



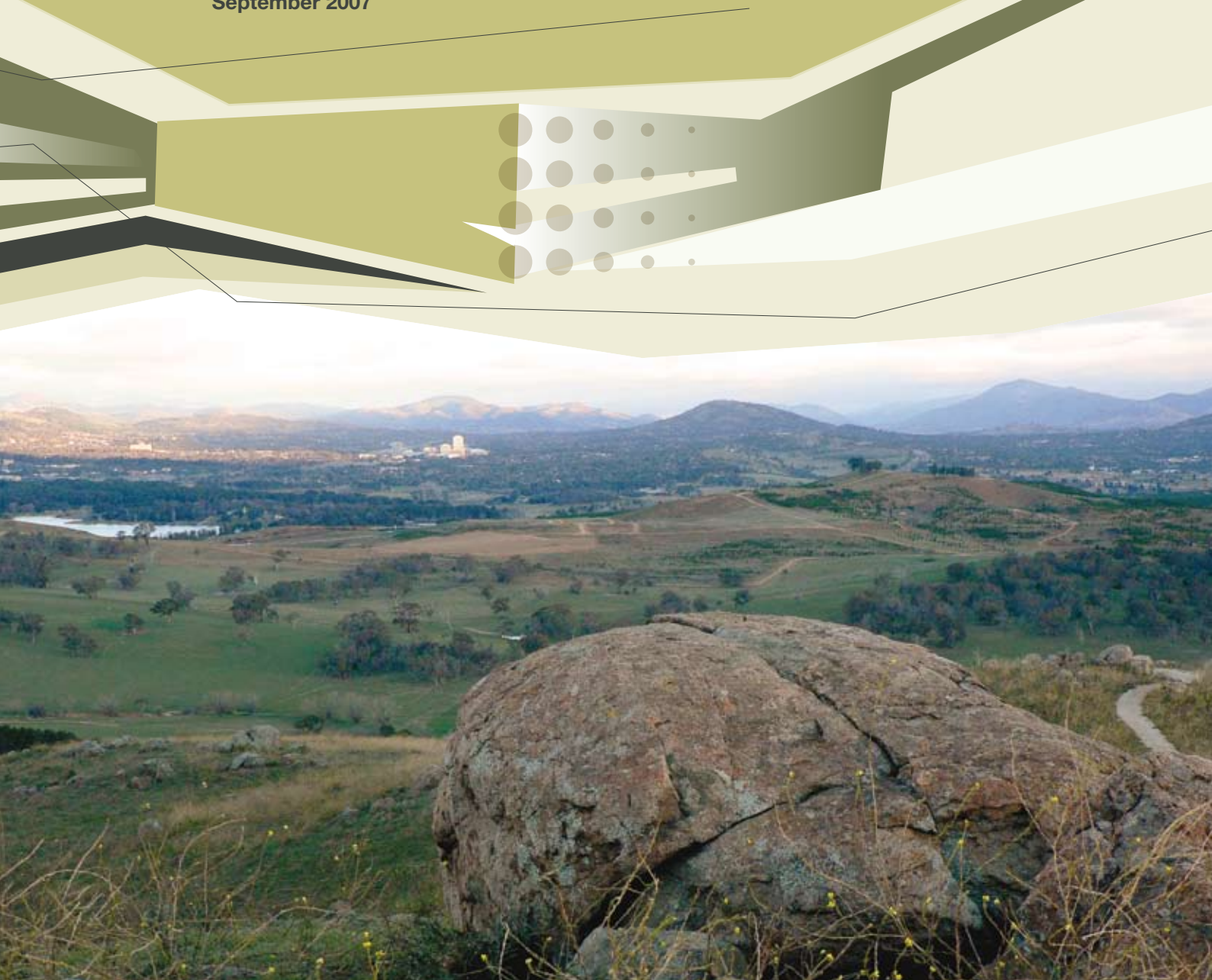
Australian Government
National Capital Authority

*The Australian Capital Territory
(Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*

National Capital Plan

Draft Amendment 63 – Molonglo and North Weston

September 2007



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Introduction

The National Capital Authority (NCA) is established under the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988* (the Act). The current National Capital Plan came into effect on 21 January 1990. In accordance with the Act, the NCA is required to keep the National Capital Plan under constant review and to propose Amendments to it where necessary.

The object of the National Capital Plan is *‘to ensure Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.’*

The National Capital Plan identifies matters of national significance in the planning and development of Canberra and the Territory. These are:

- The pre-eminence of the role of Canberra and the Territory as the National Capital.
- Preservation and enhancement of the landscape features which give the National Capital its character and setting.
- Respect for the key elements of Walter Burley Griffin’s formally adopted plan for Canberra.
- Creation, preservation and enhancement of fitting sites, approaches and backdrops for national institutions and ceremonies as well as National Capital Uses.
- The development of a city which both respects the environmental values and reflects national concerns with sustainability of Australia’s urban areas.

Within the framework of this legislative object or goal, key objectives of the National Capital Plan are to:

- Maintain and enhance the landscape character of Canberra and the Territory as the setting for the National Capital.
- Provide a plan offering flexibility and choice to enable the Territory Government to fulfill its functions properly.
- Support and promote environmentally responsible urban development practices.

The ACT Government’s *Canberra Spatial Plan* for accommodating Canberra’s future growth over the next 30 years identifies the Molonglo Valley for ‘greenfield’ residential development.

The NCA proposes National Capital Plan **Draft** Amendment 63 - Molonglo and North Weston to enable urban development to occur within Molonglo and North Weston. The **Draft** Amendment is required to provide for the continuation of urban development in the Territory, while ensuring adequate protection of the National Capital Open Space System. New Broadacre Area land use policy will also be created to recognise existing uses, and balance the loss of Broadacre land in North Weston.

The ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) **Draft** Variation to the Territory Plan No.281 has been jointly released with **Draft** Amendment 63 - Molonglo and North Weston. An Amendment to the National Capital Plan is required before the **Draft** Variation to the Territory Plan can be implemented.

Draft Amendment 63 to the Plan (set out in **Part 2 – Draft Amendment 63 – Molonglo and North Weston**) has been prepared in accordance with section 23 of the Act.

Part 1 Context

1.1 Background

Draft Amendment 63 has been jointly released with the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) **Draft** Variation to the Territory Plan No.281 Molonglo and North Weston.

The National Capital Plan General Policy Plan identifies land use policies for the ACT. An Amendment to the National Capital Plan is required before the **Draft** Variation to the Territory Plan can be implemented. Detailed planning of those areas within the **Draft** Amendment area that are not identified as Designated Areas under the National Capital Plan will continue to be the responsibility of the ACT Government.

Under the Territory Plan specified activities including certain **Draft** Variations are subject to an assessment of their environmental impacts, commencing with a Preliminary Assessment (PA). Such an assessment, along with other studies, have been undertaken for the **Draft** Variation to the Territory Plan. The **Draft** Variation to the Territory Plan is being exhibited concurrently with the **Draft** Amendment.

ACTPLA have undertaken a number of independent studies pertaining to the area subject to the **Draft** Variation, and various reports have informed the planning of Molonglo and North Weston. These studies are available on ACTPLA's website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.

The area subject to **Draft** Amendment 63 is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure1 Area subject to Draft Amendment 63 to the National Capital Plan



1.1.1 Urban Suitability

The ACT Government released the *Canberra Spatial Plan*, which identifies two new areas deemed capable for 'greenfield' residential development, being the Molonglo Valley and the Kowen Plateau. This is in addition to the completion of Gungahlin and residential intensification within existing urban areas of Canberra.

The *Canberra Spatial Plan* considered that due to proximity to existing services and employment nodes, the Molonglo Valley was capable for urban development as:

- the area conforms to the National Capital Plan policy of containing Canberra's urban growth;
- Molonglo and North Weston offer a high level of potential accessibility and are located close to established employment and service nodes of Civic, Belconnen, Barton-Parkes and Woden;
- would reduce pressure on the existing and future road network;
- urban development could make use of treated effluent from the Lower Molonglo Treatment Plant. Treated effluent could also be used for bushfire control; and
- urban development in Molonglo has the potential to introduce water sensitive urban design initiatives to improve water quality from Woden and Weston Creek thus enhancing environmental values of the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee Rivers.

Subsequently the *Molonglo Valley Suitability Study (2005)* was undertaken jointly by the NCA and ACTPLA. The study for Molonglo was in response to the proposed growth scenarios within the *Canberra Spatial Plan (2004)* and focused on the Molonglo/Stromlo area.

