



Australian Government

Department of Finance

ARCHIVAL RECORD OF GOLDEN SUN MOTH RESEARCH

York Park Conservation Area, Barton ACT

March 2020





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FINAL

Prepared by
Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited
on behalf of
Department of Finance

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	Name	Date	Name	Date
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SECTION 1

Introduction



1.0 Introduction

Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited (Umwelt) has been engaged by the Commonwealth Department of Finance (Finance) to prepare an archival record on the historic scientific research of the critically endangered species, golden sun moth (*Synemon plana*) at Blocks 3 and 15, Section 22 in Barton, ACT (the Site). The majority of this site is known as York Park Conservation Area (YPCA).

This report has been prepared to provide evidence to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) that an archival recording, in accordance with Condition 6 of the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) approval 2017/8028, has been undertaken within 12 months of the commencement of the approved action. This report includes a description of the Site, its EPBC Act values, a historical review, a scientific review and collection of all previous scientific studies having been undertaken on the Site for the species.

1.1 Background

In 2017, Umwelt, on behalf of Finance prepared a Referral under the EPBC Act for the proposed divestment of Blocks 3 and 15, Section 22, Barton, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) 2600. This property is also known as the York Park Conservation Area. Prior to sale, the land was proposed to be cleared, resulting in a full impact to all environmental values present on the property.

The proposed action was referred to DAWE under the EPBC Act on 25 August 2017, reference 'EPBC 2017/8028'.

On 2 November 2017, DAWE determined that the proposed action was a Controlled Action due to impacts to 'threatened species and communities' and as a 'Commonwealth action' and would be assessed on Preliminary Documentation. The Preliminary Documentation was submitted on 29 June 2018 and was subsequently placed on public exhibition from 4 to 17 August 2018.

On 21 February 2019, Finance received approval from the Minister of DAWE to clear and divest the Site, subject to a number of conditions. Condition 6 stated that:

To compensate for the loss of heritage values as a result of the action, within 12 months of commencement of the action, the approval holder must submit to the Department [of the Environment and Energy] and the National Archives of Australia, an archival record of GSM [sic] research conducted in the YPCA, comprising a scientific review of previous research conducted at the site and a database of previous research reports and datasets. The archival record must be prepared in compliance with How to Prepare Archival Records of Heritage Items (1998) issued by the New South Wales Heritage Office or relevant ACT standard (where available).

Condition 6 is the basis of this report.

This archival recording exercise has been completed to ensure compliance with the above condition and best practice standards, in particular, *How to Prepare Archival Records of Heritage Items* (NSW Heritage Office, 1998) (Archival Records Guidelines).

1.2 Scope of This Report

The scope of this report has been determined by the requirements set out in EPBC Act Approval Condition 6 (2017/8028) and the Archival Records Guidelines.

The following table describes the scope of this report with reference to each section and appendix.

Table 1.1 Archival Record Report Layout

Section/Appendix	Description of Contents	Reference Document
1.0 Introduction	This section includes background details including purpose of archival recording, and authorship and acknowledgements.	The Archival Records Guideline requires that the archival record include details of the author, client, date and subject; and a statement about why the record has been made.
2.0 Methodology	Summary of the methodologies employed in compiling the archival record including photography, collation of archival photos and a database of previous studies and datasets.	The Archival Records Guidelines states that a written and/or diagrammatic description of the processes should be a minimum requirement for the recording for more complex sites.
3.0 Site Description and History	Description of the site and a chronological summary of its history. This will aim to provide context for the interpretation of the site and as a basis for the heritage assessment.	The Archival Records Guideline require that the archival record include a statement of heritage significance. While this will be further described in Section 4.0 , this section will establish the heritage context of the site.
4.0 Heritage Values	Description of the natural scientific heritage values of the York Park Conservation Area, and statement of significance.	The Archival Records Guideline require the archival record to includes a statement of heritage significance. This section describes in detail the heritage values of the Site.
5.0 Scientific Review	Consolidated synopsis of the Site's ecological values and of the overarching research themes and outcomes from the reports contained in the archival record in Appendix 2 .	Condition 6 requires a scientific review be included within the archival recording.
6.0 Conclusion	Summary of report.	N/A
7.0 References	Reference list for the Archival Record Report.	N/A
Appendix 1	Archival Record Catalogue An inventory of documents that guides the reader to the information available in the appendices. This is accompanied by a complete bibliography of all documents contained within the Archival Record.	Condition 6 requires a database of reports and datasets.
Appendix 2	Full reports making up the archival record.	N/A

1.3 Qualifications of the Project Team

This document has been prepared by Umwelt who is one of Australia's leading multidisciplinary environmental consulting companies, with over 130 environmental and heritage specialists, providing a wide range of integrated services to public and private sector clients throughout Australia and internationally for over 25 years.

Umwelt has extensive experience with the site and the overarching project, having prepared the original referral application, subsequent preliminary documentation, and associated ecological and heritage investigations.

The project team responsible for preparing the archival record are as follows.

Table 1.2 Qualifications of the Project Team

Team	Role/Qualifications	Relevant Experience
Karina Carwardine Project Director, Reviewer	Manager Canberra, Principal Environmental Consultant Bachelor Marine Science	Karina has over 12 years' experience across a diverse range of projects that have included environmental impact assessments; Commonwealth, state and territory approvals; and management for major infrastructure projects. She has particular experience in the application of the EPBC Act for project approvals and compliance.
Caitlin Adcock Project Manager, Principal Author	Senior Environmental Planner Bachelor of Law Bachelor of Town Planning	Caitlin has over 9 years' experience in environmental planning for a range of projects, including infrastructure, Defence and telecommunications. She has experience in a range of environmental assessments and approvals at all levels of government.
Pam Dean-Jones Consultation	Principal, Strategic Planning for Communities and Landscapes Bachelor of Arts: Geomorphology and regional planning Post Graduate Diploma in Social Sciences	Pam has over 30 years' experience in natural resource management, strategic environmental planning and stakeholder engagement. She has conducted stakeholder and community engagement for complex environmental values and issues in a range of settings.

1.4 Lodgement

As per Condition 6 of the EPBC Act Approval noted in **Section 1.1**, this archival record and attachments will be lodged to DAWE and the National Archives of Australia. In addition, the archival record and attachments will also be lodged with the National Library of Australia.

1.5 Limitations

Umwelt was able source 55 reports relevant to the archival recording which are annexed to this report. There are an additional four reports which could not be located by the relevant authors. Refer the Archival Record Catalogue at **Appendix 1**. Additionally, not all stakeholders were available or could be contacted to contribute to the record.

It is also noted that many historical photographs of the Site remain under copyright restrictions. As such, some of these photographs could not be included in the archival record at the time of its preparation.

In addition, the framework upon which the document was prepared – the Archival Records Guideline – is primarily intended for use with historic and built heritage. As such, while general consistency with the Guidelines was achieved, many specific components of the Guidelines were not applicable or appropriate for the archival of research.

1.6 Acknowledgements

Umwelt would like to thank the various contributors of this Archival Record, particularly Will Osborne, University of Canberra and Geoff Robertson, Friends of Grasslands.

SECTION 2

Methodology



2.0 Methodology

2.1 Inventory of Archival Documents

The archival record has been prepared to comply with EPBC Act Approval Condition 6 (EPBC 2017/8028) and provides a thorough record of the golden sun moth research that has been undertaken at the YPCA. The archival record consists of:

- A scientific review of previous research conducted at the site.
- Historical photographs and mapping – this report includes historical photographs from the National Library Australia and from reports included within the archival record.
- An archival record catalogue – this includes a data spreadsheet including the references of each document, an abstract, key research themes and associated spatial data (if relevant) (refer to **Appendix 1**).
- Full archival record – this includes copies of publications identified within the archival record catalogue (refer to **Appendix 2**).

2.2 Collation of Archival Documents

Umwelt collected all known reports, including associated datasets, photographs and spatial files, with reference to golden sun moth research at YPCA. The reports were identified by:

- Liaising with relevant contacts that have been associated with the site, including:
 - Doma Property Group
 - Australian National University (ANU)
 - Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
 - ACT Government
 - University of Canberra
 - Friends of Grasslands
- Searches of available catalogues, including academic journals, Trove (National Library Australia) and Government publications.
- ‘Snowballing’ reference checks, a technique that identifies additional resources using the references from available reports.

All reports collected were reviewed and prepared for inclusion in the archival record. This included preparing abstracts, key terms and referencing within a data spreadsheet.

2.3 Stakeholder Consultation

Umwelt conducted consultation with the above listed stakeholders on 10 September 2019. Ongoing conversations and emails have been had with the ACT Government, Will Osborne (University of Canberra) and Geoff Robertson (Friends of Grasslands). **Table 2.1** outlines the method and outcomes of this consultation.

Table 2.1 Stakeholder Consultation Method

Organisation	Name	Email	Phone	Method	Outcome
Reports, spatial data, other documentation					
Doma Property Group	Gavin Edgar, General Manager Development	gavin@domagroup.com.au	02 6163 4724	1. Email	SMEC reports previously provided to Umwelt.
ACT Government	Mr James Bennett, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate Terri-Ann English, Assistant Director, Impact Assessment and Business Improvement	JamesP.Bennett@act.gov.au Terri-Ann.English@act.gov.au	02 6205 4877	1. Phone 2. Email	Information being circulated through the ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainability Development Directorate. No further response.
Historical photographs, oral histories					
ANU	Prof. Saul Cunningham, Fenner School of Environment & Society	saul.cunningham@anu.edu.au Cc: fsesea@anu.edu.au	02 6125 4588	1. Phone 2. Email	No response
CSIRO	Dr David Yeates, Director, Australian National Insect Collection	David.Yeates@csiro.au	02 6246 4282	1. Phone 2. Email	No response
University of Canberra	Dr Will Osborne, Adjunct Associate Professor Students and associates may also be included	will.osborne@canberra.edu.au	02 6201 5377	1. Phone 2. Email 3. Face-to-face meeting (TBC)	Documents received. No further response.
Friends of Grasslands	Andrew Russell, Public Officer Geoff Robertson, President Alison Rowell	info@fog.org.au arowell@iinet.net.au	0403 221 117	1. Phone 2. Email 3. Face-to-face meeting (TBC)	Documents received. Alison Rowell expressed interest in contributing to the archival record. No further response.

2.4 Oral Histories and Expert Engagement

The Scientific Heritage Impact Assessment (Umwelt, 2018a) that accompanied the Preliminary Documentation (Umwelt, 2018b) included stakeholder consultation. The following stakeholders participated either through face-to-face interview or via email.

- Dr David Yeates, Director Australian National Insect Collection, Senior Principal Research Scientist, CSIRO. Dr Yeates participated in a face to face interview on 14 March 2018 and also provided some follow up suggestions, references and contacts.
- Associate Professor Will Osborne, Institute for Applied Ecology, UC. Dr Osborne provided a preliminary email response and more detailed follow up email response to specific questions.
- Dr Philip Gibbons, Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU. Dr Gibbons provided a brief email response.

