

# Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association Inc.

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Mr Shane Rattenbury, MLA  
Minister for Territory and Municipal Services

Dear Minister

## **PEACOCKS AT ST AIDANS COURT, AND INFRINGEMENTS OF VERGE OF BROCKMAN ST NARRABUNDAH**

The Griffith Narrabundah Community Association (GNCA) notes the report in the Canberra Times of Friday 30 October that ACT Parks and Conservation Service Rangers had trapped eight peafowl on Brockman St, but hoped to remove 25 of these birds. You will also recall that you touched on this matter when addressing the GNCA's recent AGM.

The Canberra Times article suggested that the complainants has asserted that the birds "were creating a significant mess with droppings on footpaths, clothes lines and cars, and they had become a safety hazard, with the potential for residents to slip on droppings."

One of the members of the GNCA Committee regularly walks in the area and has commented in relation to such claims that

"The amount of droppings evident on paved surfaces has always been minimal. The peacocks tend to congregate in non-paved areas. Indeed, the droppings problem is mainly due to dog-walkers who do not remove droppings. It seems incongruous that some residents should complain about one and not the other; a form of misguided rationalisation for their own preferences."

Other members of the Association who walk in the area have also confirmed this apparent scarcity of droppings.

If we understand it correctly, the removal of the peafowl has been embarked upon solely at the request of residents of St Aidan's Court, with the other residents of Brockman St being generally more supportive about the peafowl colony. If, as the Canberra Times article suggests, the ACT Parks and Conservation Service is uncertain about the number of birds in the colony, the response would seem to be unduly rushed, unless the intention was to be seen to be doing something, anything, to stop these complaints, whether or not the action in\s effective. A more considered approach would be to determine the size of the colony, the true extent of local concerns about the colony, and to also establish whether the peafowl were as disruptive and messy as has been claimed. Has it been established for instance that any droppings were produced by peafowl rather than possums?

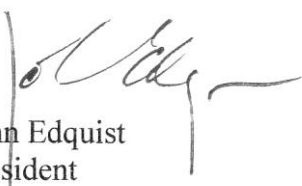
We also note that if, as it is suggested, it is only proposed to remove a portion of the colony, then the problem if it exists has not been resolved at all, because in a year or so the number of birds will have grown back towards their current numbers. In this regard we note that some birds were removed two years ago, with little apparent effect on the size of the flock before the recent trapping exercise. Surely ACT Parks and Conservation Service Rangers can find better things to do than undertake repeated ineffective activities.

This apparently enthusiastic reaction by TAMS in response to a complaint from the inhabitants of St Aidan's Court sets a high bar for the future. All other groups will (quite legitimately) wonder why their issues with matters within TAMS's jurisdiction have not been resolved with equal dispatch, and possibly wonder if the allocation of resources within TAMS could perhaps be improved.

As an example, the alacrity of this response by the Parks and Conservation Service appears to be in contrast to that of TAMS Rangers. These Rangers do not appear to have time to address at least some of the problems that have been reported to TAMS. For instance, Number 28 Brockman Street has recently been extensively renovated. During those renovations two large, apparently healthy eucalypt street trees located on what appeared to be the street verge (ie on Territory not private land) coincidentally died at the same time, and were removed. The owners have since remodelled the area where the trees had been located to form a sunken courtyard. The courtyard and newly planted hedge appear to be very close to or even encroach upon the verge. Should anyone inadvertently move from the remaining verge and stumble into the shrubs, they risk a fall of perhaps a metre onto a paved surface.

We would be most grateful if you could direct TAMS to take up this matter of the dead eucalypts on behalf of the GNCA. As you will be aware, the inner south is slowly losing trees as new residents remove them to build larger residences or encroach onto verges. The majority of our residents are environmentally very aware, but feel powerless to stop this incremental reduction in green space and the flora that support our remnant wildlife and ameliorate the effect of global warming. In relation to protecting verge trees only the Government can take the necessary actions to remedy the situation.

Yours sincerely



John Edquist  
President

6 November 2015