

National Capital Authority
Draft North Curtin Residential Area Detailed Conditions of
Planning, Design and Development

Yarralumla Residents Association Submission

Submissions close on 10 June 2026 email to dcp@nca.gov.au

Context

The North Curtin Residential Area development in the Curtin Horse Paddocks is the first major infill development under the ACT Governments Southern Gateway Corridor urban intensification project. The focus of the Southern Gateway Corridor is urban infill through densification of the Light Rail Stage 2B (LRS2B) route along Yarra Glen and Adelaide Avenue.

KEY POINTS SUMMARY

The North Curtin Residential Area DCPDD does not meet the requirements of the National Capital Plan – there is no strategic plan, no integration with LRS2B and no guidelines for this urban infill development. Nor does it meet the requirements for assessment of listed threatened species under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999).

There is no provision for the essential road infrastructure, namely the Mint Interchange. This is essential to deal with the current Adelaide Avenue-Yarra Glen- Cotter Road peak traffic congestion, **plus** the projected growth in arterial traffic due to the Molonglo suburbs and adjacent major urban infill developments, of 720 dwellings in Yarralumla, **plus** the North Curtin Residential Area of 1,200 dwellings **plus** the proposed Diplomatic Estate (32 hectares).

The high density of the development of 92 dwelling per hectare, is on a par with Singapore New Town Developments.

The proposed high density of the development is based on the 2019 advisory valuation report for the site referred to in the 2021 Final Report to Government (Confidential) by Mecone and Atlas “Canberra Light Rail Stage2B Urban Infill Ability Assessment” . This indicates that the adoption of the high-density is driven by the financial return to government.

The above matters need to be addressed and the North Curtin Residential Area development should not proceed in its current form.

Compliance with National Capital Plan

1. The North Curtin Residential Area DCPDD does NOT comply with the requirement of the National Capital Plan that it **must be** prepared in the context of a strategic planning exercise for the Adelaide Avenue/Yarra Glen corridor – as this does not exist.

No Integration with LRS2B

2. The ACT Government has justified densification stating it “will complement the LRS2B Project by creating additional residential communities along the route and increase patronage for the Light Rail service” (SLA September 20246).
3. There is no integration with Light Rail Stage 2B – no direct access and no light rail stop in proximity to the development are planned.

Road Infrastructure

4. There is no assessment, or provision for, the essential enabling infrastructure to support traffic volumes from major developments already underway in the area and the North Curtin Residential Site.
5. The Cotter Road and Adelaide Avenue from State Circle to the Cotter Road flyover are currently choke points and subject to continuous major traffic jams at AM and PM Peak.
6. The funding of the Mint Interchange is essential and its integration into planning and construction of LRS2B is essential for the North Curtin Residential Development given the traffic increases from the growth in the Molonglo suburbs, 720 new dwellings in Yarralumla, Woden, and West Deakin.

Density

7. The proposed high density of the North Curtin Residential Area of 1,200 dwellings in 13ha that is 92 dwellings/ha is unparalleled and unjustified.
8. The density is driven by land values and return to the ACT Government.
9. The high density is put forward in isolation with no consideration of the necessary infrastructure and in the absence of a clear overall plan or development guidelines for urban infill.
10. Medium density of 530 dwellings (40 dwellings/ha) equivalent to RZ4 or 170 dwellings (13 dwellings/hectare) is more appropriate.

KEY ISSUES

1. Compliance with National Capital Plan

The Draft North Curtin Residential Area Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development (DCPDD) is subject to the National; Capital Plan (4.14 Diplomatic Precinct (Yarralumla, Deakin, O'Malley and Curtin) Code - Page 190) which states:

- ⇒ No access to Residential land is permitted from Yarra Glen.
- ⇒ Detailed conditions of planning, design and development **must be prepared in** the context of a strategic planning exercise for the Adelaide Avenue/Yarra Glen corridor, and are subject to public consultation.
- ⇒ For Residential land, detailed conditions of planning, design and development must be approved by the National Capital Authority prior to development.

The National Capital Authority states in the *Explanatory Document - Draft North Curtin Residential Area – DCPDD* that “Government have been collaborating so that there is a positive relationship between this site and the broader framework and proposals”.

