

Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association Inc.

PO Box 4127, Manuka ACT 2603

Website: www.gnca.org.au

Email: info@gnca.org.au

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The October 2016 ACT Election - a new era for Canberra

After the election on 15 October, the number of Members in the Legislative Assembly will increase from 17 to 25 and there will be five new electorates, each electing five Members. The Canberra inner south is situated in the Kurrajong electorate. This is the most populous, containing over 56,000 enrolled voters. It extends from Watson in the north to Hume in the south and from Yarralumla in the west to Oaks Estate in the east.

The only candidates who have had experience in the current Assembly are Andrew Barr (Labor), Steve Doszpot (Liberal) and Shane Rattenbury (Greens). There will therefore be at least two new members from Kurrajong in the next Assembly. Will they be from the major parties or from elsewhere? Time will tell.

It is both opportune and timely to find out what each candidate says they plan to do if elected. There is also an opportunity for members of the community to tell the candidates what we would like the new government to do.

Although there are important issues relating to health, education, law and order and the huge increases in rates and taxes we are enduring, the GNCA has decided to focus on planning, because this is where most of our efforts have been directed since the last election. And, without good planning, all the other factors that contribute to our lifestyle will be degraded. A summary of our priorities is provided next.

Planning Policies for the next ACT Government

1. The Big Picture

The Garden City national capital, is being tarnished and is not adapting to meet future needs. At present:

- Urban development proposals are often *ad hoc* and appear to be focused on making a maximum short term financial return rather than contributing to the long term benefit of the city (*Mr Fluffy blocks are being sub-divided to raise money for the government, without consideration of the impact on the community or where the blocks are situated*).
- Developments are frequently not aligned with the Government's planning strategies (*The re-development of Gowrie Court contains high density towers in a low density environment - nowhere near any regional or town centres, and inconsistent with its own Planning Strategy*).
- Community land and facilities are being deconcessionalised, re-zoned and sold for private use, particularly in the Inner North and South Canberra, where land sales are likely to be the most profitable (*The Brumbies deconcessionised their lease and sold the land for more than \$11 million to a developer. The government is now reaping millions in stamp duties and rates from the 132 apartments on site*).

There is therefore an urgent need to develop a new plan for Canberra.

An open competition should be held to develop a new concept plan for the city of Canberra.

2. Public Housing

The management of public housing is very important.

There needs to be a clear definition of the Salt and Pepper policy (i.e. where public housing residences are situated) and a consistent Territory-wide, suburb-specific plan for the placement of public housing.

This will avoid concentrations within particular streets and suburbs and provide an integrated and balanced approach across suburbs, and the Territory as a whole. This plan must be made public after genuine consultation with the community.

The government must commit to enforce the provisions of its own tenancy agreements and maintain its assets, especially those covering property presentation and personal behaviour, through regular inspections, as part of improving the lives of both its tenants, their neighbours and the community.

3. Transport

The Civic to Gungahlin light rail link should be stopped as soon as possible.

It does not provide a 'whole of Canberra' benefit and the cost-benefit analysis is flawed and misleading. It will:

- be inordinately expensive to install and operate,
- provide a slower transport system than rapid buses,
- lack the flexibility needed in a modern dynamic city and
- destroy an avenue of magnificent trees which creates the entry to the National Capital, the Bush Capital, the Garden City.

4. The Mechanics of Planning

Planning processes are seemingly *ad hoc* and confusing.

The ACT Planning and Development Act, the Territory Plan, and governance of the planning system should be reviewed to ensure that the Garden City landscape and architectural principles of Canberra are maintained and enhanced in all developments.

In particular to ensure that:

- The Territory Plan is simplified so that it is easy to understand and so that all the rules relating to any particular block are available in a single codified document.
- All subjective criteria in the building codes are removed and the rules re-defined;
- The definition of plot ratio is modified so that it can be used to maintain greenery in suburban-zone RZ1 blocks;
- Access to sunlight is not reduced by neighbouring buildings;
- The plans for buildings that are exempt from Development Application requirements are publicly accessible at least one month before work starts on the site.
- The compliance capacity for all building activities is strengthened;
- Accountability in the approval process for residential houses is restored, including the return of appeal rights to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) for neighbours in suburban-zone RZ1.
- ACAT is reformed so that it is less legalistic and provides accessible, timely and affordable resolution of planning disputes; or an alternative dispute resolution system is developed to achieve these ends.

5. Inner South Issues

- a. Develop a Master Plan for the Manuka Precinct, through a broad-based and genuine community consultation process.
- b. Amend the Precinct Code for the Gowrie Court so that it is zoned medium density RZ4 rather than high density RZ5, and complies with the rules of the Multi-Unit Housing Development Code and the ACT's Planning Strategy.
- c. Genuine consultation with the community so that the works programs for roads, parks, trees, parking, footpaths etc. in the Inner South are discussed with the local community before being finalised. At present there

is usually little or no consultation; merely announcements that things will be done. A forum should be held where the various annual programs for the items above are discussed before they are finalised.

