



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,  
the Environment and Water

# **GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTENT OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**Commonwealth Park to Woden Light Rail Project  
(EPBC 2023/09753)**

***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act  
1999***

## PREAMBLE

Major Projects Canberra (the proponent) proposes to construct and operate stage 2B of the Canberra light rail network, from Commonwealth Park to Woden, ACT (EPBC 2023/09753).

On 1 March 2024, the proposed action was referred to the Minister for the Environment and Water (the Minister) under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). On 3 April 2024, a delegate of the Minister determined that further assessment and approval is required under the EPBC Act because the proposed action is likely to have a significant impact on the following controlling provisions that are protected under Part 3 of the EPBC Act:

- National Heritage places (sections 15B and 15C)
- Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A)
- Commonwealth land (sections 26 and 27A), including the ‘whole of the environment’.

On the same date, the delegate of the Minister determined that the proposed action is to be assessed by Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and prepared in accordance with tailored guidelines developed pursuant to section 102 of the EPBC Act.

These EIS Guidelines reflect the information about the proposed action and its potential impacts on relevant matters protected under the EPBC Act (protected matters) that are to be provided in the EIS.

The draft EIS must be considerate of the two potential alignment options as referred to the department in EPBC 2023/09753. If one of the two proposed alignments is selected as a final alignment prior to the completion of the drafting or finalisation of the EIS, the information in the EIS should be limited to assessing the impacts associated with the selected alignment.

The preparation of the EIS is one of a number of steps in the Commonwealth and Territory approval processes for the proposed action. Subsequent Territory and Commonwealth planning approval requirements will necessarily respond in detail to a number of matters contemplated by these EIS Guidelines. Given this, in preparing the EIS consistent with these EIS Guidelines, the proponent may refer to future planning and approval processes (including conditions which may be imposed by the Minister and any Construction Environmental Management Plan [CEMP]) as a method to provide the requested detail or otherwise ensure that the relevant detail is considered in a planning context.

Not with standing this, the information in the EIS should be sufficient to allow the Minister for the to make an informed decision on whether or not to approve, under Part 9 of the EPBC Act, the taking of the proposed action for the purposes of each controlling provision, and if approved, what conditions to attach.

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# 1 GENERAL ADVICE

## 1.1 General Content

The EIS must be a stand-alone document that contains sufficient information to avoid the need to search supplementary reports and other appendices. At a minimum, the EIS must meet the requirements of Schedule 4 of the EPBC Regulations 2000 (EPBC Regulations). The EIS must include a table which clearly identifies where the requirements of the EIS Guidelines have been addressed in the EIS and its appendices.

The EIS must take into consideration:

- [Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1: Matters of National Environmental Significance](#) (Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1).
- [Significant Impact Guidelines 1.2: Actions on, or impacting upon, Commonwealth land, and actions by Commonwealth agencies](#) (Significant Impact Guidelines 1.2).
- Other relevant EPBC Act policy statements and guidelines, including conservation advices, recovery plans, and threat abatement plans available on the department's [Species Profile and Threats \(SPRAT\) Database](#).
- [The Interim Engaging with First Nations People and Communities on Assessments and Approvals under Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 \(interim guidance\)](#) (2023) – DCCEEW.
- [The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's offsets mitigation hierarchy: Offsets mitigation hierarchy](#) – DCCEEW.
- [EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy \(2012\)](#).

The EIS must include sufficient detail to enable the Minister and any interested stakeholders to understand the potential impacts of the proposed action on relevant protected matters.

After receiving the Minister's approval to publish the draft EIS, the proponent is required to make the EIS available for public comment for a minimum of 20 business days. Specific instructions regarding publication requirements will be provided as part of the Minister's direction to publish.

The information in the EIS must be objective, clear, and succinct and, where appropriate, be supported by maps, plans, diagrams, or other descriptive detail. All maps and diagrams must be presented at a suitable size and scale; and should include consideration of the department's [Guide to providing maps and boundary data for EPBC Act projects \(2021\)](#).

The level of detail, analysis and conclusions in the EIS must reflect the level of the potential impacts on relevant protected matters. All assumptions made, and variables identified in the assessment must be clearly stated and discussed. Further, any claims made (e.g. regarding the presence/absence of protected matters) need to be adequately justified and supported with evidence.

The extent to which the limitations, if any, of available information that may influence the conclusions of the assessment must be discussed. The EIS must be written so that any conclusions reached can be independently assessed.

The EIS must be written in a clear and concise style that is easily understood by all interested stakeholders, including those who may not be familiar with the proposed action or the technical elements of the assessment. Technical jargon and acronyms must be avoided or otherwise be explained in a simple and clear manner.

Information, studies, or investigations necessary to support the information in the EIS must be included as appendices, with electronic links provided where possible. References to all supporting documents (including websites) must be used to avoid unnecessary duplication of information. All referencing must be clear and consistent (e.g. document name, section, figure, etc.) and all sources must be appropriately referenced using the Harvard standard and the reference list must include the address of any websites used as data sources.

**Note:** If it is necessary to make use of material that is of a confidential nature, the proponent must consult with the department on the preferred presentation of that material before submitting the draft EIS to the Minister for approval to publish for public comment.

## 1.2 Format and Style

The EIS must comprise three elements, namely:

- (a) the executive summary
- (b) the main text of the stand-alone document
- (c) appendices containing technical information and other information that is used to support the information in the stand-alone document.

The EIS must include a list of abbreviations, a glossary of terms, and appendices containing:

- (a) a copy of these EIS Guidelines
- (b) a list of the persons and agencies consulted during the preparation of the EIS
- (c) contact details for the proponent
- (d) the names of the persons involved in preparing the EIS and work done by each of these persons.

**Note:** The EIS Guidelines have been set out in a manner that may be adopted as the format for the EIS. This format can be adapted where the required information can be presented more effectively. Further, the proponent needs to consider the format and style of the EIS to ensure it is appropriate for publication on the Internet. However, each of the elements outlined in the EIS Guidelines must be addressed to meet the requirements of the EPBC Act and EPBC Regulations.