The North Curtin Residential Area DCPDD is being put forward in the absence of the Southern Gateway Corridor Planning Framework that is intended to: integrate development land use and transport planning for LRS2B and establish guidelines for urban regeneration.

The ACT Governments “*Statement of Planning Priorities*” (Priority 1) was released on 16 December 2025. This states only that the light rail to Woden will present opportunities for mixed-use development integrated with public transport with the corridor designated an ‘urban renewal precinct’. The DPDD was released on 15 April 2026 just 4 months later.

The North Curtin Residential Area DCPDD does NOT comply with the requirement of the National Capital Plan to be prepared in the context of a strategic planning exercise for the Adelaide Avenue/Yarra Glen corridor – as this does not exist.

2. No Integration with LRS2B

Government has justified densification stating it “will complement the LRS2B Project by creating additional residential communities along the route and increase patronage for the Light Rail service” (SLA September 20246).

There is no integration with Light Rail Stage 2B – no direct access and no light rail stops in proximity to the development planned.

- ⇒ Only two Light Rail Stops are proposed under the EIS, at Kent Street and Carruthers Street. Residents would have a 1-2km walk to the nearest stop at Kent Street.
- ⇒ A light rail stop closer to the residential area to service the proposed development at the current Cotter Road flyover was assessed as non-viable (Light Rail Stage 2B (EIS202400003) - City and Environment Directorate - Planning).
- ⇒ No direct road access is permitted to Yarra Glen under the National Capital Plan, as it is an 80kph arterial road.

Light Rail Stops

(EIS Documents - Chapter 1 | Canberra Light Rail Stage 2B | ACT Government)



3. Road Infrastructure

There is no assessment, or provision for, the essential enabling infrastructure to support traffic volumes from major developments already underway in the area and the North Curtin Residential Site.