Each stakeholder was asked the following questions, which sought to guide discussion:

- **The value of the previous research and monitoring, in relation to the Australian criteria:**
 1. How do you see that previous research on golden sun moth and its habitat at this site has contributed to scientific knowledge and conservation management in the ACT?
 2. How has the research conducted at the Project Area since the 1990s supported or informed more recent work in native grasslands and golden sun moth habitat and populations in the ACT and surrounding areas?
 3. How would you describe the significance of that research, in terms of special insights on the natural heritage of the ACT and surrounding areas? What value has your organisation received from this research output? What are the key themes that it addresses? Examples could include species persistence on small sites, species response to shading, grassland composition, and grassland management/disturbance.
- **The value of the Project Area as a continuing research site:**
 4. What is the current focus of golden sun moth research in the ACT and surrounding areas?
 5. How does York Park Conservation Area fit with current and proposed future research effort on native grasslands and golden sun moth in the ACT and surrounding areas? Which components of future research could this site contribute to?
 6. What do you see as the role of small urban land parcels in natural heritage research and conservation?
- **Mitigation of potential impacts of the proposed action on scientific heritage values:**
 7. Is enhancement of the scientific components of the natural heritage value of the Project Area feasible in-situ? How could that be achieved?
 8. How could the scientific community's interest in native grasslands and golden sun moth be demonstrated, communicated, or interpreted to the broader community?
 9. Should the history of scientific studies at the Project Area be part of that communication or interpretation? Why is the Project Area valuable for that purpose and how could that best be done? Which themes would be the focus of interpretation – for instance, about the role of landscaping and conservation in the 'bush capital'?

- **Offsetting of scientific heritage value:**

10. Could you suggest approaches to offsetting the scientific heritage values of the Project Area, which could be included in an offset strategy?

Section 5.3 summarises the responses from these stakeholders as they relate to the key questions outlined above.

Additional oral histories were sought from community groups and researchers during preparation of this archival record; however, none have yet been obtained.

SECTION 3

Site Description and History



3.0 Site Description and History

The following section provides a summary of the environmental values of the Site as context to its scientific significance. These values have been the basis for the YPCA becoming a locally important site for scientific research.

This summary draws on the information contained within several reports and documents that have been included within the archival record itself, as well as the Preliminary Documentation submitted to DAWE.



Image Source: Environment and Planning Directorate, ACT Government (2016)

Figure 1 Location of the Site

3.1 Site Description

The Site is located on Blocks 3 and 15, Section 22, in the division of Barton, ACT. Its registered address is 23 National Circuit, Barton, ACT, and is located on the corner of Sydney Avenue and National Circuit, in close proximity to Parliament House.

The two blocks are a total of 1.25 hectares in size (1.15 and 0.1 hectares, respectively). The 'York Park Conservation Area' only accounts for a portion of Blocks 3 and 15 (refer to **Figure 1**), covering an area of 0.51 hectares.

3.2 Historical Overview of the Site

The Site is located within Ngannawal country. The Ngannawal people are thought to have lived in small, highly mobile, kin-based groups throughout the Canberra region (ERM, 2016). While it is likely that the Ngannawal people transited the Site, no Aboriginal heritage objects have been found during excavation of the Site (ERM, 2016).

The first documented case of Europeans visiting the Canberra region is in 1820 when Charles Throsby passed through the area in search of the Murrumbidgee River (ERM, 2016). In 1824 the Site was located within land that formed part of Robert Campbell's Estate, which covered up to 32,000 acres. Robert Campbell was a Sydney merchant who was awarded a land grant in the Canberra-Queanbeyan region as compensation for his ship 'Sydney', which was lost whilst in the service of the NSW Government. The estate, including the Site, was used for agricultural purposes (primarily livestock) until in 1908 when Canberra was selected to become the nation's capital. Approximately 2,368km² was set aside as the Australian Capital Territory, including the majority of the Campbell estate. However, it was not until after the First World War that construction of Canberra progressed in earnest.

There is photographic evidence to suggest that the cleared land in and surrounding the Site was used for military parades and aerial displays in the 1920s. These photographs, as well as those from later years, imply that 'York Park' referred to a larger cleared area bound by Kings Avenue, National Circuit, Canberra Avenue and State Circle (refer to **Figure 2**).



Figure 2 1950 Aerial Photograph of the site(red) and 'York Park' (blue)

(Image from Department of the Interior, accessed via National Library Australia, edited by the author)

Construction of the Provisional Parliament House, now referred to as 'Old Parliament House', in the new suburb of Parkes commenced in 1923 and was completed by early 1927. This resulted in the rapid construction of housing and community services in Ainslie, Civic, Forrest, Griffith (including Manuka) and Kingston. Aerial photographs indicate that the Site and surrounding area remained largely undeveloped between the 1940s – 1960s, though with evidence of tree plantings apparent (refer to **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**).

From the 1960s onward, development increased within Barton and its surrounding suburbs. Construction of a new Parliament House on Capital Hill commenced in 1981 and was completed in 1988. As a result, substantial development began to occur throughout Barton during the early 1990s, including the RG Casey Building within 'York Park', which now accommodates the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

From this point onward, 'York Park' has generally referred to a small open public space located on the corner of Kings Avenue and State Circle. However, scientific investigations from this time also refer to the Site as 'York Park'.



Figure 3 Aerial view of Canberra looking North across Lake Burley Griffin, showing limited development around the Site (circled in white)

(courtesy ACT Heritage Library, unknown photographer, 1966, reference #003886, edited by the author)

Scientific investigations of the Site appear to have begun in the mid-1990s, and included detailed surveys, monitoring events, assessments and reviews as a result of its location within a core national capital development area, but also due to its close proximity to key research institutions such as the ANU, CSIRO and University of Canberra (Umwelt, 2018b). It is unclear as to when golden sun moth was first officially observed at the Site, however, it is apparent that the research of Dr Ted Edwards from the CSIRO Division of Entomology was a catalyst for the ongoing monitoring of the species at the Site. The presence of this species in an urbanised context, as well as increasing development pressures and the site's accessibility, meant that it attracted significant local scientific interest.

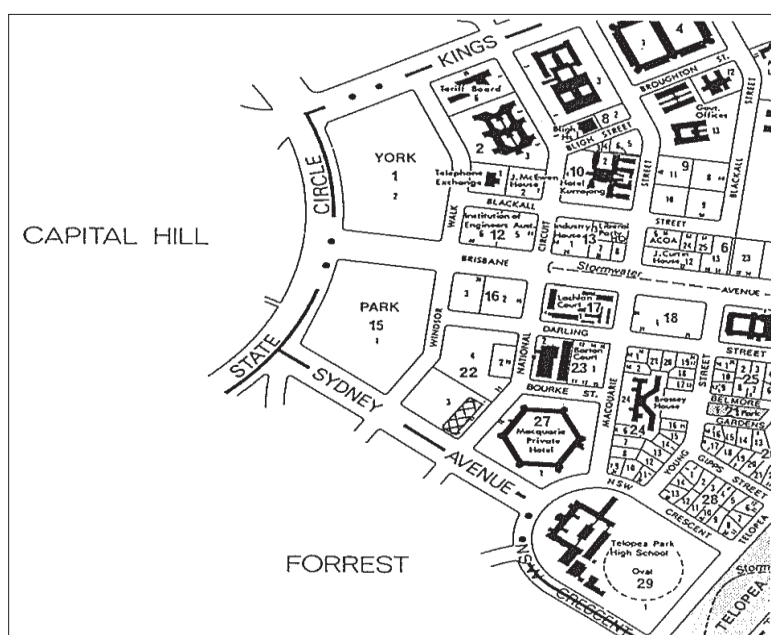


Figure 4 Development around the site in the early 1990s (Cook & Edwards, 1993)

By 2004, the suburb of Barton was substantially developed, though the Site itself still remained undeveloped. It was not until 2015 that the Site was formally identified as the 'York Park Conservation Area'. By this stage, the Site had been referenced as having a known population of golden sun moth for over 20 years.

Table 3.1 below provides an outline of the historical timeline for the York Park Conservation Area and local region.

Table 3.1 Historical Timeline for The YPCA And Local Region

Date	Activity or Event
Pre-European settlement	Ngunnawal people travelling through the region, utilising resources on annual gatherings for hunting and initiation ceremonies.
1820s-30s	Pastoral settlement of the region, large areas of land granted to and/or purchased by Robert Campbell. Introduction of sheep farming.
1910s	Walter Burley Griffin wins design competition for the new Federal Capital. Construction of Canberra begins.
1923-1927	Old Parliament House is constructed, with development commencing in surrounding suburbs. The Site and its immediate surrounds are used for military displays.
1960s	Site still comprises of a cleared lot with some tree plantings. Development of surrounding areas increases.
1981-1988	New Parliament House is constructed. Development in Barton increases.
1990s	Development within larger 'York Park' area, including the RG Casey Building. Site remains undeveloped. Golden sun moth and associated grassland habitat research commences at the site by local scientific community.
2013	Site is identified as the 'York Park Conservation Area' following approval of the proposed development of an access road for the approved Little National Hotel adjacent to the Site.
2015	Construction of Little National Hotel adjacent to the Site is completed.
2019	Approval is received from the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy to clear and divest the site.

3.3 History of Research Undertaken at the Site

As is further discussed in **Section 4.0**, the heritage value of the site is based on the scientific research that has occurred, particularly in relation to golden sun moth. A large number of surveys for the species have been conducted on the Site since the early 1990's.

The following table outlines the known golden sun moth surveys that have been undertaken at the Site, as apparent from the literature collected for this Archival Record. It is acknowledged that this is not an exhaustive list of all surveys undertaken at the Site, noting that a number of records remain unrecovered.

Table 3.2 Known Golden Sun Moth Surveys That Have Been Undertaken at the Site

Year	Survey
1992-93	Cook, L & Edwards, T (1993) – undertook mark-release-recapture techniques for golden sun moth between November 1992 to January 1993.
1995	O'Dwyer C & Attiwill, P (1998) – comparative study of golden sun moth habitat using eight sites in urban areas in Canberra, including York Park Conservation Area.
1997	Clarke, G & O'Dwyer (1998) – collection of adult male golden sun moth at ten sites in the ACT including the Site, between November-December 1997.
1997-98	Clarke, G (2000) – Hand net surveys during the 1997 and 1998 flying season.
1997-2000	Clarke, G & Whyte, L (2003) – surveys for genetic variation assessment over a four-year period.
2006-08	Richter (2010) – undertook surveys at the Site between mid-October to end January over a two-year period.
2008-09	Richter <i>et al</i> (2009) – a pilot golden sun moth monitoring program that surveyed a number of sites across the ACT, including the Site. Surveys were undertaken by community members supervised and trained by ecologists.
2011	Rowell (2012) – a mark-release-recapture survey was carried out in December 2011
2013	Umwelt (2014) – surveys were undertaken in November-December of 2013 to justify recommendations to changes to the Parsons Brinckerhoff (2008) Maintenance Plan. Robert Jessop Pty Ltd (2014) provides the baseline results of flying golden sun moth surveys, pupal case surveys and vegetation surveys for 2013.
2014-15	Umwelt (2015) – this was the 2014 monitoring event targeted at golden sun moth and natural temperate grassland. Robert Jessop Pty Ltd (2015) – this is the second year of baseline results of flying golden sun moth surveys, pupal case surveys and vegetation surveys for 2014-15.
2015	SMEC (2016) – this was the third-year monitoring event for golden sun moth at the Site, undertaken in November-December 2015. Umwelt (2016) – this was to provide an update to the 2013 Maintenance Plan and to complete the 2015 monitoring event for golden sun moth. Similarly, to SMEC (2016), surveys were undertaken in November-December 2015.
2016	SMEC (2017) – this was the fourth-year monitoring event for golden sun moth at the Site, undertaken in November-December 2016.
2017	SMEC (2018) – this was the fifth-year monitoring event for golden sun moth at the Site, undertaken in November-December 2017. Umwelt (2018) – these surveys were undertaken in November-December 2017 for golden sun moth on the Site for the purpose of calculating potential offset requirements for the proposed divestment and clearing of the site.
2018	SMEC (2019) – this is the sixth monitoring event for golden sun moth at the Site. The surveys were undertaken in November-December 2018. Umwelt (2019) – this also provides the 2018 monitoring event for golden sun moth at the Site. The surveys were undertaken in November-December 2018.

