

Ginninderry and the conservation park – January 2018 update.

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 -

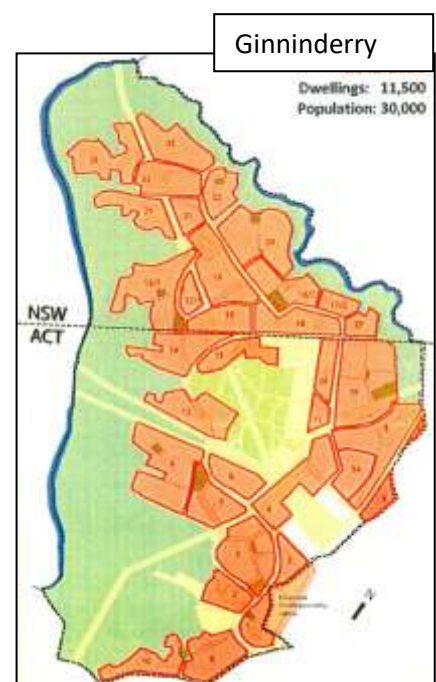
1. Ecological integrity and flora/fauna to be protected.
2. Aboriginal and European heritage to be respected and protected.
3. Aesthetics and sightlines to be preserved.
4. Conservation corridors to meet educational, cultural and recreational goals.
5. Natural heritage values must not be compromised by urban development.

NSW Government Gateway Determination

The **Revised Parkwood Planning Proposal (October 2017)** for the NSW sector of the Ginninderry Township was tabled on Wednesday 25 October, 2017 (4:00 pm) at the Ordinary Meeting of Yass Valley Council. The Council then [unanimously] recommended that *“The revised Planning Proposal PP-2014-01 and Cross Border Servicing Report be forwarded to the Southern Regional Director (Department of Planning and Environment pursuant to the conditions of the Gateway Determination prior to undertaking community consultation.”* The 173 page Planning Proposal was compiled by Knight Frank Town Planning, Sydney, for Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd and dated October 2017. The YVC motion was passed unanimously despite a presentation by GFA at the Council Meeting.

Ginninderra Falls Association (GFA) strongly disagrees with the proposed rezoning of land adjacent to the lower Ginninderra Creek and Murrumbidgee River corridors. GFA contends that this region at the confluence of the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek has significant ecological value to the wider community and has the potential to become a major regional tourist destination if designed in such a way that world-class criteria are incorporated. To achieve this the boundaries of the urban footprint have to be altered and the conservation area within NSW should be increased in size. GFA contends that **the urban development exclusion zone should be at least 300 metres wide along the lower Ginninderra Creek and Murrumbidgee River, preferably more.**

The Murrumbidgee River corridor and Ginninderra Creek gorges are such beautiful natural features of the landscape that the opportunity for creating a significant conservation park should not be missed because of lack of foresight by our political leaders. The land sales alone in NSW can be expected to raise a minimum of \$1.5-2.0billion for the landowners at \$3k-4k for each of the proposed 5000 dwellings. **Parkwood (population about 15,000) will become the largest township in the Yass Valley Council area, NSW, with most of the adult population working in the ACT.**



The Ginninderra Falls Association has identified **serious deficiencies in the Parkwood Planning Proposal** that need to be addressed by the NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment and the Riverview Projects developers before the NSW Government approves the rezoning of land and the urban development going ahead.

1. Throughout the Planning Proposal it is apparent the Riverview developers are seeking permission to rewrite the **rules and guidelines for rezoning land** in the Yass Valley Council LGA with numerous proposals to introduce special Local Environmental Plans (LEPs), a new principal Parkwood LEP.
2. The Planning Proposal includes **let-out clauses** that would allow largely unregulated developments on land currently under private ownership, e.g. Special Activities SP1 zoned land that could include Eco tourist facilities, restaurants, cafes, tourist accommodation, and function facilities. Such activities should be wholly outside an enlarged conservation park.
3. Although there are proposals to introduce **Development Control Plans (DCP)** for each stage of the urban development, it is not clear who would have the final say on whether these DCP's are approved and whether there is any avenue for community objections.
4. The Planning Proposal totally ignores recent University of NSW research on **bushfire hazards** and cites outdated bushfire regulations to proscribe Asset Protection Zones.

The Ginninderra Falls Association will be making strenuous objections to the Gateway Development approval process when it returns to the Yass Valley Council, expected early in 2018.

ACT Government approval of construction in the ACT sector of Ginninderry

The ACT Government approval process for the Stage 1 Estate Development Plan in the ACT sector of the Ginninderry Township development has been appealed by the Ginninderra Falls Association (GFA) to the **ACT Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (ACAT)**. The first hearing held on 6 November 2017 upheld the GFA's right to appeal this decision. The GFA has been greatly assisted in this matter by the Environmental Defenders Office, ACT, and other pro bono legal representation.

GFA contends that the ACT Government approved this development application in the wrong assessment tract, using the "merit track" instead of the "impact track" which would have required an Environmental Impact Statement to account for the impact on wild life currently native to the development region, including the little eagle and the scarlet robin. The ACT Planning is the respondent with Riverview as a joined party. The substantive issues will be heard in late February – early March, 2018.

There will be further ACAT deliberations in 2018. This is not a trivial/vexatious appeal. There have been development proposals in other parts of the ACT where wildlife habitat has been protected and major developments moved to another site, e.g. the legless lizard habitat on Jerrabomberra Avenue was declared and the Geoscience Australia building, completed in 1997, moved to another site.

Development proposals in the ACT are required to be assessed under Commonwealth and ACT environmental legislation for impacts on protected flora and fauna including the striped legless lizard



Lower Ginninderra Falls

Doug Finlayson,
8 January, 2018