North Curtin Residential Development – core structure and access plan

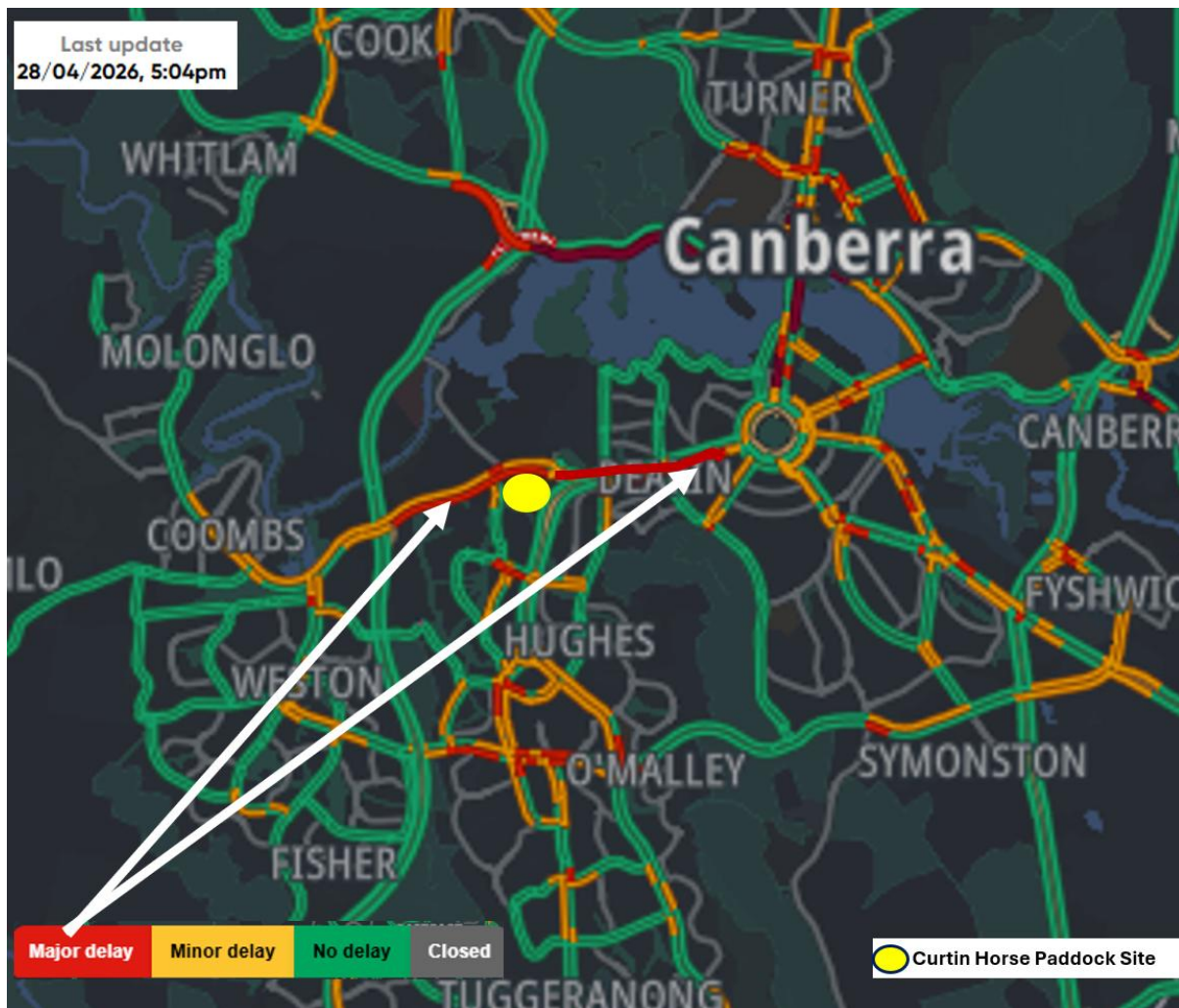


The primary access to the North Curtin Residential Site will be by vehicle from the Cotter Road. The Cotter Road carries up to 25,000 vehicles a day, and traffic is expected to grow to up to 35,000 cars by 2031 with the further development in the Molonglo Valley.

The North Curtin Residential area is proposed to have 1,200 dwellings. There will be additional Cotter Road traffic from the 720 new dwellings and commercial activities (Canberra Brickworks, Forestry Place and Minimbah Court), the major commercial area developments at West Deakin, and the development of the 32ha Diplomatic Estate. There will be increasing Adelaide Avenue-Yarra Glen traffic from the densification of Woden town Centre.

These traffic increases have been repeatedly modelled since 2012 with the assessment of the feasibility of the Mint Interchange (AECOM December 2012 Mint Interchange Pre-Feasibility Study for Land Development Agency). This showed a reduction in congestion at Kent Street of 30 to 44% at PM Peak 2031.

28 April 2026 PM Peak Traffic Congestion Adelaide Avenue-Cotter Road
(<https://www.tomtom.com/traffic-index/city/canberra>)