According to the Preliminary Documentation (Umwelt, 2018c), the results of the surveys undertaken from 2007 onwards demonstrate a general decline in the extent of golden sun moth habitat within the York Park Conservation Area, particularly from 2013 onwards.

Table 3.3 Golden Sun Moth Habitat at the Site and Surrounds (Umwelt, 2018c; Umwelt, 2019)

Year	York Park Conservation Area	Remaining area of Block 3	Sydney Avenue median strips	Total Area
2006 (Rowell, 2007)	0.56	0	0 Entirety could be rehabilitated to habitat	0.56
2007 (Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2008)	0.39			
2008 (Richter <i>et al</i> , 2009)	-	-	Unknown area, but GSM recorded	Unknown
2011 (Rowell, 2012)	0.56	-	-	0.56
2013 (Umwelt, 2014)	0.56	-	-	0.56
2014 (Umwelt, 2015)	0.34	-	-	0.34
2015 (Umwelt, 2016)	0.32	-	-	0.32
2017 (Umwelt, 2018)	0.32	0	0.4*	0.72
2018 (Umwelt, 2019)	0.36	0	-	0.36

- Indicates that there is no data for these areas during the years indicated.

* The Entirety of Sydney Avenue median strips was assumed to be GSM habitat for the purposes of the original Referral.

The Preliminary Documentation (Umwelt, 2018c) states that the primary reasons for this general decline of golden sun moth habitat at the Site were:

- EPBC Act approved impact associated with EPBC Act Referral 2010/5548. This Referral was for the construction of an access road off National Circuit to support the construction of the Little National Hotel. The driveway directly impacted upon approximately 0.04 hectares of natural temperate grassland in the north of the York Park Conservation Area. The impact occurred between the 2013 and 2014 survey seasons.
- Weed incursion recorded within the York Park Conservation Area, primarily throughout the southern portion of Block 3 (Umwelt, 2015 and Umwelt, 2016). Dominant weed species recorded were *Dactylis glomerata* (cocksfoot) and *Phalaris aquatica* (phalaris). While male golden sun moth had been observed flying over the area of weed incursion, as neither cocksfoot nor phalaris are golden sun moth feed species (i.e. C3 grasses), this area was not considered to be habitat. The weed incursion separated the previously contiguous patch of golden sun moth habitat into two patches.

- Upgrades to the footpath adjacent to National Circuit disturbed the grassland of York Park. This area was re-planted with native *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass), which is not a golden sun moth feed species, therefore these works also reduced the area of habitat present within York Park Conservation Area (Umwelt, 2016).

The most recent known extent and quality of golden sun moth habitat on the Site is shown in **Figure 5** below.

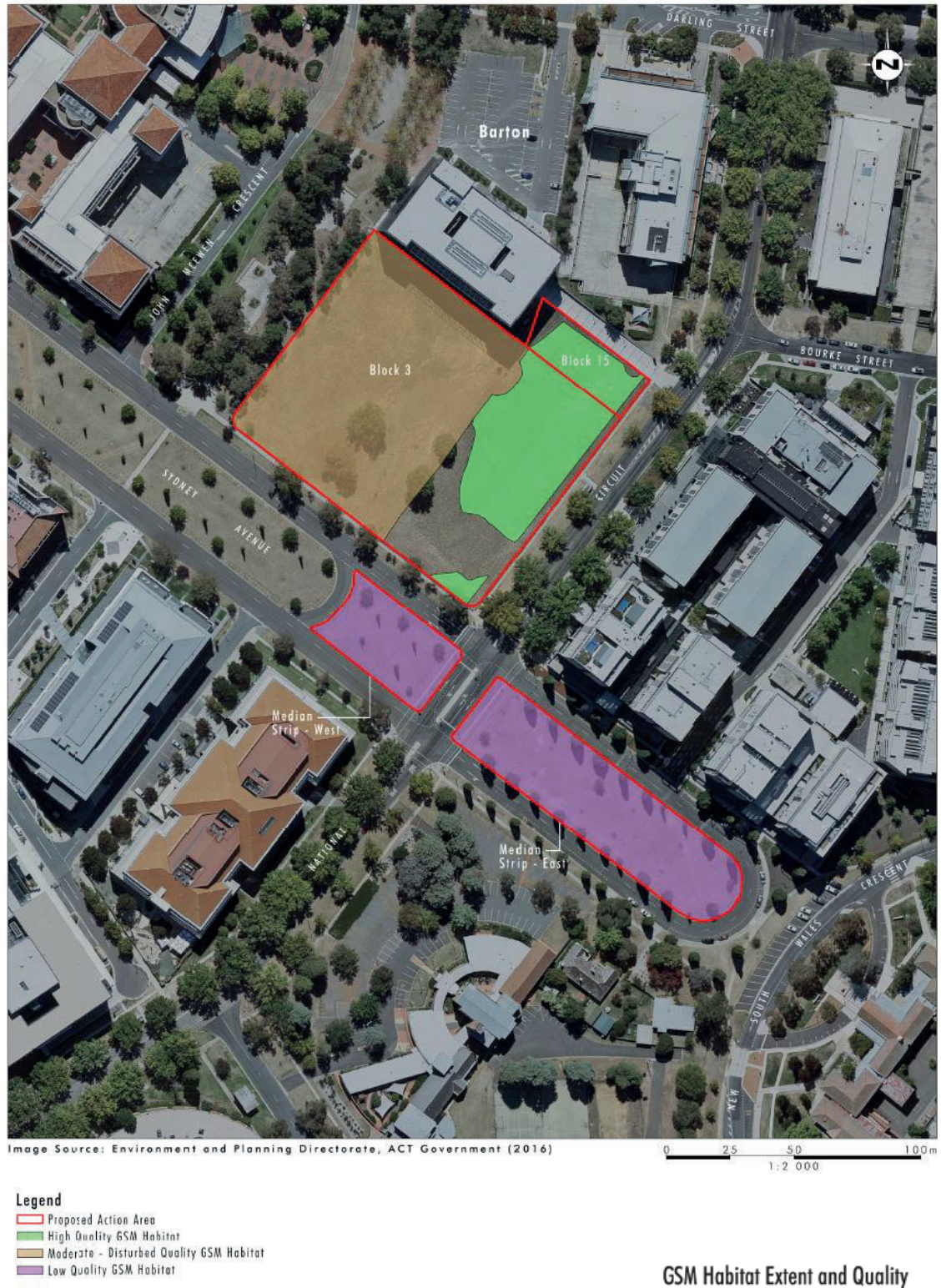


Figure 5 Golden Sun Moth Habitat on Site and Surrounding Area (Umwelt, 2018c)

SECTION 4

Heritage Values



4.0 Heritage Values

4.1 Understanding Scientific Heritage Value

The scientific heritage value of the Site was considered in the EPBC Referral process, as Finance, a Commonwealth Agency, had to consider impacts to the 'whole of the environment' as part of the referral of their proposed action. The whole of environment consideration (as defined in the Significant Impact Guidelines, 1.2 (DSEWPaC, 2013) requires a more wide-ranging appreciation and assessment of the environment, including locally and state significant values, in comparison to the nine matters of national environmental significance generally assessed under the EPBC Act.

According to the Burra Charter (ICOMOS, 2013), scientific value of heritage places is defined as:

Scientific value refers to the information content of a place and its ability to reveal more about an aspect of the past through examination or investigation of the place, including the use of archaeological techniques. The relative scientific value of a place is likely to depend on the importance of the information or data involved, on its rarity, quality or representativeness, and its potential to contribute further important information about the place itself or a type or class of place or to address important research questions. To appreciate scientific value, ask: "Would further investigation of the place have the potential to reveal substantial new information and new understandings about people, places, processes or practices which are not available from other sources?" (p.3, ICOMOS, 2013).

Threshold indicators can be used to help determine the relative significance of a heritage place (ICOMOS 2013b). The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (2008) provides summary guidelines about thresholds for different levels of heritage listing.

- To reach the threshold for the National Heritage List (NHL), a place must have **outstanding** heritage value to the Nation against one or more of the Commonwealth heritage criteria listed in **Table 4.1**.
- The threshold for inclusion on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL) is that a place must have **significant** heritage value against one or more of the Commonwealth heritage criteria listed in **Table 4.1**.

These thresholds are elaborated in 'Identifying Commonwealth Heritage Values and Establishing a Heritage Register – a Guideline for Commonwealth Agencies' (AHC, 2010).

The threshold for inclusion on the CHL is defined further as a place being of local heritage significance (p. 7, AHC, 2010). That is, a place is considered to have Commonwealth heritage value (i.e. meet the 'significant heritage value' identified above) if it is assessed as having local heritage significance.

For the purposes of the Heritage Assessment, the ACT heritage criteria were used to understand the scale of local heritage significance.

Table 4.1 Commonwealth and ACT Heritage Criteria

Commonwealth Heritage Criteria (s. 10.03A EPBC Regulation)	ACT Heritage Criteria (used as an indication of local significance)
<p>(a) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history</p> <p>(b) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history</p> <p>(c) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history</p> <p>(d) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:</p> <p>(i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or</p> <p>(ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments</p> <p>(e) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group</p> <p>(f) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period</p> <p>(g) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons</p> <p>(h) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history</p> <p>(i) the place has significant heritage value because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous tradition</p>	<p>(a) Important to the course of the ACT's cultural or natural history</p> <p>(b) Has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history</p> <p>(c) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's natural or cultural history</p> <p>(d) Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects</p> <p>(e) Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT</p> <p>(f) Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period.</p> <p>(g) Has a strong or special association with the ACT community, a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons</p>

Note: the criteria that relate to scientific heritage value (as defined in the Burra Charter) are highlighted in **blue**. All other criteria are not considered relevant for the assessment of scientific heritage value.

The analysis in the Preliminary Documentation (Umwelt, 2018c) determined that the Site has local scientific heritage value relating to the historical scientific investigations of golden sun moth within the YPCA.

Golden sun moth population at the Site has been monitored periodically for over 20 years by the local scientific community and citizen scientists and is an example of an accessible place that illustrates the scientific community culture of Canberra. A combination of accessibility and tenure has facilitated the early recognition species presence, and a long monitoring record of golden sun moth population at the Site. As discussed in **Section 5.0**, this monitoring has been influential for golden sun moth research in the ACT.

