

Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association Inc.

NEWSLETTER Vol 41 May 2019

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Government sells Gowrie Court and Stuart Flats for \$84 million

In less than an hour on 20 March 2019 the ACT Government sold three blocks in Griffith, one in Narrabundah and the derelict apartments on these blocks for a total of \$84.225 million.

The table below shows the main results from the auctions and the figure shows the locations.

Suburb	Block/Section	Area m ²	Max. dwelling numbers	Price Sold (\$m)	Buyer
Griffith	23/39	4,514	100	2.005	A
Griffith	24/39	12,080	282	40.000	A
Griffith	25/39	3,695	70	8.250	B
Griffith	6/43	2,163	32	3.615	A
Narrabundah	3/62	13,775	177	20.355	C

Code for buyers: A: BMJ Canberra Investment Corporation Pty Ltd (Morris Property Group)

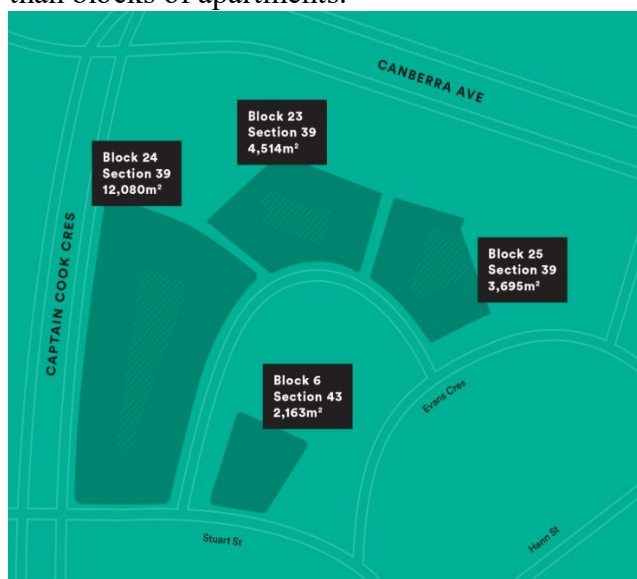
B: Bisa Inner South Projects Pty Ltd (Daniel Bisa), C: Amalgamated Property Group (Graham Potts)

This sale is part of the Asset Recycling program which has been spruiked by the Australian Government. It encourages states and territories to sell assets and reinvest the sale proceeds to fund infrastructure. Time will tell whether it will be a success, or whether it's just another way to sell off public assets to provide commercial opportunities for the private sector.

The GNCA would like to commend the government on its consultation with our community association on these re-developments. This goes back to mid-2014 when we were invited to participate in a study into the planning controls for the Stuart Flats (Griffith) and Gowrie Court (Narrabundah) when both these sites would be re-developed. We weren't completely happy with some of the outcomes; particularly the loss of open space near the Stuart Flats and the height of the two towers proposed for Gowrie Court (6 storeys rather than the 4), but we were able to suggest significant changes, which were implemented, such as the use of the Gowrie Court site for more town houses rather than blocks of apartments.

The next steps will be the demolition of the buildings on both sites and the pre-DA consultations. One of the GNCA's concerns is how the parking for the builders will be handled during the demolition and the construction phases. We will be encouraging off-site parking and transporting the workers to the site. Discussions with developer 'A' indicate that a comprehensive public consultation will soon take place and he hopes to have the development completed by 2025.

The Figure shows the locations of the four blocks auctioned on the Stuart Flats site.



Maintaining our Garden City Character

Protecting verges and their trees We are encouraging the government to protect verges and street trees by enforcing its own rules for protecting them during re-developments and by policing illegal parking on verges.

Blaxland Park and Griffith Woodland Trees are a vital component of our living infrastructure and it is widely recognised that Canberra's urban forest makes a major contribution to our well-being, particularly by mitigating the effects of climate change. We are providing support to the 'Friends of Blaxland Park' and the 'Griffith Woodland Volunteer Group'. To join any of these groups contact Mac Howell (machowell@homemail.com.au) for Blaxland Park and Libby McCutchan (griffithwoodland@gmail.com) for Griffith Woodland.



Images of Blaxland Park (left), where tree planting is a priority and Griffith Woodland (right), which is being re-generated. (images are at different scales)

Improving the ACT's Planning Process and the Development Rules

The Territory Plan is complex, and the planning rules can be difficult to understand.

In the current review by the government we are advocating that it should:

- a. Simplify the Territory Plan to make it easier to understand;
- b. Make all knock-down re-build developments subject to Development Applications that are publicly accessible. At present the plans for most of these developments are approved by private certifiers who do not have to make the plans publicly available.
- c. Until that happens, provide public access to plans for knock-down re-build developments that are exempt from submitting development applications. At present neighbours must submit a Freedom of Information request to see what is going to be built next door.
- d. Replace the current plot ratio rules with a mandatory 40% planting area for all blocks. The current plot ratio rule is not working, and the surface areas are being progressively covered by concrete or other impervious material throughout the suburbs.
- e. Remove all Criteria from the Development Codes (DCs). At present there are Rules and Criteria. A Rule might specify height, setback, hours of solar access etc., and some Rules are mandatory. The Criteria are subjective assessments and surprisingly take precedence over Rules. For example, Rule 5 of the Single Dwelling Housing (DC) specifies the maximum height of a building in zones RZ1, RZ2 and RZ3 is 8.5 m. However, Criteria 5 states that "*Buildings are consistent with the desired character*". Consequently, a subjective assessment takes precedent over a prescribed Rule and the height can be increased because no height is prescribed. No wonder there are problems.

