



CSIRO Ginninderra Field Station Site

**Phase 1 Consultation Report
August-mid-October 2015**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the initial stage of consultations undertaken by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in relation to their request to the National Capital Authority to include the Ginninderra Research Station site as 'Urban Area' in the National Capital Plan.

The consultations were targeted at priority stakeholders – in particular residents in the suburbs adjacent to the site – to ensure that they had an early opportunity to be aware of, and provide comment on, the proposal to change the use the site.

Some important features of the consultation process to date that warrant highlighting are:

- CSIRO has initiated the consultation process and has gone out earlier than would be required by NCA processes;
- Senior CSIRO staff have fronted up directly to all consultations and allowed the community to ask questions and raise issues face-to-face;
- CSIRO has been up-front with the community about the scientific and environmental assessment that has already been undertaken to identify the constraints and opportunities on the site, and has informed the community that around 20 percent of the land will be set aside due to its environmental value;
- CSIRO has not yet done detailed planning of what future development will look like, but has undertaken genuine consultation and has provided the community with the opportunity to suggest ideas and to help shape what will happen on the site.

The engagement by the community was very strong and constructive and covered a wide range of areas from environment to infrastructure to traffic, as well as feedback on the CSIRO's role in relation to broader government planning regimes.

CSIRO has committed itself to taking on board the comments received in any subsequent planning and design phase.

Further community consultations will be undertaken in line with the positive and open approach that CSIRO has commenced.

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Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to outline the consultation process since CSIRO announced on 19 August 2015 that it was requesting the NCA to include the Ginninderra Research site as 'Urban Area' and to provide feedback on the issues and questions raised by community members.

In particular, the report outlines:

- a) CSIRO's approach to community consultation.
- b) The scope and nature of the community consultations to date.
- c) Issues and questions raised in community consultations.
- d) CSIRO's approach to using feedback.
- e) Plans for further consultation with residents and community groups.

Approach to community consultation

The community consultations were led by Mark Wallis, General Manager of Property and Infrastructure at CSIRO, with support from other senior CSIRO science and management representatives. This was a deliberate approach to ensure that the community could meet and discuss issues and ideas directly with the proponent of the change.

Support for the consultation process was provided by Strategic Development Associates, a strategy and engagement consultancy. The approach included the following key elements:

- Building personal connections with community members
- Listening and being open to ideas and suggestions from the community
- Directly inviting concerns to be raised early
- Providing interested community members the opportunity for ongoing communication

Strategic Development Associates is guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) which has developed a 'spectrum' to help ensure the level of community engagement is tailored to the process at hand. The spectrum has five levels:

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate
- Empower

So far, the consultation process is working primarily at the "consult" and "involve" points on the spectrum, given the early stage of the process. Depending on the outcome of the National Capital

Authority's process, there may be opportunities to "collaborate" in subsequent stages, especially around planning and design of any new development.

Community consultation to date

Over the period mid-August to mid-October, a range of various consultation processes were undertaken with local residents and community groups.

Consultation with local residents

Three drop-in sessions were held in the second half of the September 2015 in Evatt, Nicholls (Gold Creek) and Charnwood (for Fraser residents). The sessions were open to anyone, but targeted at residents in the eight suburbs directly adjacent to the Ginninderra Research Station site - Fraser, Spence, Evatt, Mackellar, Giralang, Crace, Nicholls and Hall. Residents in these suburbs were specifically invited through the mail, in addition to general advertising in the Canberra Times and on the CSIRO website.

The drop-in sessions were held for residents to be provided with further information, allow them to give feedback, and generally make comments and ask questions. These were held so that there was an opportunity either side of Barton Highway and at different times to enable flexibility for residents to attend. The third session was held specifically for the benefit of residents of Fraser, some of whom had advised that they had not received notification of the previous two sessions.

In addition, there was an opportunity for any interested person to send written comments and questions by email or to make contact with CSIRO by phone.

Below is a summary of the participation in the three drop-in sessions.

Evatt, 3.00-7.00 pm, Thursday 17 September

- Total attendees – **88**
- "*Comments and Questions*" sheets completed – **22**
- Total requests to be included on subscriber list – **57**
(includes 45 names on Contact Sheet and additional 12 on *Comments and Questions* sheets)
- Requests to be contacted for follow-up on specific supplied questions – **11**
- There was extensive feedback provided at this session on butcher's paper

Gold Creek, 12.00-4.00 pm, Saturday 19 September

- Total attendees – **85**
- "*Comments and Questions*" sheets completed – **19**
- Total requests to be included on subscriber list – **41**
(includes 23 names on Contact Sheet and additional 18 on *Comments and Questions* sheets)
- Requests to be contacted for follow-up on specific supplied questions – **6**

Fraser/Charnwood, 5.00-7.00 pm, Tuesday 29 September

- Total attendees – **51**
- Number who stayed for information session – **31**
- "*Comments and Questions*" sheets completed – **6**
- Total requests to be included on subscriber list – **28**

(includes 24 names on Contact Sheet and additional 4 on *Comments and Questions* sheets)

- Requests to be contacted for follow-up on specific supplied questions – 4
- There was an extensive Q&A session with over **25 questions** asked (see below) and still more with their hands up when the session ended

Note that several more people took the form away to complete online (especially at the Fraser session and there was an influx of responses online in the days immediately following). Also, some of the completed forms at both sessions represent views of households or couples.