4.2 Key Scientific Heritage Values

This section describes the specific heritage values associated with the Site. As it was determined that the Site did not meet the heritage criteria for either the National Heritage List (NHL) or the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL), the ACT Heritage Criteria (refer to **Table 4.1**) have been used as the basis for the following discussion.

The full analysis is provided in the Scientific Heritage Impact Assessment (Umwelt, 2018b).

4.2.1 Important to the course of the ACT's cultural or natural history

The basic test for this value is outlined as follows within the ACT Heritage Assessment Policy (ACT Heritage Council, 2018):

*The place or object has a clear association with an event, phase, period, process, function, tradition, land use, movement, custom, way of life, **ecological community, species, biodiversity**, geology, climate, or evolution of natural landforms in the ACT's history.*

AND

*The association of the place/object to the event, phase etc. is **evident in the physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources** or oral history.*

The various types of scientific work conducted at the Site for golden sun moth in the past meets a number of the inclusion criteria outlined above. The long research and monitoring interest in the Site have influenced other work on golden sun moth in the ACT and more broadly in the scientific community. There is local community interest (both citizen science and general) in the Site and interpretation information has been provided around the site boundary for the benefit of visitors.

The research and monitoring that has been conducted at the Site for almost 30 years has meant that it provides a record of local scale environmental change (to the grassland habitat) and the resilience of an important and readily recognised endangered invertebrate species in the ACT. This is recorded in a range of scientific documents, including journal articles, workshop documents, monitoring reports and reports on citizen science. Of note, the early work undertaken by Dr Ted Edwards, Lyn Cook, Cheryl O'Dwyer and Geoffrey M. Clarke during the early 1990s at the Site has had an ongoing influence on the study of golden sun moth, particularly within the ACT. The documentary evidence from the Site about its golden sun moth population and habitat can (at this time) be considered 'rare', and the work there can be considered to have a 'seminal influence, long association and influential association' in the ACT.

Because of the ownership, location and management history of the Site, it cannot be considered representative of the broader grassland (or urban grassland) landscape of the ACT.

Similarly, the occurrence of striped legless lizard at the Site is considered to be isolated and not representative of striped legless lizard habitat in the ACT.

As such, its scientific value primarily relates to golden sun moth. The Site is not the only or the best location in Canberra and surrounding districts for investigation of golden sun moth conservation issues, however, it is currently the most studied site, benefitting from its central, accessible and conspicuous location.

However, as noted within the Heritage Impact Assessment (Umwelt, 2018b), this is likely to change over time, as robust monitoring of important conservation sites throughout the ACT become more common (such as annual monitoring at Offset Sites). Additionally, the Site at this stage is considered to be vulnerable due to its small size and urban context. It is expected that the value of its fabric will decline. The Site has been increasingly affected by weeds (particularly *Dactylis glomerata* (cocksfoot) and *Phalaris aquatica* (phalaris)), and other urban edge effects. While the Site may have some short-term value in demonstrating the resilience or demise of the species within the YPCA, this value is likely to decline due to the disturbed nature of the Site.

As such, while the Site presently demonstrates importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's natural history, this value is unlikely to remain in the medium to long term.

4.2.2 Uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history

The basic test for this value is outlined as follows within the ACT Heritage Assessment Policy (ACT Heritage Council, 2018):

*The place or object must have a **clear association with an aspect of the ACT's cultural or natural history.***

AND

*The association of the place/object to the aspect of history must be evident in the **physical fabric of the place/object and/or in documentary resources** or oral history.*

AND

*The aspect of history must have made a strong, noticeable or **influential contribution to the ACT's society** or environment.*

The ACT Heritage Assessment Policy indicates that, when considering natural heritage, the intent of this criterion is to apply to places which provide significant habitat for rare, threatened, uncommon, and at limits of range species. Rarity and uncommonness are assessed in the context of similar places elsewhere in the ACT.

Overall, it is considered that the Site meets this criterion at a local (ACT) scale. The value of the Site is as an example where long-standing scientific interest has monitored and demonstrated the survival of an endangered species on a small and isolated parcel of land in an urban context.

That is, the Site itself is not rare in terms of the species that are present, or that it has outstanding conservation values for the golden sun moth. Rather, the scientific and community interest in the site, which arose in part from its location and accessibility to major research institutions in Canberra, makes it a place with a locally significant associated history and a place which has made a strong, noticeable or influential contribution to the ACT's society or environment. The length of time over which investigations or monitoring have occurred at the Site and the insights it has provided about the survival of rare or endangered species on urban habitat fragments is its key value.

The Site was determined to have either low or now value against the other criteria relevant to scientific heritage.

4.3 Qualifications to Scientific Heritage Value and the Site

It is important to note that this Archival Record report provides a snapshot in time of the scientific heritage value placed on the YPCA.

As noted within the Scientific Heritage Impact Assessment (Umwelt, 2018b), there are a number of factors which indicate that the scientific heritage values of the Site are presently in decline:

- The accessibility of the YPCA has been an important factor in the early detection of golden sun moth on the Site. This has subsequently led to an extensive monitoring record, in some cases attached to EPBC Act obligations and approval requirements. This is particularly relevant to the later investigations of the Site undertaken by Robert Jessop Pty Ltd, SMEC and Umwelt from 2014 onwards. However, now that there are numerous other golden sun moth sites known in and around the ACT, and monitoring and conservation programs are being implemented at diverse habitat sites, the significance of the scientific record at the Site is likely to decline over time. The scientific record of the Site is ultimately one snapshot of the species' population dynamics at a site that is not representative of the range of sites on which the golden sun moth and its grassland habitat are now known to occur.
- The scientific heritage value of the Site in relation to future research prospects depends on the condition and integrity of the fabric of the place. It is important to note that the integrity of the fabric of the Site is vulnerable to a range of urban and isolation threats. Going forward, this may have provided a short-term research opportunity to study how the population responds to these urban pressures over time. However, over the medium term, the value of the place is expected to decline, even if the Site were not to be sold and developed. This Site is already more intensively managed than many other grassland sites in the ACT, in an effort to maintain its habitat and golden sun moth population. This has not prevented substantial changes to the habitat, particularly weed invasions.

Nonetheless, it is apparent that the documentation of scientific work on golden sun moth at the Site has had a seminal influence on research on golden sun moth populations in the ACT, and that it has received significant local community interest.

As such, it is relevant and appropriate to capture this research within a consolidated record for future reference. This is the purpose of the Archival Record, which is further discussed in **Section 5.0**.

SECTION 5

Scientific Review



5.0 Scientific Review

5.1 Ecological Values

The Site is known to have had the following ecological values, each listed under the EPBC Act:

- natural temperate grassland of the south eastern highlands (natural temperate grassland), a critically endangered ecological community
- striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*), a vulnerable reptile species
- golden sun moth (*Synemon plana*) a critically endangered invertebrate species.

The following sections provide an overview of these values and their presence at the Site.

5.1.1 Natural Temperate Grassland

Natural temperate grassland is an ecological community dominated by native tussock grasses with a diversity of wildflowers and other grassland-specialist plants and animals. The ecological community occurs at altitudes up to around 1200 metres and as low as 250 metres. It is a naturally treeless or sparsely treed community.

The major dominant or co-dominant grass species are kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra* syn. *T. australis*), snowgrass (*Poa sieberiana*), river tussock grass (*Poa labillardierei* var. *labillardierei*), kneed speargrass (*Austrostipa bigeniculata*), slender speargrass (*Austrostipa scabra* var. *falcata*), red grass (*Bothriochloa macra*), various wallaby grasses (*Rytidosperma species* syn. *Austrodanthonia species*), and blownglass (*Lachnagrostis filiformis*). These dominant or co-dominant grasses occur in association with a range of other native herbaceous species, including many forb and grass-like species.

Natural temperate grassland provides habitat for a range of native animals including striped legless lizard and golden sun moth, which are discussed below.

According to the most recent surveys conducted in 2018, there is 0.36 hectares of natural temperate grassland within Blocks 3 and 15 (Umwelt, 2019). Natural temperate grassland occurs in two patches, both located within the YPCA. Data from 2015 (Umwelt, 2016) indicated that the natural temperate grassland varied between moderate to high quality based on the diversity of native, non-grass flora species. In 2016, the natural temperate grassland ecological community was re-listed under the EPBC Act, with new parameters developed to determine its quality (TSSC, 2016). The data was subsequently reviewed, and the quality of the natural temperate grassland was rated as high to very high (Umwelt, 2018a).



Figure 6 Natural Temperate Grassland at York Park Conservation Area (Umwelt, 2017)

5.1.2 Striped Legless Lizard

Like other members of the legless lizard family, striped legless lizard does not have forelimbs and has very reduced vestigial hind limbs. These hind limbs are only apparent as small flaps. Striped legless lizard reaches a maximum total length of about 300 mm. While it shows considerable variation in colour and pattern, striped legless lizard is usually pale grey-brown above and cream on the ventral surface, with a series of lateral and dorso-lateral stripes along the length of the body, becoming diagonal bands on the tail. Superficially, striped legless lizard resemble snakes but can be distinguished by the presence of external ear openings, a fleshy undivided tongue and a tail which, when unbroken, is longer than the body. Striped legless lizard is found in grasslands of south-eastern NSW, the ACT and north-eastern, central and south-western Victoria.

One striped legless lizard individual was opportunistically identified within the YPCA (SMEC, 2017) while undertaking annual golden sun moth monitoring. The striped legless lizard was recorded towards the eastern boundary of the YPCA, within the natural temperate grassland. Due to the opportunistic nature of the species' record, a targeted survey of the YPCA was undertaken in November and December 2017 by Umwelt so that greater detail regarding the species' extent could be gathered. The presence of the individual striped legless lizard was subsequently confirmed in December 2017 (Umwelt, 2018c).

In addition, a number of reptile skins (approximately eight) were found on the Site in February 2018. These skins could not be identified down to species level; however, were consistent with striped legless lizard in terms of size and shape. A precautionary approach was undertaken, and these skins were assumed to be from striped legless lizard. These observations indicated that the entire YPCA could provide habitat for striped legless lizard.



Figure 7 Striped Legless Lizard in York Park Conservation Area (Umwelt, 2017)

5.1.3 Golden Sun Moth

Golden sun moth is a medium-sized day-flying moth with green eyes, clubbed antennae and no functional mouthparts. It has a wingspan of about 3 – 3.5 cm and a tapered abdomen. Males are slightly larger than females, and the sexes are distinguished by their wing colours, with only the females having characteristic golden hind wings. Males can be seen flying in a zig-zag pattern in the warmest part of the day looking for females, while the females rarely fly.

Breeding occurs between mid-October and January. Females generally lay their eggs in clumps of wallaby grass, laying around 100 to 150 eggs. The eggs hatch after about 21 days and the larvae then tunnel into the ground, where they live for one to three years (refer to **Figure 8** and **Figure 9**). The larvae feed on the wallaby grass but have also demonstrated a willingness to feed on the exotic Chilean needle grass (*Nassella neesiana*). Adult moths only live for one to four days.

A large number of ecological investigations have been conducted at the Site over the past three decades. As of the 2017/2018 flying season, about 0.32 hectares of golden sun moth habitat existed within Blocks 3 and 15 (consistent with the extent of natural temperate grassland). However, golden sun moth was also identified within the adjacent median strips of Sydney Avenue, where Chilean needle grass is present.