- d. Enforce regulations prohibiting parking on verges in order to avoid compaction of soil and consequential damage to the valuable urban forest.

We encourage you to raise these, and any other issues with the candidates if your high priority concerns are not covered in our wish list.

There will also be an opportunity at the *'Meet the Candidates'* forum on Tuesday 27th September -starting at 7 pm -see below.

The Inner South Canberra Community Council with its constituent Associations, like the GNCA, is convening a *'Meet the Candidates'* event at the Eastlakes Club, corner of Oxley and Eyre Streets in Griffith, at 7 pm on Tuesday 27 September 2016. Put this event in your diary and be there to interact with the Kurrajong candidates.

Government suspends Grocon/GWS proposal for Manuka Oval

On 5 August 2016 the government suspended the un-solicited bid by GROCON/GWS to redevelop Manuka Oval and build 650 apartments between the oval and Manuka Circle.

To quote the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr:

“The Government will now establish a community panel to help inform a new, detailed masterplan for the Oval and its surrounds. The goal is simple: a precinct that preserves the heritage-listed elements and attracts even more world-class sport to Canberra. While the scale of the bid from the Greater Western Sydney Giants was outside community expectations, some development at the Oval is necessary to make sure it stays world standard. Any development will need to improve the Oval, be high-quality, and sympathetic with its surroundings.”

This is definitely a step in the right direction. However, it should be made clear that the GNCA has never opposed improvements to the oval. The stands need to be covered, the toilet facilities need to be improved and there needs to be more permanent seats installed. However, 650 apartments between the stands at the oval and Manuka Circle is completely unacceptable, particularly as 500 new residences are planned for the Stuart Flats’

site and Canberra Avenue is already congested. We believe there must be a better way to upgrade the oval without giving away public land for a developer to fund an upgrade to the oval.

Government changes tack on Solar Access

In 2013 a Variation to the Territory Plan (V306) was approved to improve solar access for all Canberrans. However, according to the building industry, on some small blocks ($\leq 250 \text{ m}^2$) in the newer suburbs it was proving expensive to comply because additional excavation was required to prevent overshadowing of neighboring blocks. Consequently, the building industry lobbied the government to reduce solar access throughout Canberra including the older developed suburbs in the Inner North and South. GNCA has been lobbying to prevent this happening during the last two years and on 2 August 2016 the government agreed to restrict the reduced solar access conditions to the smaller blocks in newer suburbs and leave V306 unchanged everywhere else. One significant win for the community and we are very pleased that the current government listened to the views of the community.

The ISCCC

The GNCA participates in and supports the Inner South Canberra Community Council,

which represents seven separate 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.

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 ISCCC meets at 7 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the National Press Club, Barton and local residents are very welcome to attend and raise any issues of concern.

Blaxland Park

We have made good progress in planning and developing Blaxland Park and 21 trees were planted in late 2015. We are now examining options to increase these plantings in 2016.

Our Meetings

The GNCA meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the East Hotel, 69 Canberra Avenue. These meetings are open to the public, so please come along to participate. The next dates are: 14 September, 12 October, 9 November & 14 December. Then there is our **AGM, to be held at the Griffith Community Hall at 7:30 pm on 22 October 2016** and where Canberra author and historian **Nick Swain** will be talking about Manuka's history and heritage.

A big thankyou to the sponsors during 2016

Aubergine: A local favourite in Canberra, well known for its consistently high levels of food and service; tel: 6260 8666 (<http://www.auberginerestaurant.com.au/>).

Café Societea: Not just the high tea specialist, come and have a coffee or lunch with Jeanette and Philip; tel: 04 1376 1758.

East Hotel & Apartments: 69 Canberra Av, Griffith. Studios, apartments and meeting facilities combined with a great location and excellent service; tel: 6295 6925. (www.easthotel.com.au).

Gryphons: A chic venue with a relaxed atmosphere, offering a quality dining experience for breakfast, lunch and dinner – or just a snack at any time; tel: 0419 618 679 (<http://gryphons.com.au>).

Shop-Rite: Provides all your grocery and liquor needs; tel: 6295 0781.

Your Discount Chemist, Griffith: Over 11,000 products online at www.yourdiscountchemist.com.au; tel: 6295 6725.

Membership Application: **New Member ()** **Renewal ()**

Name:

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Full Address:

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Phone:(h).....(m)

Email Address:

Membership Fee: \$.....\$10 per person for Annual Financial Membership

Donation: \$.....**Total amount:** \$.....(When using EFT, please add your name to the payment form. Bank: Westpac; BSB 032 722; Account 134058; Name: Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association.

Signature: **Date:**

Please send completed form to PO Box 4127 Manuka, 2603 or scan & send to info@gnca.org.au