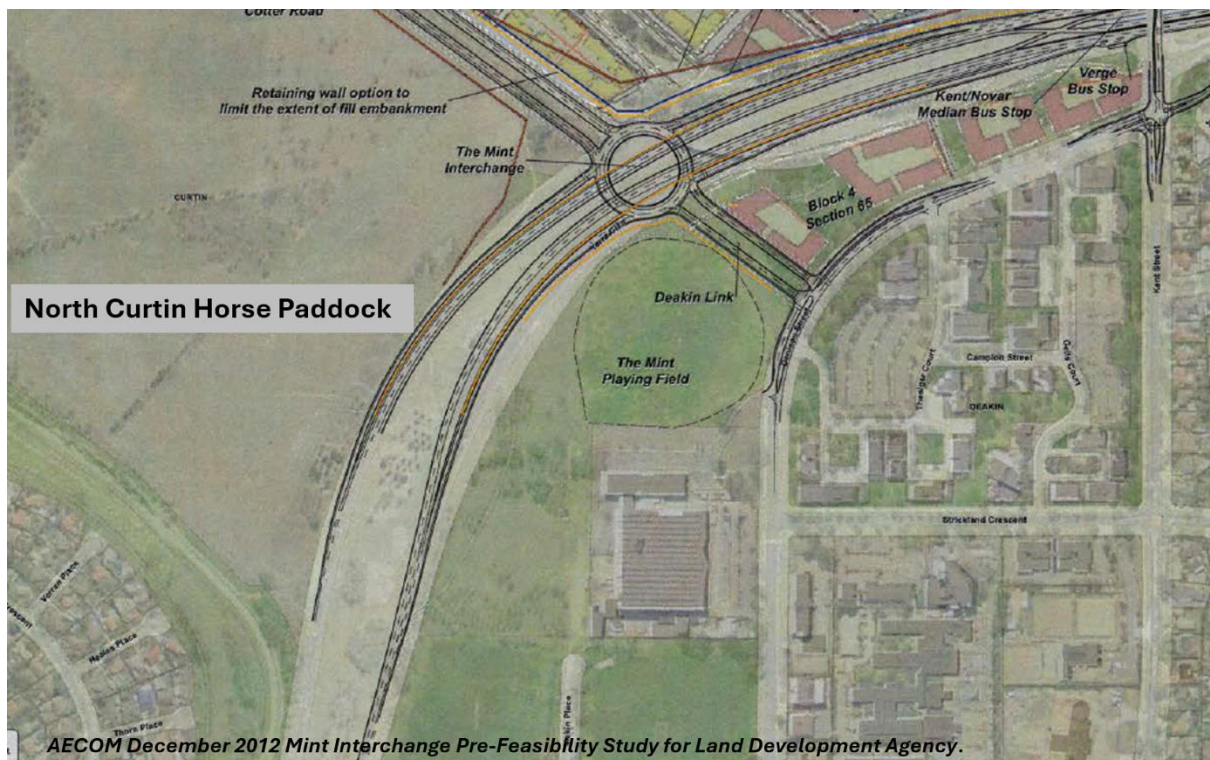
The Mint Interchange has been included in the ACT Government’s recent traffic modelling on improvements to the road network on Adelaide Avenue and surrounding streets. The Canberra Strategic Traffic Model (CSTM) show a reduction in traffic congestion of 30 to 44% at Kent Street at 2031 (Stantec 2023 Transport Impact Assessment Forestry Place, Yarralumla). The Microsimulation Analysis to 2031 (SMEC June 2021 Traffic Report Microsimulation Analysis (Appendix A) specifically includes the future road network assumption of the Cotter Road Stage 3 From Dunrossil Drive to Adelaide Avenue (including the Mint Interchange) to link with Light Rail).

There are various designs for the Mint Interchange (e.g. raised roundabout, diamond intersection) however they all require to be planned and constructed in conjunction with the LRS2B as they impact on the alignment of LRS2B, road reserve land requirements and access to Adelaide Avenue-Yara Glen and the Cotter Road. It would be virtually impossible to construct the Mint Interchange afterwards.

