

Australian Capital Territory

Nature Conservation (Draft Strategy) Approval 2013

Disallowable instrument DI2013-211

made under the

Nature Conservation Act 1980, s 30(1) (Minister's powers in relation to draft nature conservation strategy)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The ACT Conservator for Flora and Fauna has prepared a Draft Nature Conservation Strategy, pursuant to section 26 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* (the Act). This Strategy includes proposals in relation to the protection, management and monitoring of flora and fauna indigenous to the Territory. The Draft Strategy has been approved by the Minister under section 30(1) of the Act. The text of the Draft Strategy is contained in Schedule 1 of this instrument.

The previous Nature Conservation Strategy was approved in 1997 (see DI 1997-263). This approved Draft Strategy is intended to replace the previous Strategy.

Since the 1997 Nature Conservation Strategy was approved, the strategic context for nature conservation in the ACT has changed, requiring a new strategy to be developed. This Draft Strategy recognises that many strategies and actions from the 1997 Strategy remain relevant, and several incomplete actions or follow on actions have been retained in the new Draft Strategy. This approach ensures continuity and commitment to long term actions such as managing the recovery of threatened species.

The new Draft Strategy is a document for all land management, planning, business and community sectors in the ACT to guide a coordinated and integrated approach to nature conservation. The Draft Strategy aims to strengthen the key foundational elements of nature conservation in the ACT – connectivity, resilience, and community capacities – which constitutes a long-term approach to build the adaptive capacity of natural ecosystems and people to a changing climate. The Draft Strategy encourages investment in conservation to be focused across a number of priority 'focal landscapes'. The Draft Strategy is guided by five strategies and 33 actions. Success in meeting the Draft Strategies three outcomes will be measured through seven targets.

A number of new approaches are emphasised in the Draft Strategy. These new directions include:

- taking a whole-of-landscape approach to conservation;
- focussing on ecosystems rather than species;
- using spatial prioritisation to focus on activities;
- developing cross-border approaches to conservation through regional planning and project implementation;
- addressing the needs of biodiversity in a changing climate;
- developing a distinct urban biodiversity component in recognition that urban areas contribute to biodiversity conservation; and
- re-emphasising the value and benefit of community engagement.

The Draft Nature Conservation Strategy is comprised of the following sections:

- Overview – provides a summary of the Strategy;
- (1) Background – provides contextual information about the Strategy, highlighting the nature conservation framework in the ACT and linkages to national policies;
- (2) Restoring the ACTs focal landscapes – identifies four focal restoration landscapes in the ACT as priorities for investment, each of which has specific restoration objectives;
- (3) Enhancing connectivity – identifies connectivity as a strong element of the Strategy, and discusses the different types of connectivity that the Strategy will enhance;
- (4) Strategies and actions – outlines five Strategies and 33 associated actions;
- (5) Monitoring and Evaluation – outlines seven targets and associated indicators, as well as processes for monitoring and review; and
- (6) Implementation – explains that implementation will be guided by two implementation plans covering five year periods (2013-2018; 2019-2023), discusses the main implementation mechanisms for the Strategy, and also how funding will be prioritized across focal landscapes.

Section 27 of the Act requires public consultation on the Draft Strategy before it is approved. A public consultation process has been undertaken for the Draft Strategy. In accordance with section 28 of the Act, public comments were taken into account in finalising the Strategy.

To the extent that they have not been disallowed under the *Legislation Act 2001*, the provisions of the Draft Strategy at Schedule 1 of this instrument will become the text of the Nature Conservation Strategy for the Territory, pursuant to section 32 of the Act. As soon as practicable after the provisions of Schedule 1 become the text of the Nature Conservation Strategy, the Minister must, in writing, fix a day when the Nature Conservation Strategy is to commence.