


NOTICE OF DECISION AND STATEMENT OF REASONS

Section 55 of the *Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act)

Regulations 57(2)(b), 63 and 64 of the *Environment Protection Regulations 2020* (EP Regulations)

Name of proposed action	Holtze Development Area
Proponent	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL)
NT EPA reference	EP2022/022
Description of proposed action	<p>Urban development of 202 hectares (ha) of land within the Holtze Development Area on Crown land sections 4231 and 4229 Hundred of Bagot and freehold Portion 2295. Proposed development is located in the Litchfield Local Government Area, approximately 1.8 km north of the Palmerston central business district.</p> <p>The proposed action includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land clearing of approximately 116 ha of native vegetation • construction of enabling infrastructure (sewerage to Palmerston, water supply, power, communications, roads and drainage infrastructure) • subdivision for residential, commercial, public space and community development purposes • development of the Holtze land release, Territory reserve parcel, Palmerston Health Precinct and future urban development.
Nature of proposed action	Urban and residential
Decision	<p>Standard environmental impact assessment is required in accordance with section 55 of the EP Act and regulation 57(2)(b)(i) of the EP Regulations.</p> <p>Assessment by referral information is the required method of environmental impact assessment in accordance with regulation 57(2)(b)(ii).</p>
Person authorised to make decision	Dr Paul Vogel AM – Chairperson, as delegate of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA)
Signature	
Date of decision	7 March 2023
Matters considered under EP Regulation 56	<p>The NT EPA has considered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the accepted referral (including the referral form, referral report and appendices) • submissions made in relation to the accepted referral
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proponent consultation and stakeholder engagement prior to submission of the referral has occurred through multiple community

consultation opportunities about the Greater Holtze Area, including the proposed action. Submissions were received from the Department of Defence, government authorities, community and private industry stakeholders.

- NT EPA invited submissions on the referral to be made between 4 January and 1 February 2023. Submissions received during NT EPA consultation:
 - government authority: 7
 - public: nil
- Government authority submissions on the referral information identified potential impacts on terrestrial ecosystems, hydrological processes, inland water environmental quality and culture and heritage, community and economy and human health.

All submissions are available on the NT EPA website.

Statement of Reasons

Overview

The NT EPA considers that the proposed action has the potential to have a significant impact on environmental values associated with four environmental factors¹.

Land

- **Terrestrial ecosystems** – may be significantly impacted through:
 - loss of regionally important sub-populations and fragmentation of the global population of the listed threatened flora species, *Typhonium praetermissum*, from land clearing, unmanaged land and urban development
 - loss and decline of high density stands (stem density greater than 400 per hectare) of the listed threatened flora species *Cycas armstrongii*, Darwin cycad, from land clearing, unmanaged land and urban development
 - cumulative impacts on protected woodland species.

The loss of high density stands has not been quantified and the effectiveness of proposed management measures to avoid or minimise potential significant impacts is uncertain.

Water

- **Inland water environmental quality** – potential significant impacts from increased sediment entering the headwaters of Mitchell Creek from stormwater runoff from exposed soil areas during construction. The proposal includes measures to avoid and minimise potential significant impacts including an erosion and sediment control plan.

People

- **Community and economy** – potential significant impacts at the existing Palmerston Regional Hospital and neighbouring rural resident receptors from construction noise. The proposal includes mitigation through compliance with the NT EPA NT Noise Management Framework Guideline and implementation of the proponent's Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- **Culture and heritage** – significance of potential impacts to archaeological items (if any) in the southern part of the proposal is poorly understood.

¹ [NT EPA Environmental factors and objectives](#)

The NT EPA considered other environmental factors during its consideration of the referral; however, the impact on those factors was not considered to be significant.

Justification

A standard environmental impact assessment on referral information is required, having regard to:

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| Regulation 59 (a) | The significance of the potential impact of the proposed action as described in submissions on the referral and in the overview above. |
| Regulation 59 (b) | The NT EPA's level of confidence in predicting potential significant impacts of the proposed action taking into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the proponent's and the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security's (DEPWS) site-specific data collected in relation to <i>Typhonium praetermissum</i> occurrence and connectivity• ongoing consultation between the proponent and the DEPWS with regard to a Conservation strategy for cumulative impact on threatened woodland species. |
| Regulation 59 (c) | The NT EPA's level of confidence in the effectiveness of proposed measures to avoid, mitigate or manage potential significant impacts with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• potential impacts to listed threatened species (<i>Typhonium praetermissum</i>, <i>Cycas armstrongii</i> and woodland species) from construction and operation of the urban development. |
| Regulation 59 (d) and (e) | The extent of community engagement that has occurred in relation to the proposed action, and the capacity of communities and individuals to access and understand information about the proposed action and its impacts.

The proponent has summarised community consultation on the broader development and planning of the Greater Holtze area. The outcomes of stakeholder concerns and how they are addressed by the proponent are provided at Appendix F of the Referral Report. |
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Conclusion

The NT EPA considers that the proposed action has potential for significant impacts on four environmental factors, and that environmental impact assessment is required. The method of assessment will be assessment by referral information.

In making its decision under EP Regulation 57, the NT EPA has considered the:

- objects under section 3 of the EP Act
 - purpose of the environmental impact assessment process under section 42 of the EP Act
 - matters under regulation 56 of the EP Regulations
 - criteria under regulation 59 of the EP Regulations.
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