Cox and Associates Consultants were appointed to undertake this work evaluating the potential for urban development in the study area.

The study recommendation divided the Molonglo area into two distinct sections for development, the eastern sector and the western sector. The work also recommended that an urban form study be undertaken, and this was completed by Annand Alcock Urban Design for ACTPLA to produce the *Molonglo Valley Structure Plan (2006)*.

The Structure Plan identifies three distinct areas for development, namely east, central and west Molonglo. It is anticipated that east and central Molonglo (including North Weston) could ultimately cater for up to 73,000 people. The west Molonglo area has been found suitable for Broadacre rather than residential development.

The *Molonglo Valley Suitability Study* is available on the NCA website at www.nationalcapital.gov.au. The *Molonglo Valley Structure Plan* is available on the ACTPLA's website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.



1.1.2 Environment

The *Molonglo River Corridor Boundary Study (2007)*, undertaken by Redgum Environmental Consulting Ltd for the NCA and ACTPLA, evaluated the River Corridor boundary based on the values identified in the National Capital Plan (ecological, environmental, water quality, flood levels, landscape, cultural, recreational).

The river corridor boundary recommended by the study takes account of the National Capital Plan's values, and principle for river corridors, in the following key ways:

- conserving important transition areas between ecological communities and allowing for rehabilitation of important habitat areas and watercourses that are important for wildlife movement;
- facilitating the protection of threatened species habitat and protecting a potential site of cultural significance;
- conserving the natural integrity of riparian vegetation and allowing for riparian connectivity with the surrounding landscape;
- ensuring development is excluded from the steep slopes of the river corridor;
- allowing for further assessment to consider appropriate siting of built facilities as they relate to the 1 in 100 year flood level; and
- allowing for passive recreation pursuits in areas that are easily accessible and have a high degree of public safety.

The *Molonglo River Corridor Boundary Study (2007)* is available on the NCA website at www.nationalcapital.gov.au.

ACTPLA commissioned independent environmental studies. For example, Bisosis Research, Natural and Cultural Heritage Consultants, prepared the Molonglo Valley Ecological Impact Review(2006). The review considered potential impacts on specific habitat features, including woodlands, grasslands, riparian and instream habitats and habitat corridors. Within this framework the impacts of development on two endangered ecological communities (EECs) and a number of rare and threatened species were examined.

The study is available on the ACTPLA website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.

The **Draft** Amendment to the National Capital Plan does not require referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC)*. However subsequent development within Molonglo and North Weston are subject to the provisions of the EPBC Act and may trigger referral processes under the Act.

The **Draft** Variation to the Territory Plan No.281 in conjunction with the PA further details the identification and assessment of environmental values in the subject area. **These documents can be found on the ACTPLA's website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.**

1.1.3 Heritage

The *Molonglo Valley Suitability Study* identified a number of heritage sites, both within and in proximity of the area. The study identified a number of areas that have heritage listing, including:

- Huntley, a rural property located on Uriarra Road, is listed as an Indicative Place on the Register of National Estate and is listed on the ACT Heritage Register.
- The Lower Molonglo River Corridor (Part) is listed as an Indicative Place on the Register of National Estate.
- The Mount Stromlo Observatory Precinct is listed as registered as a Historic Place on the Register of National Estate. The Mount Stromlo Observatory Precinct is also listed on the Commonwealth Heritage list, and has been nominated for the ACT Heritage Register.
- The Murrumbidgee River Corridor is listed as registered as a Natural Place on the Register of National Estate and has been nominated for the ACT Heritage Register.

Independent heritage studies commissioned by the ACTPLA produced the *Molonglo Valley Heritage Review (2006)* and the subsequent *Molonglo Valley Heritage Review Geological Heritage Review Addendum Report (2006)*. The two heritage reviews catalogued all known Indigenous and European sites in the areas, and identified likely locations of other indigenous sites through a predictive model. Details of these reports are available on the ACTPLA website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.

The **Draft** Amendment to the National Capital Plan does not require referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC)*. However subsequent development within Molonglo and North Weston are subject to the provisions of the EPBC Act and may trigger referral processes under the Act.

1.1.4 Landscape

The *Molonglo Valley Suitability Study* identified Landscape Priority Zones (LPZ) for the Molonglo Valley. These LPZs identify the general boundaries of the essential and contributory landscape and open space areas. The identified areas take account the intention of the National Capital Open Space System in terms of visual, environmental and exposure factors.

The LPZs include important rural landscape areas, hill areas, significant landscape features and major visual and screening features to western areas from the Central National Area (CNA). Existing gazetted nature parks, such as Black Mountain Nature Reserve and the Aranda Bushland Nature Reserve are included within the LPZs. The LPZs were essential in informing the decision for appropriate areas for urban development within the Molonglo Valley, and indicate those key areas where urban development should not be considered.

Independent visual assessments commissioned by the ACTPLA produced the *Molonglo Valley Landscape and Visual Assessment Report (2006)*. **This report is available on the ACTPLA website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.**



1.1.5 Key Infrastructure

Major Infrastructure

The Molonglo and North Weston area is serviced by existing water, sewerage, electricity and telecommunications services. New and augmented infrastructure will be required to service the population, the extent of which is currently being investigated by the ACT Government. Natural gas is not available in the proposed development area and new supply mains would be required.

ACTPLA has commissioned a number of studies in relation to infrastructure. Details of these studies can be found on the ACTPLA website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.

Scrivener Dam

The most recent review of the flood hydrology of Scrivener Dam was undertaken in 2000 (*Lake Burley Griffin and Scrivener Dam Hydrology Review March 2000*) by Ecowise Environmental Ltd.

Using the 2000 flood hydrology, a risk assessment of Scrivener Dam was completed in February 2005 (Scrivener Dam Risk Assessment Study Dam Failure Consequences, February 2005). This assessment now places Scrivener Dam in 'High C' hazard classification for an Acceptable Flood Capacity (AFC) of 1 in 100, 000 Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood. The AFC indicates the level of flood risk that is adopted for Scrivener Dam is in accordance with the applicable Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD) guidelines.

This hazard rating takes account of the structural stability of the Dam with regard to the impact from floods for the current downstream population at risk, and financial losses.

At this level of hazard rating, the study concluded that no structural strengthening of the Dam is required for the current downstream population at risk.

The proposed developed in the lower Molonglo Valley region will change the downstream population risk and is therefore likely to impact on the hazard rating of the dam, potentially warranting remedial works. ACTPLA is conducting a review of the downstream impacts based on the current hazard rating of Scrivener Dam.

1.1.6 Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No.281

Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No.281 Molonglo and North Weston sets out the structure plan for the urban area subject to **Draft** Amendment 63. The **Draft** Variation proposes urban land use policies for Molonglo and North Weston and the principles and policies that will guide future urban development.

The **Draft** Variation can be found at the ACTPLA website at www.actpla.act.gov.au.

1.2 Explanatory Statement

1.2.1 Purpose of Draft Amendment

The National Capital Authority proposes National Capital Plan **Draft** Amendment 63 - Molonglo and North Weston to enable urban development to occur within Molonglo and North Weston. The **Draft** Amendment is required to provide for the continuation of urban development in the Territory, while ensuring adequate protection of the National Capital Open Space System. New Broadacre Area land use policy will also be created to recognise existing uses, and balance the loss of Broadacre land in North Weston.

1.2.2 Site Description

This **Draft** Amendment relates to that part of the lower Molonglo Valley downstream of the Tuggeranong Parkway. It includes the lower Molonglo River from Yarralumla to the confluence of the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo Rivers. It also includes North Weston, being the area situated north of the suburb of Weston and bounded by the Molonglo River, Tuggeranong Parkway, Heyson Street and Streetton Drive. North Weston is bisected by Cotter Road.

The Molonglo Valley is principally situated to the west of Central Canberra, between Belconnen and Weston Creek. It is bounded by the Tuggeranong Parkway to the east, William Hovell Drive and Drake Brockman Drive to the north, Cotter and Uriarra Roads to the south and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor to the west.

1.2.3 Existing National Capital Plan Provisions

General Policy Plan

In accordance with Section 10(1)(b) of the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*, the National Capital Plan 'shall set out the general policies to be implemented throughout the Territory, being policies of: (i) land use (including the range and nature of permitted land use).'

The majority of Molonglo and North Weston is Territory Land, with the exception of Block 48 Stromlo and Block 1212 Weston Creek.

