

Planning and Development (Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion – Block 78, Coree – Solar Panel Array) Notice 2018

Notifiable instrument NI2018–28

made under the

Planning and Development Act 2007, s 138AD (Requirements in relation to environmental significance opinions)

1 Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Planning and Development (Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion – Block 78, Coree – Solar Panel Array) Notice 2018*.

2 Conditional Environmental Significance Opinion

(1) On 16 November 2017, the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, pursuant to section 138AB(4) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the **Act**), gave the Applicant a conditional environmental significance opinion in relation to the installation of a solar panel array on Block 78, Coree.

(2) In this section:

Conditional environment significance opinion means the opinion in this schedule.

Note Under section 138AD(6) of the Act, the conditional environmental significance opinion and this notice expire 18 months after the day the notice is notified.

Ben Ponton
Chief Planning Executive
12 January 2018

Schedule

See section 2(2)

ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OPINION

In accordance with section 138AB(4) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (the Act), I provide the following environmental significance opinion:

APPLICANT

Icon Water, as represented by Michael Smith, Environmental Officer, Environment and Sustainability Branch.

APPLICATION and DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The applicant has applied under section 138AA of the Act to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna for an environmental significance opinion to the effect that the development proposal set out in the submission is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact (the application).

The development proposal is for the installation of a 20 kWh grid connected solar panel array to assist in powering the operation of the Uriarra Sewage Treatment Plant as described in the submission.

LOCATION

Block 78 District of Coree.

MATTERS TO WHICH THIS OPINION APPLIES

This opinion applies only the development proposal as described in the application.

OPINION

Provided the works are undertaken in the manner consistent with the submission, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.

Attached is a Statement of Reasons for the decision.



Dr Annie Lane
Conservator of Flora and Fauna

16 November 2017

**STATEMENT OF REASONS
REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

The proposed development is a proposal mentioned in Schedule 4 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* – Development proposal for an activity requiring an EIS Schedule 4, being:

Part 4.3, item 1(a) development that may impact on a species or ecological community that is endangered, a species that is vulnerable; protected; or has special protection status;

The site is mapped as ACT listed Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland an ecological community listed as endangered under the provisions of the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*.

The proponent wants the application for the development approval assessed in the merit track on the grounds that the proposal is not likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact, and has applied to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to that effect.

Meaning of *significant* adverse environmental impact

An adverse environmental impact is *significant* if—

- (a) the environmental function, system, value or entity that might be adversely impacted by a proposed development is significant; or
- (b) the cumulative or incremental effect of a proposed development might contribute to a substantial adverse impact on an environmental function, system, value or entity.

In deciding whether an adverse environmental impact is *significant*, the following matters must be taken into account:

- (a) the kind, size, frequency, intensity, scope and length of time of the impact;
- (b) the sensitivity, resilience and rarity of the environmental function, system, value or entity likely to be affected.

In deciding whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact it does not matter whether the adverse environmental impact is likely to occur on the site of the development or elsewhere.

It has been determined that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant environmental impact, based on the documentation submitted, known values of the site, and provided the works and ongoing management are carried out in accordance with the conditions attached to this ESO.

Project description

The installation of a 20 kWh grid-connected ground-dwelling solar panel array to assist in powering the Uriarra Sewage Treatment Plant. The solar array is to be installed to the west of the Uriarra STP but within the area leased by Icon Water Ltd.

The array is proposed to be constructed as a fixed-tilt, ground mounted structure with the mounting system pile driven on large, tophat-shaped piles installed to a depth of 1 m to 1.4 m. The array is to be in two rows of modules (approximately 3.5 m width and 20 m in length), oriented due north, tilted at 30° from horizontal with at least 4.5 m spacing between the rows. As the site is low lying, the modules and all electrical components are to be mounted 750 mm above ground to prevent them from coming into contact with pooled water in the event of a flood.

Connection to the grid will be via an underground conduit to the Sewage Treatment Plant. A separate communications cable will also be installed. Trenching between the rows of modules would also be required for a DC array cabling to the inverter.

The facility will require a 2.0m high man proof fence around the array for security purposes.

Documentation Submitted

- Uriarra Sewage Treatment Plant Solar PV Project Environmental Assessment (Icon Water 3 November 2017).
- Form 1M.

Natural conservation values present

The site is mapped as ACT listed Yellow Box/Red Gum Grassy Woodland however a site visit showed that the ACT Listed Box-Gum woodland is located south of the proposed works and will not be impacted during construction. The vegetation at the location for the solar array is a weedy, flat, regularly mown grassy paddock.

The headwaters of Tarpaulin Creek runs between the proposed location of the solar array and the sewage treatment plant. The creek is overrun with *Rubus fruticosus* (Blackberry). Other weeds such as *Eragostis curvula* (African Lovegrass) and *Hypericum granimeum* (St John's Wort) are also found throughout the site.

To the south west of Tarpaulin Creek there are 8 trees are present on the embankment closest to Brindabella Road. These trees will not be impacted by the proposed PV array.

The land is regularly mown under a maintenance regime for fire fuel management and the surrounding lands are stocked improved pastures. No trees will be removed as a result of the works.

No listed species or communities listed under the provisions of either the Nature Conservation Act 2014 or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* were found to be present.

Potentially Significant Environmental Impacts

There are no potential significant impacts with the proposed works.

It has been determined that if the works are undertaken in a manner consistent with the submission, they are unlikely to cause a significant adverse environmental impact.