

Griffith Narrabundah Community Association Inc.

PO Box 4127 Manuka ACT 2603

Website: www.gnca.org.au

Email: info@gnca.org.au

NEWSLETTER Vol 38 September 2017

Do we really need a waste incinerator in Fyshwick?

Capital Recycling Solutions (CRS) is a joint venture between Benedict Industries Pty Ltd and Access Trading Company Pty Ltd (Access Recycling) in partnership with ActewAGL.

It proposes to establish a facility in Ipswich Street, Fyshwick to sort and incinerate waste. It would operate 24/7 all week, every week, processing Canberra's red bin Municipal Waste and importing more from NSW.

Information provided so far by CRS is insufficient to make a properly informed opinion about the incinerator and its Scoping Application is either silent or only half-informative on critical aspects such as emissions and monitoring of particulate matter (PM2.5) and dioxins. Air emissions modelling does not appear to have considered temperature inversion in nearby low-lands. The data presented only covered a small area around the Fyshwick site.

At present the ACT generates about one million tonnes of waste per year of which 30% goes to land fill. The government plans to reduce the material sent to land fill from the current 30% to 10% by 2025.

Can the CRS proposal contribute to achieving this goal, or is it a flawed option?

A few of the key questions we need answers to are:

How much of the red bin waste would be recovered and how much would be incinerated?

How will the government monitor and police noxious emissions?

What would be the financial benefit to processing NSW waste?

Can Fyshwick cope with the increase in heavy traffic?

The proponents must develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which will be open for public comment for 20 working days. More information is available on our website.

Size, Sun and Skinny boundaries

GNCA checks whether local Development Applications comply with the government's own planning laws. Recent DAs have drawn comment and questions from us when they seem not to comply with the:

- plot ratio rules - the floor area should be no more than 50% of block size for most residential land in the GNCA area, characterised by low rise and predominantly low-density housing.
- solar access rights - would the proposed building shade your block unreasonably?
- requirements to be set back from boundaries - is the building too close to the neighbours?
- approved plans - is the developer building what has been approved?

Our submissions on the proposed developments in Landsborough Street, Wells Gardens, Lindsay Street and Mitchell Street, have raised legitimate concerns on plot ratios.

If a building development affects you or you want to know how to comment on a Development Application please contact the GNCA; we may be able to help.

We also recommend that you download the free "DA Finder App. V2" from your app store, to check on proposed development activity near you or go to:

http://www.planning.act.gov.au/development_applications/da_finder_app

16 Landsborough Street – size matters

When the building at 16 Landsborough Street did not comply with the approved plans, neighbours and the GNCA complained to the Planning Authority and the developer had to submit an amended Development Application. 39 submissions were received protesting about what was being built. The main issue was the height of the garage wall. It should not have exceeded 2.6 m, to allow reasonable solar access but, the approved plan indicated a height of 3.4 m, and what was built was about 4.3m high. At that height, the neighbour's solar access would have been severely compromised.

Following these complaints, the government decided that:

“the raised parapet garage wall had an unacceptable adverse overshadowing impact on the neighbouring block”. Consequently, the height of the wall had to be reduced to comply with the originally approved plans, and this has now been done.

If there are lessons to be learnt from this debacle, they are that the government should not approve plans that do not comply with the planning rules and it should more closely control what is being built to make sure the building complies with the approved plans.

Finally, residents should be vigilant about what developers are proposing in their neighbourhoods.

It's a Sign - Outdoor Billboards

The Assembly Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal sought community input to its Inquiry into outdoor billboards. A record number of 166 submissions were made and all but three were opposed to any changes in the legislation.

In its submission, the GNCA questioned the need for any relaxation of existing rules on outside advertising. We sought the:

- enforcement of existing rules about the placement of billboards,
- monitoring and enforcement of the use of sandwich boards if they impede pedestrians,
- speedy removal of corflutes after an election, and
- Commissioning of a rigorous cost benefit analysis to identify all the costs and benefits of any increase in outdoor advertising before the Government reaches any decision to permit an increase in outside advertising.

The Committee has yet to report or respond to submissions it has received.

Tidying up the Territory Plan – Draft Variation 352

The Planning and Land Authority circulated a Draft Variation to the Territory Plan which included some policy changes as well as refining and clarifying some planning rules and definitions.

The substantive comments made by the GNCA included:

- Opposing a ban on childcare centres in Industrial zones. We sought a solution which both protects children in childcare centres from the hazards of industrial zones and permits those who work in industrial zones adequate access to childcare close to their workplace.
- Supporting the siting of animal care facilities in industrial zones.
- Supporting changes to the requirements for water storage in single dwellings. These require the installation of a pump to water tanks, where the elevation is insufficient to give adequate pressure.
- Supporting changes to courtyard wall setbacks which makes their siting better suited to the established streetscape and neighbourhood character of residential zones.
- Opposing the removal of references to Neighbourhood Plans in planning codes. We restated our disappointment that the Griffith and Narrabundah Neighbourhood Plans had been removed from housing codes in 2013.