The General Policy Plan within the Plan identifies land use for the whole of the ACT. The current land use policies are Broadacre Areas, Rural Areas, Hills, Ridges & Buffer Spaces and River Corridors and Urban Areas.

Figure 2 shows the existing General Policy Plan – Metropolitan Canberra of the Plan where it applies to the area subject to **Draft** Amendment 63.



Designated Areas

In accordance with Section 10(1) of the *Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988*, the National Capital Plan may 'specify areas of land that have the special characteristics of the National Capital to be Designated Areas'.

Part of the area identified for urban development in Molonglo is currently located within a Designated Area of the Plan. This **Draft** Amendment proposes to redefine the Designated Area boundary to uplift Designated Area status from the area which will change from Inner Hills and Rural (minor) to Urban. Designated Area status is extended to west of the Tuggeranong Parkway.

Planning and approval of development within Designated Areas is the responsibility of the National Capital Authority (NCA).

Figure 3 shows existing Designated Areas map of the National Capital Plan where it applies to the area subject to **Draft** Amendment 63.

Figure 4 identifies the Inner Hills for the area subject to **Draft** Amendment 63. The Inner Hills provide the scenic backdrop and natural setting for Canberra's urban areas. Accordingly, their planning, design and development as open space areas are central to the maintenance and enhancement of the character of the National Capital. This **Draft** Amendment proposes some changes to the Inner Hills.

Figure 2 Area of existing General Policy Plan subject of **Draft** Amendment 63

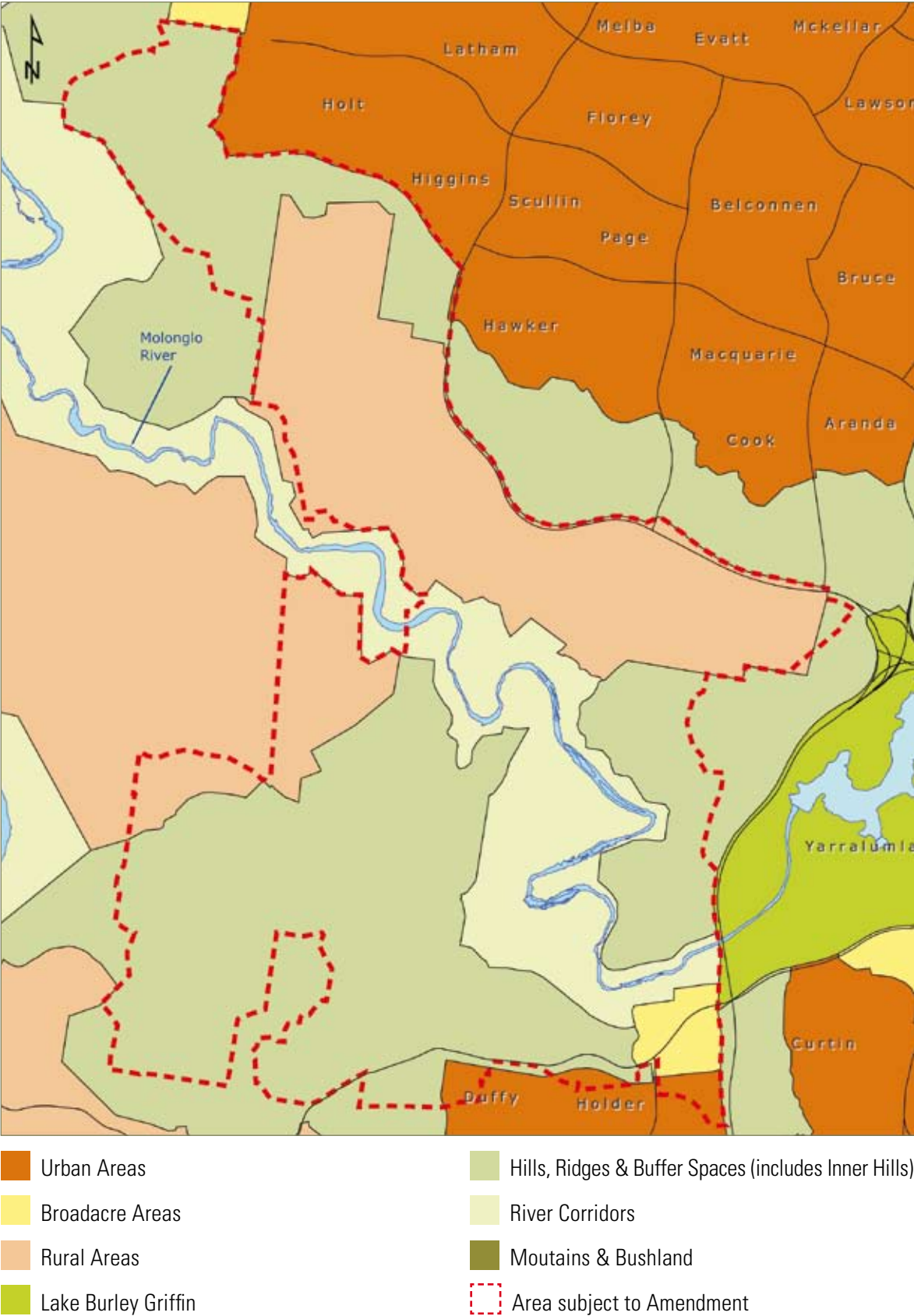
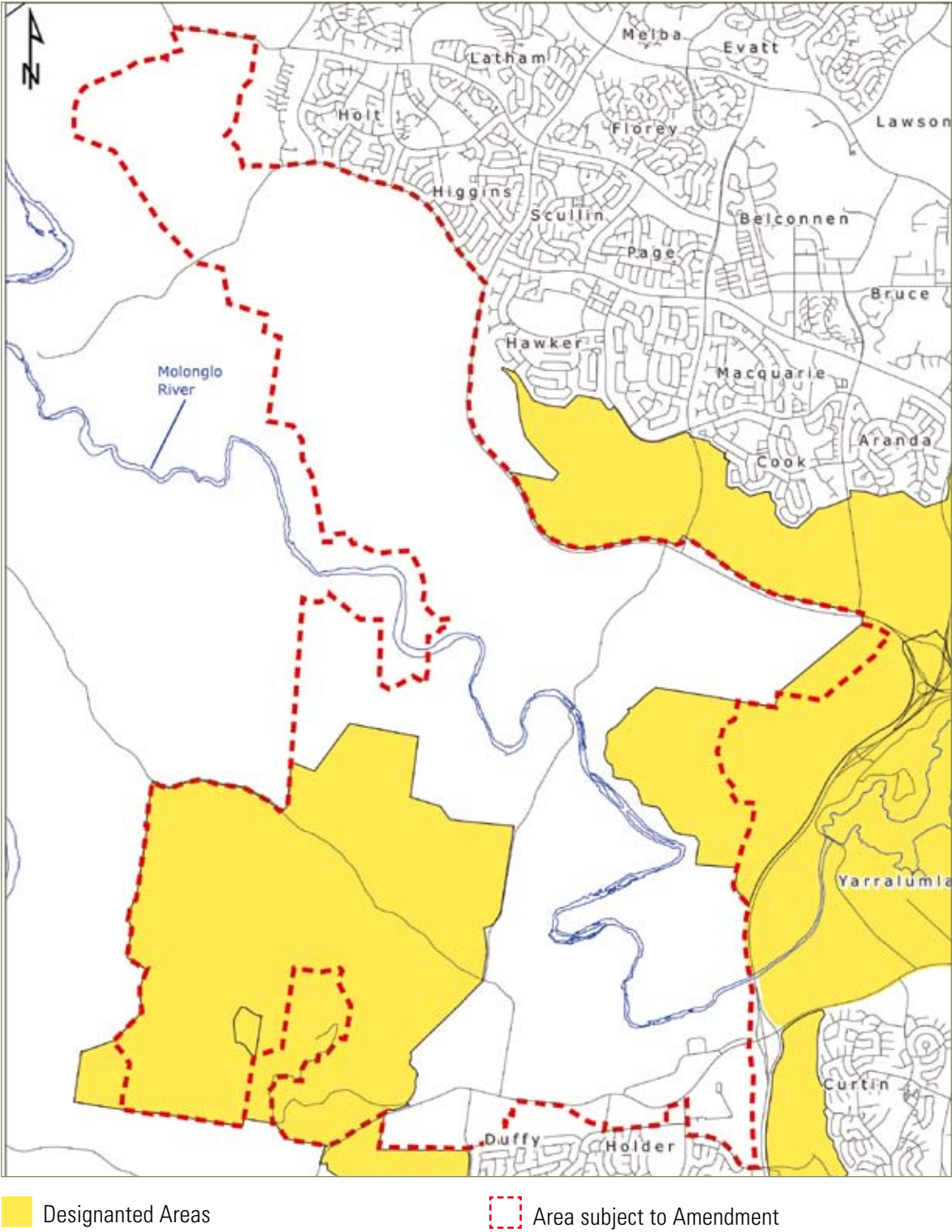


Figure 3 National Capital Plan Existing Designated Areas subject of **Draft** Amendment 63



Special Requirements (River Corridor)

The areas within the **Draft** Amendment that are subject to the River Corridor policies are identified in **Figure 5**.

