

## PROPOSED DEFENCE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT – LAWSON NORTH

August 2020

Defence Housing Australia has recently proposed a two-stage housing development at Lawson North (the former navy transmission station in Belconnen). This development has already been approved by the National Capital Authority's Development Control Plan (DCP) 12/09. The first stage has lower impact, but the second stage has certain precincts containing Critically Endangered Ecological Communities of Natural Temperate Grassland and Box-Gum Woodland, and habitat for a number of threatened, rare and declining species. One precinct contains an extensive Kangaroo Grass community which is arguably some of the best remaining in the ACT.

The areas of ecological communities have already been identified for heritage and nature conservation protection. The conservation values of the affected precincts are identified in the *ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans* as well as DCP 12/09, so the DCP will have to be amended to permit Stage 2 to proceed.

The natural values of this site were flagged a long time ago, but as usual the dollar values of the area have become predominant. The recent review conducted for the *Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* has shown that over the 20 years of its operation it has had little effect on protecting natural assets in Australia, and that our natural environment is in severe decline. We simply cannot afford to lose areas such as found in Lawson North.

To this end, a number of environmental groups have prepared correspondence to be circulated to Defence Housing Australia, and various relevant Federal Government Ministers, challenging this development proposal. It has also been signed by many individuals involved in biodiversity conservation in the ACT. The request is to ensure the “...entire extent of the Lawson Grasslands and associated Box-Gum Woodland should be recognised for its ecological, natural and cultural values, and conserved in perpetuity.” The ANPS President, Lucinda Royston, has added our Society's support to the correspondence.