Figure 8 A male golden sun moth in York Park Conservation Area (Umwelt, 2017)



Figure 9 Golden sun moth larvae from soil under native grassland, Canberra ACT
(David McCleneghan CSIRO, 2004)

5.2 Research Themes

In fulfilment of Condition 6 of the EPBC Act Approval, this Archival Record report provides a scientific review of the themes identified within the research within the Archival Record catalogue. The objective of this scientific review is to summarise the research that has been completed at the YPCA relevant to golden sun moth. This scientific review does not provide an assessment of the validity or credibility of the research undertaken, rather creates a consolidated synopsis of scientific research for the future education and information of all.

The majority of the scientific work that has been carried out at the YPCA relates to the critically endangered golden sun moth. This includes academic research and citizen science conducted in Melbourne, across western Victoria, in Canberra, the ACT (including at the YPCA) and NSW. In light of the large number of research papers and documents included within the Archival Record catalogue, this scientific review is intended to highlight the key research themes relevant to golden sun moth at the YPCA.

This scientific review has identified that research into golden sun moth at YPCA falls into the following broad research themes:

- genetic diversity
- population change over time
- links between population vulnerability and habitat quality (and what defines quality habitat for this species)
- the resilience of the species to major events and gradual change
- the value of flagship species and accessible urban sites in driving or supporting conservation outcomes and awareness
- the broader issues around decision making for effective conservation management.

Several of the publications cover a number of these themes, building from basic ecological research to broader issues of conservation management processes and effectiveness.

As demonstrated in the Archival Record catalogue (refer to **Appendix 1**), the publications also come in a number of different forms. This has ultimately influenced the objectives of the research undertaken in each publication, the style in which it has been presented, and to an extent the outcomes reported. These types are outlined in **Table 5.1**.

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Table 5.1 Publication Types within the Archival Record

Publication Type	Research themes and discussion	Key documents [#]
<p>Specialist scientific research</p> <p>Includes research conducted by academic staff and students at the major research institutes in Canberra. These generally focus on small sites or specific technical issues (e.g. genetic analysis of populations).</p>	<p>Individually, these studies may not contribute much to national scale golden sun moth research themes. However, when considered together, this specialist scientific research contributes to the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • genetic diversity of the species • population change over time • links between population vulnerability and habitat quality (and what defines quality habitat for this species) • the resilience of the species to major events and gradual change • value as a 'flagship species' in an urban site. <p>The studies may provide evidence to support strategic planning and land management decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braby M & Dunford (2006) (No. 5) • Clarke, G (2000) (No. 7) • Clarke, G & O'Dwyer, C (1998) (No. 9) • Cook, L & Edwards, T (1993) (No. 13) • Richter et al (2013) (No. 44)
<p>Studies required for development assessment purposes</p> <p>As golden sun moth reside within lowland areas of the ACT, they often occur within future development areas. As golden sun moth are protected under Commonwealth and ACT legislation, studies (primarily impact assessments) are required to support development applications and approvals processes.</p> <p>This type may include peer review or strategic studies undertaken for planning purposes; but many are undertaken by consultants or researchers that operate in a consultancy context.</p>	<p>David Hogg Pty Ltd (2010) provides a list of 41 such reports completed prior to 2010, for at least 25 different sites. Parsons Brinkerhoff (2008) and Umwelt (2014, 2016) are examples of documents prepared for the Site as requisites for a planning and/or environmental approval.</p> <p>These studies provide information relevant to themes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population change over time • links between population vulnerability and habitat quality (and what defines quality habitat for this species). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons Brinkerhoff (2008) (No. 39) • Umwelt (2014) (No. 53) • Umwelt (2016) (No. 55)

Publication Type	Research themes and discussion	Key documents [#]
<p>Monitoring</p> <p>This includes studies undertaken on a regular basis, usually by landowners, managers, or their delegates due to the known presence of protected species or species of interest.</p> <p>This work is primarily conducted by consultants on behalf of ACT or Commonwealth Governments; but as above, may also be conducted by academic researchers.</p>	<p>Much of the reporting undertaken by consultancies, such as ERM, SMEC and Umwelt are examples of this type of publication.</p> <p>This type of work has been integral to monitoring the presence of golden sun moth at the Site. This type of work can also provide information that can support analysis of population change over time and factors influencing the vulnerability or resilience of threatened species.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Hogg Pty Ltd (2012) (No. 16) • ERM (2016) (No. 22) • Robert Jessop Pty Ltd (2014; 2015) (No. 45, 46) • Rowell, A (2012) (No. 47) • SMEC (2016; 2017; 2018; 2019) (No. 49, 50, 51, 52)
<p>Regional scale conservation planning</p> <p>This includes baseline survey, monitoring, or targeted management research conducted as part of regional scale conservation planning and priority setting.</p>	<p>Edwards (1994) is the earliest of these types of surveys identified by the literature review, with other strategic conservation reviews prepared by (as examples) Richter <i>et al</i> (2009) and Hogg (2010).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarke, G (1993) (No. 6) • Cooper, M (2009) (No. 14) • Edwards, T (1991) (No. 18)
<p>Policy for conservation management</p> <p>This includes policy documents, action plans, strategic plans and guidelines primarily prepared by government agencies, that seek to prioritise conservation efforts and spending.</p>	<p>ACT Government (1998; 2005) are examples of strategic conservation management plans that integrate scientific studies into management priorities.</p> <p>These documents are generally limited to demonstrating the research theme of broader issues around decision-making for effective conservation management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Government (1998) (No.1) • Mulvaney, M (2012) (No. 36)
<p>Citizen science research</p> <p>The Site has been subject to a number of collaborative research studies between research institutions and local community groups. Newsletters prepared by community groups demonstrate the organisational efforts of these community groups and their educational role in assisting volunteers undertake golden sun moth surveys at the Site.</p>	<p>The poster (FOG, 2008) and newsletters prepared by Hnatiuk (2008-2009) are examples of the citizen science activities that have been undertaken at the Site. These documents do not relate to a research theme as such (and have therefore been designated as 'other') but are nonetheless valuable in demonstrating the forms of research that have been carried out at the Site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Grasslands (2008) (No. 24) • Hnatiuk, S (2008-2009) (No. 28-35)

[#] Includes reference number assigned in Archival Record Catalogue.

For ease of discussion, the follow section discusses the research themes identified above in the following groupings:

- **Section 5.2.1** discusses genetic diversity, population change over time, and links between population vulnerability and habitat quality.
- **Section 5.2.2** discusses conservation management issues relating to flagship species and golden sun moth resilience.
- **Section 5.2.3** discusses broader conservation management decision making.

5.2.1 Golden Sun Moth Species and Population Issues

Research topics that sit within the research themes of genetic diversity and population change generally relate to specialist scientific studies that have been undertaken at the Site. These include the following:

- Determining the life cycle of golden sun moth and how it relates to soil and grassland conditions:
 - Edwards (1994), and later Richter *et al* (2013) found at the Site that based on the size classes of larvae observed in the soil, golden sun moth appears to remain underground for at least two years.
 - O'Dwyer & Attiwill (1998) found that phosphorus concentrations in the soil had an impact to golden sun moth larvae, in that high concentrations can be toxic to the species.
- Genetic variability and diversity of golden sun moth:
 - Clarke and O'Dwyer (1998), who undertook the largest genetic study of a threatened invertebrate species at the time, found that five major population groupings within the ACT and Victoria all had somewhat lower genetic variation compared to other lepidopteran species.
 - This was further discussed by Clarke and O'Dwyer (2000), in that it was hypothesised that this limited level of genetic variation may have resulted from population bottlenecks and founder events following habitat fragmentation.
- Identifying methods for population monitoring, given that golden sun moth spends most of its life cycle underground and only emerges to fly for a short period of time in summer:
 - Richter *et al* (2013) refer to the difficulty of formulating specific conservation actions for golden sun moth because of the lack of a standardised monitoring protocol and limited knowledge of golden sun moth ecology. They report a number of monitoring methods that may be applied that have varying levels of complexity, skill requirements, and time requirements. They conclude that different methods provide reliable estimates of population size and are suitable for different types of research. It was apparent that the time of day for monitoring is also important.
- Research into the value of small, urban habitat for the conservation of the species has also been undertaken:
 - David Hogg Pty Ltd (2010) suggests that locations where golden sun moth occur in central Canberra are on land that was withdrawn from rural land use early in Canberra's development. These land parcels were likely retained (generally unmanaged) as grassland remnants or only limitedly modified by rural uses that would have precluded golden sun moth habitat regeneration. Despite this value, these sites are generally more vulnerable to edge effects or catastrophic events due to their size and isolation and have generally low species diversity.

- Research undertaken by David Hogg Pty Ltd (2010) as part of this broader research theme also notes the conservation value of existing, longer-term monitoring programs. Specifically, any sites that have a long and reliable monitoring history, which would be difficult to replicate elsewhere or are otherwise scientifically significant (e.g. because of their use for major grassland rehabilitation trials). The Site is noted for its 'cultural scientific value and extensive monitoring records' (David Hogg Pty Ltd 2010, p 4), as opposed to the quality of its golden sun moth habitat.

This specialist scientific research has subsequently informed much of the policy development related to the species. For example, the research of Richter *et al* (2013) was used within the ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans (ACT Government, 2017) to provide context to its policy actions and strategies (refer to **Figure 10**). Furthermore, the national approved conservation advice for golden sun moth (DoE, 2013) references many of the studies included within this Archival Record. Similarly, the Significant impact guidelines for the species (DEWHA, 2009) also uses much of the research that has been undertaken on the golden sun moth at the Site. It is apparent that this research has had a direct impact on the national conservation efforts for the golden sun moth.

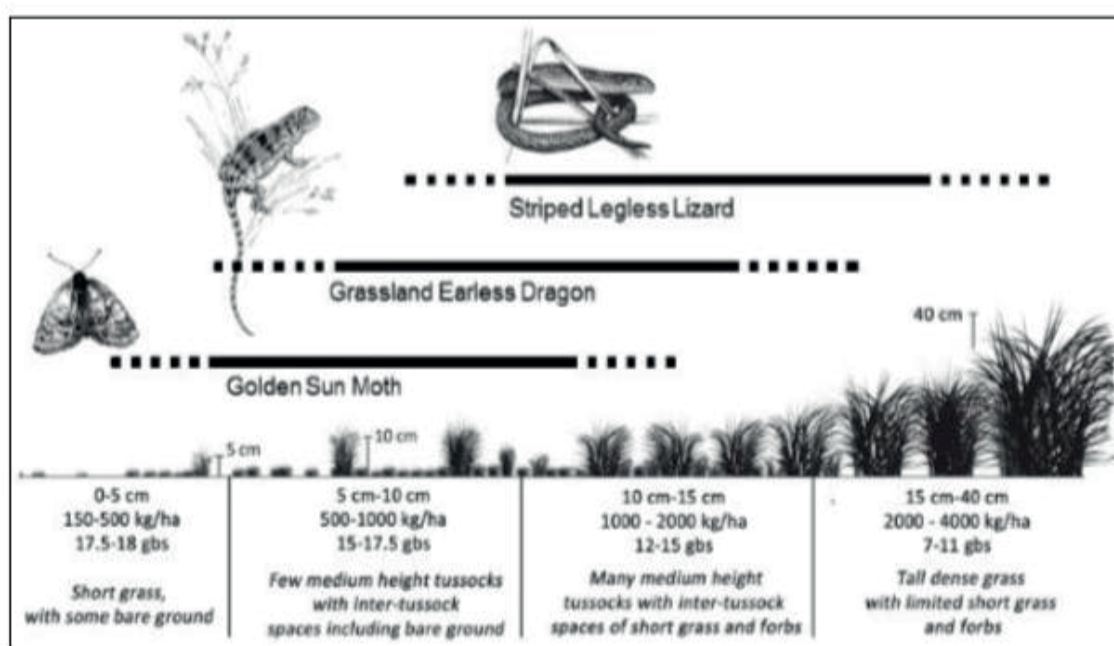


Figure 10 Grassland Structure and Habitat Suitability for Some Threatened Grassland Fauna (ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans, ACT Government, 2017)

5.2.2 Broader Conservation Issues

A common theme throughout much of the golden sun moth research at the Site relates to broader conservation issues of the species, and of endangered invertebrate species generally. Examples of this research are as follows:

- The use of golden sun moth as a 'flagship' species for insect conservation:
 - Gibson & New (2007) and Richter *et al* (2013) use this term to describe golden sun moth and justify the need for further research into the species' biology.
 - The species appears to have first been described as a 'flagship' species by Edwards (1993), in which he argues that the species serves as a figurehead for many invertebrates as being unstudied and at risk of extinction.