The principle for River Corridors identified in the National Capital Plan is as follows:

'To protect and enhance the environmental quality, landscape setting and natural and cultural resources of the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors. The Murrumbidgee River Corridor is to be conserved as an important national capital resource and a key open space element which provides a definable edge to the developed urban areas.'

Several policies in the National Capital Plan also apply to River Corridors, pertaining to ecological, environmental, water quality, flood levels, landscape, cultural, recreational, and land use. Appendix F of the National Capital Plan contains additional general and specific policies relating to the Murrumbidgee River Corridor, and it is proposed to make Appendix F apply to both the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors.

Urban Development and Urban Areas

The National Capital Plan currently provides for the continuation of urban development in the Territory as separate and distinct towns set in broad landscaped valleys, with the immediate hills, ridges and other major open space and the Molonglo River Valley providing separation between towns and the distant mountains providing a natural landscape backdrop.

Figure 4 National Capital Plan Existing Inner Hills (Designated Areas)
subject of **Draft** Amendment 63

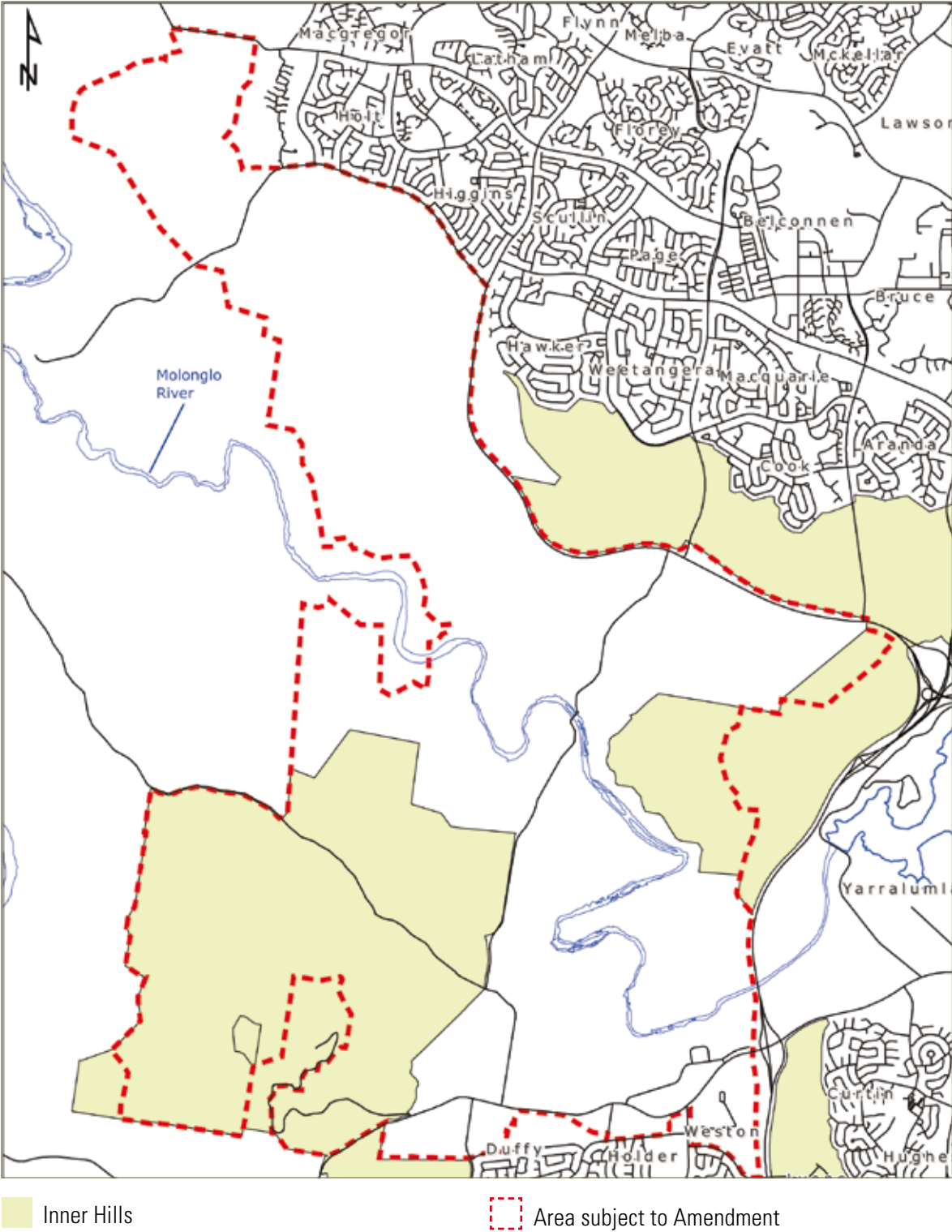
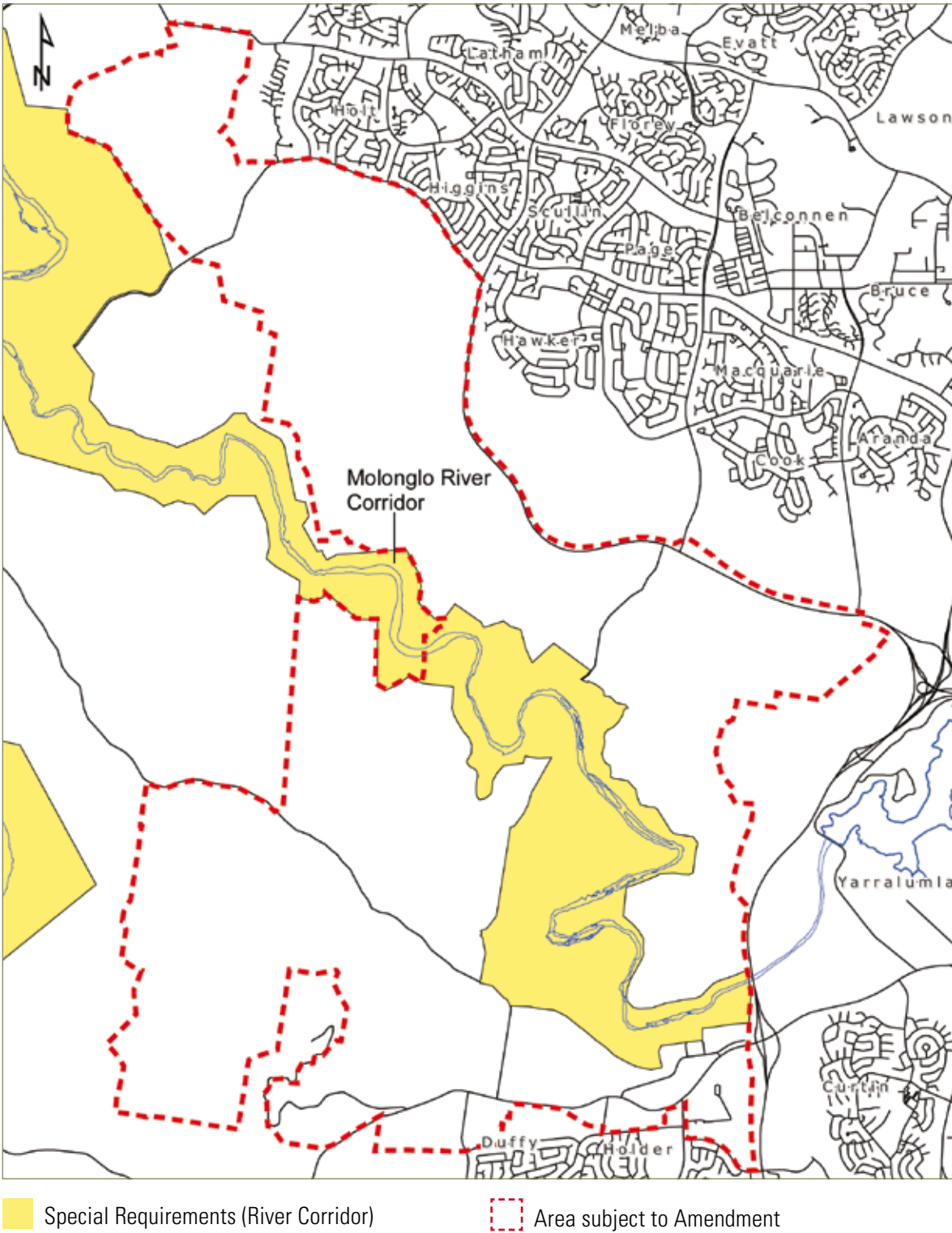


