

FRANKLIN GRASSLANDS Landscape Plan

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD



FRANKLIN GRASSLANDS LANDSCAPE PLAN

Franklin Grasslands was established as an environmental offset site in 2019 and formally declared a Canberra Nature Park reserve in early 2020. The primary objective of the Franklin Grasslands is to protect and conserve natural and cultural values while meeting environmental offset commitments.

The grasslands protect and support many wildflowers and animals. Threatened species such as the Golden Sun Moth, Striped Legless Lizard, Perunga Grasshopper and Superb Parrot can all be found in the reserve. It is also the richest area in the world for the Ginninderra Peppergrass, which is only found in the ACT.



The Landscape Plan aims to identify opportunities for community engagement and education while protecting the important reserve values by:

- identifying activity areas, including for conservation and recreation (e.g. sensitive infrastructure including paths, gathering spaces, lookouts, and interpretive elements (signs and sculptures))
- managing access and behaviour in the reserve to prevent inadvertent damage to its values
- educating and engaging the local community on the importance and values of the Grassland's flora and fauna, and its importance more broadly, including links to nearby Mulangarri and Gungaharra grassland reserves
- improving visual amenity of the site, engendering a sense of care within the community.

THE CONVERSATION

In **February 2020**, ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) held a face-to-face Stakeholder Workshop with key Gungahlin community groups to brainstorm ideas and discuss the key themes of *Environmental Management*, *Community Engagement*, and *Managing Access and Behaviour* in relation to the grassland site.

Posts were placed on the ACT Parks and the Environment Directorate's social media pages. There were 1,000 postcards distributed throughout the suburbs of Franklin and Harrison to inform the local community about the consultation period and open day, and offer instructions on how to provide feedback on the draft Landscape Plan.

For six weeks, from **14 August to 25 September 2020**, we held a conversation online through YourSay, where we provided information about the site and asked for your comments and feedback on the draft Landscape Plan.

An open day was held on site on **6 September 2020** and provided an opportunity for the community to speak with PCS to learn about the values of the site and comment on the proposed plans in person. PCS estimates up to 100 people stopped over the course of the day.

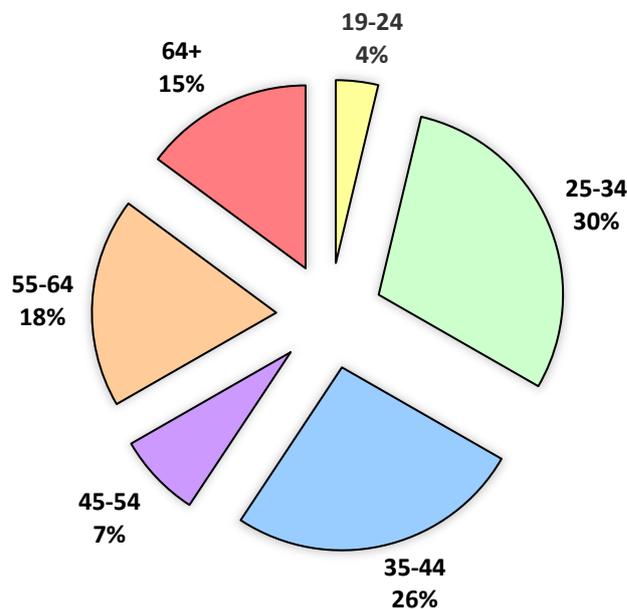


WHO ENGAGED

Representatives from the following government and community organisations have been engaged throughout the Landscape Plan process. These organisations have particular interest in and/or knowledge of the Franklin Grasslands site:

- ACT Government – owners and managers of the site
- Friends of Grasslands - community group dedicated to conservation of natural temperate grassy ecosystems in south-east Australia
- Gungahlin Community Council – volunteer association with a focus on improving the well-being of the Gungahlin community
- Conservation Council ACT – environmental advocacy group, representing over 40 member groups
- Ginninderra Catchment Group – community-based natural resource management organisation whose aim is to maintain and improve the health of the Ginninderra Catchment and surrounding environments
- Franklin/Harrison/Gungahlin residents – primary users of the site

YourSay respondent age demographics



Key insights from the community

Site development

1. There is overwhelming support for the site to be protected and managed as a Nature Reserve.
2. There is relief that the site is not going to be developed into apartments or housing.
3. The draft Landscape Plan has been met with support and enthusiasm from those engaged so far, particularly that the plan will enhance the site, protect its values, and improve visual amenity.

Site visitation

4. In its current condition, people enjoy the site's flora and fauna, the views it provides from their homes, and that it has not been developed for housing.
5. People dislike the sites 'neglected' feel, the spoil sites at the southern end, and the lack of paths and formal infrastructure. The community see it as largely unusable in its current state.
6. All respondents said they would visit the reserve a lot more if the Landscape Plan was implemented.

Landscape Plan

7. The elements in the Landscape Plan which received the most positive feedback were the defined walking paths and entry points, the 'gathering' spaces, protection of the high-quality areas, and potential learning/educational opportunities.
8. The elements of the Landscape Plan which received the least positive feedback were perceived increases in traffic and noise associated with increased visitation, the design and placement of the northern carpark (potential for antisocial behaviour, rubbish dumping), impacts on threatened species due to increased visitation.

Recreation

9. Respondents listed activities including, walking, bird watching, meditation and mindfulness, and accessing the light rail as likely uses of the site.
10. Dog walking/access was the most contentious issue. Approximately 50% of respondents did not believe dogs should be allowed into the reserve, and the other 50% were in favour of allowing dogs into the site.

WHAT'S NEXT?

All feedback from the consultation process will be collated and reviewed for inclusion into the final Landscape Plan.

Prior to construction, a detailed design stage will be undertaken which will see drawings and plans produced for each of the core elements, including paths, signage, gathering spaces, sculptures, fencing and earthworks. Further community consultation will be undertaken at this stage.

To find out more about the Franklin Grasslands project and other initiatives, policies and projects in Canberra visit <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/franklin-grasslands> or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.



Key Timings

- [Step 1] – Delivery of the final Landscape Plan [We are here]
- [Step 2] – Detailed design phase, including further community consultation
- [Step 3] – Implementation

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

700 over 700 people viewed the project YourSay page	100 We spoke to more than 100 individuals at our Open Day event	1,000 We distributed 1,000 postcards to local residents	100% of people surveyed were supportive of the draft Landscape Plan
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