- A number of studies also discuss and highlight the value of citizen science in urban areas, including the role of 'friends' groups in conservation efforts:
 - The various FOG newsletters are testament to the 'Sun Moth Count' community monitoring events held by University of Canberra and FOG at the Site and across Canberra. In the FOG Newsletter 2 (Hnatiuk, 2008b) it states that there were 41 volunteers counting moths at around 36 sites throughout Canberra. This cross-city survey organised by the University of Canberra and FOG (refer to **Figure 13**) was able to distinguish several urban sites where golden sun moth had previously been observed but were not part of this survey; or where apparent suitable habitat was present, but the species was not observed.
 - Following the 'Sun Moth Count' project, Richter *et al* (2009) prepared a report on the outcomes of the investigation. The report also describes the participant demography and their feedback (refer to **Figure 11**) The use of volunteers also assisted in raising publicity for the project and the species generally (refer to **Figure 12**).
 - David Hogg Pty Ltd (2010) highlights the importance of 'friends' groups in insect conservation campaigns. This includes their capacity to encourage large numbers of participants to join in field monitoring exercises. The ease of access and lack of travel costs for people working in their local area means that people can potentially visit a site on multiple occasions and increase the database of observations.
 - Richter *et al* (2013) report the role of volunteers who participated in surveys in Canberra in 2012 and collected some 650 pupal cases from 11 grassland areas.
- Identifying the habitat and food tolerances/preferences of golden sun moth:
 - In particular, this relates to building an understanding of the role and value of the Weed of National Significance (WoNS) Chilean needle grass (*Nassella neesiana*) for golden sun moth; and how it may affect the distribution and survival of the species in the future. The spread of golden sun moth into areas of previously 'unsuitable' habitat has been very traceable at YPCA through annual monitoring. It can be identified when it started using areas previously not mapped as habitat, as Chilean needle grass invaded the Site. This raises a potential conflict in conservation efforts the need to remove weed invasions and the desire to protect golden sun moth populations. Publications that discuss golden sun moth presence in Chilean needle grass include:

▪ Braby & Dunford (2006)	▪ Richter <i>et al</i> (2013)
▪ Richter (2010)	▪ David Hogg Pty Ltd (2010)
▪ Richter <i>et al</i> (2012 and 2013)	
- The impacts of conflicting land use on small, urban habitat is also reoccurring theme in multiple publications:
 - Edwards (1990) notes the impacts of the construction of Parliament House on nearby known habitat sites, presumably referring to the YPCA itself.
 - Falconer (1991) and later Clarke & O'Dwyer (1998) warn of the impacts of urban and agricultural expansion and that these small golden sun moth habitat sites will be a 'litmus test' to 'our' ability to coexist with the natural environment in the ACT.

Over the past 20 years, golden sun moth has gone from being a species studied by only a handful of scientists primarily in the ACT, to one that has attracted wide community interest and research. This is apparent from the 'Sun Moth Count' Project which was a collaboration between the Institute for Applied Ecology at the University of Canberra and the community group, Friends of Grasslands (FOG) (Richter *et al*, 2009). This collaborative research effort between research institutions and community groups has ultimately culminated into the scientific heritage values discussed within **Section 4.0**.

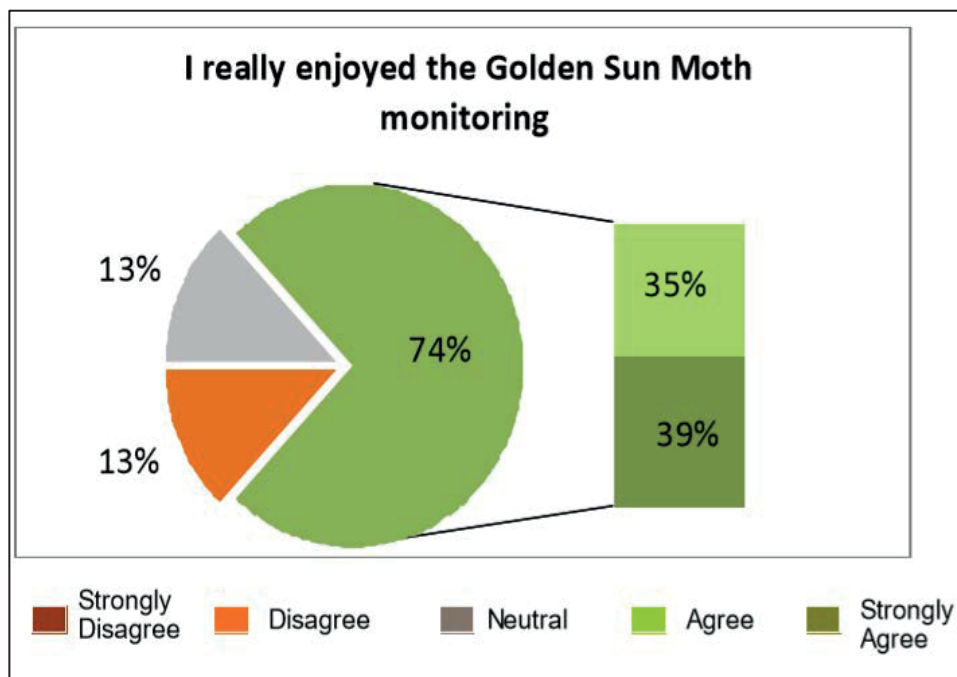


Figure 11 Volunteer ratings of their enjoyment of the 'Sun Moth Count' Project
(Richter *et al*, 2009)



Figure 12 Article from the Sunday (Canberra) Times on the 'Sun Moth Count' Project
(Leigh, Kate; 13 March 2009, taken from Richter *et al*, 2009)

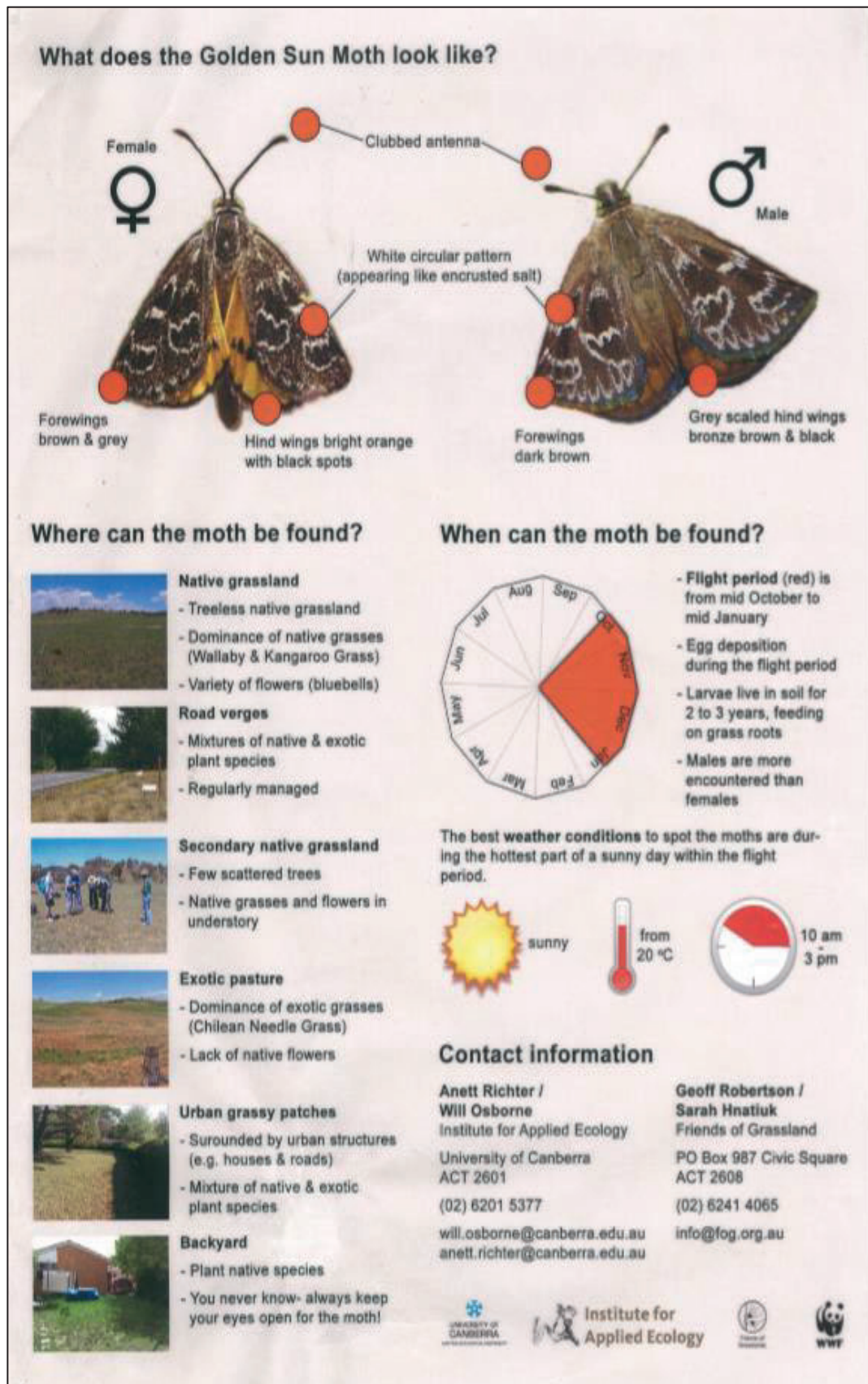


Figure 13 Poster from the 'Sun Moth Count' Project (Friends of Grasslands, 2008)

5.2.3 Conservation Management Decision-Making

The majority of literature on golden sun moth at the Site provides commentary on conservation management decision-making. However, those that are solely dedicated to this research theme are either policy documents or regional scale baseline studies for conservation management. The themes and conservation attitudes identified within this research theme include:

