



RAPID CREEK LANDCARE GROUP

SUBMISSION RE: DISCUSSION PAPER TOWARDS AN AREA PLAN FOR THE KNUCKEY AND IRONSTONE LAGOONS LOCALITY AUGUST 2013

Found in Darwin's northern suburbs, Rapid Creek and its catchment form the only significant freshwater system in Darwin's urban area and it is a valuable environmental and community asset. The Rapid Creek Landcare Group's members look after Rapid Creek through regular working bees, by promoting awareness about the creek and by advocating for better management throughout the catchment.

The Rapid Creek Landcare Group welcomes this discussion paper as the first step towards a sustainable approach to development in the area. Following an appraisal of the paper several points of concern to the landcare group have arisen.

The western part of the study area falls within the Rapid Creek catchment. There is no reference to Rapid Creek or its catchment, this needs to be rectified. We would like to see a much more detailed analysis on the impacts any proposed development would have on the catchment. This relates to hydrology and habitat and recent studies on the flooding impacts of Rapid Creek.

Although some documents are mentioned in the discussion paper there is no formal referencing. A draft Area Plan will need to have a comprehensive referencing process which includes: recent flood studies; native vegetation studies; all existing studies in relation to the special lagoon and groundwater system; and the *Rapid Creek Management Plan*.

The natural values of this area are very important. We are opposed to engineering solutions to modify the natural lagoon and drainage system in order to facilitate more intense development in the area. We also wish to see all existing areas of native vegetation retained, improved and properly managed, especially in relation to fire and weed management. Our preference is to see the Low Growth Scenario or similar implemented.

We would also like to see more detailed information from Darwin International Airport, Airservices Australia and Australian Government regulators in relation to development scenarios, particularly within the 20 ANEF or higher zones.

The identification of areas for increased development needs to be looked at in a broader context such as through the *Greater Darwin Regional Land Use Plan*. There are areas more suitable for densification than the sensitive, wetland environments in the study area. The discussion paper notes 'The vision of these property owners as to the future of the area will be pivotal in determining the form of future development.'. However, if their vision is for inappropriate, intensified development in sensitive areas that will require expensive engineering work to proceed, they should not be given priority in the planning process.

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