



## Andrew Barr MLA

### Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality

Minister for Tertiary Education

Minister for Tourism and Special Events

Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment

Member for Kurrajong

Mr Tom Duncan  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 1020  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 5 June 2019 regarding petition number 16-19 lodged by Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA about urban development at Parkwood NSW on behalf of 664 residents of the Australian Capital Territory.

The Parkwood Planning Proposal to rezone the NSW portion of the Ginninderry development for urban settlement and environmental conservation is currently being considered by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. The ACT Government supports the proposal to rezone land at Parkwood for urban settlement, recognising this as an essential step to progress the Ginninderry development.

Notwithstanding the outcomes of the NSW planning decision, the ACT Government has been working with NSW to progress planning of the delivery of services to Parkwood. This includes two Cross-Border Forums in the past two years, which have brought together ACT and NSW representatives to discuss the best approach to cross-border service delivery. The forums have led to detailed services and infrastructure planning, with work continuing between jurisdictions to determine appropriate methods of delivering services for the future community of Ginninderry.

Movement of the ACT-NSW border in West Belconnen remains a priority for the Government and is specifically referenced under section 5.4 of the current ACT Labor Party and ACT Greens Parliamentary Agreement for the 9th Legislative Assembly. Movement of the border would result in the entire Ginninderry development, including the Parkwood area in NSW, coming under the ACT's service delivery jurisdiction. This would be the simplest solution to eliminate many of the cross-border complexities regarding service delivery.

With respect to concerns regarding the environmental impacts of the Parkwood development, the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy undertook a strategic assessment of proposed urban development at Ginninderry, including the Parkwood area (referred to as West

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Belconnen) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC Act). The strategic assessment examined impacts from the proposal on matters of national environmental significance and included assessment of planned conservation areas for the protection of biodiversity and maintenance of urban amenity. On 1 September 2017, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy granted approval for urban development and biodiversity conservation at West Belconnen. The program report of the strategic assessment is available at the Department of Environment website.

The ACT Government recognises the significance of our unique natural environment and the importance of protecting the Aboriginal heritage of the land, on which we strive to promote biodiversity rich, resilient landscapes, where well-functioning ecosystems can meet the needs of people and the environment. The ACT Planning Strategy (2018) supports the directions of the NSW South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036, which identifies the need for urban planning that is sustainable and resilient, in terms of protecting biodiversity, enhancing habitat connectivity and reducing our vulnerability to natural hazard events.

Biodiversity conservation, Aboriginal heritage and natural hazards are important issues and are being appropriately considered as a part of the Ginninderry development process, reflecting the direction set out in key ACT and NSW Strategic Planning documents.

In October 2018, the ACT Government agreed to the establishment of the Ginninderry Conservation Trust to have responsibility for the environmental and conservation management of the 596 hectares of conservation corridor to be dedicated as part of the cross border urban development (360 ha in the ACT and 236 ha in NSW). Establishing the conservation corridor and the Trust are requirements of the strategic assessment under the EPBC Act approval for the urban development. The cross-border Trust aims to achieve seamless conservation outcomes with the ACT government directly funding conservation activities in the ACT and the NSW portion funded from NSW derived revenue sources.

The Trust is an example of collaboration in planning and conservation to safeguard those natural assets that support Canberra as a city in the landscape – the influence of which will extend across the border into the Parkwood stages of the development. The Ginninderry Conservation Corridor will be progressively put in place as stages of the urban development progress, with the entire corridor in place by 2042-55. The Trust will be Governed by a Board of Directors comprised of government and community representatives, with positions reserved for Indigenous representatives nominated from an existing advisory group, the Ginninderry Aboriginal Advisory Group (GAAG). The group established itself to advise the Trust; provide input to cultural values management in the conservation corridor for the life of the Ginninderry development; advise Indigenous stakeholders and the broader Indigenous community on the progress of GAAG activities; and respond, when appropriate, to project-wide issues raised by the Joint Venture and the wider community. Group members are the eight cultural Knowledge Holders (or their representatives) as nominated by Indigenous community stakeholders during the cultural heritage assessment of the Conservation Corridor.

If Parkwood becomes part of the ACT as a result of the movement of the ACT-NSW border, risks such as bushfire will be appropriately considered by the ACT Government in the planning of the development. The adequacy of bushfire studies and of mitigation or control measures proposed by the developer will be assessed as part of the normal course of development applications received by the ACT Government.

An assessment by either the ACT or NSW Government of development at Parkwood, including environmental and Aboriginal heritage impacts, has not yet occurred, noting this assessment would be undertaken once development approval is sought.

Thank you for writing to me on this issue. I trust this information is of use.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Barr', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Barr MLA  
Chief Minister

28 AUG 2019