Figure 5 National Capital Plan Existing Special Requirements (River Corridor)
subject to **Draft** Amendment 63





1.2.4 Effect of the Draft Amendment

General Policy Plan

The changes proposed in **Draft** Amendment 63 will result in:

- Extension of the Urban Areas land use policy over Molonglo and North Weston into those areas identified as suitable for urban development.
- Adjustment of the Molonglo River Corridor boundary.
- Adjustment of those areas identified as Hills, Ridges & Buffer Spaces (including Inner Hills).
- Adjustment to the boundaries of Designated Areas associated with adjusting land use from Inner Hills and Rural to Urban.
- New Broadacre Areas land use policy will also be created to recognise existing uses, and balance the loss of Broadacre land in North Weston.

Designated Areas

Parts of Block 13, 402 and 403 Stromlo are located within “The Inner Hills” Designated Area of the National Capital Plan. The land use policies currently covering the three blocks are Hills, Ridges and Buffer Spaces, and a small part that is Rural Areas.

Draft Amendment 63 proposes to uplift the Designated Area status of these three blocks. In addition, the **Draft** Amendment proposes to change the land use policies covering the three blocks. The Rural land use policy will be uplifted, and the Hills, Ridges and Buffer Spaces will be reconfigured to accommodate the addition of the Urban land use policy. The proposed changes will enable the three blocks to be incorporated into the Molonglo Urban area and the ACTPLA will be responsible for development approval and detailed planning of the area.

The Inner Hills Designated Area runs along the west of the Tuggeranong Parkway from the Glenloch interchange. The Designated Area is proposed to be redefined in this area. The Designated Area will now extend all the way from the Glenloch Interchange to the Molonglo River Corridor but will be reduced in width. The extent of the Designated Area will run over the ridgeline of the low hills to the west of the Tuggeranong Parkway. This will ensure that no urban development occurs on these low hills which serve as a back drop to the Central National Area.

Special Requirements (River Corridor)

Development within the Molonglo River Corridor is subject to Special Requirements identified in the National Capital Plan. It is proposed to amend the Plan to require development within the Molonglo River corridor to comply with those applicable general and specific policies set out in Appendix F of the National Capital Plan. The general policies set out in Appendix F of the National Capital Plan are broadly based and define the National Capital Planning Authority's key objective and the primary values for the river corridor as a whole. General policies refer to such matters as streamflow and water quality, nature conservation, landscape, cultural heritage, recreation, transport and access, and education, scientific study and research.

Urban Development and Urban Areas

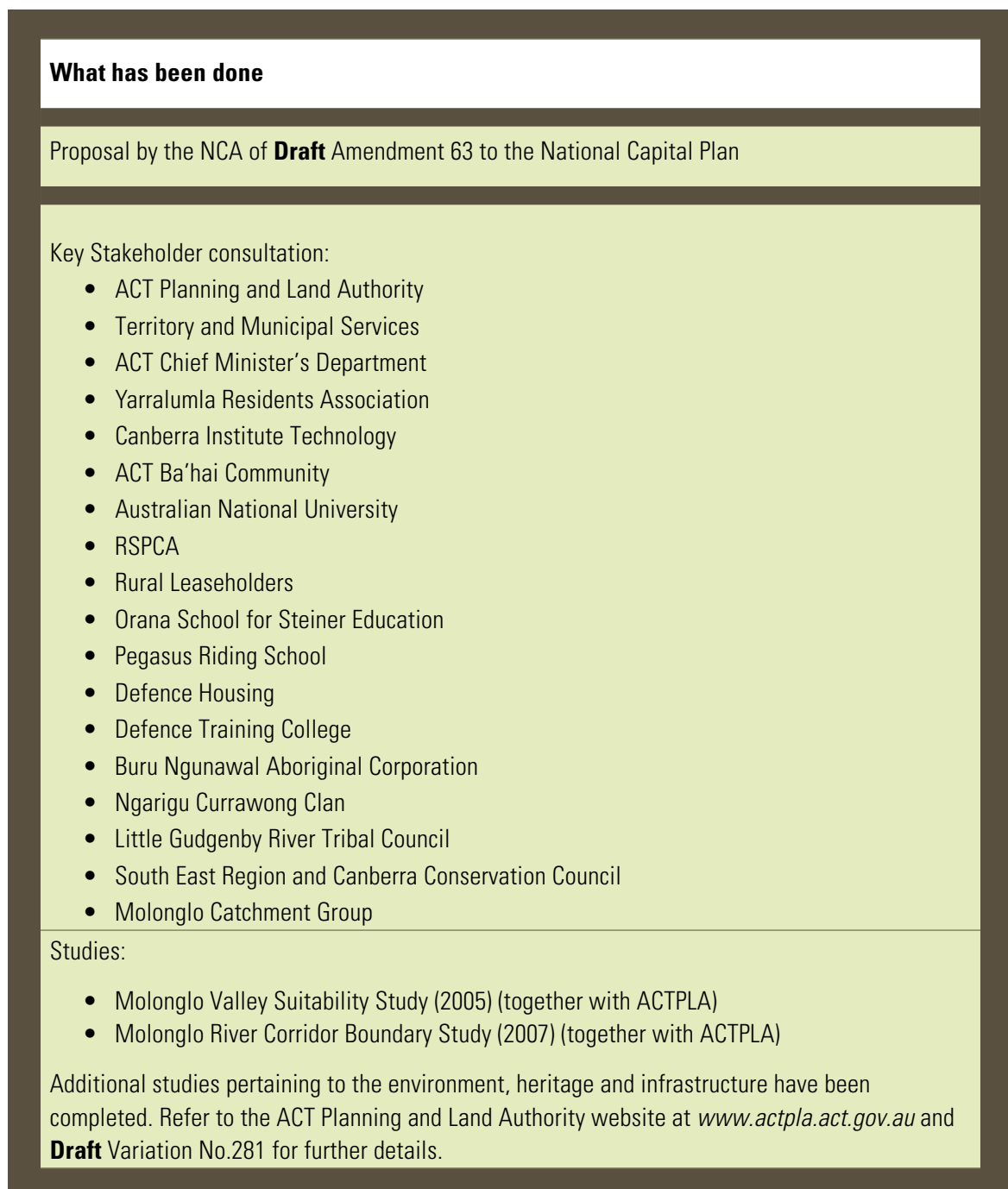
Draft Amendment 63 will remove those references to the Molonglo River Valley providing separation between towns.