- Determining conservation priorities in contested land use contexts:
 - Action Plan No. 7 (ACT Government, 1998) lists the loss or degradation of habitat as the major threat to golden sun moth, noting that its habitat continues to be in demand for urban, industrial and infrastructure development, as well as being vulnerable to alteration by agricultural practices. Key conservation objectives are subsequently to develop cooperative management arrangements between the Commonwealth and ACT Government, as well as negotiating with rural lessees for cooperative management arrangements. This continues to be a recognised threat and measure for protections, respectively, in Action Plan No. 28 (ACT Government, 2005).
 - David Hogg Pty Ltd (2010) notes that it is inevitable that future developments will adversely affect some golden sun moth habitat; but that conservation of the species does not necessarily mean conserving every site at which it has been recorded. Rather, a strategy should be developed to build on major initiatives that the ACT Government has already undertaken by improving habitat quality or implementing indirect offsets in those areas of highest conservation value and/or greatest long-term security. This is reflected in the Golden Sun Moth ACT Strategic Conservation Management Plan (Mulvaney, 2012), in which he notes that the larger habitat areas are likely to contain greater genetic variation and that smaller sites are unlikely to contribute to the overall ecological health of the species.
- Use of golden sun moth as an 'indicator' species:
 - Richter *et al* (2013) discusses how monitoring is a powerful tool in conservation biology and how species such as butterflies and moths may be used as environmental indicators used in long-term monitoring. The benefit of such indicators is the way it can be used by citizen scientists, allowing larger and cheaper monitoring events (refer to **Figure 13**).
- Research into the impact of climate change on insect populations:
 - Richter *et al* (2013) refer to the potential for climate change to greatly modify the habitat value of temperate grasslands naturally located in frost prone areas at low to moderate elevation. This will influence the survival of endangered ecological communities and their insect fauna. Details of specific ecological impacts are a subject for further research, to support conservation efforts.
 - Mulvaney (2012) also discusses the potential implications of changes in climate to the species. Referencing Richter *et al* (2011), he notes that an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide may impact the coverage of C3 grasses, which are the preferred food source for golden sun moth. Increases in carbon dioxide may affect C3 grasses photosynthetic processes, and result in a decline in coverage. This reduced food availability may have significant impacts on golden sun moth, which have limited dispersal capability.
- Conserving native grassland habitat as a means of protecting golden sun moth and other species. This prioritisation for protecting native grassland has resulted from much of the research undertaken on the life cycle and biology of golden sun moth, as outlined in **Section 5.1**:
 - Action Plan No. 28 (2005) and the ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans (2017) focus on providing guidance on the conservation of native grasslands as a means for protecting component species, such as golden sun moth.

- The Report on ACT Lowland Native Grassland Investigation (Cooper, 2009) provides a series of recommendations for the protection of lowland native grasslands. This includes improving the ecological condition of sites that are in a critical condition, or approaching this state, by reducing threatening processes such as weed invasion, inappropriate mowing and overgrazing. The YPCA is highlighted as one of these sites that requires urgent management.
- This approach is further demonstrated by the Maintenance Plan prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff (2008) which sought to provide a framework for ongoing best-practice management of natural temperate grassland at the Site. The Plan states that its aim is to “conserve native plant diversity while maintaining structure and species composition thought to be favourable to the survival of the Golden Sun Moth” (p.1). This is an approach that is subsequently adopted in all of the following monitoring reports, in that each monitoring event includes floristic surveys of the natural temperate grassland at the Site, as well as golden sun moth counts.

As noted in **Section 5.2.1**, much of the research on golden sun moth that has been carried out at the Site has subsequently been used in the above policy documents. These policies and plans demonstrate the importance of local scientific research in informing environmental management and policy. Furthermore, the knowledge sharing within the local scientific community on this research has encouraged the ACT Government to provide a public source for consolidated ecological information (e.g. ACTMAPi, ACT Wildlife Atlas). This is apparent in **Figure 14** and **Figure 15** in which the known distribution of golden sun moth within Canberra has become significantly more site-specific and publicly accessible.

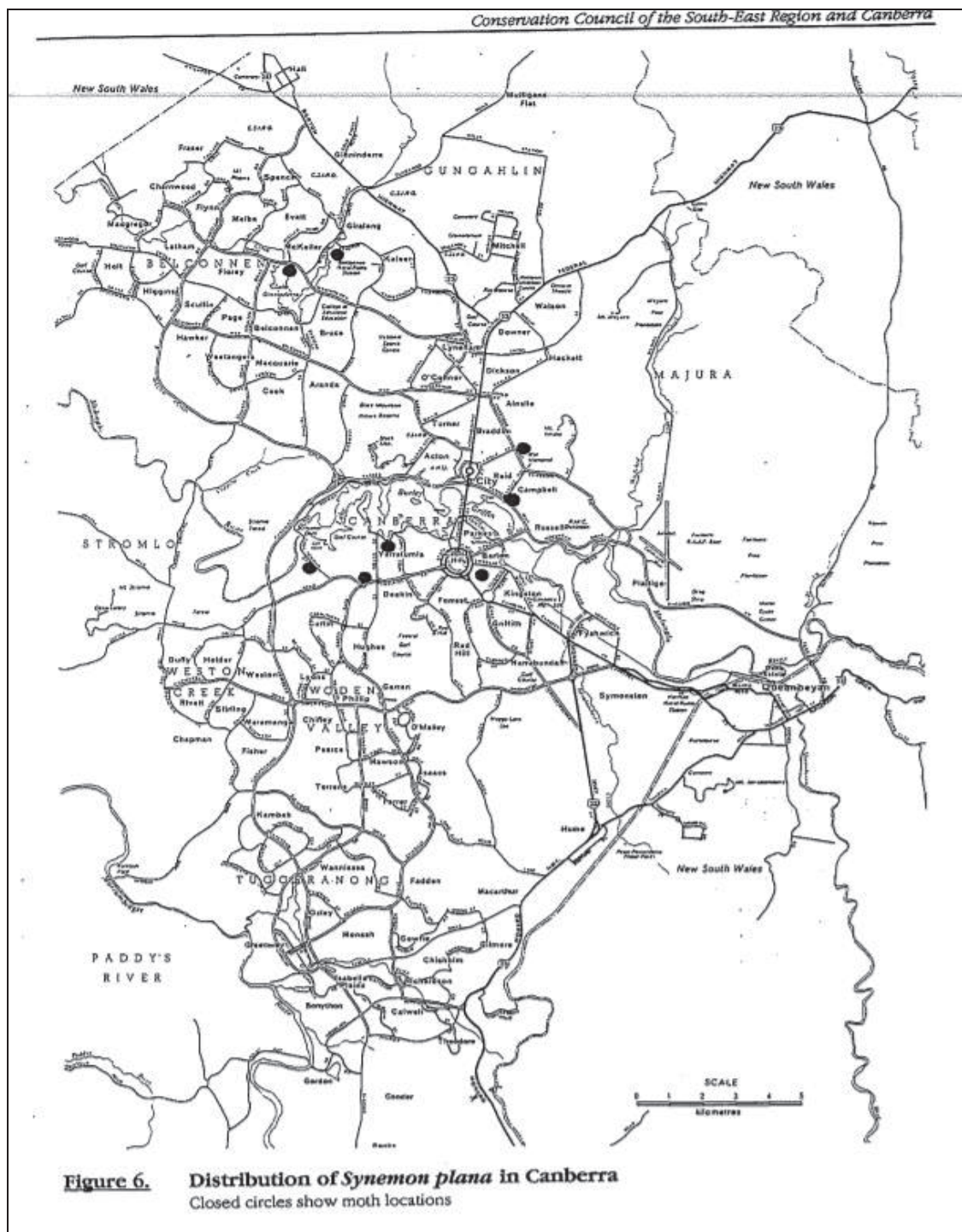


Figure 14 Known distribution of golden sun moth in Canberra in 1991 (Edwards, 1991)

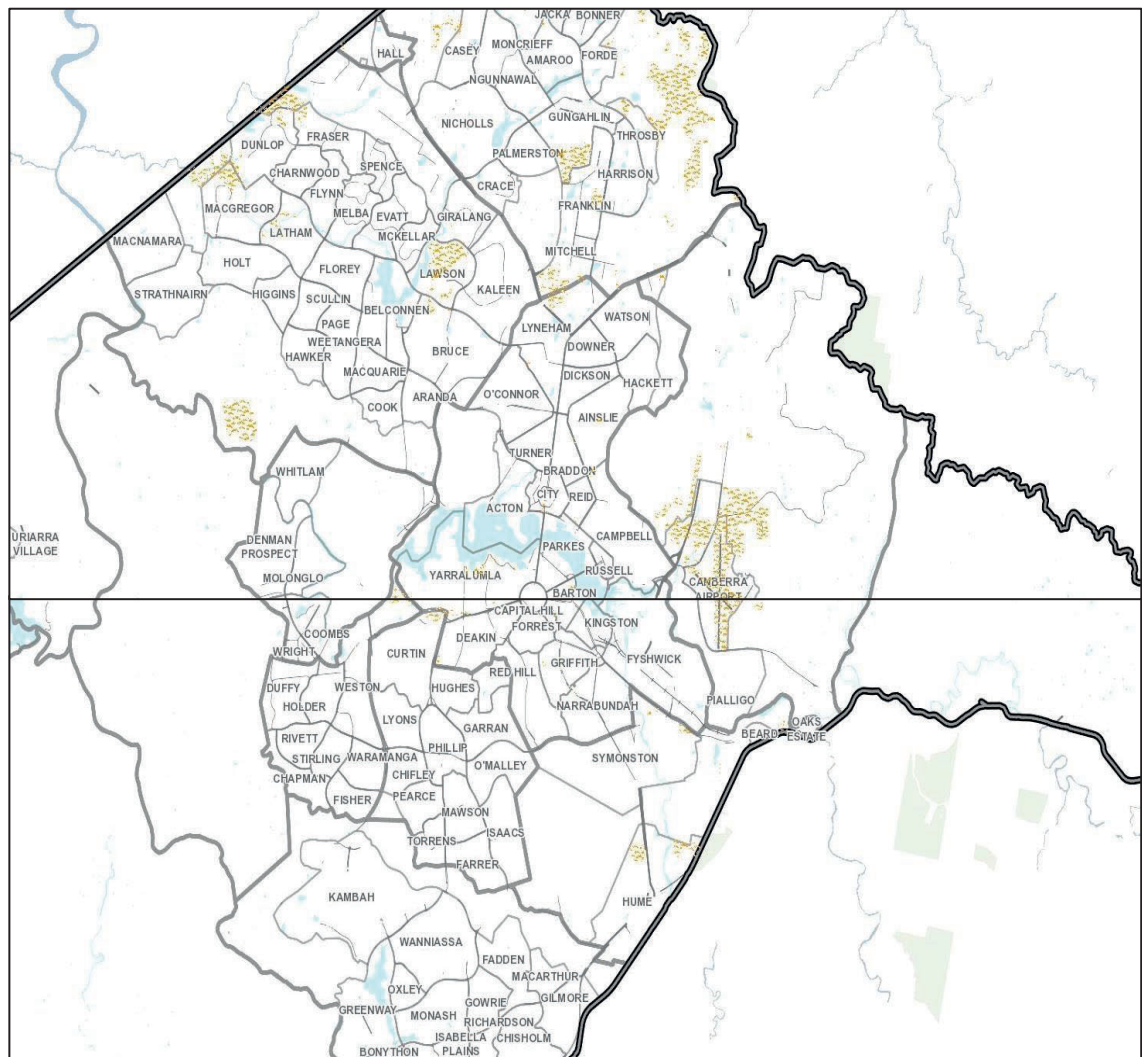


Figure 15 Publicly Available Data on the Distribution of Golden Sun Moth in Canberra in 2019 (ACTMapi, 2019)

5.3 Stakeholder Consultation

As introduced in **Section 2.4**, in addition to published research, researchers and other experts have been consulted as part of the larger project. **Table 5.2** summarises a number of anecdotal records provided by these expert stakeholders to provide another perspective on the research undertaken at YPCA.