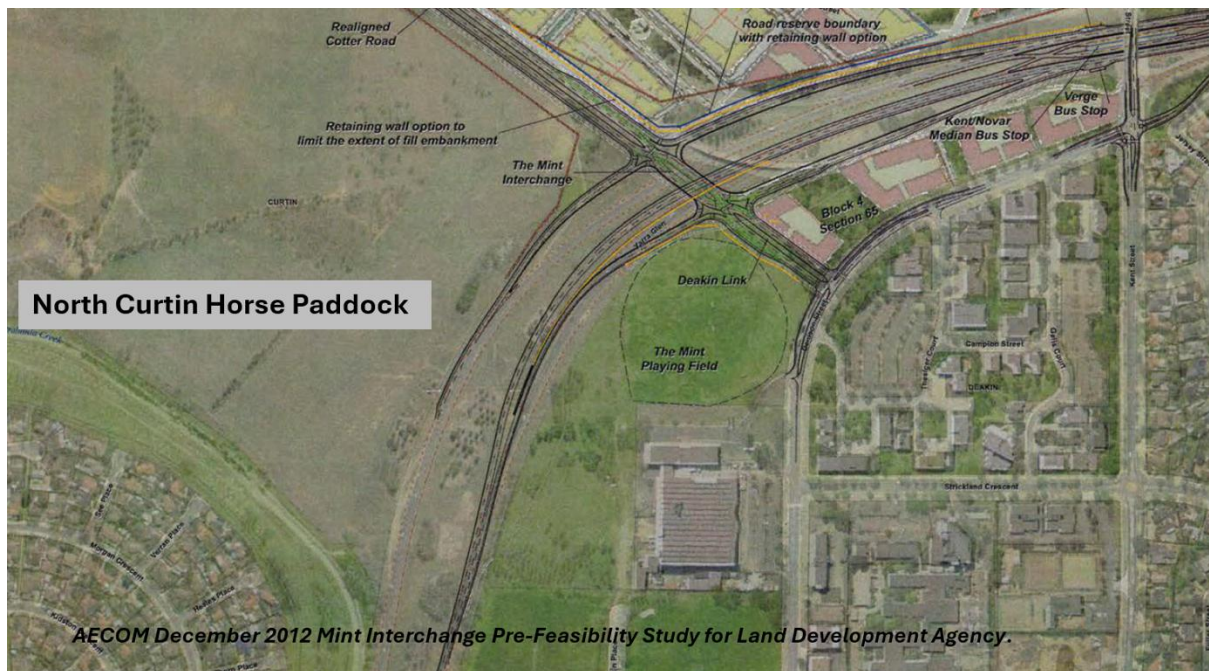
Mint Interchange



Mint Interchange raised roundabout arrangement



Mint Interchange- general arrangement



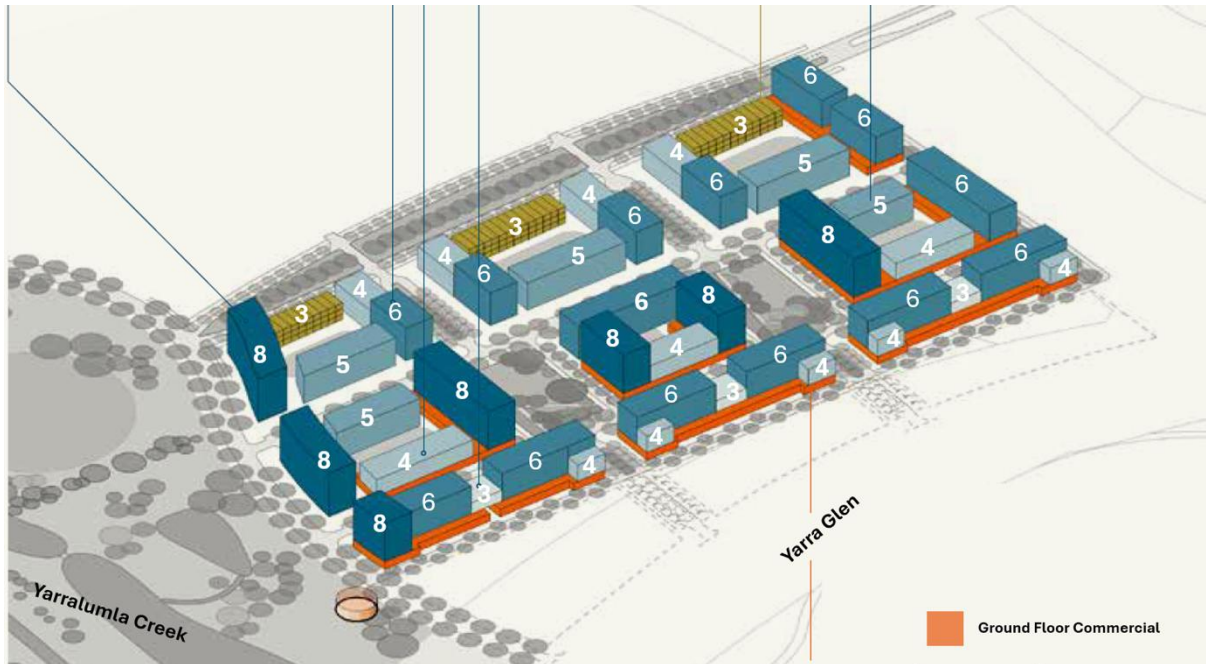
The concurrent construction of Light Rail Stage 2B and the Curtin Residential Area over 10 years will cause long term serious disruption to commuter traffic.

