

**2001**

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**LOWER MOLONGLO RIVER CORRIDOR  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**EXPLANATORY STATEMENT`**

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**Circulated by the authority of  
Mr Brendan Smyth MLA  
Minister for Urban Services**

# LOWER MOLONGLO RIVER CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

## OUTLINE

Under the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991* the Conservator of Flora and Fauna is required to prepare a draft Plan of Management for areas designated as “Nature Reserve” in the Territory Plan. Following the successful resolution of Variation No. 89 to the Territory Plan, the Lower Molonglo River Corridor has been designated as Public Land (Nature Reserve).

The linear nature of the Corridor, its location between rural lease land and the restriction of public access to two end entry points has served to protect its natural riverine gorge character and provided habitats for species and ecological communities that are now endangered. The management philosophy for LMRC is to retain the area's generally undeveloped character with particular protection given to rare or threatened species and ecological communities. No new recreational activities are planned for the area. To protect these values a management plan has been prepared for the Corridor that:

- sets the planning context, identifies and describes the Corridor, and states the issues, expectations and constraints for management;
- provides direction for management (objectives, actions and priorities);
- provides a basis for evaluating management success; and
- allows the community to understand and comment on management intent.

The vision for the Corridor is to protect and enhance the natural environment as an ecologically viable and sustainable system while providing opportunities for research and low-impact recreational activity.

The achievement of this vision will be dependent upon:

- maintaining the Corridor's natural, cultural and scenic values while providing for ecologically sustainable activities consistent with the requirements for the nature reserve;
- maintaining a substantial vegetated rural or forested buffer between the Corridor and areas of future urban development;
- rehabilitation of degraded areas within and around the Corridor to promote the protection of the sensitive riverine and gorge environment;
- providing a high standard of service to Corridor visitors; and
- co-operative and sympathetic management of adjacent land by other agencies and lessees in ensuring that, wherever possible, future facilities and utilities that service urban areas are located outside the Corridor.

Visitor use is important, and as this depends on the natural and cultural values of the Corridor, it follows that protection of the primary values of the Corridor should be the first responsibility of management. Use of the Corridor

needs to proceed in such a manner that the resource can be sustained for future generations.

A draft plan of management for the LMRC was originally released for public comment in January 1998 and 16 submissions were received. These comments were considered and a final draft plan produced. Further comments on the Plan were received through public hearings held by the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services. As a result of these hearings the Committee recommended that an acceptable boundary with a rural lessee be determined, the Plan be updated in the light of contemporary information and for the Plan to clearly state the position on several 'hanging' issues.

Following on-site inspections with the lessee the boundary for the area to be excised from the rural lease has been satisfactory resolved. A revision of the Plan has been undertaken and new information on ecological communities has been incorporated in the Plan. A review of items left in the original Plan for later resolution has been undertaken and the issues associated with these items have been resolved and clear statements about them incorporated in the Plan.

The Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Services Report No. 82 recommended that the draft Management Plan be endorsed and drew attention to three key points. The Government has noted these three points.

The management plan for LMRC addresses the management issues, objectives, management policies and procedures specific to the Corridor. It is consistent with the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan. Management of the Corridor cannot take place in isolation and this plan defines its context within the wider system of ACT land planning, administration, management and the increasing efforts of community groups in environmental enhancement.

The management plan will ensure that the Corridor remains a distinctive resource for Canberrans and visitors and continues to be an important landscape element of the "Bush Capital".

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN**

The Plan comprises nine chapters each covering a specific aspect of the management of the Corridor.

Most chapters in the Plan follow a common format with a background or overview, specific management objectives and management practices, followed by the management actions that need to be undertaken to achieve the objectives of the Plan.

Chapter 1 explains the scope and purpose of the plan, gives statutory and management responsibilities and outlines the significance and values of the Corridor.

Chapter 2 describes the management of the natural resources of the Corridor including its riverine, flora, fauna, geology and landscape as well as its Aboriginal and European values. This chapter states the actions for the conservation of rare and threatened species and ecological communities.

Chapter 3 looks at the management of visitor use including access arrangements and facilities, specific issues associated with visitor use, public safety, permitted recreational activities and waste management.

Chapter 4 describes the management objectives to protect natural resources through measures such as soil conservation, control of pest plants and animals, bush fire hazard reduction and fire fighting arrangements.

Chapter 5 looks at the management of authorised activities including land occupancy and land uses agreements and utilities and services.

Chapter 6 considers the requirements for research and monitoring to provide more informed management decision-making.

Chapter 7 states the requirements for management of access and associated facilities, particular for the sewerage pipeline, as these are important components within the Corridor.

Chapter 8 considers the requirement to assess development proposals to ensure they don't compromise the ecological values of the area.

Chapter 9 summarises the management priorities for the Corridor with a reference to the part of the plan to which they apply and foreshadows the development of an implementation plan to further refine the actions outlined in this Plan to place them in a management context.