## 2 SPECIFIC CONTENT

The EIS must include the background and context of the proposed action including:

- (a) the title of the proposed action
- (b) the full name and postal address of the designated proponent
- (c) a clear outline of the objective of the proposed action
- (d) the location(s) of the proposed action
- (e) the background to the development of the proposed action
- (f) how the proposed action relates to any other actions (of which the proponent should reasonably be aware) that have been, or are being, taken or that have been approved in the region affected by the proposed action
- (g) the current status of the proposed action
- (h) the consequences of not proceeding with the proposed action.

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

The EIS must describe the proposed action in sufficient detail to allow interested stakeholders to understand all relevant stages and components of the proposed action. Supporting maps, plans and/or diagrams should be prepared with consideration of the department's [Guide to providing maps and boundary data for EPBC Act projects \(2021\)](#).

Information to be provided includes:

- (a) A description of all known pre-construction, construction, and operational components of the proposed action
- (b) The proposed location of all works to be undertaken, structures to be built and any other elements of the proposed action such as grade separations, based on the concept design, that have the potential to impact on the controlling provisions with relevant supporting documentation, including but not limited to:
  - i. the location and extent of overhead wiring for the light rail, and the nature and location of any non-wired sections of the light rail
  - ii. grading changes to roads and any temporary or permanent changes to road infrastructure, traffic flow and accessibility
  - iii. the location of substations and construction compounds
  - iv. an overview of the design concept and 3D renders of the light rail bridge along Commonwealth Avenue
  - v. the location of platforms, tracks, barriers, and signage in relation to all relevant heritage places
  - vi. what action will be taken that could directly or indirectly affect listed threatened species and communities

- vii. what action will be taken that could directly or indirectly affect National Heritage places
  - viii. what action will be taken that could directly or indirectly affect Commonwealth Heritage places
- (c) Detail of how the works for each component of the proposed action are to be undertaken (including stages of development and their timing), the design parameters for the structures or elements of the proposed action that may impact on relevant protected matters, and the indicative timing and duration of each component of the proposed action.
  - (d) Clear delineation of the project site, disturbance footprint and avoidance areas for relevant matters of national environmental significance (MNES) including the size of these areas (in hectares). Shapefiles for these areas must be included as an appendix to the EIS.

### **3.1 Design Justification and Alternatives**

The EIS must contain a discussion on the design of the proposed action, including the alignment options as presented in the referral, or, in the event that a preferred alignment has been selected from the two options presented in the referral, for that preferred alignment.

The EIS must:

- (a) discuss how the proposed action aligns with the requirements of the National Capital Authority's (NCA) National Capital Plan, relevant ACT Heritage Management Plans, and relevant ACT Precinct Codes
- (b) detail the Registered Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs) consultation regarding project design alternatives to avoid both permanent and temporary impacts on First Nations cultural heritage values
- (c) discuss the reasoning behind the proposed rail alignment(s)
- (d) detail how the design of the proposed action is consistent with any EPBC Act approval conditions relevant to the project site (e.g. light rail stages 1 and 2A).

The EIS must contain details on any potential alternative(s) to the proposed action which have been considered, including:

- (a) if relevant, the alternative of taking no action
- (b) a comparative summary of the impacts of each alternative on relevant MNES
- (c) advantages and disadvantages of each alternative
- (d) sufficient detail to make clear why any alternative is preferred to another
- (e) how the choice of alternative(s) ensures impacts on relevant MNES are appropriately avoided, minimised and managed to an acceptable level.

## 4 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The EIS must include a description of the environment of the project site and the surrounding areas that may be impacted by the proposed action. The description must be sufficiently detailed to inform the assessment of potential impacts on relevant protected matters, supported by maps where appropriate.

At a minimum, this section must include:

- (a) detailed mapping of land tenure within the project site, including of Territory and National lands
- (b) the topography across the entirety of the project site, supported by topographic maps
- (c) details of the terrestrial ecosystems, including key vegetation communities and features (e.g. hollow-bearing trees, soil types, etc.)
- (d) details of any aquatic ecosystems, including aquatic riparian values, and surface water hydrology and quality
- (e) details of any native flora and fauna, including common species and species listed under the EPBC Act and Nature Conservation Act 2004 (NC Act)
- (f) details of any pest species and weeds
- (g) the location of relevant National Heritage places (see **Section 5.1**)
- (h) the location of relevant Commonwealth Heritage places (see **Section 5.3.4**)
- (i) cultural heritage places and values (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), people and communities, and other relevant social considerations
- (j) the location of known and potential contamination sources, and the nature and extent of any previous removal and/or remediation activities (see **Section 5.3.1.2**).

## 5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROTECTED MATTERS

The EIS must provide a description of the protected matters that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action. The protected matters must be described at a relevant scale (e.g. local, regional, national) so that the relative value/importance of the project site, disturbance footprint and surrounds is sufficiently understood.

### 5.1 National Heritage

The EIS must include a description of all National Heritage places across the project site that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action. This should include a copy of the listed heritage values and Statement of Significance for each place. At a minimum, the EIS must include information on:

- Old Parliament House and Curtilage (Place ID: 105774)
- The High Court – National Gallery Precinct (Place ID: 105745)

The EIS must include detailed mapping of the proposed action, which differentiates between those parts of the footprint that are proposed to be within the final light rail

corridor alignment(s) as opposed to the construction site, including proposed locations for construction boundaries, underground works, grade separations, overhead wires, substations, or other infrastructure based on the concept design, and show where these overlap with or are adjacent to the boundaries of National Heritage places.

## 5.2 Listed threatened species and communities

The EIS must include information on the presence (or likelihood of presence) of any EPBC Act-listed threatened species and ecological communities that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action. At a minimum, this must include:

- Natural Temperate Grasslands of the South Eastern Highlands threatened ecological community
- White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland threatened ecological community
- Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*)
- Gang-gang Cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*)
- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*)
- Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*)
- Southern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*)
- Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)
- Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*)
- Canberra Grassland Earless Dragon (*Tympanocryptis lineata*)
- Key's Matchstick Grasshopper (*Keyacris scurra*)
- Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
- Button Wrinklewort (*Rutidosia leptorhynchoides*)
- Small Purple Pea (*Swainsona recta*)
- Matted Flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*)
- Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans subsp. tricolor*)

**Note:** The list above may not be a complete list of listed threatened species and ecological communities that will be or are likely to be impacted by the proposed action. It is the proponent's responsibility to ensure that any threatened species or ecological communities listed at the time of the controlled action decision (3 April 2024), which will be or are likely to be impacted by the proposed action, are assessed in the EIS.