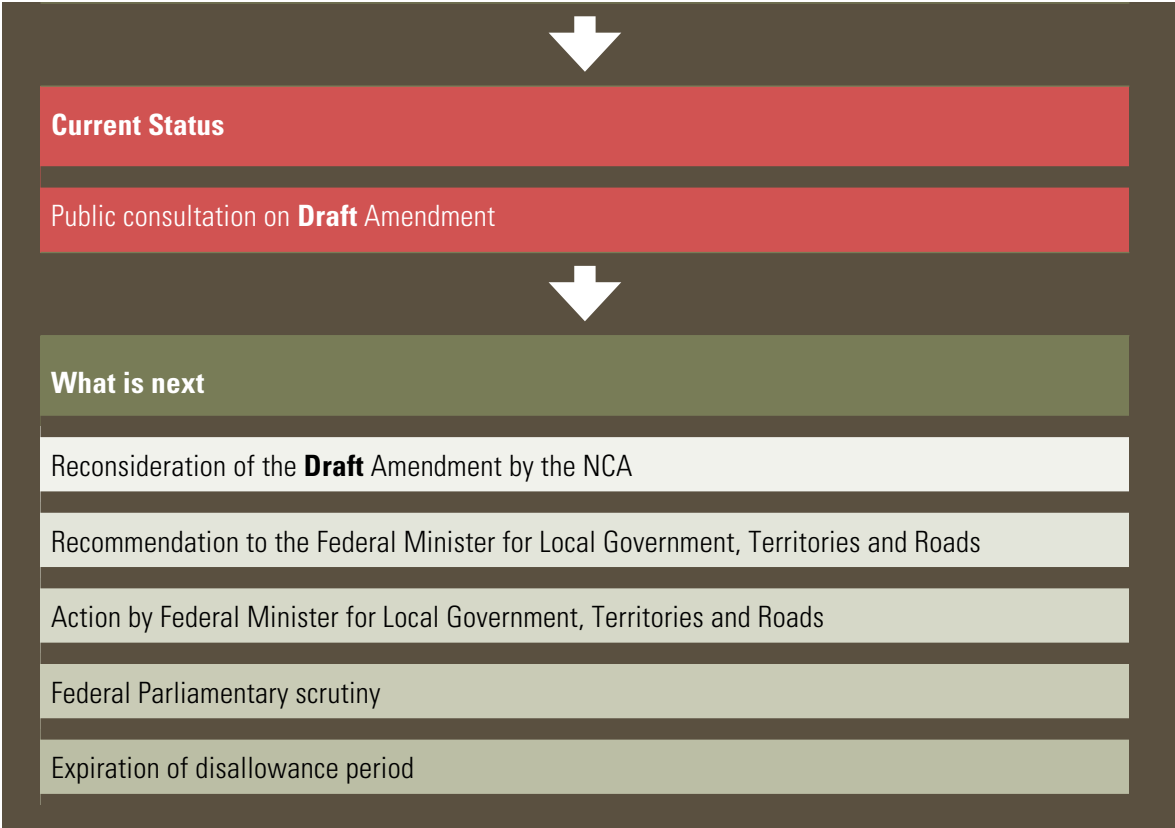
Molonglo and North Weston will be added to the list of those areas comprising Metropolitan Canberra and within the policy identifying the urban area of Canberra.

1.3 Draft Amendment Process

The process for making an Amendment to the National Capital Plan is outlined in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6 Outline of the **Draft** Amendment Process





1.4 Public Consultation

The National Capital Authority welcomes written comments on **Draft** Amendment 63 – Molonglo and North Weston to the National Capital Plan from interested individuals and organisations as part of the consultation process. All responses received will be assessed before **Draft** Amendment 63 is submitted to the Federal Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads in accordance with the provisions of the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (the Act).

Copies of **Draft** Amendment 63 are available from:

- **National Capital Authority**
Ground Floor, Treasury Building
King Edward Terrace
PARKES ACT 2600
Between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday
- **National Capital Exhibition**
Regatta Point
Commonwealth Park
Between 9am and 5pm daily
- **The National Capital Authority Website**
www.nationalcapital.gov.au

Three public information sessions on **Draft** Amendment 63 will be held on:

- **Tuesday 11 September 2007 from 5:30pm to 8:00pm, at the National Capital Exhibition, Regatta Point, Barrine Drive, PARKES ACT 2600**
- **Saturday 13 October 2007 from 9:00am to 2:00pm, at the National Capital Exhibition, Regatta Point, Barrine Drive, PARKES ACT 2600**
- **Thursday 8 November 2007 from 5:30pm to 8:00pm, at the National Capital Exhibition, Regatta Point, Barrine Drive, PARKES ACT 2600**

Comments on **Draft** Amendment 63:

Written submissions on **Draft** Amendment 63 are invited in accordance with the provisions of the Act until close of business Friday 23 November 2007 and should be forwarded to:

Mr Todd Rohl
Managing Director
Planning and Urban Design
National Capital Authority
GPO Box 373
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email todd.rohl@natcap.gov.au

Or delivered by hand to the NCA office at:
Ground Floor, Treasury Building
King Edward Terrace
PARKES ACT 2600

Further information on **Draft Amendment 63** is available from Ms Rebecca Sorensen by telephone on 6271 2851, fax 02 6273 4427 or email rebecca.sorensen@natcap.gov.au

Draft Variation to the Territory Plan

Draft Variation No 281 to the Territory Plan has been proposed by the ACTPLA. The ACTPLA has invited comment on the **Draft** Variation, having released the **Draft** Variation for the same period of consultation as for the **Draft** Amendment.

The **Draft** Variation, and details regarding opportunities to make comments, can be found on the ACTPLA's website at www.actpla.act.gov.au



Part 2: National Capital Plan **Draft** Amendment 63

National Capital Plan

Draft Amendment 63 – Molonglo and North Weston

The National Capital Plan is amended by the following:

Introduction

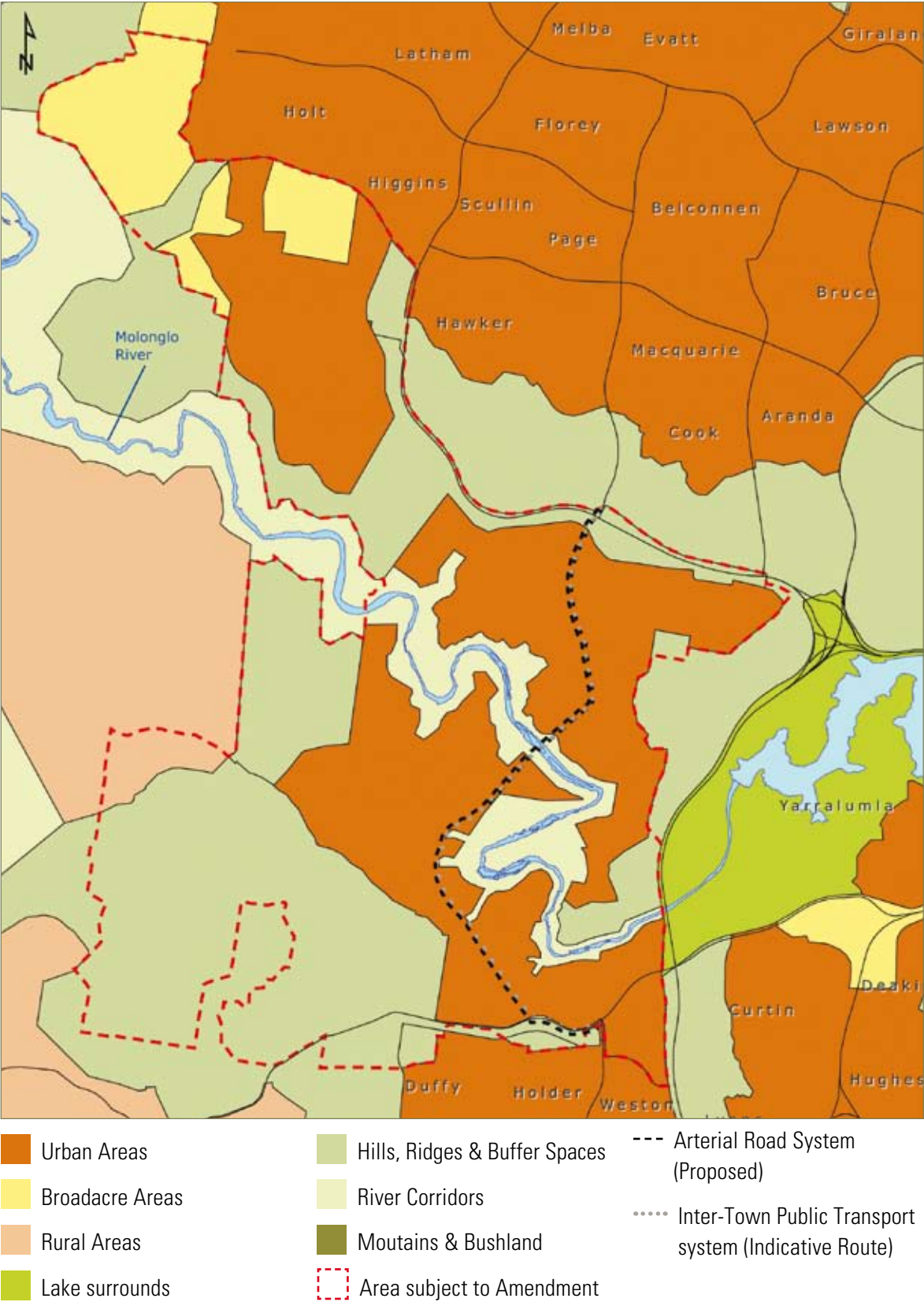
Urban Development

(a) Delete paragraph four and replace with the following:

“The National Capital Plan provides for the continuation of urban development in the form of separate and distinct townships set in broad landscaped valleys, with the immediate hills and ridges generally providing separation between towns, and the distant mountains providing a natural landscape backdrop.”

