods. The stone cottage, with the removal of some additions, was restored to its 19<sup>th</sup> century form as a pastoral dwelling for an overseer. Despite storm damage at the time of the repairs, and the need to leave some interiors as empty shells for future safety, the work environment of shearers a century later lives on in the woolshed and the shearers' quarters. The 1950 house embodies the Shepherd family's move to a modern family home. Its interior amenities reflect the changes made from the 1920s in many other local rural farmhouses that no longer exist. Figure 4-8 shows examples of the conserved buildings.



Figure 4-8 Documentation of Eric Martin and Associates external stabilisation and conservation works, Belconnen Farm Precinct, 2018-2019. Photos: Eric Martin AM of Eric Martin and Associates, 2019 (houses); 2022 (kitchen block). [as arranged]: Exterior and interior of stone cottage, exterior and interior shell of shearers' quarters' kitchen block, exterior of 1950 house

EMA's research on the Belconnen Farm precinct threw up the puzzle of a house noted on an early ACT map. While no surface remnants were found, it's possible that it was a slab hut erected for a shepherd or boundary rider. In the wider area of Ginninderry and neighbouring properties, EMA also noted sites

that did not meet the heritage significance threshold but reflected important and interesting elements of colonial life and history. For these they recommended conservation in the form of interpretation. This recommendation was taken up by GLHS along with the broader brief of researching and interpreting the history of non-Indigenous people and places connected with the Sturt-Campbell pastoral property from the 1820s to present day Ginninderry (see Part 2 'Ginninderry Local History Study').

*Eric Martin (GLHS conversations and emails 20/3/24 – 23/3/24)*

## Past-present-future

In the changing landscape that is now Ginninderry, past, present and future stories of people and places tangle and meld in an ongoing past-present-future. Generations of farming experience combine with 21<sup>st</sup> century scientific research informing conservation of local ecosystems. New communities emerge in different circumstances and in the pattern of their time, but often using similar threads and stitches. Landmarks of places and stories, formed in the changing experiences and meanings of the land, are rediscovered and renewed in the fabric of each present, with an eye to the future.

### Land management/farm management

Since Corkhill Brothers moved their cattle from Gundaroo to West Belconnen in 2003, they have continued farming on the land associated with Ginninderry, as a business and, increasingly, as a way of managing the land over the process of a 40-year development. Patrick Corkhill, principal farmer in the Corkhills' farming business, Reid and Stevens, continued the work of breeding his Angus cattle on Ginninderry land for nearly two decades. He was dedicated to and loved his work (Brian Corkhill, GLHS conversation, 12/5/20). In the last years of his life, when he was undergoing chemotherapy, his wife Helen accompanied him as he saw to everyday farming tasks around Strathnairn. Like other members of the family, she said how much the land and farming work meant to him – 'he loved it out there' (Helen Corkhill, GLHS conversation, 13/5/20). Patrick died in 2019 at the age of 82. He is remembered in Strathnairn's Paddy's Park.

In September 2017, Reid and Stevens employed farm manager, Marcus Bush, to assist Patrick in managing the farming activities (Figure 4-9). In 2018, Patrick also decided to replace the demanding work of calving with the production of cattle for the beef market (Brian Corkhill, GLHS conversation, 12/5/20). After Patrick died, Marcus became Ginninderry's farm manager. In this role, Marcus has continued to manage the market specifications for beef sold on the livestock markets in a way that achieves premium prices for fat cattle and that fits in with the management of the changing Ginninderry landscape. This includes ensuring that the requirements for primary production, as well as conservation and bushfire management are met. As Marcus says, 'it's all about grass and managing the fuel load' (Marcus Bush, (GLHS conversation, 9/4/24).

In practice, Marcus feeds around 800 cattle on the basis of an annual 8-month program of grass management that uses a rotational grazing approach across the existing pasture (Figure 4-10). This method involves grazing a relatively large number of cattle per paddock for a shorter period, leaving grass at a height that allows quick regrowth so that after the last paddock is grazed, stock return to the first paddock to start the cycle again. By reducing the time cattle compact and disturb the ground in any one paddock, the rotational system supports soil health and the habitat of native flora and fauna. For the herd there is the benefit of moving to the next paddock where they are able to feed on younger, fresher, tastier and higher protein pasture that has not dried to the point where protein levels are depleted.

A group of Ginninderry's natural inhabitants, the dung beetles, play an important role in the success of rotational grazing (Figure 4-10). In the process of creating protein-rich nests for their larvae in dung balls, they break down and bury the manure the cattle leave. This activity aerates and fertilises the soil. It also creates habitat for earthworms and increases water penetration (National Museum of Australia online). In effect, the dung beetles follow the cattle through the paddocks to ensure they commence their breeding cycle in fresh dung pats. In 2024, an ANU Dung Beetle program is conducting research across the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor and the paddocks under the management of Ginninderry.

From 2003-2024, Ginninderry's grazing management, driven by the Corkhill family's long experience, has evolved in relation to changing demands including the availability of pasture, market requirements, bushfire mitigation, environmental sustainability, and, most recently, changes in both urban and conservation areas of the Development (Figure 4-9). In the future, as the development front moves north and reduces the area of pasture, there will be further adjustments. For instance, pasture improvement for grazing is likely to be progressively replaced with planting crops to maintain nutrition.

*(Marcus Bush, GLHS conversation, 9/4/24; Matthew Frawley, 15/4/24)*



Figure 4-9 Marcus Bush, Ginninderry Farm Manager, assessing the vehicle track in Little Eagle Paddock, Conservation Corridor, Photo Angela Callies, June 2020.



Figure 4-10 Angus Cattle grazing in lot 7, NSW, south of Ginninderra Creek. Photo: Jessica Stewart, May, 2021.

## New stories

In 2019, GLHS finalised a set of 10 illustrated postcards, *Stories from Ginninderry*, for the first new residents' welcome pack. A workshop with some of the new residents waiting for their houses to be finished, provided material for a postcard reflecting the different worlds they were bringing into Ginninderry and the life they were looking forward to in Strathnairn. A photograph of new residents taken by Tuli King as part of Ginninderry's Christmas 2019 event completed the card, 'New Stories' (Figure 4-11). The postcards were launched along with the Conservation Council's booklet *Ginninderry Treasures*, in early February 2020.



Figure 4-11 Some of Ginninderry's first residents, Strathnairn Arts Centre, December 2019. Photo: Tuli King.



*Shuchi & Rohan Ahluwalia; Harry and Meryl McCay; Kingsley and Mary Okolie; and Mary Hutchison*

At the end of 2020, Ginninderry's first public park, Paddy's Park, named in memory of Patrick Corkhill, his years of farming Ginninderry land, and love of the outdoors, was launched (Figure 4-12 and Figure 4-13). The Park includes sporting and picnic facilities, a playground, an outdoor amphitheatre, a wetland, walking paths and ample room for quiet and more active recreation. It has developed as a site of many and varied activities such as kite flying, dancing, drumming, community picnics, arts activities, and play days for all ages (*Inspire News and Insights*, 9/2/2023 online).



Figure 4-12 Paddy's Park Play Day picnic, c.2021-2024. Source: Ginninderry



Figure 4-13 A new Ginninderry generation, c.2021-2024. Source: Ginninderry

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### Abbreviations

ACTHL: ACT Heritage Library

CDHS: Canberra & District Historical Society

ms: manuscript

NAA: National Archives of Australia

NLA: National Library of Australia

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