The EIS must consider relevant listed threatened species and ecological communities at the local, regional, and national level and must include the following information:

- (a) A description of the desktop assessment methodology used to inform a likelihood of occurrence assessment and the field surveys within and/or adjacent to the project site, including known historical records in the broader region.

- (b) Details of the scope, timing (survey season[s]), effort and methodology for field studies or surveys undertaken to provide information on the presence of listed threatened species and ecological communities (e.g. sightings, scats, calls, etc.) within and adjacent to the project site.
- (c) Details of the scope, timing (survey season[s]), effort and methodology for field studies or surveys undertaken to provide information on habitat for listed threatened species and ecological communities (e.g. vegetation assessments, tree hollow measurements, soil characteristics, etc.) within and adjacent to the project site.
- (d) Details of how the field studies or surveys are consistent with relevant Commonwealth statutory documents (including but not limited to conservation advice and recovery plans), departmental guidelines or policy statements, or are undertaken in accordance with best practice for studies or surveys.
- (e) A description of any uncertainties/limitations with the field studies or surveys, including but not limited to timing, weather conditions and technology.
- (f) Justification for divergence from relevant Commonwealth statutory documents, departmental guidelines or policy statements, or best practice for studies or surveys (if relevant).
- (g) Study or survey outcomes, including the total number of records (individuals and evidence of presence) of listed threatened species and ecological communities within and/or adjacent the project site, and a brief description of the habitat in which each record was found.
- (h) An assessment of the habitat available within and adjacent to the project site, including an assessment of specific habitat requirement(s) relevant to each listed threatened species and ecological community (e.g. breeding, foraging, dispersal, known important habitat, suitable habitats, roosting, etc.).
- (i) Justification for the habitat assessment with consideration of field studies or surveys, the SPRAT Database, relevant departmental documents and other published sources (e.g. published research).
- (j) Amount of each type of habitat (in hectares) within and adjacent to the project site for each listed threatened species and ecological community, where required by relevant management plans and policies for those species.
- (k) A description of the importance and value of potentially impacted environmental features at a local and regional scale.

### **5.3 Whole of the Environment (Commonwealth land)**

The EIS must include a description of the heritage values and the environment at the project site that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action. The environment is defined in section 528 of the EPBC Act as:

- (a) ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities
- (b) natural and physical resources

- (c) the qualities and characteristics of locations, places, and areas
- (d) heritage values of places
- (e) the social, economic, and cultural aspects of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d).

These matters must be described at the local and regional level, with consideration of the requirements in the following sections.

### **5.3.1 Ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities**

The EIS must include a description of the ecosystems and their constituent parts in relation to the project site and surrounding areas. This must include a discussion of plants, animals, pollutants, chemicals and toxic substances, water resources, people and communities, and landscape and soils, as described in the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.2.

**Note:** Native plants and animals (including native vegetation) are considered part of the whole of the environment. This includes common native species, rare, endemic, or usual native species, and species listed under ACT legislation but not under the EPBC Act.

#### **5.3.1.1 Plants and animals**

The EIS must include information on the presence (or likelihood of presence) of species listed under the NC Act, and locally rare, endemic, or otherwise valuable species at the project site and in surrounding areas that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action. The ACT Scientific Committee's ACT Rare Plant list must be considered to identify rare plants in the region.

At a minimum, the EIS must include information on:

- Natural Temperate Grassland as listed under the NC Act
- Box-Gum Grassy Woodland as listed under the NC Act
- Perunga Grasshopper (*Perunga ochracea*)
- Canberra Raspy Cricket (*Cooraboorama canberrae*)

#### **5.3.1.2 Pollutants, chemicals, and toxic substances**

The project site should be subject to a preliminary site investigation in accordance with Commonwealth-endorsed guidelines including the National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure 1999 (ASC NEPM), the Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) PFAS National Environmental Management Plan 2.0 (HEPA 2020) (PFAS NEMP), and the National Water Quality Management Strategy.

Where potential contaminated sites are identified, a detailed site investigation must be undertaken, either prior to the completion of the EIS, or planned for completion as part of a CEMP.

The EIS should:

- (a) provide detailed descriptions and maps of all past and current contaminated sites within and directly adjacent to the project site, including a discussion of sites which will need to be disturbed due to the proposed action, at any stage of the proposed action
- (b) provide detailed information regarding proposed works, based on current designs, so that the potential to encounter, remobilise, introduce, and/or redistribute contamination can be independently assessed.

### **5.3.1.3 People and communities**

The EIS must include a description of the types of people and communities that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action and how they will be impacted by the proposed action. This includes but is not limited to government entities, commercial businesses, road and public transport network users, recreational area users, tourists, community and residential groups, and emergency services.

### **5.3.2 Natural and physical resources**

The EIS must include a description of the natural and physical resources that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action including but not limited to:

- Lake Burley Griffin and surrounds,
- surface waters (stormwater, creeks, rivers, and dams),
- groundwater
- soils and quarry materials.

### **5.3.3 Qualities and characteristics of locations, places, and areas**

The EIS must include a description of the qualities and characteristics of all locations, places, and areas that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action. At a minimum, the EIS must include information on:

- mature street trees, plantings, and landscaping features
- vistas, views, and general aesthetic features
- general ambience (e.g. noise levels, intensity of road and foot traffic, air quality, shade quality, temperature etc.).