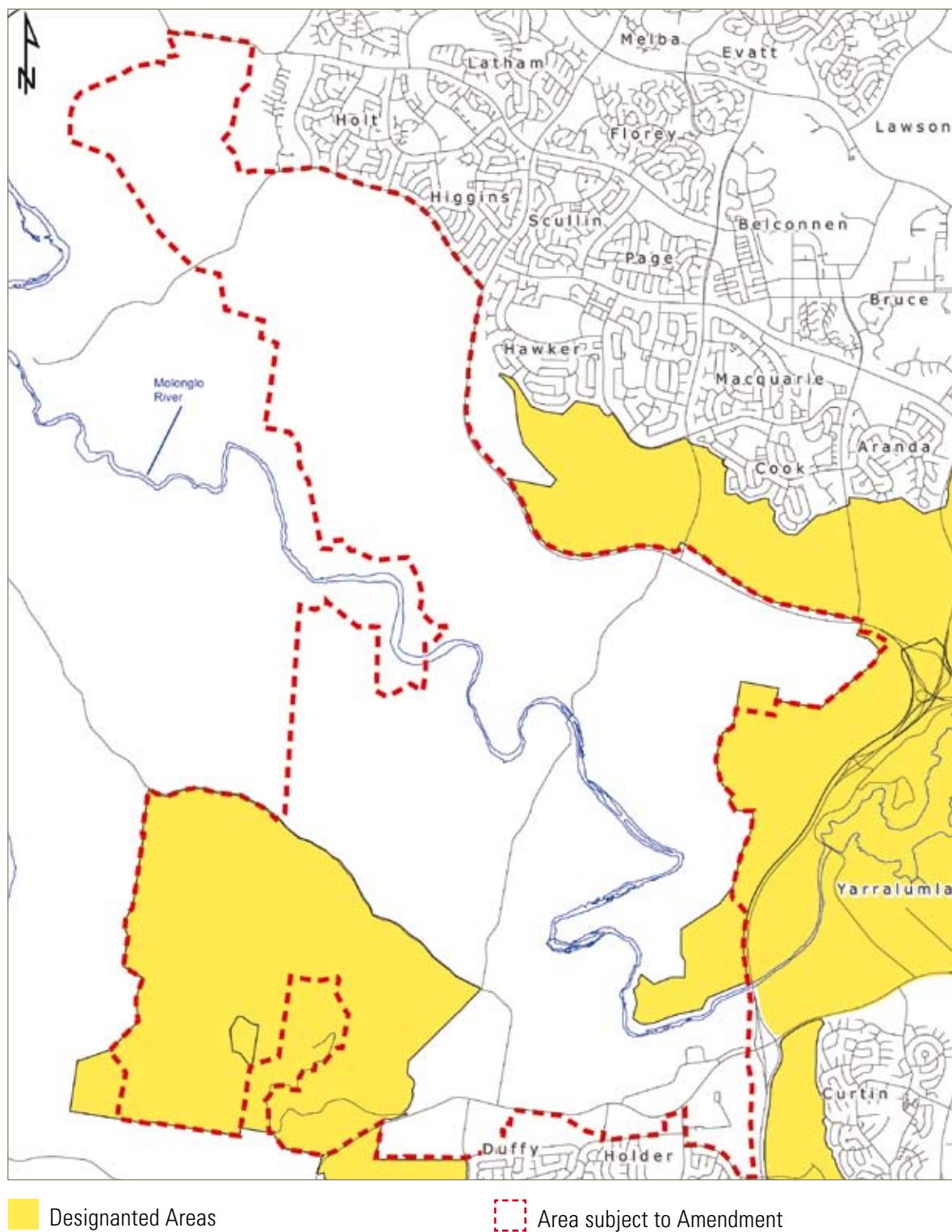
General Policy Plan

(b) Amend Figure 1 the General Policy Plan with the following:



Designated Areas

(c) Amend Figure 3 Designated Areas with the following:



4 Urban Areas

Chapter 4 Urban Areas

(d) Delete paragraph three and replace with the following:

“The National Capital Plan therefore provides for the continuation of urban development in the Territory as separate and distinct towns set in broad landscaped valleys, with the immediate hills, ridges and other major open space generally providing separation between towns and the distant mountains providing a natural landscape backdrop.”

(e) Add to 4.1 Background a new dot point following the second dot point ‘the new town of Gungahlin’

- Molonglo and North Weston

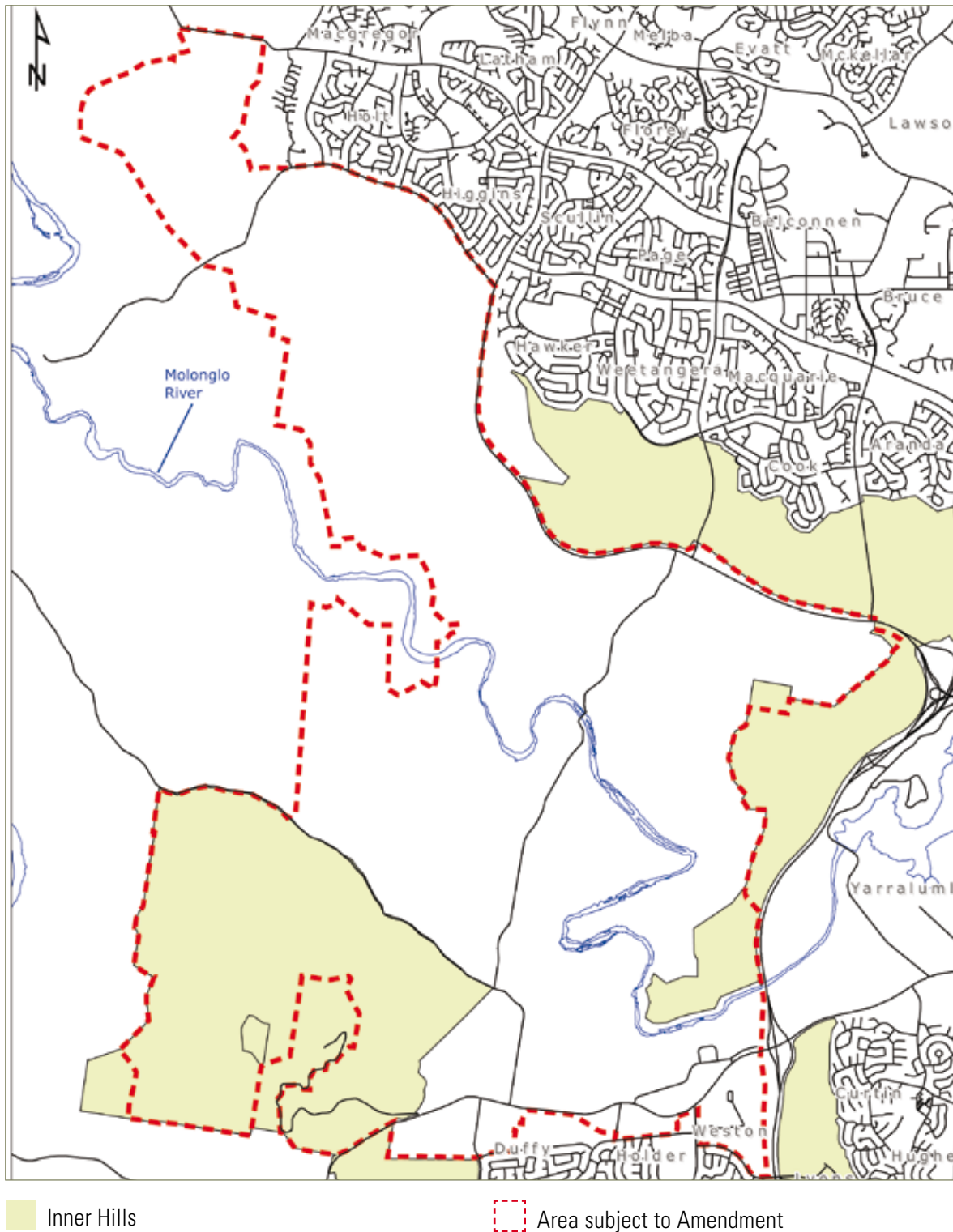
(f) Add to 4.4 Policies for Urban Areas a new dot point following the third dot point ‘the new town of Gungahlin’

