



## NEWSLETTER Vol 48 October 2022

### Hot Issues for 2022

***GNCA supports high-quality public housing. Housing ACT appears to aim at squashing as many dwellings on a block as possible***



*Above, is 33 Captain Cook Crescent; scheduled for demolition by Housing ACT.  
Below, is a perspective view of the proposal, taken from the Development Application.  
Not sure how the three dwellings on the right will retain the characteristics of the street.*



The GNCA does not support the cheek-by-jowl policy. Our views are summarised below.

<b>What we would like</b>	<b>What we get too often</b>
Dwellings that blend with the neighbourhood	As many dwellings as possible squashed onto every block
Proper maintenance of Public Housing	Poorly maintained buildings and gardens
Housing ACT to consult and engage with local community groups and neighbours	Extreme secrecy, difficult to have a meaningful consultation
Dwellings of high quality that will mitigate climate change	Residents treated as 2nd class citizens with cheap housing
Supportive and Adaptable Housing close to shops and public transport	Apparent random distribution often far away from shops and transport routes
We should be proud of our public housing	Extreme secrecy on policy goals and actions

In the last year five development applications were lodged, in the GNCA area of interest, to demolish an existing dwelling and construct three new single-storey, so-called supportive dwellings in the low-density residential zone RZ1. In addition, there was one in Roe Street, to demolish two dwellings and replace them with four.

If this development is completed, 70% of Roe street dwellings will comprise public housing. You might like to consider the quality of the proposed dwellings because the costs listed by Housing ACT appear to be very low. No mention of any solar panels.

<b>Address</b>	<b>DA lodged</b>	<b>Cost to build \$, area of block</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Current status</b>
77 Captain Cook Cres	23/09/21	\$731,450 1297 m <sup>2</sup>	Approved by ACTPLA 26/11/21, GNCA to ACAT 13/12/21	DA Surrendered by Housing ACT
18 Lockyer St	14/10/21	\$730,000 1114m <sup>2</sup>	Approved by ACTPLA 23/05/22 GNCA to ACAT 6/06/22	Under review at ACAT
32 Sturt Avenue	18/11/21	\$653,500 1114m <sup>2</sup>	Approved 3/06/22 GNCA to ACAT 19/06/22	Under review at ACAT
11 Wells Gardens	02/08/22	\$770,000 1224 m <sup>2</sup>	Under consideration by ACTPLA	
33 Captain Cook Cres	21/09/22	\$701,000 1173 m <sup>2</sup>	Under consideration by ACTPLA	
7 Roe Street*	21/07/22	\$930,200 1647m <sup>2</sup>	Approved by ACTPLA 30/8/22	Under review by ACAT

\*The Roe Street development would demolish two dwellings and replace them with four so-called supportive dwellings.

The ACT Government says it is currently investing more than \$1 billion in the growth, renewal and realignment of public housing over 10 years from 2015 – 2025. To quote Minister Berry from the ACT Housing Strategy 2019-2024: “*Public housing is a vehicle for better lives, social inclusion, participation and stronger communities.*” It would be good if these aspirations were being realised.

## ***Rates and land values make residents angry***

Many residents of Griffith/Narrabundah had a nasty surprise when they received their Valuation Notice this year. Instead of the typical annual increase of about three percent, some Unimproved Values doubled in one year from 2021 to 2022.

We all know that property values have increased, but a doubling of land value in one year is unbelievable.

Consequently, it is not surprising that your rates bills have also increased.

We are not sure whether the numbers provided by the government are the averages or the medians because the 5% increase for units is not consistent with the increases in Amaya, where there is a 12% increase. According to the government numbers, the rates for houses have increased by 7% in 2022.

We have written to Mr Barr, the ACT Treasurer and one of our Kurrajong MLAs, to find out how the calculations were done to achieve these outcomes.

## ***We question the government's fiscal management***

According to Khalid Ahmed's presentation at the ISCCC forum on 13 September 2022, the ACT is the only jurisdiction in Australia not to have posted an operating budget surplus since 2012-13.

By 2025-26 the net debt to revenue ratio is estimated to be 126% and that is without any of the costs expected for Light Rail Stage 2.

In the last two years the record leaves a lot to be desired.

The Auditor General (AG) has identified major deficiencies in the ACT Government's performance in major projects. Let's look at three:

### *1. Acton Waterfront Project*

According to the Auditor General, in late 2014 the Land Development Agency issued a Request for Tender (RFT) for a contractor to undertake an estimated five hectares of public realm works. The construction work was expected to cost \$28 million and be completed by October 2016.