4. Density

The proposed high density of the North Curtin Residential Area of 1,200 dwellings in 13ha that is 92 dwellings/ha. This is unparalleled for a suburb and unjustified. The high density is put forward in isolation with no consideration of the necessary infrastructure and in the absence of a clear overall plan or development guidelines for urban infill.

The high density is driven by land values and return to the ACT Government. Medium density of 530 dwellings (40 dwellings/ha) equivalent to RZ4 or 170 dwellings (13 dwellings/hectare) is more appropriate.

North Curtin Residential Area – Proposed building height and massing
(Draft North Curtin Residential Area Detailed Conditions of Planning, Design and Development National Capital Authority)

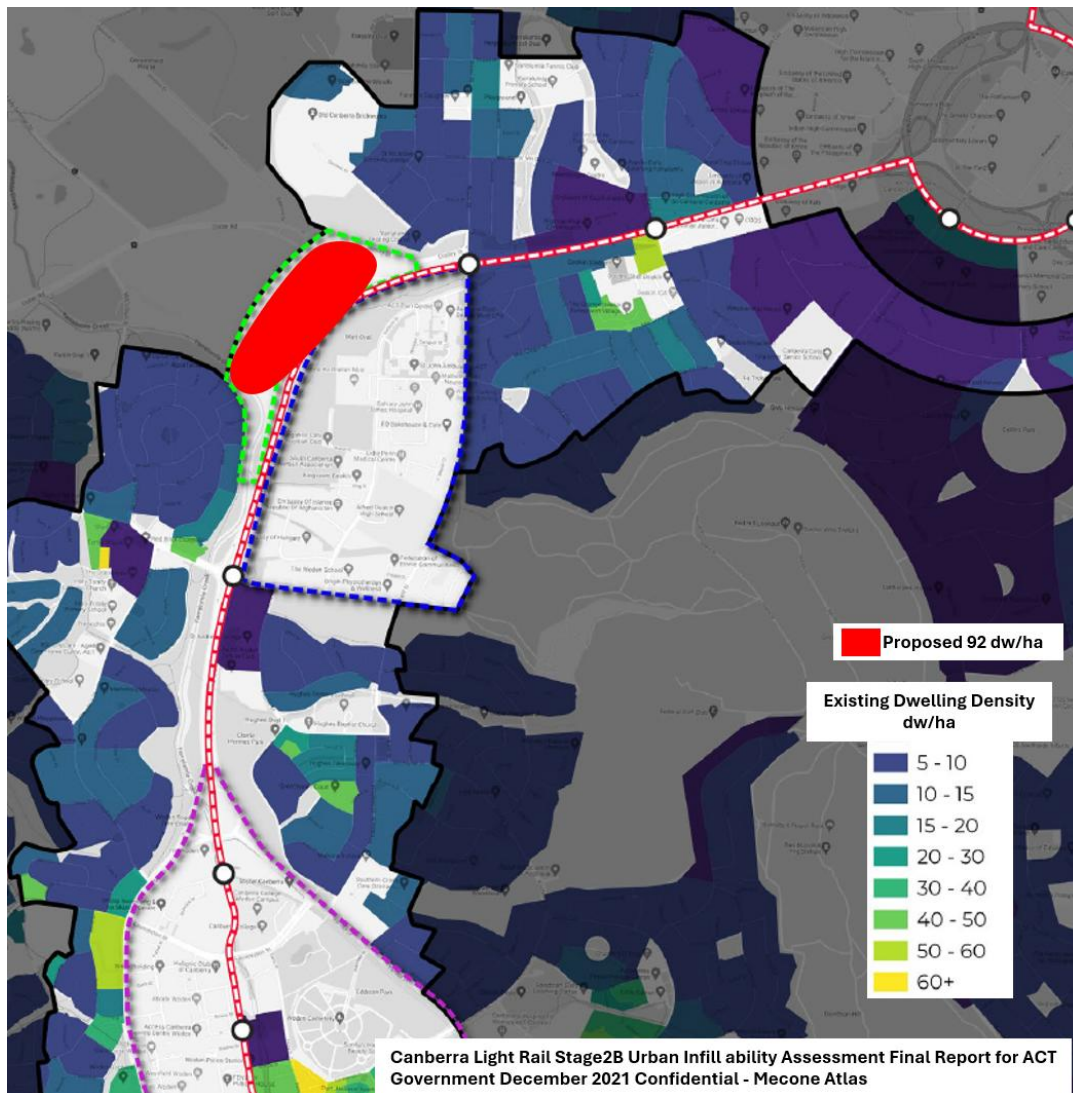


DENSITY

5. The density of 92 dwellings/ha is the same as Singapore New Town developments (<https://www.globalurban.org/GUDMag07Vol3Iss1/Yuen.htm>)
6. 4 times the density of the Canberra Brickworks and Forestry Place developments together of 25 dwellings/ha
7. Up to 20 times the density of Deakin Red Hill at 5 to 10 dwellings/ha
8. The density is equivalent in size to a new suburb but there is no provision or space for a local shopping centre, school or other community facilities. Only a possible “mini “supermarket is flagged and some ground-floor non-residential space.
9. Public open space within the development is just 0.24ha is provided – which equates to 2 square metres per dwelling
10. The adjoining wetlands “ecological park” is the 13ha floodable area of Yarralumla Creek next to Yarra Glen, provides open space will be of limited recreational use – you cannot play in a wetland or creek.