### **5.3.4 Heritage**

The EIS must include a description of the identified heritage values at the project site that are likely to be impacted by the proposed action. At a minimum, the EIS must include information on:

- Parliament House Vista (Place ID: 105466)
- Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands (Place ID: 105230)
- National Library of Australia and Surrounds (Place ID: 105470)
- High Court – National Gallery Precinct (Place ID: 105544)

- High Court of Australia (Place ID: 105557)
- National Gallery of Australia (105558)
- Old Parliament House and Curtilage (Place ID: 105318)
- Old Parliament House Gardens (Place ID: 105616)
- West Block and the Dugout (Place ID: 105428)
- National Rose Gardens (Place ID: 105473)
- King George V Memorial (Place ID: 105352)
- York Park North Tree Plantation (Place ID: 105242)
- Commencement Column Monument (Place ID: 105347)
- The Surveyor's Hut (Place ID: 105467)
- Patent Office (former) (Place ID: 105454)
- Edmund Barton Offices (Place ID: 105476)
- John Gorton Building (Place ID: 105472)
- Communications Centre (John Gorton Building Bunker) (Place ID: 105618)
- The Lodge (Place ID: 105452)
- State Circle Cutting (Place ID: 105733)

**Note:** The list above may not be a complete list of Commonwealth Heritage places that will or are likely be impacted by the proposed action. It is the proponent's responsibility to ensure that any listed Commonwealth Heritage places at the time of the controlled action decision (3 April 2024), which will or are likely to be impacted by the proposed action, are assessed in the EIS.

Additionally, any other places that are not explicitly included on the Commonwealth Heritage List, but have either historic, natural and/or Indigenous values must also be included in the EIS. At a minimum, the EIS must include information on:

- Parliament House
- Commonwealth Avenue
- Aboriginal Tent Embassy
- Albert Hall
- Hotel Canberra (Hyatt Hotel Canberra)
- Treasury Building
- Presbyterian Church of St Andrew
- Capital Hill
- Hotel Kurrajong

Indigenous heritage values (of a place) are defined in section 528 of the EPBC Act as a heritage value of the place that is of significance to Indigenous persons in accordance with their practices, observances, customs, traditions, beliefs, or history.

### **5.3.5 Social, economic, and cultural aspects**

The EIS must include a description of the social, economic, and cultural aspects relevant to those elements of the environment outlined in **Sections 5.3.1** through **5.3.4**. Further information regarding the inclusion of social, economic, and cultural considerations in the EIS can be found in **Section 13** of these EIS Guidelines.

## **6 RELEVANT IMPACTS**

Relevant impacts of the proposed action must be assessed in accordance with relevant departmental policies and guidelines, and the information provided in the SPRAT Database.

The EIS must include a description of relevant impacts of the proposed action (direct, indirect, cumulative, and facilitated) on listed threatened species and ecological communities, National and Commonwealth heritage values, and the whole of the environment.

Impacts expected to arise during the pre-construction, construction and operational stages of the proposed action must be addressed, with clear linkages between which component(s) and stage(s) of the proposed action are of relevance to each protected matter.

The following information must be provided in the EIS:

- (a) A detailed assessment of the nature and extent of the likely direct, indirect, and facilitated short-term and long-term impacts on relevant protected matters.
- (b) A statement, with supporting evidence, on whether any impacts are likely to be unknown, unpredictable, or irreversible.
- (c) Any technical data and other information used or needed to make a detailed assessment of the impacts.
- (d) A conclusion as to whether the impacts are consistent with the relevant conservation advice, recovery plans, and other departmental policies and guidelines (e.g. key threatening processes).

The EIS should identify and discuss cumulative impacts on relevant MNES, where potential impacts from the proposed action are in addition to existing impacts of other activities (including known potential future expansions or developments by the proponent and other proponents in the vicinity and region [e.g. light rail stage 1 and stage 2A]).

Quantification and assessment of impacts should:

- (a) be against appropriate background/baseline levels
- (b) be prepared according to best practice guidelines and compared to best practice standards

- (c) consider seasonal and temporal variations where appropriate (including temporal changes in the sensitivity of the receptor)
- (d) be supported by maps, graphs and diagrams as appropriate to ensure information is readily understandable
- (e) explain and justify guidelines and standards used to quantify baselines and impacts.

The EIS must take into consideration the following international conventions and demonstrate that the proposed action will not be inconsistent with the objectives and principles of:

- the Biodiversity Convention
- the Convention on the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention)
- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

## **6.1 National Heritage**

The EIS must include supporting information for the impact assessment on the values of all National Heritage places (see **Section 5.1**).

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) must be included as an appendix that addresses all potential impacts on heritage within and adjacent to the project site. The requirements on the HIA are detailed in **Section 7.5.1**.

## **6.2 Listed threatened species and communities**

For each threatened ecological community, the EIS must include:

- (a) the total direct impact (in hectares) to each identified patch, within and adjacent to the project site, and compared to its current extent
- (b) a discussion on the post-impact viability of each individual patch within and adjacent to the project site to be directly and indirectly impacted (e.g. fragmentation, edge effects, etc.) if the proposed action was to proceed as proposed.

For each listed threatened species, the EIS must include:

- (a) the total direct impact (in hectares) to each identified type of habitat (e.g. breeding, foraging, dispersal, known important habitat, suitable habitats, roosting, etc.) within and adjacent to the project site
- (b) details of the indirect impacts on species and their habitats (e.g. fragmentation, edge effects, population connectivity, individual mortality, increase in noise, light, and dust, increase in people and pet interactions, etc.) as a result of the proposed action.

Detailed mapping of habitat for relevant listed threatened species and ecological communities that are found to be, or may potentially be, present within and/or adjacent to the project site must be included in the EIS, and must:

- (a) be specific to the habitat assessment undertaken for each listed threatened species and ecological community (see **Section 5.2**)
- (b) include an overlay of the disturbance footprint
- (c) include known records of individuals (or evidence of individuals) derived from desktop analysis and/or field surveys.

### **6.3 Whole of the environment (Commonwealth land)**

#### **6.3.1 Plants and animals**

With regards to plants and animals on Commonwealth land, the EIS must include:

- (a) a description of the impacts on common native species, rare, endemic, or usual native species, native and non-native vegetation, and species listed under the NC Act. This should include a discussion of impacts on the species listed in **Section 5.3.1**.
- (b) a discussion regarding the potential cumulative impacts of the proposed action on ecosystem resilience within and adjacent to the project site (e.g. connected vegetation communities, connected species habitat, etc.) noting that cumulative impacts may include past, present, and future human activities and natural variations over time, and can be both positive and negative.
- (c) the cumulative effects of climate change impacts of the proposed action on the environment in the assessment of ecosystem resilience, particularly where climate change is identified as a specific risk to a species, ecological community and/or vegetation community. Where relevant to the potential impacts of the proposed action, a risk assessment must be conducted, summarised in the EIS, and attached in full as an appendix.

