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### **Seaplanes on Lake Burley Griffin – Discussion Paper May 2021**

The Canberra Ornithologists Group (COG) wishes to provide comments in response to this Discussion Paper. COG is a volunteer-based community group with around 400 members, with a mission that includes the conservation of native birds and their habitats. COG plays an active role in advocating for the protection of birds and bird habitats, and for the mitigation of threats to and impacts on native birds.

There are a significant number of water-based bird species that utilise Lake Burley Griffin as foraging/feeding habitat, and some species breed on islands in the lake or in fringing trees. This includes large bird species such as Black Swans, Pelicans, and several species of cormorants. There is a breeding colony of Silver Gulls on Spinnaker Island which has been studied extensively. Black Swans occur regularly in the open waters of the lake, and are slow to take off when disturbed, requiring a long flight pathway low over the water. The Discussion Paper does not address any issues for or potential impacts to the birdlife occurring on the lake.

Similarly, a large number of bird species occur in the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve at the eastern end of Lake Burley Griffin. This is a regionally important reserve, and a significant habitat for the Latham's Snipe, a threatened, migratory wader. Many ducks also use the wetlands, and will quickly take flight when there is 'disturbance' in the form of a potential threat from above or nearby, including noise. Possible impacts on birds resulting from the potential flightpaths of seaplanes over or near the wetlands have not been addressed in the Discussion Paper.

COG recommends there should be an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on the impacts of seaplane activity on birdlife on Lake Burley Griffin and at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands Nature Reserve. An EIA should address the full range of possible impacts, including bird strikes hazard; this might provide a way to designing safe seaplane activity that does not impact the birdlife.

COG can be contacted on [cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au](mailto:cogoffice@canberrabirds.org.au).

Yours sincerely

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