In total, 224 individuals made comments and asked questions through these community consultation opportunities. These are reflected in the “Issues raised in consultations” section of this document, below.

Consultation with community groups

On the day of the announcement of CSIRO’s request to the NCA (19 August 2015), key community groups were contacted and provided with information about the request, and were given the opportunity to have a separate briefing or attendance by a senior CSIRO staff member at a meeting. The people and organisations contacted in this way were generally very appreciative of the early notification and the opportunity to provide feedback. In summary, the following consultation with community groups took place between 19 August and the end of September 2015:

- a) Phone calls to a total of 31 key community organisations with potential interest in the site, including an offer of a face-to-face briefing by a senior CSIRO staff member.
- b) Face-to-face briefings were offered with community groups following initial phone contact (a total of 12 took up this offer).
- c) Participation in meetings of key community groups - Belconnen Community Council; Village of Hall and District Progress Association; and Gold Creek Marketing Group Pty Ltd. Further invitations to speak to other groups in the community have arisen out CSIRO’s attendance at these meetings and will form part of the next phase of consultation. (Note, a planned presentation to the Gungahlin Community Council was postponed due to reasons beyond CSIRO’s control and is being rescheduled for early November).

The discussions with these groups were wide-ranging, covering similar ground to the general community consultations, as well as focusing on particular interests of each group (eg environment, social services, affordable housing). In each case, the initial discussion marked the beginning of an ongoing dialogue that will continue into the subsequent planning and design phase in the event that the NCA includes the site as ‘urban area’ in the revised National Capital Plan.

Issues raised in consultations

A large number of issues were raised in the consultations.

The recurring themes and questions raised were, in descending order:

- Housing/block sizes/related development
- Natural environment/green open spaces/trees
- Traffic

- Facilities - recreation/art/culture/educational
- Food source/agriculture/community gardens
- Sustainability
- Impact on existing residents (ie view/disruption)
- Wildlife
- Social and community services
- Impact on CSIRO research
- CSIRO involvement in development
- Heritage

The overall feelings of respondents about the proposal as captured in their feedback can be grouped in the following ways – ie those who:

- 1) ***Want to maintain the status quo***, in particular to leave green space and preserve wildlife
- 2) ***Accept the inevitability of some change*** but not necessarily urban/housing
- 3) ***Welcome the change*** to urban (some with caveats)

Those who provided written feedback were evenly spread across these three groups, with 28 assessed as fitting under Group 1, 27 under Group 2 and 24 under Group 3 (with some sitting across two or three groups). Verbal feedback was generally more wide-ranging and difficult to categorise, but was also assessed to include a range of comments fairly evenly spread across the groups.

CSIRO use of community feedback

The most striking element of the consultation process so far has been the high level of community interest in participating in the planning and design of the development in the event that the NCA agrees to the site becoming ‘Urban Area’.

If and when the time comes to undertake detailed planning of a new urban development, the comments and feedback from community members will be invaluable to the CSIRO and form the basis for further in-depth consultation, in particular in the following areas:

- Maintenance of a natural environment with green open spaces
- Link between the new area and existing suburbs and key natural features (eg Mt Rogers)
- Attractive housing with a mix of block sizes
- Sustainable living embedded in the housing and other facilities
- A good range of community facilities and services within the development
- Improved traffic arrangements

For this, the CSIRO is extremely grateful to the interest, energy and ideas of both local residents and other interested community members and groups.

Proposed further consultation

Continued consultation with local residents

Initial consultations have identified the value and importance of ongoing consultations with close neighbours of the Ginninderra Field Station site. This will continue through the following methods:

- website (<http://ginninderraproject.com.au/>) which will both provide updated information and opportunities for ongoing feedback;
- distribution of regular Newsletter to interested community members (self-identified);
- correspondence on specific issues by email or phone; and
- offer to meet in person with a senior CSIRO staff member.

Additional consultation with community groups

CSIRO has appreciated the engagement of key community groups at both the local level and territory-wide. To date these have covered resident associations, environment groups, peak bodies and social service organisations.

In addition, other priority stakeholders have been identified for additional consultation. These include local schools, religious, sporting and community organisations who will be offered briefings and opportunities to meet.