#### **6.3.2 Pollutants, chemicals, and toxic substances**

The EIS must include as an appendix a Preliminary Site Investigation Report detailing the characterisation and delineation of known contamination, or detailing potential sources of contamination, on and immediately adjacent to the project site. This report must be prepared by a suitably qualified person in accordance with **Section 5.3.1.2**.

The EIS must include a summary of the findings of the preliminary site investigation, including an assessment of the potential for redistribution or mobilisation of contaminants as a result of the proposed action and the associated likelihood and severity of impacts to human health and the environment (including soil, sediment, groundwater, surface water, biota and air).

This should include information relating to the potential for redistribution, mobilisation/remobilisation of contaminated material and discuss the severity of impacts to media potentially affected (such as soil, groundwater, surface water, air) and any other ecosystem and sensitive receptors.

#### **6.3.3 People and communities**

The EIS must include a description of the impacts on any people and communities during both construction and operation phases of the proposed action. At a minimum, the EIS must include information on:

- (a) changes to traffic flow and access
- (b) changes to public transport and parking spaces
- (c) changes to pedestrian and cyclist flow and access
- (d) disruptions to emergency services and access.

#### **6.3.4 Natural and physical resources**

The EIS must include a description of the impacts, based off a desktop assessment, on key surface water resources including but not limited to impacts on or associated with:

- (a) turbidity and soil erosion
- (b) contamination from litter, pollutants, and chemicals, either directly caused by the proposed action or through remobilisation of existing contaminants
- (c) changes to overland flow paths

The EIS must also include a description of how the proposed action may impact on any groundwater resources and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs), including but not limited to impacts on:

- (a) groundwater quality
- (b) groundwater flow regimes
- (c) perched aquifer storage and connectivity to deeper aquifers
- (d) water availability to GDEs and springs

The EIS must include a discussion as to how these impacts are predicted to adversely affect receptors (e.g. ecosystems, surface water or groundwater users) and the potential pathways of the impacts from sources to receptors. This should include a discussion on how the pathways might interact with each other.

#### **6.3.5 Heritage**

As noted in **Section 6.1**, a HIA is required as an appendix to the EIS. In addition to the impact assessment on National Heritage values, the HIA must address potential impact on all heritage values within and adjacent to the project site, including Commonwealth Heritage places (see **Section 5.3.4**). The requirements of the HIA are detailed in **Section 7.5.1**.

#### **6.3.6 General environmental impacts**

Assessment of impacts to the environment (as defined in section 528 of the EPBC Act), during both construction and operation of the proposed action, should also include but not be limited to the following:

- (a) road noise and vibration impacts on the community and natural environment

- (b) impacts on air quality (e.g. dust, including consideration of seasonal and meteorological variations that influence local air quality)
- (c) lighting impacts on the community and natural environment
- (d) changes in recreational use and amenity of natural & urban areas
- (e) social, economic, and cultural impacts
- (f) creation of any risks or hazards to people or property that may be associated with any component of the proposed action.

## **7 PROPOSED SAFEGUARDS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

The EIS must provide information on proposed safeguards and mitigation measures to deal with the relevant impacts of the proposed action. It must include detailed information on feasible measures to further avoid and minimise the proposed impacts on relevant protected matters detailed in **Section 5** of these EIS Guidelines. Specific and detailed descriptions of proposed measures must be provided and substantiated, based on best available practices and must include the following elements.

Consideration of relevant agreements and plans that cover impacts or known threats to a matter protected by a controlling provision, including:

- (a) any recovery plan and/or conservation advice for the affected species or ecological community
- (b) any threat abatement plan for a process that threatens an affected species or ecological community
- (c) any relevant strategic assessment undertaken in accordance with an agreement under Part 10 of the EPBC Act
- (d) any relevant management plans for heritage places.

A consolidated list of mitigation measures proposed to be undertaken to prevent, minimise or compensate for the relevant impacts of the proposed action, including:

- (a) a description of the environmental outcomes the measures are expected to achieve including details of any baseline data or proposed monitoring to demonstrate progress towards achieving these outcomes
- (b) a description of proposed safeguards and mitigation measures to deal with relevant impacts of the action, including by considering mitigation measures proposed to be taken by the ACT Government, other authorities or the proponent
- (c) assessment of the expected or predicted effectiveness of the mitigation measures
- (d) any statutory or policy basis for the mitigation measures
- (e) a conclusion as to whether, following implementation of all safeguard and mitigation measures, any residual impacts are acceptable.

Overall, the EIS must not rely on proposed management plans and/or broad objectives to describe avoidance, mitigation, and management measures, having regard to the development of plans as proposed under, and the other matters in, these EIS Guidelines.

Any management plans submitted as appendices to the EIS must be prepared by a suitably qualified person and be in accordance with the department's [Environmental Management Plan Guidelines \(2014\)](#).

Committed language (e.g. 'will', 'must', etc.) rather than non-committal language (e.g. 'may', 'where possible', 'if required', etc.) must be used for the relevant plans. The proposed measures must be developed in accordance with the 'S.M.A.R.T' principle:

S – Specific (what and how)

M – Measurable (baseline information, number/value, auditable)

A – Achievable (timeframe, money, personnel)

R – Relevant (conservation advice, recovery plans, threat abatement plans)

T – Time-bound (specific timeframe to complete)

Specific and detailed descriptions of proposed measures must be provided and substantiated, based on best available practices and appropriate standards and supported by scientific evidence.

## **7.1 Plants and animals**

The EIS must provide information regarding:

- (a) native buffer zones (in metres) or design measures proposed to be implemented to protect the outer edge of patches of ecological communities and habitat for listed threatened species
- (b) commitments to avoidance, mitigation, and management measures that are consistent with relevant departmental statutory documents, best practice guidelines and/or scientific evidence
- (c) avoidance, mitigation, and management measures to reduce lighting impacts on local and migratory species, especially at sensitive times of day (e.g. at night).

