

NEWSLETTER

Volume 1

25 November 2000

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

As a result of our Start-Up Meeting on 2 November, the Griffith/Narrabundah Community Action Group (GNGAC) is now a reality. We have over 120 paid members and we are getting new members all of the time. Thank YOU! Now, can anyone come up with a way to pronounce GNCAG? We will be trying our best to keep getting newsletters out to you on a regular basis.

OUR GOALS ARE CLEAR

1. *The retention of our community facilities for now and the future.*
2. *The preservation of our community open space.*
3. *The retention of our library service.*
4. *Opposition to any development that is inconsistent with our other goals, including that which would involve varying the Territory Plan in order to re-zone the land.*

OFFICERS ELECTED

The 18 people who volunteered to be on the Committee met on 9 November and elected Officers. The officers are here to help us accomplish our goals.

President:	Margaret Fanning	6295 0997
Vice-President:	Trish Bootes	6295 9663
Vice-President:	David Palmer	6295 9759
Secretary:	Iain Macinnis	6295 8610
Treasurer:	Frank Mestrov	6295 1152

WE NEED NEW MEMBERS

Please talk to your neighbours and your friends and ask them to join us. Please ask them to call Frank Mestrov or any of the other officers to join us. If you know of people who attended either the LAPAC meeting on 5 September, or the Consultant's Information Exchange Session on the 12 October who are not yet members of our group, please ask them to contact us.

URGENT ATTENTION

SECTION 78 FEASIBILITY STUDY

The next Consultant's meeting is on Tuesday 28th November at the O'Connell Centre. There will be two sessions, one at 4.30 pm and the other at 7.30 pm. The ACT Government's Consultants, SKCM, will be giving us feedback on the submissions we made previously and outlining several options for the development of the site.

Remember that they are following an ACT Government Brief to prepare development options that will require the sale of the land. Our goals are to prevent this from happening.

SECTION 78 GRIFFITH MUST REMAIN PUBLIC LAND AND BE USED FOR COMMUNITY PURPOSES AND OPEN SPACE.

The ACT Government has singled out our community space for development. They see it as a "land bank" and we see it as having far greater value than money. It is at the heart of our community and contributes greatly to the character and identity of our area. **We must not allow our land to be lost to the community forever.**

Our community was not consulted prior to the ACT Government's decision to sell and develop the land. No studies were done of the needs of our community. No studies were made of alternative or additional uses. We were not asked whether we wanted the land sold and now we are being asked to comment on development proposals!!

The ACT Government's decision to sell the land is totally inequitable. Aren't the residents of Griffith and Narrabundah entitled to have open space and community facilities like the rest of Canberra. Apparently not when the ACT Government wants to top up the coffers!!

OUR ACTION GROUP MEANS ACTION

Since the Start-Up Meeting the committee has met twice and many actions have been taken. The Officers and the Committee are developing (maybe the wrong word) a strategic action plan. We are presently working on the politicians and helping to raise awareness of the infill issues Canberra-wide.

We will soon be focussing our attention on the inadequate consulting process that only allows the community to comment after decisions have been made. We will be taking action on the local front to make opportunities for our community to genuinely participate in finding a solution that meets the needs of our community rather than having the Government's agenda forced upon us.

ON THE POLITICAL FRONT

• Meeting with the Minister for Urban Services

Two of our Officers met with Brendan Smyth, the Minister for Urban Services, on 15 November with representatives of some other community and residents groups. We asked the Minister to agree to a moratorium on the development of open spaces until the Government put in place a process of meaningful public participation. As reported in the Canberra Times on 16 November, the Minister rejected the idea of a moratorium.

• Meetings with the Shadow Minister for Planning

Two of our Officers and representatives of other groups also met with Simon Corbell, the Shadow Minister for Planning. He agreed to consider the idea of a moratorium and said that his party would be calling for the establishment of an Independent Planning Authority to keep major planning decisions separate from the Government's revenue gathering function. This will be an election issue and the whole Canberra community will have the opportunity to vote on it at the next ACT Election in October 2001.

GNCAG will continue to lobby the Shadow Minister and all MLAs. In a meeting with us last week, Simon Corbell said that he would be prepared to support our group to protect our community facility land and open space at Section 78 Griffith. We will be following this up with him formally.

We are about to commence a flurry of letter writing to all MLAs, the Department of Urban Services and the Chief Minister. More in the next newsletter on the results.

CANBERRA-WIDE AWARENESS-RAISING ON THE INFILL ISSUE

• Rally Against Infill

As you have probably heard, GNCAG joined with about 10 other Community groups in the Rally Against Infill on Saturday, 18 November at Civic Square in front of the Legislative Assembly. More than 300 people attended, and heard speeches by representative of the community and residents groups and some community leaders.

Tony Powell, a Griffith resident and one of the ex-Commissioners of the National Capital Development Authority gave a stirring opening speech about the context of planning in Canberra, infill and open space issues and suggested a course of action. If anyone would like a copy of his speech, please call Trish Bootes and she will send you one.

• Moratorium

The Rally called for a Moratorium on the development of open space and other sensitive areas earmarked for development. The details of the Moratorium will be worked out in the near future through PACTT (Planning the ACT Together), an umbrella group that brings together most of the community groups in Canberra.

We will working with PACTT to finalise the terms of the Moratorium. It will then be presented to the Legislative Assembly, and hopefully come into effect in January 2001 and be ongoing until after the next election.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

If you can help in any way, please contact one of the Officers. We need help of all kinds: lawyers, media people, accountants, IT people, and people who can help organise rallies or social events to show we want and need the site.

Please keep writing to your elected representatives, to the Canberra Times and talk to your neighbours. Let everyone know how you feel about selling our community land!!!!!! **Please attend the consultant's briefing on 28 November.**