By September 2020, the Contract Price had increased to \$46.8 million to complete approximately two-thirds of the works identified in the original RFT.

### *2. Light Rail Stage 2a*

According to the AG for the purpose of the economic appraisal, the Stage 2a Business Case did not include the cost of raising London Circuit, the cost increase to ban overhead wires for part of the route, and does not articulate how the supposed benefits by re-developing Acton and the areas inside the access roads to Parks Way will be achieved.

### *3. Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS)*

Even the TSS was found wanting. The audit found that the planning and delivery of the Scheme were hampered by a lack of clarity and specificity with respect to its purpose and objectives.

Not a good track record.

There must be a better way to manage large projects.

## ***The future of the Capital Golf Club is uncertain***

Capital Golf Club was formed in 1978, after a public golf course was established at the site in 1969. Its future is now uncertain.

We have pieced together its recent history with help from the RiotAct. (<https://the-riotact.com/capital-public-golf-course-closure-reopens-development-debate/592390>).

Apparently, Mrs Liangis tried to buy the land in 2003, but Capital Golf Club members fought off the bid and the Vikings Group bought the course for \$4.2 million. They wanted to build high-density housing and community facilities on part of the course but, when Andrew Barr was Planning Minister, could not get rezoning approval.

In 2011 Liangis Investments bought the site from the Vikings Group. The operation of the golf course was leased to Capdorf Pty Ltd and maintained by ACT Landscape & Turf, which has now taken over the management of the course.

Members were told on 6 September that Liangis Investments Pty Ltd had chosen to terminate the five-year lease on 30 September 2022. Several members have either joined other clubs or just left.



The site, shown above from ACTmapi, has many mature trees. The block has an area of 30.7 hectares and is zoned PRZ2: Restricted Access Recreation Zone. The main Objective of the zone is: *‘Accommodate facilities that will meet the recreational needs and demands of the community and are appropriately located for the potential users of the facility.’* To be re-developed, the site would need to be rezoned, granted a new lease and finally obtain a successful Development Application. All the surrounding areas are zoned RZ4 medium-density residential.

The GNCA welcomes comments from members on a way forward. Any information about the distribution and accessibility of Canberra golf courses would be useful

## Urban Forest Bill 2022 unlikely to work

We doubt that the government will achieve its goal of 30% canopy cover by 2045 as stated in the earlier strategic plan. The numbers just don't stack up.

The Objects of the new Urban Forest Bill, tabled in August this year, still include “*a target of the tree canopy covering 30% of the Territory's urban areas*”.

However, to obtain 30% coverage by 2045 requires about 950,000 plantings over 26 years (see the Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045); half to replace dead trees and the other half to increase the canopy coverage from 22.5% in 2020 to 30% in 2045. This needs a planting program of about 36,500 per year, well above the 9,100 trees planted in 2021.

Another problem is that when new suburbs like Wright, Throsby and Taylor are developed there is a loss of many mature trees. Developers tend to *clear as much land as possible*. Furthermore, it is likely that suburbs like Wright will never be able to reach the 30% target. There are not enough planting places for large trees.

A report by the EPSD Directorate (Loss of mature native trees Action Plan 2022) summarises the situation in the ACT (<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3048220859/view>). The percentage loss of mature trees in our urban area was 6.2% over the last five years.

When you consider that the average life of these trees would have been at least 80 years, it puts the losses into perspective. The tables below summarise the situation for the whole of the ACT and for the ISCCC suburbs.

Suburb	2020 canopy cover (% land area)	Hot & vulnerable (% land area)
Red Hill	40.7	2.0
Forrest	35.3	0.0
Deakin	34.2	1.0
Griffith	31.2	4.8
Yarralumla	30.3	0.3
Narrabundah	29.3	9.0
Barton	20.9	0.0
Kingston	18.7	10.8

Habitat context	Mature Trees 2015	Loss by 2020	Percentage Loss
Urban	231,366	14,455	6.2
Rural	446,027	4,846	1.1
Reserves	309,408	1,731	0.6

*Table 1 Results for the ISCCC suburbs*

*Table 2 Results for the whole of the ACT*

## So, what can we do? We can register lots of trees

There are two types of Protected Tree: Regulated Trees and Registered Trees.

A Regulated Tree is automatically protected if it is sufficiently large:

Consequently, we should focus on having as many Registered Trees as possible.

These are identified as being exceptional for their:

- natural or cultural heritage value; landscape and aesthetic value;
- scientific value; and being listed on the ACT Tree Register or Provisional tree Register.

If you identify a significant-looking tree you can check if it is on the tree registry, and if not, google Nomination for Tree Registry ACT, fill out the form and see what happens!

