ACT Government
Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development

EPSDD Ref No.: 21/43721

Response to DLO Request

*** All information provided should be factual.**
EGM clearance email to be saved in the Objective file and forwarded to the EPSDD DLO inbox and copy in the relevant EO.

Subject: Queanbeyan Sister City - Botanical Garden Projects

- Development, including novel landscapes such as botanic gardens, would not be supported within the Conservation Estate (River Corridor Reserves) unless they were specifically designed as restorative, rehabilitation or endemic ecosystem improvement. The design would need to include a buffer of interface area that would assist in the prevention of the spread of pest plants and animals and pathogens into the Reserve.

Subject: Proposed new Queanbeyan Sewage Treatment Plant (QSTP)

- Best practice standards and technologies are essential for the new QSTP to ensure the protection of the aesthetic, recreational and tourism values of Lake Burley Griffin (estimated to be in excess of $23 Mill annually - Note 1).
- Significant point sources of nutrient inputs into the Molonglo River and Lake Burley Griffin, such as the QSTP, are much easier to control than the diffuse inputs from runoff in urban and rural areas.
- Even small increases in loads or concentrations of nutrients, especially phosphorus, could result in more frequent and long-lasting algal blooms in the lake.
- Key environmental concerns have been highlighted by the EPSDD in the formal response to the draft EIS for the QSTP.
- The QSTP upgrade to 75,000 EP (effective population) capacity is forecast by QPRC to reach capacity around 2040. At that time, total phosphorus load discharged from the QSTP will have approximately doubled from the current discharge load, assuming that effluent pollutant concentration for phosphorus remains similar to recent QSTP plant performance.
- If QPRC operate the upgraded QSTP to meet the current ACT Environmental Authorisation for phosphorus of 50%ile 0.2 mg/litre, the total phosphorus load discharged from the QSTP will increase approximately four-fold from current by around 2040. When the 2024 QSTP upgrade reaches capacity around 2040, total

phosphorus load entering the lake would increase more than 30-90% above current load depending on median effluent phosphorus load discharged.

- Total effluent phosphorus load discharged from sewage treatment plants (STPs) upstream of the lake could be exacerbated even further with a potential upgrade around 2030 of Icon Water's Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant, and a request by Icon Water that it also discharge upstream of the lake. Under this scenario, and assuming an ACT Environmental Authorisation for the Fyshwick STP the same as the QSTP, the total phosphorus pollutant load discharged by STPs upstream of the lake could increase in the range of three- to six-fold, and total phosphorus load entering the lake could increase more than 60-150% above current load depending on median effluent phosphorus load discharged.
- A more thorough assessment of water quality and the appropriate discharge authorisations (licence conditions) is needed, along with associated policy and licencing changes. This will assist the ACT Government to be confident that no deterioration of water quality in Lake Burley Griffin will occur in the future (e.g. by 2040). The EPSDD has initiated this work.
- Greater consideration should be given also to the contribution of the new QSTP (and other potential STPs) to the lake's water quality under the more extreme and drier conditions of climate change and given the estimated increase of the local population.
- Successful long-term management of regional water quality and water security are dependent on close cooperation between the ACT and the QPRC.

Note 1: Report on the state of the watercourses and catchments for Lake Burley Griffin – Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment 2012

Subject: Catchment Management

- The QPRC is proposing that, to better and more permanently fund broad-scale catchment management initiatives (noxious weed eradication, erosion mitigation, water quality, water security) across the region, a joint funding arrangement be put in place to carry out these catchment initiatives on an annual basis.
- Funding for these initiatives is proposed to come from the QPRC's contribution to the Water Abstraction Charge (WAC - approx. $3Mill annually) and a new Environmental Levee (or similar) that Council will introduce to its ratepayers.
- The ACT & Region Catchment Management Coordination Group (for which EPSDD provides the Secretariat) provides a forum for discussion on catchment initiatives.
- ACT Treasury has advised previously that they are not supportive of hypothecating funding derived through the WAC.
- The EPSDD is supportive of consideration of opportunities to use funds derived through the WAC for catchment management activities as per the intended purpose of the WAC.

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Subject: Heritage

- Long before the formation of the ACT, and up to World War II, Queanbeyan was the business hub inextricably connected to colonial settlement and Canberra's pastoral history.
- The growth of heritage tourism can only benefit with an ongoing partnership between the ACT and our surrounding region, building on the existing connections of the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival and the Canberra Tracks program.
    - Since 2009 the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival has been connecting local and visiting audiences to the significant Aboriginal, natural and built heritage of the district.
    - Each year, the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council has been a valued partner, offering multiple events each year, with at least six in the 2021 Festival.
    - The Canberra Tracks network of heritage interpretation includes Queanbeyan's Riverside Cemetery as a key site on track 4: ACT Pioneers Cemetery Track.
    - The 2009 Heritage Festival saw the official unveiling of seven signs by Mayor Tim Overall and former Chief Minister Jon Stanhope.