



10 December 2021

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## **“The Vines” (Block 1582), Belconnen, ACT – Ecological Review**

**Capital Ecology project no. 3107**

Dear Mr Khan,

As requested, I undertook a brief site inspection of “The Vines” (Block 1582), Belconnen, ACT (referred to hereafter as the ‘study area’) on 22 October 2021. The study area is 34.33 ha and is zoned ‘NUZ1: Broadacre’. The purpose of the site inspection was to record the general condition of the vegetation and flora/fauna habitat, and to identify any areas of potential ecological significance.

The study area is boarded by:

- NUZ3: Hills, Ridges, and Buffer Areas zoned land to the south, east, and west; and
- Stockdill Drive to the north, beyond which are the current and future suburbs of the Ginninderry development, and the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor.

As shown on ACTmapi, the only recorded ecological value in the study area is ‘Potential Threatened Woodland’ along the eastern boundary.

### **Results of the Site Inspection**

The entire study area has been subject to long-term and intensive land management and modification, including clearance of most of the former woodland vegetation, establishment of the vineyards, and sowing of pasture grasses and clovers around the periphery of the vineyards and along the tracks etc. No part of the study area supports a native groundstorey, and the only retained remnants of the former woodland are the clumps and isolated mature Blakely’s Red Gum *Eucalyptus blakelyi* and Apple Box *E. bridgesiana* (Figure 1 and Appendix A: Plate 1). The other trees in Figure 1 are planted eucalypts, most of which are locally indigenous species and approx. 20 years old (Appendix A: Plate 2).

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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As noted above, the groundstorey vegetation is entirely exotic (see Appendix A: Plates 3 and 4), composed of a mix of annual and perennial grasses and herbs. It is highly unlikely that this groundstorey provides habitat for any significant flora or fauna species.

From a constraints perspective, I would recommend that any development proposed within the study area should aim to retain and protect the remnant eucalypts, or at least as many of them as possible. This is because it is quite difficult to gain approval to remove mature remnant eucalypts in the ACT, especially since removal of such trees was recently listed as a key threatening process under the ACT *Nature Conservation Act 2014*. I expect that these trees also provide foraging habitat for Superb Parrots *Polytelis swainsonii* and other significant woodland birds. Removal of the younger planted trees would be less constrained as that could be compensated for by replanting similar vegetation elsewhere within the study area.

I trust that this letter provides the review and advice required. If, however, you should have any questions relating to any of the matters discussed herein, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. J. ...", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Director / Principal Ecologist

## Attachments

Figure 1. Remnant Vegetation

Appendix A: Photo Plates





Figure 1. Remnant Vegetation



## Appendix A. Photo Plates



Plate 1. Example of the mature remnant Blakely's Red Gums on the southern side of the dam.



Plate 2. Example of the planted semi-mature eucalypts.





Plate 3. Example of the exotic pasture across former vineyard.



Plate 4. Example of the exotic pasture along the tracks and across the rest of the study area.