

STATEMENT OF REASONS

Section 69(1)(a) of the *Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act)

Environmental approval holder	Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, Northern Territory of Australia ABN 84 085 734 992
Environmental approval number	EP2022/022 - 001
Action	Holtze Development Area Urban development of 202 hectares (ha) of land approximately 1.8km north of the Palmerston central business district in the Litchfield local government area on Crown land sections 4231 and 4229 Hundred of Bagot, and freehold Portion 2295.
Material considered	Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) advice received on 24 July 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment Report 102• A draft environmental approval setting out recommended conditions. Fit and proper person advice – signed declaration.
Decision	In accordance with sections 69(1)(a) and 82(4)(a) of the EP Act, I accept the draft environmental approval, adopt the proposed conditions of the NT EPA and grant the approval.

REASONS

This statement of reasons has been prepared in accordance with sections 82(3) and 82(4) of the EP Act.

Overview of Action

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics submitted a referral for the Holtze Development Area (action) to the NT EPA that was accepted on 22 December 2022 for consideration under the *Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act).

The action is for urban development of 202 hectares (ha) of land approximately 1.8km north of the Palmerston central business district in the Litchfield local government area on Crown land sections 4231 and 4229, Hundred of Bagot, and freehold Portion 2295. The proposed action includes 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, and development of the Holtze land release, Territory reserve parcel, Palmerston Health Precinct.

Environmental context

The proposal is one of four potential development areas (Holtze, Kowandi, Holtze North and Howard Springs North) within the Greater Holtze Area included in the Holtze to Elizabeth River

Subregional Land Use Plan 2022 (HESLUP), which provides a framework for future land use in the area. The proposal area is zoned for rural living (RL) (44 ha), future development (FD) (120 ha), community purpose (CP) (18 ha) and proposed main road (PM) (20 ha).

Environmental values that require protection during implementation of the action include threatened flora species (*Typhonium praetermissum* and *Cycas armstrongii*), inland water quality, and community and cultural values.

Matters considered under section 73 of EP Act

Section 73(1) Principles of environment protection and management

In considering Part 2 (Principles of environment protection and management) of the EP Act, I have considered the meaning of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and applied each of the principles of ESD. I have reviewed the NT EPA's consideration of the principles of ESD as summarised in Assessment Report 102. I have considered and weighed all the principles of ESD in making my decision.

The NT EPA's assessment process has considered and I have applied approval conditions to mitigate environmental impacts associated with land clearing and urban development. The assessment of the proposal, the NT EPA's advice to me and consequently my decision, has been informed by public and government authority consultation processes.

I have considered and applied the hierarchies for environmental decision-making and waste management. I have given particular consideration to the application of the environmental decision-making hierarchy, and proposed measures to avoid, and then mitigate and manage potential adverse impacts on the environment.

I am satisfied that through compliance with the environmental approval, the action is consistent with the ESD principles and the management hierarchies.

Section 73(1)(a) Objects of the EP Act

I have had regard to the objects of the EP Act. I note in particular that through the environmental impact assessment of the action and the granting of the environmental approval, significant adverse impacts on the Territory environment are likely to be avoided and the protection and management of the Territory environment have been promoted.

The approval of the action will allow for urban development of land while maintaining protection of the environment of the Territory. The wellbeing of the people of the Territory is likely to be improved by the action through the generation of benefits for local and regional communities and businesses. I also note the opportunity provided to the community for involvement in the environmental impact assessment of the action.

Section 73(1)(b) Assessment report on the action

I have considered the advice of the NT EPA in its assessment report on the action (Assessment Report 102) which provides the NT EPA's assessment of the potential significant impacts of the action and recommendations for avoiding, mitigating and managing those impacts. The NT EPA identified that the action has the potential to have a significant impact on environmental values associated with four environmental factors, including terrestrial ecosystems, inland water environmental quality, community and economy, and culture and heritage. Assessment Report 102 states that the action is likely to meet the NT EPA's environmental objectives and can be implemented and managed in a manner that is environmentally acceptable. The NT EPA recommended an environmental approval be granted subject to implementation of the approval holder's commitments in the referral information and the recommended conditions in the draft environmental approval. The proposed conditions of the NT EPA have been adopted in the environmental approval.

Section 73(1)(c) Fit and proper person to hold environmental approval

I have had regard to whether the approval holder is a fit and proper person to hold an environmental approval. I consider the approval holder to be a fit and proper person to hold an environmental approval.

Section 73(1)(d) Any other matters the Minister considers relevant

I have not identified any other matters that are relevant to, or require my consideration, in deciding to grant environmental approval for the action.

Section 73(2) of the EP Act

Overall, having regard to the above and the materials I considered, I am satisfied that:

- the community has been consulted on the potential environmental impacts and environmental benefits of the proposed action through public consultation on the referral information; and
- the significant impacts of the action have been appropriately avoided or mitigated or can be appropriately managed to acceptable levels through compliance with the environmental approval. The NT EPA's Assessment Report 102 supports this view.

No significant residual adverse impacts on the environment were identified that would require an environmental offset.

Signature



Hon Lauren Jane Moss MLA

Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water Security

DATE *30th August 2023*
