

Tara Cheyne MLA

Manager of Government Business

Attorney-General

Minister for Human Rights

Minister for City and Government Services

Minister for the Night-Time Economy

Member for Ginninderra

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**Questions on Notice Paper No 3****7 March 2025****Question No. 170****MR CAIN MLA** - To ask the Minister for City and Government Services:

- (1) What are the plans for significant upgrades at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, including the development of a new visitor centre and a broader master plan, and how will transparency, accountability, and collaboration with stakeholders be ensured throughout this process.
- (2) Who is being consulted during the development of the Tidbinbilla master plan.
- (3) What steps are being taken to incorporate Ngunnawal cultural perspectives and ensure the Ngunnawal Tidbinbilla Working Group plays a meaningful role throughout the process.
- (4) How will the Ngunnawal Cultural Burning Partnership Working Group be integrated into the management of Tidbinbilla to preserve and promote cultural fire management practices.
- (5) What is the purpose of the current entry fee collection for the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.
- (6) Can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of revenue allocation.
- (7) How many rangers are currently employed at Tidbinbilla, and how many positions remain vacant.
- (8) Is the current ranger capacity sufficient to manage new responsibilities, such as cultural burning practices and broader conservation initiatives.
- (9) What steps are being taken by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service to address dangerous and reckless driving on entry roads and within Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve
- (10) Has specific funding been allocated for the construction of the new visitor centre and the rehabilitation of the former site at Tidbinbilla.
- (11) How is the project being managed to ensure it remains on track with budget and timeline.



- (12) Are these upgrades funded through entry fees or other revenue streams, and how will they enhance conservation efforts and visitor experiences.

MINISTER CHEYNE MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) is in the early stages of the development of a master plan for the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.
- (2) EPSDD is planning to consult widely during the development of the master plan. Consultation is likely to include staff who work at Tidbinbilla, traditional custodians, ParkCare volunteers, visitors, other areas of the ACT Government, the ACT Heritage Council, accessibility representative bodies, emergency services, the ACT Education Directorate, Visit Canberra, the ACT community, neighbours and other identified interested parties.
- (3) EPSDD has already undertaken extensive engagement with Ngunnawal community about the potential plans for a new Visitor Centre and associated infrastructure upgrades. This consultation will continue as the master plan is developed. In 2023, EPSDD engaged Murri Matters to facilitate Ngunnawal Community and Elder participation in a series of Community meeting sessions.
- (4) EPSDD engages with the Ngunnawal Community to create opportunities for cultural practices to be delivered on country and respects Ngunnawal cultural knowledge.
- (5) The entry fees that are collected at the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve assist to maintain visitor infrastructure, and undertake critical work to protect, preserve and enhance the environment for our native plants and animals throughout the reserve.
- (6) Revenue generated by fees and charges that is collected by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS), including the entry fees to Tidbinbilla, are used to deliver conservation land management activities across the conservation estate. This includes supporting delivery of seasonal programs and maintenance activities, education and interpretation, community engagement and the management of our threatened species programs. The ACT budget papers provide detail of the operating budget for PCS.
- (7) There are four park rangers employed at Tidbinbilla.
- (8) Current park ranger capacity is sufficient to undertake fundamental land management and conservation functions across the ACT. In addition to park rangers, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service has general service officers that undertake repairs and maintenance activities, volunteer and visitor services officers that support community outreach, as well as technical officers that deliver a range of programs and activities including the Tidbinbilla threatened species conservation programs.

Fire on the parks estate is managed by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, however ACT Emergency Services Agency will assume control in a larger bushfire response. Any cultural, ecological, or hazard reduction burning programs are planned and delivered by a large multi-disciplined team across multiple agencies to ensure appropriate processes are followed and risks are managed.

- (9) Dangerous and reckless driving on and around entry roads to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve is a road safety issue and the responsibility of ACT Policing to address. Rangers report incidents of dangerous or reckless driving to ACT Policing.

The entry gate to Tidbinbilla is locked at the end of the day, so the public cannot access the reserve. CCTV cameras are being installed outside the temporary visitor centre to monitor the car park and road immediately adjacent.

- (10) Funding for the demolition and rehabilitation of the old Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre was allocated in the ACT Budget and work will commence in 2025.

Funding for a new Visitor Centre has not been allocated. The Government will consider the outcomes of the master plan, the priorities for upgrades, and the investment requirements as part of future budget processes.

- (11) The project to demolish the existing Visitor Centre and development of a master plan is being overseen by governance mechanisms to ensure timely progress.

- (12) The development of the master plan for Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve will help to inform and guide future Government decisions about priorities for upgrades and will be subject to future budget processes.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Tara Cheyne MLA

Minister for City and Government Services

Date:.....

27/3/25

This response required 3hrs 25mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$382.83.