- Molonglo and North Weston

8 National Capital Open Space System

Chapter 8 National Capital Open Space System

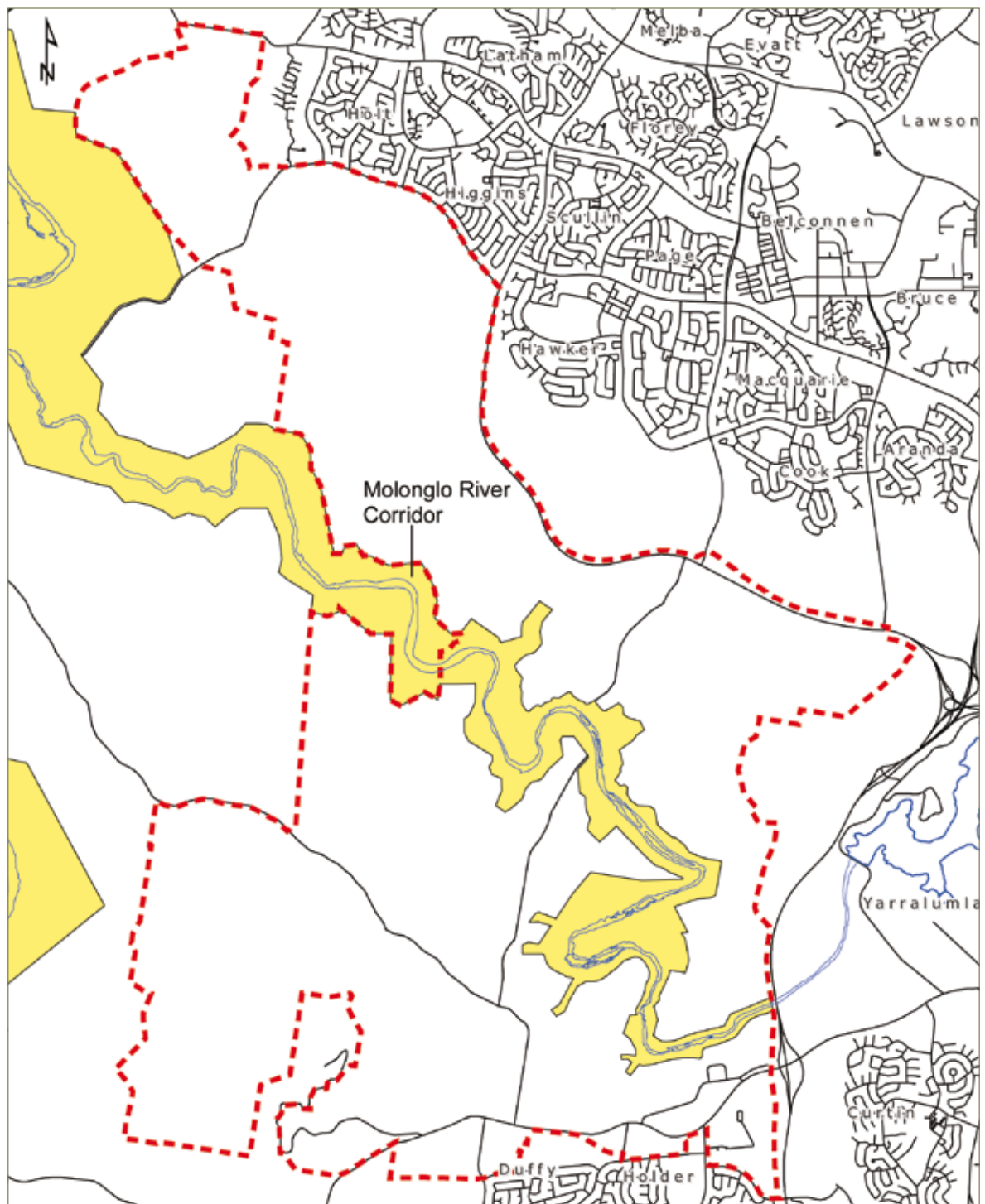
(g) Amend the existing Figure 24 Inner Hills with the following:



- (h) Delete clause 8.6.4 Special Requirements for Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors (iii) and replace with :

8.6.4 (iii) Development within the Molonglo River Corridor is to be in accordance with a Development Control Plan that is agreed by the Authority and addresses the relevant general and specific policies set out in Appendix F.

- (i) Amend the existing Figure 27 Special Requirements with the following:



Special Requirements (River Corridor)

Area subject to Amendment

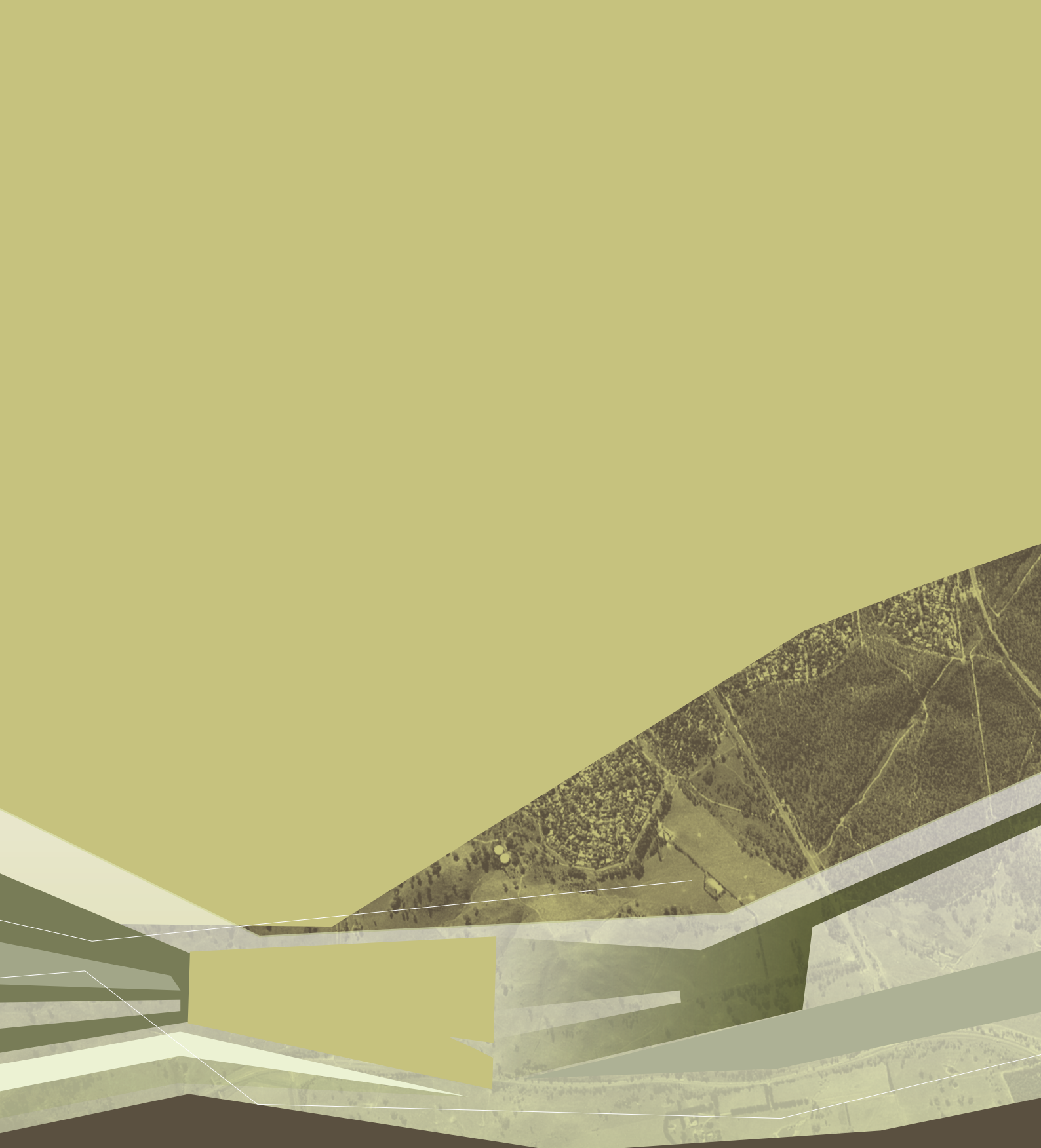


Appendix F Requirements for Murrumbidgee River Corridor

- (j) Amend Appendix F Requirements for Murrumbidgee River Corridor with Appendix F Requirements for Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River Corridors.

Part Two Administration and Implementation

- (k) Amend the Plan to recognise consequential changes of **Draft** Amendment 63 to page numbers, section titles and contents page.



The National Capital Authority was established under the
Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988

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