

**Suzanne Orr MLA**

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs  
Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water  
Minister for Disability, Carers and Community Services  
Minister for Seniors and Veterans

Member for Yerrabi

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**RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**  
**Questions on Notice Paper No 1**  
**6 December 2024**  
**Question No. 30**

**MS CLAY MLA** - To ask the Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water:

- (1) What proportion of the Ecological Network map has been ground-truthed.
- (2) What mapping of remaining environmental areas that would be suitable for use as environmental offsets has been undertaken.
- (3) What areas are priority areas flagged for future use as environmental offsets.

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

- (1) The Urban ACT Ecological Network covers approximately 44,518 ha within the current urban districts. It excludes Kowen, the Western Edge Investigation Area, and all other non-urban areas of the ACT lowlands.

27% of the Ecological Network has been ground-truthed (12,019 ha), through carrying out "Plant Community Type/Condition" (PCT) mapping of priority areas. PCTs are spatial polygons that define the extent and condition of vegetation communities in the ACT.

- (2) The best mapping source for identifying potential environmental offsets is the BPRP Polygons Protection and Restoration Advice (BPRP). BPRP builds upon existing PCT mapping to identify additional threatened conservation values. Using the BPRP polygons, it is possible to identify areas which contain Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) that are not currently protected by either offsets or nature reserve, and degraded areas containing MNES within protected areas.

Mapping suggests land suitable for potential environmental offsets on unprotected land exists within the following areas:

- a. Eastern Broadacre (Jerrabomberra Valley and Majura Valley)
- b. Bonshaw (Jerrabomberra Valley)
- c. Harcourt Hill, Gungahlin
- d. North Gungahlin Woodlands, north of Jacka, Taylor and Bonner
- e. Western Edge – west of Molonglo Valley urban area

There are also areas of land managed adjacent to existing nature reserves that are managed for their conservation values and may be suitable for potential environmental offsets. In addition, there are various small areas of territory/unleased land that may be suitable for consideration,

Work to strategically map conservation values using best available data, with a focus on supporting decisions to prioritise areas for protection, stewardship, restoration and development (including identification of appropriate future offsets), is in the scoping/planning stage. This work will be progressed over the coming years and will inform the development of an ACT Landscape Plan.

It should be noted that the suitability of a site as an environmental offset is determined by the MNES impacted, and the significance of the impact proposed by a development. As such, the ACT may not have a suitable offset for every proposed development which may impact MNES, as required under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

(3) Areas identified for future use as environmental offsets include:

- a. Sites under the proposed Eastern Broadacre Strategic Assessment
- b. Bonshaw

**Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.**

  
**Suzanne Orr MLA**

**Minister for Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water**

Date: 20/12/24

This response required 6hrs 15mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$535.96.