

Help stop developers cutting down our habitat trees
protect our urban wild life



Follow the QR
code to sign our
petition ASAP!



SCULLIN COMMUNITY GROUP
LOCAL • COLLABORATIVE • CREATIVE

Art by Finn Bokilho

Save Scullin's tree hollows and protect other trees with hollows across the ACT for the future

The Scullin Community Group and local residents are working to urgently stop the removal of habitat trees with hollows on a development site slated for Frewin Place, Scullin.

Part of this work includes gathering at least 500 signatures on the attached petition, so we can submit this to the ACT Assembly.

You'll see the petition is very formal and quite long. It needs to meet certain formal conditions to be presented to the ACT Assembly.

Essentially, we are saying 2 things:

#1. Native trees with hollows should not have been slated for removal as doing so contravenes the government's own environmental plans. We want the decision to remove them to be reversed.

#2. We also want the ACT Government to amend its processes so other native trees with hollows in Canberra are not approved for removal in the same way.

Please take the time to read the petition so you are comfortable signing it, and thank you for your support of the habitat trees and the wildlife they support.

PETITION

Save Scullin's habitat trees and protect other native trees with hollows across the ACT for the future

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that:

1. On Friday 24 August 2023, a Notice of Decision was posted by the ACT Government for DA 202240865. This provided notification of development approval for a new community housing development on the corner of Frewin Place and Ross Smith Crescent, Scullin.
2. The purpose of this petition is not to oppose the development of community housing on this site.
3. The community opposes the plans to clear mature native eucalypt habitat trees, full of hollows recently used for nesting by native birds including eastern rosellas and gang gang cockatoos. These trees are numbered as S6, S8 and C7 on the development site plan.
4. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report recommends removal of the above trees on the basis of a "low value" rating (pages 15-17.) This value rating appears to not take into account the ecological and conservation value of the multiple active hollows in these trees.
5. Tree hollows are widely recognised as having high conservation value due to their role in providing habitat for native species. A shortage of natural hollows limits the number and density of bats, arboreal mammals and breeding birds. In 2019, the ACT Minister for the Environment and Heritage added the loss of tree hollows to the List of Key Threatening Processes (NI2019-822), following advice from the Scientific Committee. This decision fails to act on ACT Environments' recommendations for retaining mature native trees and dead trees.
6. Members of the Scullin community alerted the ACT Government through development consultation submissions that these trees contain active hollows and are currently used by several species of native birds. It appears that these have not been considered by the Conservator. The Development Notice contains notes by the Conservator that *"The trees to be removed are either not Regulated or are of poor quality (S6, S8) or are weed species (S16, S17, S 19, S20, S21 and S22) and the Tree Protection Unit would not oppose their removal. Tree C7 is a street tree, and its removal will be determined by Urban Trees Division."* There is no acknowledgement of the conservation value of trees S6, S8 and C7 due to their extensive hollows.
7. The ACT Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045 has a vision for *"a resilient and sustainable forest and to achieve this we must first protect the forest that we have"*. Its primary objective is to *"Protect the urban forest"*. Its planned outcomes include the protection of trees *on unleased public land and leased land* and that *'Mature and remnant trees, including cultural and heritage trees are conserved effectively and respectfully.'* The approval to remove these habitat trees contradicts the vision, objective, and planned outcomes of the ACT Government Urban Forest Strategy.
8. This situation is a case study in a broader issue occurring across the ACT and Australia where Government planning processes are at odds with Government biodiversity goals and do not provide adequate protection to native flora and fauna.

PETITION

Save Scullin's habitat trees and protect other native trees with hollows across the ACT for the future

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call upon the ACT Government to:

Protect the three Scullin habitat trees approved for removal and take the following actions to amend the development application approval process so that native trees with habitat hollows can only be removed in exceptional circumstances:

1. Review the development application review processes for 202240865 / s144B Block 20, Section 43, Scullin to identify the development application process points that allowed hollow-bearing trees to be approved for removal. Release the findings in full to the Assembly once it is complete.
2. Withdraw the approval to remove these habitat trees and require updated development plans that ensure the survival and ongoing health of trees S6 and S8. These plans should include plans to prevent root damage during construction.
3. Discontinue the TCCS plans to remove the street tree noted as C7.
4. Add a requirement for all Tree Assessment Reports conducted in the ACT from now on to include estimates of the number and size of hollows in native trees recommended for removal.
5. Create a reference guide for consultants undertaking tree assessments. This guide should replace third-party references, set criteria for whether a tree should be retained, and only allow native trees with hollows to be removed in exceptional circumstances.
6. Review and improve the Tree Protection Unit decision-making process that led to Conservator approval of the removal of native trees without taking into account the multiple community submissions that reported active hollows in these trees.
7. Update development approval policies and processes to ensure that:
 - a. reports submitted by the development proponent are subject to greater scrutiny and not taken at face value;
 - b. community reports of active hollows are taken into account when native trees are recommended for removal; and
 - c. on-site inspection is undertaken prior to granting development application to verify claims made in the application process

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Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to call upon the ACT Government to do two things:

1. Withdraw the approval to remove the three Scullin habitat trees, and
2. Amend the development approval process so that native trees with active habitat hollows cannot be approved for removal and other hollows in Canberra are protected too.

Full name	Full address	Contact email	Signature

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