Existing and Proposed Density— Curtin, Yarralumla, Deakin and Red Hill

(from Page34 Canberra Light Rail Stage2B Urban Infill Ability Assessment Final Report for ACT Government December 2021 Confidential - Mecone Atlas)



The ACT Government has justified densification stating it “will complement the LRS2B Project by creating additional residential communities along the route and increase patronage for the Light Rail service” (SLA Final Version 2 – September 2024 6 Statement of Requirements – [PUI] 8788).

However, there is no connection or integration of the Curtin Residential Estate with LRS2B. Direct access to Yarra Glen is precluded by the National Capital Plan and a Light Rail Stop adjacent to the proposed development at the Cotter flyover has been assessed in the LRS2B draft EIS as unviable.

The proposed density is based on the “High Scenario” in the report to the ACT Government “Canberra Light Rail Stage2B Urban Infill Ability Assessment Final Report

for ACT Government December 2021 Confidential - Mecone Atlas”. This indicated that the adoption of the high-density scenario is driven by the financial return to government alone.

Extract from Mecone Atlas Report 2021 Pages 43 and 44

Table 4. Curtin Horse Paddocks Scenario Capacities and Take-Up (Dwellings)

Item	Existing	2031	2041	Capacity
Base Case	0	170	170	170
Medium Scenario	0	530	530	530
High Scenario	0	1,100	1,900	1,900

Medium Scenario

The built form outcome is assumed residential development ranging from 3-4 storeys, similar to an RZ4 zoning across the site. This medium scenario represents the moderate expected development on the site.

High Scenario

This scenario represents the high expected development on the site and is based on a 2019 advisory valuation report for the site.

