

2026

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

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

**Urban Growth Boundary - Establishment - Assembly Resolution of 10 April 2025 -
Letter to Ministers Standing Order 137A**

**Presented by
Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development
May 2026**

Our ref: 25/0426479

Members of the Legislative Assembly
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Members

I am writing to inform you, in accordance with Standing Order 137A, that the Government will be unable to meet the deadline set out in Clause (3)(d) of the Assembly Resolution passed on 10 April 2025 regarding the Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment (the Resolution). Clause (3)(d) of the Resolution calls for the release of the Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment (EBSA) by 31 July 2026.

Since the resolution was passed, the ACT Government has been engaging with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to progress development of the Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment (EBSA). As part of this engagement, DCCEEW has advised that they have matured as a regulator and that expectations for strategic assessments have evolved since the EBSA process commenced. They highlighted specific concerns relating to the age of the ecological surveys that underpinned the EBSA, as the majority of these were undertaken before the project was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are now over five-years old, and that this now exceeds the timeframe that DCCEEW consider to be best practice.

In response to this advice, and in consultation with DCCEEW, CED have engaged two consultants to support the finalisation of the EBSA and update the ecological survey; Open Lines/Capital Ecology and Umwelt.

Ecological studies that have been undertaken as of the end of February 2026 include:

- critical striped legless lizard (SLL) surveys from August to December 2025;
- Plant Community Type and vegetation zone mapping in the field
- Established Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon survey transects

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- Threatened ecological communities mapping
- Ongoing threatened species habitat mapping
- Targeted nocturnal surveys for Canberra Raspy Crickets

A revised delivery program for the EBSA has been developed, with further studies to be undertaken across the study area.

Undertaking these ecological studies extends the timeframe for the EBSA, but they are critical to ensure that the strategic assessment represents contemporary best practice and is fully informed by updated ecological survey data. This approach meets expectations of DCCEEW, who, as the Commonwealth approval body, must endorse the strategic assessment before it can be publicly released for exhibition. There would also be an expectation from the Canberra community that decisions for future development and conservation in the Eastern Broadacre area are based on current and rigorous evidence.

With the inclusion of the additional program of ecological studies, the revised timeline indicates that the draft EBSA will be provided to DCCEEW, in Q3-Q4 2026 to review and endorse for public exhibition. The actual timing for the public exhibition will be subject to Commonwealth consideration and endorsement.

Given this, it is unlikely that the commitment in the Assembly Resolution to release the EBSA by 31 July 2026 will be met.

This correspondence will be tabled as required under Standing Order 137A. I acknowledge the importance of timely reporting to the Assembly, and I will also be providing the half-yearly progress update to the Assembly in July 2026 in accordance with the Resolution.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support on this important matter.

Yours sincerely



Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development
14/05/2026