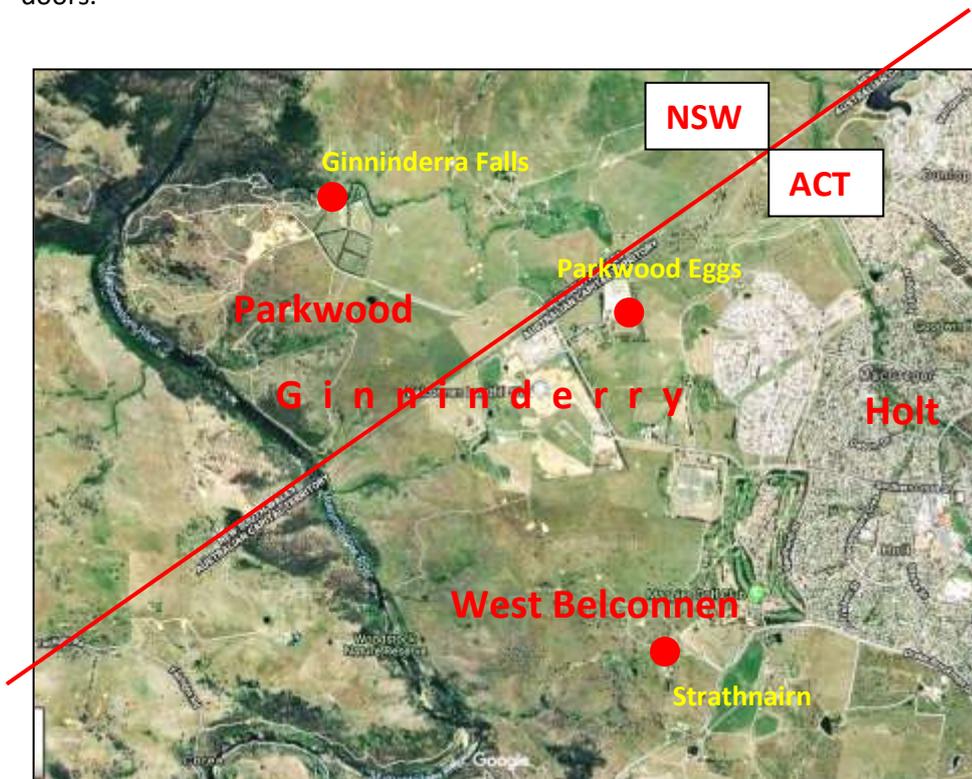


Ginninderra, Ginninderry, Parkwood, Gateway Agreement, Riverview, Yass Valley Council, NSW Dept of Planning and Environment, West Belconnen, ACT Planning and Land Authority, etc.

- - Confused ???? Join the crowd

April 2018 update.

In our 2018 January Update the Ginninderra Falls Association tried to explain the complex and convoluted administrative processes surrounding the approval of a NSW/ACT cross-border urban development for about 30,000 people now called Ginninderry. But there are so many “fingers in the pie” that it is difficult for members of the public to find out exactly what is going on, mainly because it’s all going on behind closed doors.



Where is it?

In NSW

Ginninderra Falls Association contends that the current development proposal Gateway Agreement for the NSW sector called Parkwood does not allow sufficiently wide buffer zones for the river and creek corridors

to be set aside in perpetuity for a) flora and fauna to flourish, b) public amenity, and c) bushfire hazard protection.

The five principles that should govern the Ginninderry urban development in the area to the northwest of the ACT straddling the border with NSW are **-1) Protection of ecological integrity and flora/fauna, 2) respect and protection of Aboriginal and European heritage, 3) preservation of landscape aesthetics and sightlines, 4) development of conservation corridors to meet educational, cultural and recreational goals, and 5) the natural heritage values must not be compromised by urban development.**

The Ginninderra Falls Association is currently awaiting the return to Yass Valley Council of planning proposals, with or without changes, for the NSW sector of the development, the so-called Gateway Agreement, that was sent by Yass Valley Council to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment for assessment in October 2017. This document must then go on public display for a minimum of 28 days to enable public comment.

In the meantime, the Ginninderra Falls Association has had a stall at Yass Markets, Murrumbateman Markets and Hall Markets over the last few months to publicise the issues that the Association feels the public should know about the Gateway Agreement shortcomings.

The Ginninderra Falls Association (GFA) seeks to ensure that viable conservation and buffer zones along the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek waterways are set aside in perpetuity before land is rezoned for urban development within NSW. The Association maintains that the proposed urban footprint for the Parkwood township in NSW, as it currently stands, does not allow for the establishment of an adequate and sustainable conservation park.

Meanwhile, in ACT

Opportunities for public comment in the ACT planning process arise under 'merit' and 'impact' track development applications ('DA'). Merit track and impact track DAs must be publically notified, and anyone may make a written comment or objection about a publically notified DA. Impact track DAs must also lodge an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which allows further opportunity for public comment during the EIS assessment process. The majority of DAs in the ACT fall into the merit track, for which there is no EIS and/or opportunity to contribute to an EIS. It is of note that in a Ginninderra Falls Association (GFA) case study involving West Belconnen, the DA was lodged in the merit track, rather than the impact track despite the development impacting on biodiversity under the *Nature Conservation Act 2014* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

In 2017 the Ginninderra Falls Association applied to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) to argue that the Ginninderry Stage 1 development application approved by the ACT Minister should have been assessed under the 'impact tract' rather than the 'merit tract' to make allowance for the nesting habits of the Little Eagle known to frequent the "Strathnairn" area, and the setback needs of the Scarlet Robin. The ACAT appeal was withdrawn by GFA after a negotiated agreement was reached with assistance from the ACT Environmental Defenders Office. Ginninderry has now applied to the ACT Government for exemption from the need to lodge an EIS for any future stage in the ACT. This is possible under the ACT's *Planning and Development Act 2007*.

<p>The Ginninderra Falls Association (GFA) seeks to ensure that a viable, wide, conservation zone along the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek waterways with appropriate buffer zones is set aside in perpetuity. The Association maintains that the proposed urban footprint for the Ginninderry township does not allow for the establishment of adequate and sustainable conservation parkland.</p>

Doug Finlayson,
25 April, 2018