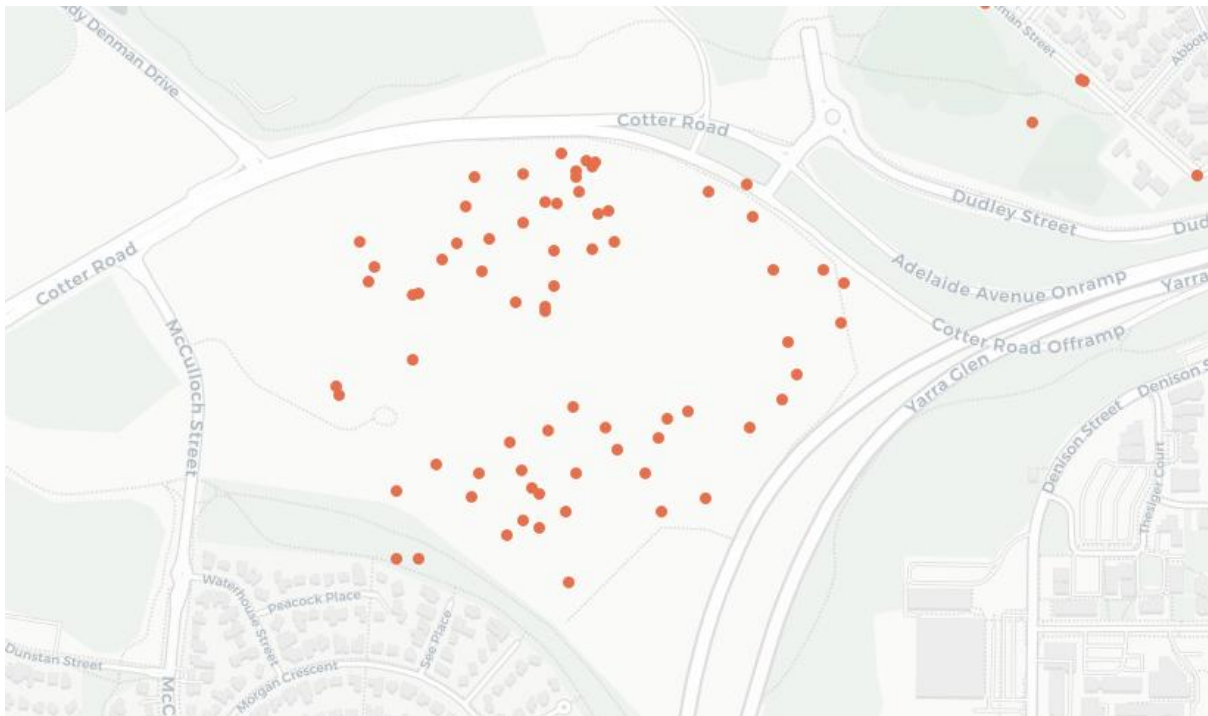
1. Non Compliance with the EPBC Act

The North Curtin Residential site (13ha), the Diplomatic Estate (32ha), and the adjacent Yarralumla Creek area (13ha) are habitat for the Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*) which is listed as a "Vulnerable Threatened Species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act (1999) (EPBC Act)*. This is shown in a EPBC Act Protected Matters Report for the site.

Golden Sun Moth populations have reduced, and are highly fragmented, there being 125 known sites throughout its range post-1990. This includes 32 in the ACT where majority of these populations do not exceed 5 hectares in area.

Under the EPBC Act approval is required if the proposed action, on or adjacent to Commonwealth land, has, will have, or is likely to have a **significant impact** on a species listed in any of the following categories: extinct in the wild; critically endangered; endangered, or vulnerable. An assessment is required as to whether the impact will be significant and includes the site and adjacent areas. If there is any doubt on its significance the matter must be referred to the Environment Minister.

Occurrence Records 2026 *Synemon plana* : Golden Sun Moth | Atlas of Living Australia



The National Capital Plan Amendment 95, North Curtin Diplomatic Estate and Urban Area, took effect on 28 October 2020. The National Capital Authority advised that as the next steps will undertake detailed site investigations and estate development planning for the diplomatic estate ([Amendment 95 – North Curtin Diplomatic Estate and Urban Area | National Capital Authority](#)).

The 2021 Final Report to Government (Confidential) by Mecone and Atlas “Canberra Light Rail Stage2B Urban Infill Ability Assessment states that the ACT Government is currently undertaking detailed ecological assessments to determine the extent of threatened species and ecological communities on the site. It is understood from preliminary investigations in the diplomatic estate that there the potential existence of natural temperate grassland, a very rare habitat in the ACT.

There is no documentation in the public domain to demonstrate that an assessment of matters of environmental significance has been undertaken, whether there is a significant impact on listed species and communities, and the need for referral and assessment under the EPBC Act.

The North Curtin Residential Area DCPDD does not meet the requirements of the EPBC Act and should not proceed until this has been undertaken.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Until these matters are addressed, the proposed North Curtin Residential Area development should not proceed.

END OF DOCUMENT