Moving Canberra 2019-2045: Integrated Transport Strategy

No! Canberra is not being moved, just the people who live here. *Moving Canberra 2019-2045* (<https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/moving-canberra>) replaces *Transport for Canberra 2012-2031 -Transport for a Sustainable City*, which must have reached its use-by date early. The GNCA made a submission on the latest plan, which can be accessed on our website. In the ACT Planning Strategy 2018 the government plans to increase density along rapid transit corridors and the proposed light rail corridor along Adelaide Avenue and Yarra Glen is identified as an area where land use is being investigated. However, it is a common observation that as soon as development along 'rapid' transit corridors takes place the transit corridor no longer remains a rapid thoroughfare.

Furthermore, it appears that there may be enough dwellings in the pipeline to meet Canberra's requirement to provide homes for Canberra's expected population increase until 2030 so there is no good reason for intensification along this corridor at this time. The current bus service between the City and Woden is one of the best in Canberra and takes less time than any light rail connection, so why would any government want to invest in a system that would be worse than the one we have now?

The analysis that underpins the government's decision to invest in light rail for this route has never been made available and neither has the business case, because the route is still being finalised. It looks like this proposal could have come from the back of an envelope just before the last election.

We recommend that Light Rail Stage 2 be put on hold until:

- a satisfactory business case is developed and made public,
- the government releases its plans to develop the land at either side of the Woden/Civic Corridor and,
- the finalisation of the Gungahlin Civic light rail and its usage has been properly evaluated.

Participating in the Inner South Canberra Community Council

The Inner South Canberra Community Council is a federation of seven separate Community Associations in Canberra's Inner South (of which GNCA is one).

It 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 our area. Visit the website (www.isccc.org.au) for more details and a schedule of its meetings for 2019.

Rubbish in Fyshwick: Smoke and/or Mirrors?

Residents will recall that in 2017, Capital Recycling Solutions (CRS) proposed the construction of a waste incinerator plant at 16 Ipswich Street in Fyshwick. Following public protests, it abandoned its plan for an incinerator.

But CRS then applied in December 2017 (DA201700053) to construct a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) for putrescible mixed household waste on the same Ipswich Street site. The ACT Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development (EPSD) Directorate issued Scoping Document NI2018-27 on 19 January 2018, requiring a submission by CRS of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) within 18 months. The GNCA, businesses, and other community groups criticised the draft April 2018 EIS (EIS201700053) that CRS lodged in support of its proposed MRF. The (presumably revised) EIS and application for the MRF are still under consideration by the Government.

In December 2018, CRS lodged yet another proposal (DA201835108) with EPSD; this time for the construction of a rail loading hardstand for freight containers, again at the Ipswich Street site. Its application claims that construction will ‘be progressed [independently] even if the MRF is not approved’. However, CRS owns or sub-leases adjacent land that would enable it to apply for waste recycling and rail transport of waste in the future. Noise and traffic congestion on nearby streets could increase substantially. Approval of the hardstand also risks constraining the rail corridor, so that any future proposal for a fast train to Sydney may be adversely affected. The GNCA and others have therefore lodged objections.

Fyshwick appears to have become the suburb of choice for waste recycling for others as well.

On 4 April the EPSD Directorate issued Scoping Document 201900001 in response to a new application, by Hi-Quality ACT Pty Ltd, to construct an “Integrated Resource Recovery Facility” at 6-14 Tennant Street in Fyshwick. EPSD requires the proponent to supply an EIS in accordance with the terms of the Scoping Document within 18 months. A front-page article in the Canberra Times 8 April reported that the proposed facility would include ‘wood burning activities’, and that Canberra Airport may have some concerns. Watch this space.

Eat, Drink and be Healthy in Griffith

Every year we hold a raffle to raise the funds to operate the GNCA. The theme for 2019 was **Eat, Drink and be Healthy in Griffith**. We received outstanding support from Griffith businesses and there were 21 prizes to be won. Some of the funds raised will be allocated to maintain our local parklands. The prizes were drawn at the Griffith Shops on 20 April (see below).



From left to right, GNCA President Leo Dobes, Tina Srikhumwong owner of Pro Thais and Vice- President Venessa Tripp at the drawing of the prizes.

DONORS	PRIZE WINNERS
Aubergine	Cathi Moore
Bambusa Restaurant	Jude Berger
Body Temple	Richard Glenn
Essence Salon & Spa	Cindy Cantamessa
Fox Antiques	Anna Ryan
Gryphons 1	Stella Ashton
Gryphons 2	Maureen Ryman
InSync Institute	Stella Ashton
Mackas Newsagency	Tony Webster
Mountain Creek	Gary Kent
Organic Energy	Elke McKenzie
Polit Bar 1	Doris Kordes
Polit Bar 2	Lyn Philipson
Pro Thais Massage	Kelsey Lorraway
Rubicon	Moira Smythe
Shop-Rite	Isabel Firkins-Fox
Sweet Little Café:	Patricia Denham
The Hierophant 1	Simon Ottaviano
The Hierophant 2	Leo Dobes
The Hierophant 3	Paul Gibbon
Your Discount Chemist	Robyne Parolin

We would like to congratulate the winners and thank our generous sponsors for providing the prizes.