Has the National Capital Authority (NCA) forgotten what roads are for?

The National Capital Authority's new plan for Commonwealth and Kings Avenue Bridges, which was made public in June 2017, is bizarre. What do you think this means?

"The vision for Kings and Commonwealth avenues is to transform them into destinations and landmarks in their own right, accentuated by their character and special qualities. The structure of the avenues will unify the public realm and the buildings that line them, while providing a sense of formality, celebration and liveliness."

We are not sure, but it says nothing about using the roads to enable pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to get to from A to B. It's all about how the roads look.

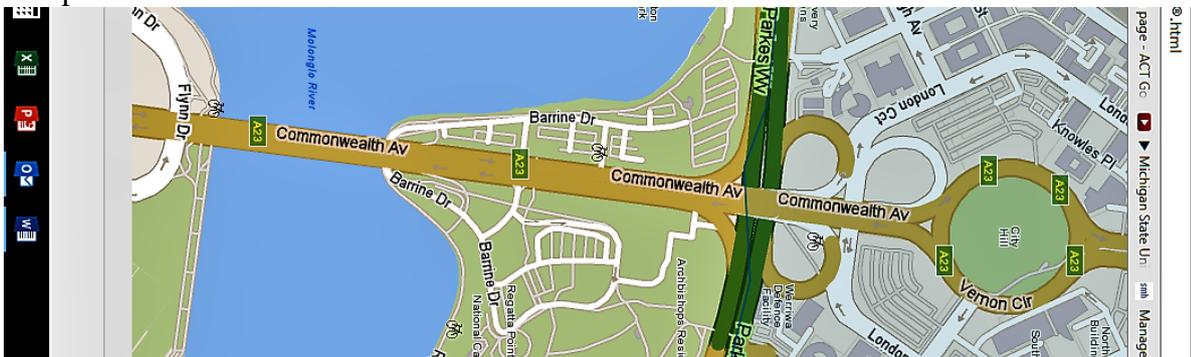
Commonwealth Avenue Bridge is Canberra's busiest road, carrying about 68,000 cars per day and it is part of a well-designed system. At present, there are four exits before City Hill for vehicles going north. If the NCA's plan is implemented each of these exits will be controlled by traffic lights, as shown in the diagrams below.

There are similar proposals at the southern end of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and at the northern end of the Kings Avenue Bridge. See https://www.nca.gov.au/sites/g/files/net791/f/consultation/Kings%20and%20Commonwealth%20Avenues%20Design%20Strategy_Final%20LR.pdf for the complete report.

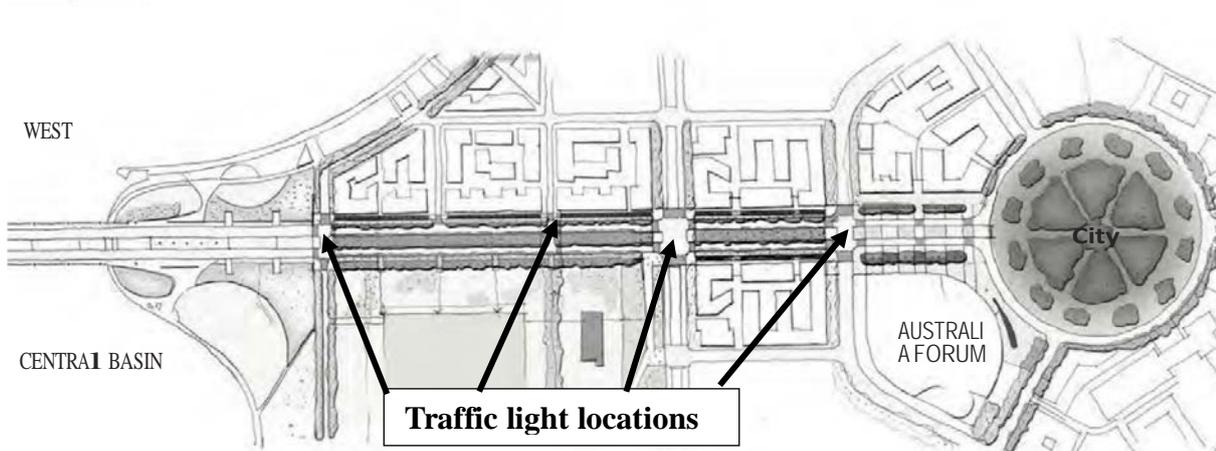
The GNCA's submission to the NCA, pointed out that the new proposals completely ignore the vital transport role of both the Kings and Commonwealth Avenues, and the likely impacts and costs of restricting traffic on either avenue if these plans are implemented. It would affect all Inner South Canberra residents who need to travel north of Lake Burley Griffin.

