



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked By: Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Addressed to: Minister for the Environment, Parks and Land Management

Redirection: Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Reference: Environment

Hearing Date: 31 July 2024, 11.00am – 1.30pm

In relation to: Works at Tuggeranong Homestead

QON lodgement Date: 01/08/2024

Answer Due date: 08/08/2024

1. Given the ACT Government's successful completion of a certain section of the creek naturalisation project in Calwell, can you provide an update on the future planning and timeline for extending this project to include the section of the creek adjacent to the Tuggeranong Homestead?
2. What specific plans does the government have to ensure the continuity of this project, and how will these plans address the environmental and heritage concerns raised by the MOTH group and ensure that the preservation of historic plantings and the rammed earth construction of the homestead building are maintained?
3. How will a government plan to further naturalise the creek integrate and support the efforts of volunteer groups ensure that their valuable planting and restoration contributions are recognized and utilized effectively?
4. How will the next phase of the creek restoration project prioritise the conservation of the historic plantings within the creek area, some of which are over 120 years old and nominated to the Historic Tree Register, and ensure their continued health and vitality?
5. What measures are being taken to address the specific hydrological needs in the planning and execution of the next phase of the creek restoration project, to help restore the water table and maintain the soil moisture necessary for the homestead's structural integrity.

Shane Rattenbury MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. Initial feasibility studies have been conducted on naturalising the section of the concrete Tuggeranong Creek drain adjacent to the Tuggeranong Homestead. However, there are currently no plans to naturalise this section of the concrete channel.

The Government has progressed with planning for a project to restore flows to a section of the original Tuggeranong Creek bed adjacent to Tuggeranong Homestead (the 'anabranche'), which was stranded when the concrete drain was built. The project has received development approval and design acceptance. Budget constraints and increased costs of construction of other Healthy Waterway projects has meant that this project will not be delivered in this term of government. Project planning is well progressed should funding be made available in the next term of government.

2. The development of the Lake Tuggeranong Healthy Waterways plan will inform future water quality infrastructure and channel naturalisations.

The MOTH group was consulted, along with the Tuggeranong Homestead lessees, in formulating a plan for the anabranche project. The resulting design flows are too low to impact any of the MOTH plantings on the Homestead, which are on the upper banks of the old channel, or any of the Homestead buildings.

Creek restoration projects require thorough investigation to protect environmental and heritage values and deliver the best water quality outcomes. A heritage consultancy was conducted for the anabranche project to ensure that heritage trees and iron works are preserved. The project design avoids damage to heritage trees adjacent to the channel and has elements that will help protect a heritage tree on a bank that is at risk of being undermined.

3. The Government works closely with Catchment Groups, ParkCare and Urban Landcare to engage in community stewardship of public land. Where proposals are of local interest, we engage with local community groups. If the project proceeds, signage about the anabranche project would emphasise the connections to country of local First Nations families and the contribution of MOTH to enhancing the flora of the area.
4. The anabranche project already prioritises the preservation of historic plantings. If the Tuggeranong Creek concrete channel is naturalised, then further heritage consultancies will be conducted to ensure that the values present are preserved or enhanced.
5. If the anabranche is restored it would raise the local water table since the old creek bed is well connected to the underlying aquifer. There is also some connection between the Tuggeranong Creek naturalisation upstream of the Homestead and the aquifer under the homestead site that assist in maintaining the water table.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that are difficult to decipher as a specific name.

Date:

7/8/24

By the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, Shane Rattenbury MLA