## **7.2 Pollutants, chemicals, and toxic substances**

The EIS must provide information or approaches regarding:

- (a) management and mitigation controls to prevent construction activity from releasing contaminants into the environment
- (b) management of dust suppression and emission (within the context of pollutants, chemicals, and toxic substances)
- (c) plans for remediation and rehabilitation of all contaminated areas, where required
- (d) management of rainwater in open pits and detention basins, including dewatering, disposal, and reuse processes

- (e) management measures for handling and disposal of contaminated material.

### **7.3 People and communities**

The EIS must provide information or approaches regarding:

- (a) avoidance, mitigation and management measures to reduce the impact of changes to traffic and public transport options, including to vulnerable sections of the community
- (b) avoidance, mitigation, and management measures to reduce both the levels and impact of noise and vibration, especially at sensitive times of day (e.g. at night near residential areas, during school hours near schools, etc.)
- (c) avoidance, mitigation, and management measures to reduce both the levels and impact of dust/particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) on human health and other sensitive receptors
- (d) avoidance, mitigation, and management measures to reduce lighting impacts on local people and communities, especially at sensitive times of day (e.g. at night near residential areas).

### **7.4 Natural and physical resources**

The EIS must provide information regarding:

- (a) management and mitigation controls to prevent construction activity from impacting on soil, surface water, and groundwater
- (b) management of rainwater in open pits and detention basins, including dewatering, disposal, and reuse processes
- (c) optimisation of reuse of soils where possible.

### **7.5 Heritage**

#### **7.5.1 Heritage Impact Assessment**

The EIS must include a HIA for the potential alignments as referred – National Triangle Barton and State Circle East. The HIA will be updated to reflect the selection of a final alignment.

The HIA should:

- (a) address historic heritage, natural heritage, and Indigenous heritage including consultation with the Canberra RAOs and evidence of best practice consultation with First Nations communities (see **Section 7.5.2** and **Section 11.1**)
- (b) note that the referral documentation described direct and indirect significant impacts on Old Parliament House and Curtilage, Commonwealth Avenue, the Edmund Barton Building, Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands, and the Patent Office (former) and should clarify whether the final design option is likely to have significant impacts on these or any other heritage places

- (c) include information on the values of all National and Commonwealth Heritage places and the heritage values of places that may not be included on official lists. These places include, but are not limited to, those listed in **Section 6.1** and **Section 6.3.5**. The HIA should address any potential impacts that the proposed actions will have on the heritage values of these places
- (d) address the potential impact that the proposed actions will have on significant heritage sight lines associated with the Parliament House Vista and visual impact assessment supported by visual renderings of those sightlines
- (e) address:
  - i. changes to, and/or new construction associated with, Commonwealth Avenue Bridge
  - ii. proposed tree removal and replacement, changes to the public domain and landscape
  - iii. impacts on adjacent heritage values and physical fabric (both listed and identified)
  - iv. methodology for dealing with unanticipated finds (detailed below).
- (f) include any relevant heritage assessment reports or advice and address any impacts that the proposed action will have on the heritage values identified in these reports
- (g) specify plants proposed to be removed by the proposed action, which are included in Commonwealth Heritage listings or have other historic, natural or First Nations heritage values. A map identifying these plants must be included in the HIAs
- (h) be undertaken by expert consultants with relevant qualifications and experience
- (i) meet the standards of the EPBC Act (Significant Impact Guidelines 1.2)
- (j) take account of any relevant heritage management plan policies
- (k) include a framework for the avoidance, mitigation, and management of the relevant impacts of each stage of the proposed action (for each proposed alignment) on relevant heritage values within and adjacent to the project site
- (l) include information on First Nations cultural heritage, including but not limited to:
  - i. details on how any proposed mitigation strategies to be applied to the project site will operate to protect sensitive Indigenous heritage areas (e.g. conservation in situ, site avoidance, restricted access, buffer zones, creation of a conservation area)
  - ii. commitment to provide details on where the salvaged artefacts will be relocated, how they will be managed, and any documentation and access arrangements discussed with the RAOs from consultation

- (m) include an unexpected finds protocol addressing First Nations, natural and historic heritage finds (including the potential discovery of archaeological remains) and the steps required to deal with these.

### **7.5.2 Indigenous cultural heritage**

The EIS must include details on any ongoing and proposed RAO consultation regarding alternative project design options to avoid both permanent and temporary impacts on Indigenous cultural heritage values.

The proponent must undertake First Nations consultation in accordance with the department's [Interim Engaging with First Nations People and Communities on Assessments and Approvals under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 \(interim guidance\) \(2023\)](#).

The unexpected finds protocol must include appropriate steps to work with the RAO in safeguarding and mitigating impacts to cultural artefacts and/or remains that may be uncovered during excavation and construction works. The proponent should consider and discuss arrangements for an appropriate keeping place with the RAO and relevant heritage authorities, in line with the HIA requirements in **Section 7.5.1**.

In addition, the proponent should consider contacting the department for recommendations and guidance on effective engagement with First Nations peoples and communities, with respect to assessment under the EPBC Act.

### **7.5.3 Geoheritage**

The EIS must take into consideration the [State Circle Cutting Heritage Management Plan 2016 \(nca.gov.au\)](#).

### **7.5.4 National Heritage**

The EIS must take into consideration the [National Heritage management principles](#), as outlined in Schedule 5B of the EPBC Regulations, and demonstrate how the proposed action will not be inconsistent with those principles.

### **7.5.5 Commonwealth Heritage**

The EIS must take into consideration the [Commonwealth Heritage management principles](#), as outlined in Schedule 7B of the EPBC Regulations, and demonstrate how the proposed action will not be inconsistent with those principles.

## **7.6 Environmental Management Plan**

The EIS must include a detailed outline of an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) as an appendix. The EMP outline must be prepared in accordance with the department's [Environmental Management Plan Guidelines \(2014\)](#) as amended from time to time and must:

- (a) set out the proposed action, including any provisions for independent environmental auditing. As a minimum, the EMP outline must consider the impacts outlined in **Section 6** and must consider the proposed safeguards and mitigation measures outlined in **Section 7**

- (b) address the project phases (construction and operation) separately. It must state the environmental objectives, performance criteria, monitoring, reporting, corrective actions, responsibility and timing for each environmental issue
- (c) describe contingencies for events such as failure of sewerage systems, heavy or prolonged rainfall, or chemical spills
- (d) include an unexpected finds protocol for contaminated materials and heritage artefacts.