Table 5.2 Stakeholder Responses from Scientific Heritage Assessment (Umwelt, 2018b)

Key questions/Responses
<p>How do you see that previous research on the golden sun moth and its habitat at this site has contributed to scientific knowledge and conservation management in the ACT?</p> <p>Scientific knowledge</p> <p>Dr Yeates referred to the work of Clarke and Dwyer (1998) and earlier studies by Edwards (1993 and 1994), which investigated the genetic diversity of the golden sun moth across its distribution, in the ACT, southern NSW and Victoria. The results of this work showed that the five ACT sites sampled for those studies were relatively closely related genetically, i.e. the ACT populations are a genetic cluster. Samples from further away (e.g. western Victoria) were more different and today could perhaps be regarded as a subspecies.</p> <p>There have been several important developments in genetic research since this work was done in York Park, which was able to use few genetic markers. Modern research would provide a lot more information about genetic distinctiveness and connectedness.</p> <p>Opportunities for genetic research include the capacity to sample from dead specimens in collections (including some material currently held at Wollongong University which may be from Clarke's collection); new genetic material could also be collected at York Park, to be analysed with modern techniques.</p> <p>Conservation management</p> <p>The continuing population at York Park demonstrates that the critically endangered golden sun moth does have resilience. It can persist (as far as the 20 to 25 years overall of studies demonstrate) in small patches of habitat. Habitat fragmentation around this site has been ongoing for at least 80 years. The golden sun moth has a generation time of 2 to 3 years. The monitoring information from York Park therefore covers approximately 10 generations. This is a longer monitoring record than at other grassland or golden sun moth sites in the ACT. There are also observations that the golden sun moth can adapt to habitat provided by an invasive species (Chilean needle grass), which has a structure and chemical composition similar to the native grass habitat. Given the Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) listing of Chilean needle grass and its widespread, but recent incursion into temperate grasslands in the ACT, this raises complex conservation policy and management questions.</p> <p>Dr Osborne considers that the previous research on the golden sun moth and its habitat at Block 3 has made a significant contribution to the knowledge of the species and its conservation management. He commented on the reliability of the population (i.e. stable numbers) and suggested this was useful to researchers and environmental consultants.</p> <p>He also referred to the value of the isolation of the site from other golden sun moth habitat as being valuable for comparative study. He commented 'It is an important site that has contributed significantly to our ability to calculate extinction probabilities for the species in sites of different sizes, as documented in Annet Richter's PhD thesis – What makes a species vulnerable to extinction following habitat fragmentation and degradation – a test using insect fauna from native temperate grasslands in South eastern Australia (University of Canberra, 2010).</p> <p>The site has been used to test methods for tracking population stability, including visual and mark/recapture release methods of monitoring moths (Richter et al 2013 provide a good example; see also Rowell, A. 2012). Dr Osborne suggested that findings from the York Park research have contributed considerably to the development of the action plan for the species in the ACT and referred to the ACT Native Grassland Conservation Strategy and Action Plans 2017 pp 184-206).</p>

Key questions/Responses

How has the research conducted at Block 3 since the 1990s supported or informed more recent work in native grasslands and golden sun moth habitat and populations in the ACT and surrounding areas?

See above in relation to Chilean needle grass.

There are further research questions on the connectivity of primary grassland habitat for the golden sun moth and how the presence of Chilean needle grass affects connectivity.

The existing knowledge does not consider the potential impacts of invasive invertebrates or predator species on the mortality rates of the golden sun moth. This in part relates to the encroachment of tree cover around the margins of grassland communities, particularly as climate change linked temperature rise affects habitat distribution. The moths are vulnerable to birds.

The research dating back to the 1990s is part of the scientific culture of Canberra as a small city with major research institutions that are nationally and internationally recognised for their excellence. Canberra has huge universities right in the centre of town, and the CSIRO. The attention to Blocks 3 and 15 is part of this old Canberra scientific culture, where convenient and accessible in town sites are valued for local research and teaching opportunities. Dr Yeates was not sure what level of scientific significance this would mean (and it would apply to multiple sites, not just Blocks 3 and 15), but it is a distinctive Canberra cultural heritage feature.

Dr Osborne suggested that York Park is an example of high quality natural temperate grassland. The presence of moths in disturbed median strips adjacent to the site (both in native grassland and sites dominated by Chilean needle grass) makes it a suitable site for the study of habitat restoration.

He considered that the site has high significance as a site for continuing research, addressing key questions about population persistence within an urban matrix.

How would you describe the significance of that research, in terms of special insights on the natural heritage of the ACT and surrounding areas?

What value has your organisation received from this research output?

What are the key themes that it addresses? Examples could include species persistence on small sites, species response to shading, grassland composition and grassland management/disturbance.

Key themes in the research at this site include threatening processes affecting small populations on isolated sites and what limits their viability.

Golden sun moth is a flagship species for conservation management. ACT organisations that have contributed research – at this site and at other sites across the ACT have benefited from the scientific profile of a flagship species.

Although, in time the length of record can be replicated at other sites, it was suggested that this small site is unique (nationally and potentially internationally) as a case study of an endangered species on a tiny urban site. (Note however, that if another site emerged from research across the ACT with similar resilient population, uniqueness would be reduced).

What is the current focus of golden sun moth research in the ACT and surrounding areas?

Research themes highlighted included the impact of invasive species and predators on these small isolated populations. Examples include other exotic grass species (already present in general rural landscapes across the ACT), the role of ants in the subsoil habitat component of the golden sun moth life cycle, and the potential for other predators species such as European wasps.

The survival and enhancement of endangered species populations in urban contexts is a general interest of conservation scientists, but the research addresses a wide range of species, not just those occurring at this site.

Further research on the impacts of landscaping and access management on small remnant areas – e.g. further habitat dissection by informal walking paths across grassland, mowing practice, and locations and species of trees planted; also watering protocols.

Note: ACT Government mapping and monitoring is only on land owned by the ACT Government. There are opportunities for greater coordination of monitoring on land owned by Defence or other Commonwealth agencies.

Key questions/Responses

What do you see as the role of small urban land parcels in natural heritage research and conservation?

Dr Osborne noted the attention to Block 3 over the years, and that it had been visited and used many times by consultants, entomologists, research students and members of the public who have an interest in 'this unusual day flying moth and its natural grassland habitat'. Dr Osborne also thought that the level of scientific and community science interest in the site would not have been documented. People who have conducted research or visited the site in relation to the conservation values included Dr Ted Edwards (CSIRO), Dr Annet Richter (a site used as part of her PhD project, at the University of Canberra) and a community engagement program (the golden sun moth count) organised by the Friends of Grasslands group.

Dr Osborne commented on the accessible and inner city location of Block 3, as a site 'embedded deep within the urban matrix of Canberra and in one of the earliest parts of the city'.

Dr Gibbons commented that the Fenner School at ANU has not been involved in active research at York Park; their interest at the site is restricted to teaching. The site is used to discuss the issues associated with the conservation of small populations, including undertaking a PVA based on available published data. The use of the site for teaching is linked to its central location, close to the ANU and the existing monitoring data available for the site, commissioned by the Commonwealth government because of the presence of the critically endangered golden sun moth.

Dr Yeates commented on the community education value of small urban sites partly independent of the scientific research value.

He also noted that based on the existing evidence, the site is not critical in a genetic sense, because of its similarity to the genetic composition of other ACT sites.

How could the scientific community's interest in native grasslands and the golden sun moth be demonstrated, communicated or interpreted to the broader community?

It was suggested that native grasslands could be presented to the broader community as a type of 'surprise package' in terms of their potential to yield scientific information. Native grasslands may look simple and familiar, but on closer inspection they can include diverse and important (threatened and endangered) species with interesting ecology/life cycles.

The potential to use social media and local signage, as well as develop an ACT ecological science trail for interpretation, was noted.

It was also suggested that major academic and research institutions could promote the science culture of Canberra as a city with and large remnants of natural landscape that are easily accessible. 'Science/nature on your street'.

Note these suggestions do not relate specifically to the Project Area but are about broad opportunities for interpretation of native grassland communities (which are widespread across the Canberra locality) to the people of the ACT.

Should the history of scientific studies at this site be part of that communication or interpretation?

Why is this site valuable for that purpose and how could that best be done?

Which themes would be the focus of interpretation – for instance, about the role of landscaping and conservation in the 'bush capital'?

Yes, with respect to small and isolated sites still supporting relatively stable populations of critically endangered species – how and why?

Generally about the conservation role of connected sites (noting the limited connectivity of this site beyond its immediate context).

5.5 Scientific Review Summary

While research at the Site has not been central to any major entomology or conservation research programs, it is apparent that it has influenced ongoing research about golden sun moth within the ACT. In the past, this research was most likely considered to be influential to the monitoring, management and conservation of the species.

Notably, the collaboration between scientific institutions and community groups into the research of golden sun moth at the Site has undoubtedly contributed to the high profile that golden sun moth now enjoys within the ACT. It is a species that is well known throughout Canberra, with targeted government policies dedicated to its conservation.

SECTION 6

Conclusion



6.0 Conclusion

This archival record of the historic scientific research of the critically endangered species, golden sun moth (*Synemon plana*) at Blocks 3 and 15, Section 22 in Barton, ACT (also partly known as the York Park Conservation Area), has been prepared to fulfil Condition 6 of the EPBC Act approval 2017/8028. This report has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Heritage Office's *How to Prepare Archival Records of Heritage Items* (1998) and will be submitted to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy, the National Archives of Australia and the National Library of Australia.

The York Park Conservation Area has been found to meet the ACT local heritage criteria due to the early recognition of the Site as golden sun moth habitat and its accessible location in the centre of a city with major research organisations and long-standing citizen science interest. The research and monitoring that has been conducted at the Site for over 20 years has been influential on golden sun moth research and management.

This Report has provided a summary of the values of the Site, and a scientific review of the research undertaken over the past 20+ years.

A catalogue of the documents contained within the archival record is provided in **Appendix 1**, including a complete bibliography of all of the publications. These documents have been attributed reference numbers, research themes and abstracts to assist when reviewing these documents.

Appendix 2 consists of the archival record itself, with copies of all available publications included. It is noted that some publications could not be retrieved, however, citations have been included to encourage further research.

We encourage members of the Canberra scientific community and associated community groups to contribute further to this archival record where additional information on golden sun moth research at the York Park Conservation Area comes to light.

SECTION 7

References



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