

Mick Gentleman MLA

Manager of Government Business
Minister for Planning and Land Management
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety

Member for Brindabella

Ref. 23/558

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
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Dear Mr Duncan *Tom*

I refer to your letter of 6 June 2023 regarding the petitions 012-23 and 016-23 about the Ainslie Volcanics Sites.

The ACT Government acknowledges the interest of Ms Jo Clay MLA to have the sites incorporated into the Mt Ainslie Nature Reserve. The sites have important ecological and cultural values that require ongoing protection and care. The ACT Government acknowledges the contribution of local volunteers working with the Molonglo Conservation Group and ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) to undertake environmental restoration activities.

Part Block 4 Section 63 Campbell is under the custodianship of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. The area is managed to maintain the current ecological condition and as a bushfire asset protection zone for Block 1 Section 63 Ainslie. While the investment in the land is less than what would be expended if the land was part of a Nature Reserve, the Government continues to manage the land in a way that controls pest plants and animals and undertakes works for amenity purposes.

While adding this section into the protected areas of Canberra Nature Park could assist to secure ecological improvements, it will require significant additional resourcing to achieve conservation requirements to the level of a Nature Reserve.

Despite the above, conservation can occur across all land tenures. Areas on the blocks that contain conservation values, such as habitat for protected animals or endangered ecological communities can be managed separately to open space areas that are managed specifically for amenity and recreation values. Conservation zones can be identified with bollards to ensure appropriate management activities and spatially for land managers in planning and ensuring to avoid areas for slashing and mowing and pest plant and animal controls.

This system is underway across other areas of the Territory, such as Kuringa Drive Woodlands (protecting box-gum woodland), around Giralang Ovals (protecting rare plants), and at Lake Tuggeranong in Greenway (protecting Striped legless lizard habitat). There are also productive conversations occurring with conservation groups about ways in which we can provide greater recognition and protection to areas of high ecological value that sit outside the formal reserve system.

Some areas raised in the petitions, in particular Blocks 2 and 3 Section 60, Ainslie, and the grassy section of Block 4 Section 63, Campbell between block 4 Section 38 and Wolseley Drive, are currently managed by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS). There are some concerns regarding suitability of these sites into the nature reserve due to the fact that they are not directly connected to Canberra Nature Park, the level of ecological degradation on the site and the likely future use by the community as part of the urban open space network.

In consideration of the above matters, the government views that the current land management arrangements provided through PCS and TCCS are adequate to protect the identified values and the site. The site remaining as is will enable protection of ecological values as well as the flexibility for volunteer groups to participate in land management activities, and for future amenity activities to improve the open space for local residents.

The government will continue to support local community groups to also care for these locations through the provision of grants and other assistance. The government also notes that a Heritage Nomination is currently under assessment and consideration by the ACT Heritage Council pursuant to statutory processes.

I trust that the information in this letter is helpful and provides advice on the issues raised in Petitions 12-23 and 16-23.

Yours sincerely


Mick Gentleman MLA
3/15/2025