As necessary, the EIS must also include the name of the agency responsible for endorsing or approving each mitigation measure, management plan or monitoring program.

## **8 ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSETS**

The EIS must include an assessment of the likelihood of residual significant impacts occurring on National heritage values, listed threatened species and communities, and the environment (including Commonwealth and First Nations heritage values) after avoidance, mitigation and management measures have been applied. If it is determined that a residual significant impact is likely on relevant MNES, then environmental offsets will be required in accordance with the principles of the [EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy \(2012\) \(Offsets Policy\)](#).

If environmental offsets are required, an offset within the ACT must be sought in the first instance, in consultation with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. Where this is not possible, and an alternative sought, justification must be provided in the EIS for this decision.

If environmental offsets are required, an Offset Management Strategy (OMS) or an Offset Management Plan (OMP) prepared by a suitably qualified professional must be included as an appendix to the EIS, with a summary of its key elements included in the body of the EIS. If an offset area(s) has been nominated, include an OMP. If an offset site has not been nominated, include an OMS. The relevant requirements for the OMS and OMP are outlined below.

### **8.1 Offset Management Strategy**

For relevant listed threatened species and communities, the OMS must contain, at a minimum:

- (a) details of the proposed environmental offset(s) to compensate for the residual significant impacts of the proposed action on each relevant listed threatened species and ecological community, and/or their habitat.
- (b) details of how the proponent will ensure that proposed environmental offset(s) will meet the requirements of the Offsets Policy, including the Offsets Assessment Guide.
- (c) details of a strategy for the staging of environmental offset(s) for each project stage (if proposed).

- (d) information about how the connectivity with other relevant habitats and biodiversity corridors provided by any proposed offset area(s) will be assessed.
- (e) the methodology, with justification and supporting evidence, used to inform the inputs of the Offsets Assessment Guide in relation to the impact site for each relevant listed threatened species and ecological community, including:
  - i. quantum of impact – area (in hectares)
  - ii. quantum of impact – quality
- (f) the methodology, with justification and supporting evidence, used to inform the inputs of the Offsets Assessment Guide in relation to each potential offset area(s) for each relevant listed threatened species and ecological community, including:
  - i. time over which loss is averted (maximum 20 years)
  - ii. time until ecological benefit
  - iii. risk of loss (%) without offset
  - iv. risk of loss (%) with offset
  - v. confidence in result (%)
- (g) what evidence will be provided that the relevant listed threatened species and ecological community, and/or their habitat, is present in any proposed offset area(s).
- (h) details of the proposed mechanism to legally secure any proposed offset area(s), such that legal security remains in force over the offset area(s) for at least 20 years to provide enduring protection for the offset area(s) against development incompatible with conservation.

For relevant components of the environment, the OMS must demonstrate, with supporting justification, how the proposed environmental offsets are consistent with the principles of the Offsets Policy. Note that the only relevant heritage values that can be offset are those related to habitats for significant species. Other impacts on heritage places cannot be compensated for using offsets, as heritage values are unique and dependent on context.

The OMS must be prepared by a suitably qualified person.

## **8.2 Offset Management Plan**

For relevant listed threatened species and communities, the OMP must be prepared by a suitably qualified person and must include, at a minimum:

- (a) information on the residual significant impacts to each relevant listed threatened species and ecological community that will be compensated for by the environmental offset(s)
- (b) a description of the offset area(s), including location, size, condition, environmental values present and surrounding land uses

- (c) details of how the environmental offset(s) meets the requirements of the Offsets Policy, including the Offsets Assessment Guide
- (d) baseline data and other supporting evidence, including ecological field data that documents the presence of each relevant listed threatened species and ecological community and the quality of their habitat within the offset area(s)
- (e) details of the field surveys undertaken within proposed offset areas in accordance with Commonwealth guidelines, State and Territory guidelines, and/or best practice survey methodologies
- (f) commitments to achievable improved ecological benefits at the proposed offset area(s) and the expected timeframes in which they will be achieved
- (g) details of how the offset area(s) will provide connectivity with other habitats and biodiversity corridors and/or will contribute to a larger strategic offset for each relevant listed threatened species and ecological community
- (h) maps and shapefiles to clearly define the location and boundaries of the offset area(s), accompanied by the offset attributes (e.g. physical address of the offset area(s), coordinates of the boundary points in decimal degrees, the listed threatened species and ecological communities that the environmental offset(s) compensates for, and the size of the environmental offset(s) in hectares)
- (i) specific offset completion criteria derived from the site habitat quality to demonstrate the improvement in the quality of habitat in the offset area(s) over a 20-year period
- (j) details of the management actions, and timeframes for implementation, to be carried out to achieve the offset completion criteria
- (k) interim milestones that set targets at 5-yearly intervals to demonstrate progress towards achieving the offset completion criteria
- (l) details of the nature, timing, and frequency of monitoring, and submission of monitoring reports to demonstrate progress against achieving the 5-yearly interim milestones (Note: The frequency of monitoring must be sufficient to track progress towards each set of milestones, and sufficient to determine whether the offset area(s) are likely to achieve those milestones in adequate time to implement all necessary corrective actions)
- (m) timing for the implementation of corrective actions if monitoring activities indicate the interim milestones have not been achieved
- (n) risk analysis and a risk management and mitigation strategy to identify and control all risks to the successful implementation of the OMP and/or the timely achievement of the offset completion criteria, including a rating of all initial and post-mitigation residual risks in accordance with an appropriate risk assessment matrix
- (o) evidence of how the management actions and corrective actions take into account relevant approved conservation advice and are consistent with relevant recovery plans and threat abatement plans

- (p) Details of the proposed mechanism to legally secure the proposed offset area(s), such that legal security remains in force over the offset area(s) for at least 20 years to provide enduring protection for the offset area(s) against development that is incompatible with conservation.

