

Planning and Development (Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve) Plan of Management 2010

Disallowable instrument DI2010–280

made under the

Planning and Development Act 2007 section 330

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Legislative context

The *Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve Plan of Management* has been prepared under the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Act) and policies in the National Capital Plan.

Under the Act (Part 10.4, s. 320) the custodian for an area of public land may prepare a draft plan of management for the area if the custodian considers the existing plan of management is outdated. The 1994 plan of management for the Jerrabomberra Wetlands is now outdated and a new plan has been prepared.

A plan of management is a disallowable instrument under section 330 (1) of the Act.

The Territory Plan identifies that the Jerrabomberra Wetlands is public land reserved for the purposes of Nature Reserve. Under the Act (s. 317, Schedule 3) management objectives for nature reserve are:

1. to conserve the natural environment
2. to provide for public use of the area for recreation, education and research.

The Act (s. 319) requires that a plan of management includes a description of the area to which it applies and how the management objectives for the area are to be implemented or promoted in the area.

Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve

Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve is located on the Molonglo River floodplain, approximately four kilometres east of the city of Canberra, in the ACT. The reserve is bounded by Lake Burley Griffin to the west and by Dairy Road to the east. The reserve includes the Molonglo Reach to the north and the Jerrabomberra Billabongs and silt trap to the south.

Jerrabomberra Wetlands is one of the most valuable wetland areas in the lowlands of the ACT and adjacent region of NSW. The presence of permanent, shallow water bodies means that the wetlands are regionally important as a drought refuge and as seasonal habitat for migratory species. Over 80 species of waterbird have been recorded in the wetlands and many bird species not specifically associated with water habitats also occur in the planted woodlands and nearby grasslands. In total, 170 bird species have been sighted in the reserve.

Jerrabomberra Wetlands is listed in the Australian Directory of Important Wetlands for its significant bird habitat. A number of bird species which use the wetlands on a seasonal basis are protected under bilateral agreements between Australia and the governments of Japan, China and Korea, and the wetlands are on the ACT Heritage Register.

The area also supports other terrestrial and aquatic fauna and the reserve provides linking habitat between the woodlands and open forest of Mt Pleasant and Mt Ainslie to the north and Jerrabomberra Creek catchment to the south.

The location of the reserve close to the Canberra City on the eastern edge of Lake Burley Griffin provides an opportunity for education and research activities related to wetland ecosystems and recreational activities linked to the area's natural and cultural values.

Preparation of the plan of management

Preparation of the plan of management for Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve commenced in 2004 through consultation with ACT and Commonwealth Government agencies, conservation groups and the Canberra Airport.

The *Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve Draft Management Plan* was released for public comment in 2006. Eleven submissions were received and a submissions report was prepared.

During 2009/2010 the Chief Minister convened three round table discussions which drew together relevant agencies, expert advisory committees and individuals to explore issues associated with urban development adjacent to Jerrabomberra Wetlands. Governance options for the reserve were also considered.

In April 2010 the revised draft plan was provided to the Standing Committee on Planning, Public Works and Territory and Municipal Services as required under s. 326 of the Act and at the same time the revised draft plan was made available on the Department of Territory and Municipal Services website.

The Standing Committee advised that an inquiry was not warranted and suggested that the plan be provided to the Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water as it may be of interest. This committee also advised that an inquiry was not warranted.

In June 2010 the revised draft plan was provided to the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve Interim Board of Management and the board endorsed the plan in its current form.

Contents of the *Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve Plan of Management*

Chapter 1 outlines the purpose and scope of the plan and includes a Statement of Significance. The chapter also indicates statutory responsibilities, sets out the ACT planning framework and provides key principles for management.

Chapter 2 describes the physical features, types of habitat, the infrastructure within the wetlands and adjacent land uses. It also describes the values of Jerrabomberra Wetlands and the goals and objectives of management.

Chapter 3 defines the reserve management zones. These are based on the values that management aims to protect and the types of activities that will be permitted in each zone.

Chapter 4 addresses the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the reserve, in particular the value of the wetland habitats. The chapter addresses the need to conserve and enhance habitats suitable for migratory bird species protected under international agreements.

Chapter 5 identifies the importance of the Jerrabomberra Wetlands landscape including the rural floodplain character of the reserve and the paleochannels of the Molonglo River. The national capital significance of the area and its role as a significant part of the Lake Burley Griffin foreshore is also identified.

Chapter 6 addresses the recreational use of the nature reserve. The focus is on recreational activities, visitor access and facilities that relate to and complement the reserve values, in particular wetland habitat.

Chapter 7 discusses education and research, noting that the primary management objective is for the reserve to be used for education about wetland ecosystems, and for appropriate facilities to be provided. The plan also supports wetland research.

Chapter 8 seeks to ensure that cultural heritage values of the reserve (including Indigenous heritage) are identified and conserved.

Chapter 9 considers a number of other management issues and requirements that support the conservation of reserve values. These include hydrology and water management, urban services infrastructure, adjacent land uses and future developments, fire management, and extraction of sand and gravel. The need for a master plan to guide site planning for the nature reserve is also identified in this chapter.

Chapter 10 addresses the implementation of actions within the plan, including priorities, and identifies the potential for community involvement in the management of the reserve.