The goal appears to be to free up land for further property development near LBG, to make the bridges pedestrian destinations and to increase cycle use by slowing and reducing vehicle traffic.

The plan should be buried.



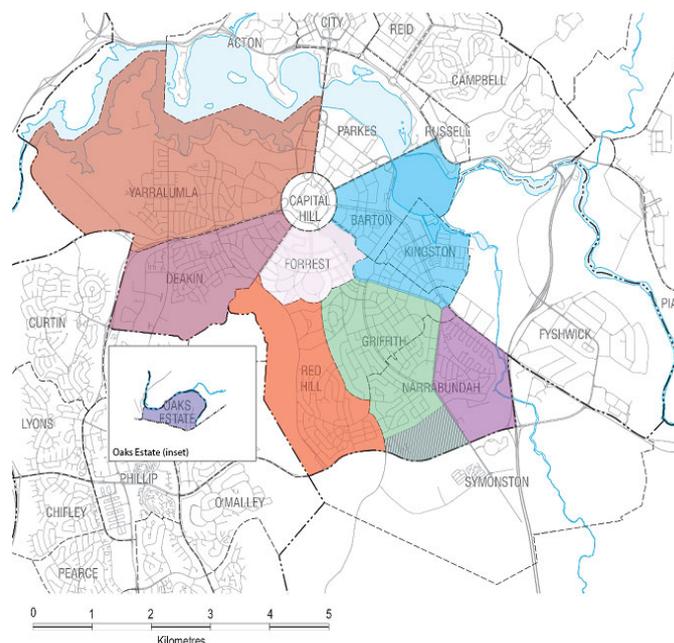
There are now four exits between the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge and City Hill for north bound traffic. None of these are controlled by traffic lights.



NCA's proposals will require four sets of traffic lights, one at each of the roads that intersect Commonwealth Avenue.

The Inner South Canberra Community Council

The GNCA participates in and supports the Inner South Canberra Community Council, which represents eight Community Associations in Canberra's Inner South (of which GNCA is one). Have a look at the website <http://www.isccc.org.au> to see its current activities and when it meets. The ISCCC has a seat at the government's high-level Environment and Planning Forum and is a member of the Combined Community Councils of the ACT. It provides a representative voice to government for the whole of Canberra's Inner South and has been very active on many issues affecting this area. The map below shows the areas where the eight associations operate.

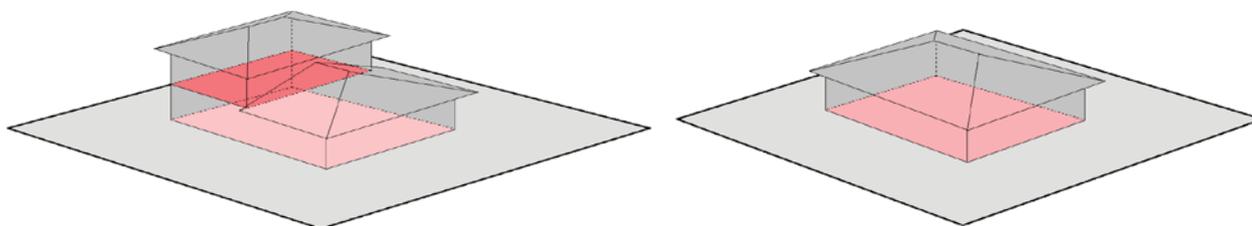


Blaxland Park

We have made good progress in planning and developing Blaxland Park. 21 trees were planted in late 2015 at the southern end of the Park. After talking to City Services, a further 7 trees were planted in Autumn 2017 and another 13 are planned for Spring 2017. We are advocating more large deciduous trees at the southern end of the Park and several additional eucalyptus trees at the northern end, near Blaxland Crescent.

How is a Plot Ratio calculated?

Plot ratio (PR) is defined as the gross floor area in a building divided by the area of the site. So, $PR = GFA/B$, where B is the area of the block, and GFA is the sum of the area of all floors of the building measured from the external faces of the exterior walls, excluding areas used solely for rooftop-fixed mechanical plant and/or basement car parking. It should be simple, but the PR depends on the planning zone and what sort of building it is. In the RZ1 residential zone, which mostly comprises single dwellings and blocks larger than 500m², the plot ratio must not exceed 50%. That is a mandatory rule in the Planning Code. The shaded areas in the diagrams below indicate what the GFA is for single and double storey dwellings.



This looks reasonable. So how is it that McMansions can be built that fill the whole block? The reason is that several items are excluded from the calculation. These include, balconies, court yards and swimming pools. In other words, a building with a huge courtyard and a swimming pool could be built to completely fill the block and it would comply with the regulations.

If you would like more information please go to our website and click on plot ratio <http://www.gnca.org.au/gnca/wp-content/uploads/Plot-Ratio-Factsheet.pdf>. The above information was provided in 2016 by the ACT Government.