Supporting evidence must be included in the OMP to justify how the proposed management action(s) are additional to the existing requirements (e.g. weed and pest management requirements) of the landholder in managing their land as required by the Offsets Policy.

The OMP must also include scientific evidence (e.g. published research, pilot studies, previously successful projects/programs, etc.) to demonstrate how successful proposed measures will be to create, revegetate, regenerate and/or improve habitat (e.g. tree planting, nest boxes, artificial hollows, etc.) in the proposed offset area(s) for each relevant listed threatened species and ecological community.

For relevant components of the environment, the OMP must demonstrate, with supporting justification, how the proposed environmental offsets are consistent with the principles of the Offsets Policy. Note that the only relevant heritage values that can be offset are those related to habitats for significant species. Other impacts on heritage places cannot be compensated for using offsets, as heritage values are unique and dependent on context.

### **8.3 Other Endorsed Offset Frameworks**

If efforts to obtain an offset site within the ACT have not been successful, options for offsets within NSW may be considered, including the use of an endorsed offset framework such as the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS).

If an endorsed offset framework is proposed to be used, the report detailing the outcomes (including the credit report) must be discussed in the EIS. The report must be included as an appendix to the EIS.

## **9 RISK ASSESSMENT**

The EIS must describe the likelihood and consequence of any potential risks that may arise if the environmental objectives for proposed action were not met (e.g. the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures/offsets, or the ability of the proponent to implement these measures).

In taking account of the likelihood and consequence of each risk, the acceptability of each risk should also be considered and discussed, along with any proposed mitigation measures.

The risk assessment must be included as an appendix to the EIS.

## **10 OTHER APPROVALS AND CONDITIONS**

The EIS must include information on any other requirements for approval or conditions that apply, or that the proponent reasonably believes are likely to apply, to the proposed action. This must include:

- (a) details of any NCA planning scheme, or plan or policy under any local or Commonwealth Government planning system that deals with the proposed action, including:
  - i. what environmental assessment of the proposed action has been, or is being, carried out under the scheme, plan or policy
  - ii. how the scheme provides (if at all) for the prevention, minimisation and management of any impacts on relevant protected matters
  - iii. details of the existing Development Control Plans (DCP), including the desired planning outcomes.
- (b) details on any intended DCP amendment process and its indicative timeframe.
- (c) a description of any approval that has been obtained from any Commonwealth or Territory agency or authority (other than an approval under the EPBC Act), including any conditions that are relevant to protected matters.
- (d) a statement identifying any additional approval(s) that are required, including but not limited to a Works Approval from the NCA and Parliamentary Approval.
- (e) a description of the monitoring, enforcement and review procedures that apply, or are proposed to apply, to the proposed action.

## **11 CONSULTATION**

The EIS must include details of any consultation about the proposed action, including:

- (a) any consultation that has already taken place
- (b) proposed consultation about relevant impacts of the proposed action
- (c) any documented response to, or result of, the consultation
- (d) identification of affected parties, including a statement mentioning any communities that may be affected and describing their views.

### **11.1 First Nations Engagement**

The EIS must describe engagement that has been undertaken to date, and a process for ongoing consultation with First Nations peoples and communities throughout the duration of the proposed action. This must include, but not be limited to:

- (a) an engagement plan for ongoing consultation during the construction and operational stages of the proposed action, and how this will be conducted in a culturally appropriate way
- (b) information demonstrating that Traditional Owners have been consulted on the requirements in these EIS Guidelines.
- (c) the names of the Traditional Owners, First Nations stakeholders, and/or representative bodies
- (d) identification of existing or potential Native Title rights and interests, including any areas and objects that are of particular significance to Indigenous peoples and

communities, with the potential to be impacted by the proposed action and the potential need to avoid, mitigate, and manage those impacts

- (e) a discussion demonstrating how feedback from Traditional Owners and First Nations stakeholders has been incorporated into project planning and design, construction, and operation
- (f) details on the reasons why feedback from Traditional Owners and First Nations stakeholders has not been incorporated (if required)
- (g) information from the RAO confirming consultation is proposed or ongoing and will result in a designing with country framework that will inform future stages of the proposed action and bring an inclusive cultural value to the proposed action.

The proponent must undertake First Nations consultation in accordance with the department's [\*Interim Engaging with First Nations People and Communities on Assessments and Approvals under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 \(interim guidance\) \(2023\)\*](#).

In addition, the proponent should consider contacting the department for recommendations and guidance on effective engagement with First Nations peoples and communities, with respect to assessment under the EPBC Act.

## **12 ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD OF PERSON(S) PROPOSING TO TAKE THE ACTION**

The EIS must include details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against:

- (a) the person proposing to take the action
- (b) for an action for which a person has applied for a permit, the person making the application.

The EIS must include details of any environmental policy and/or heritage strategy relevant to the person proposing to take the action.

## **13 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MATTERS**

The economic and social impacts of the proposed action, both positive and negative, must be assessed in the EIS. Matters of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) details of any public consultation activities undertaken and their outcomes, including with First Nations peoples and communities
- (b) projected economic costs and benefits of the proposed action, including the basis for their estimation through a cost/benefit analysis or similar study
- (c) employment opportunities expected to be generated by the proposed action, including during the pre-construction, construction, and operational stages.

Economic and social impacts must be considered at the local, regional, and national levels.

## **14 PRINCIPLES OF ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The EIS must provide information about how the proposed action is consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD). The principles of ESD are outlined in section 3A of the EPBC Act and specified below:

- (a) decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations
- (b) if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation
- (c) the principle of inter-generational equity – that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations
- (d) the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making
- (e) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.

## **15 INFORMATION SOURCES PROVIDED IN THE EIS**

For information given in the EIS, the EIS must state:

- (a) the source of the information
- (b) how recent the information is
- (c) how the reliability of the information was tested
- (d) what uncertainties (if any) are in the information.

## **16 CONCLUSION**

An overall conclusion as to the environmental acceptability of the proposed action should be provided, including discussion on compliance with principles of ESD, and the objects and requirements of the EPBC Act. Reasons justifying undertaking the proposed action in the manner proposed should also be outlined.

Measures proposed or required by way of offset for any unavoidable impacts on controlling provisions, and the relative degree of compensation, should be restated here.