

# Griffith-Narrabundah Community Association Inc.

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## DA 201731693 MANUKA OVAL MEDIA CENTRE

The Griffith Narrabundah Community Association (GNCA) is opposed to the construction of the proposed new Media Centre at Manuka Oval because its size and scale are not consistent with the character of Manuka Oval and surrounding areas. A lower height, less intrusive building which meets the ICC requirements and fits into the surrounding space should be designed. The design should be consistent with the current NCA Draft Control Plan and prospective Land Management Plan for Manuka Oval.

In March this year the GNCA, together with a number of other community organisations, took part in two consultation sessions about the proposed new Media Centre to be built at Manuka Oval. Following these sessions the GNCA lodged a submission on 6 April 2017 with the Community Engagement area of Economic Development Directorate. A copy of the submission is available at the GNCA website <http://www.gnca.org.au/>.

As the submission noted,

“The GNCA ... was invited to send a representative to two meetings on 2 March and 23 March. At the first of these meetings we were told that the Government had decided to construct the new Media Centre, that it would be located at the south end of the Oval, and that it would comply with the ICC’s requirements. This left little to discuss except the desirability of the building using materials and design features to blend in amongst the trees, and how good design could minimise the energy footprint of the project.

No explanation was offered as to why it had become necessary to construct a permanent Media Centre at this stage, nor why, if such a centre were to be built, it needed to be of the size proposed. It appeared that the Government had accepted the ICC’s requirements completely uncritically. The Government needs to explain what problem it is that the New Media Centre is to solve, and why this building, at the cost and scale proposed, is the best and most cost effective solution.”

These objections still stand. The Government needs to explain why a building of this size, and at this cost (which has now grown to \$11.6m) is appropriate for Manuka Oval, or is a worthwhile expenditure of public funds.

Other flaws are apparent with the process. The building for which the DA seeks approval appears to be substantially the same as that proposed by the Government in March this year. It is to be 18.1m high and set back 8.0m from the property line. The DA is consequently not compliant with the still applicable NCA Draft Control Plan (DCP 13/01 which applies a height limit of 9m and a setback of 10m on Manuka Oval. The NCA is currently considering the application of a new DCP for the whole of the Manuka Circle Precinct, which would

include Manuka Oval, and which would introduce a new height limit of 22m and a new setback of 8m, but this has not yet been approved by the NCA, despite several meetings of the NCA board to consider the matter.

The GNCA is concerned that a DA that is clearly non-compliant with existing planning regulations is being lodged, and urges Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) to immediately reject the DA, and make it clear that the DA cannot be considered until the NCA has succeeded in introducing the necessary changes.

Perhaps more concerning is that no Land Management Plan has been prepared for Manuka Oval. The Planning and Development Act 2007 requires, at s.321, that the Custodian of the land prepare a Draft Land Management Plan, and that this be considered by the Assembly prior to its approval. It appears that to date no Land Management Plan has been prepared for Manuka Oval by Venues Canberra, the Custodian of Manuka Oval. However, we understand that Venues Canberra is currently working on development of a Conservation Management Plan as a first step towards the development of a Land Management Plan. We are somewhat surprised that under these circumstances Venues Canberra is seeking DA approval for the construction of the proposed new Media Centre, which in any terms is a major development. If the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2007 are to have any meaning, surely no further development at Manuka Oval can be approved before an appropriate Land Management Plan is in place. On this basis the GNCA urges EPSDD to reject the DA.

Finally, we have grave concerns that Venues Canberra chose to schedule its briefing on the proposed new Media Centre only two days before the closing of public comments on the DA (since extended by a week, we understand). The Government recently issued new pre DA Consultation guidelines for major developments, and this does not seem to meet the new requirements. It may be that the new Media Centre does not fall within the scope of the new guidelines, but, if that is the case, it can only contribute further to widespread public cynicism about Government planning guidelines.

For all these reasons the GNCA urges that this DA not be approved.

Yours sincerely

Leo Dobes  
President  
17 November 2017