## **GNCA supports three local Volunteer Park Groups**

**Urban parklands provide some of the most valued features in our suburbs. The GNCA is supporting our local community to maintain these valued facilities.**

### **Friends of Blaxland Park**

Blaxland Park was gazetted in 2013 to commemorate the crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813 by Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Wentworth. Descendants of Blaxland are now living in Canberra.

Friends of Blaxland Park was formed in 2017 and has planted more than 60 trees since then. These comprise seven varieties of eucalypts and four varieties of deciduous exotics.

The paths installed by the government have made a huge impact on the park and have made it much more accessible.

Funds were also obtained from the ACT Government to start a small native garden and GNCA provides funds for maintenance to keep the trees healthy.

To join the Friends of Blaxland contact Mac Howell at [machowell@homemail.com.au](mailto:machowell@homemail.com.au)

### **Griffith Woodland Group**

The Griffith Woodland Group protects and improves a rare urban space between La Perouse Street and Jansz Crescent. The site contains a wealth of remnant native trees, shrubs and grasses, including Yellow Box gums, estimated to be at least 150 years old. It needs to be protected as a valuable recreation area, habitat and food source for native fauna. Working Bees normally take place every 2nd Sunday of the month, from 9am to 10:30am - ending with tea and biscuits. Anyone is welcome to come along!

Contact Libby McCutchan at [griffithwoodland@gmail.com](mailto:griffithwoodland@gmail.com) for more information.

**Bass Gardens** main features date back to the original designs in the 1930s. It was named after George Bass, navigator and surgeon and is now a heritage park hosting a wonderful range of native grasses and forbs. Grasses include Speargrass, Wallaby Grass, Kangaroo Grass and Redleg Grass. It is a habitat for the golden sun moth. It also provides an understorey for flowers like the Yellow Rush Lily, Goodenia and Blue Devil.

Our volunteer group is attacking invasive weeds and reviewing adaptive mowing regimes. The project aims to protect and recover native grassy ecosystem plants and is also supported by the Friends of Grasslands.

Contact Sue Ross ([sueross@grapevine.net.au](mailto:sueross@grapevine.net.au)) for more information.

### **Participating in the Inner South Canberra Community Council**

The Inner South Canberra Community Council is a federation of eight Community Associations in Canberra's Inner South. These are: *Old Narrabundah Community Council, Griffith Narrabundah Community Association, Kingston Barton Residents Group, Forrest Residents Group, Oaks Estate Residents Association, Red Hill Residents Group, Deakin Residents Association, and Yarralumla Residents Association.*

The ISCCC provides a representative voice to government for the whole of Canberra's Inner South. It has been active on many issues affecting our area, particularly in stopping the proposals for waste processing facilities in Fyshwick, which the government banned after the last election. Visit the website ([www.isccc.org.au](http://www.isccc.org.au)) for more details of its activities.

## **Come to our AGM Wednesday 26 October 2022**

**East Hotel, 69 Canberra Avenue, Griffith**

### **Agenda**

**7 pm-Keynote Speaker: Helen Oakey, Executive Director Conservation Council ACT**

**7:40 pm the GNCA 2021 AGM, including election of committee for 2022**

**8.50 pm David Denham: some thoughts on the future and closing remarks.**

**Please join us for Refreshments and discussion**

### **More on the business case for Light Rail Stage 2A**

A comprehensive critique of the business case was produced by one of our committee members at the invitation of the ACT Standing Committee on Public Accounts for its inquiry into the Auditor-General's Report 8/2021. See

[www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/1993364/Submission-02-Dr-Leo-Dobes.pdf](http://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1993364/Submission-02-Dr-Leo-Dobes.pdf)

Some of the major errors in the Government's business case include:

- Omitting the deadweight cost imposed on residents and businesses from increased rates to fund expenditure on the tram, as well as the opportunity costs of reduced health, educational, and other government services.
- Dismissing the negative value (a cost to passengers) of trams being slower than express buses between Woden and Civic by claiming the greater comfort of trams as an offset.
- Ignoring electric O-Bahn alternatives, which offer a smooth ride, can run on to other city street routes, and do not require the costly raising of London Circuit.

### **Whatever happened to the Manor House proposal?**

You may remember the proposal to build a 4-unit, 2-storey "Manor House" with 9 car parks in a low-density residential area in Griffith and how the local community objected loudly and clearly to it being built.

It is part of the ACT Government's Demonstration Housing Project, which originated in 2017. It is supposed to "*test and showcase how we can best deliver a compact, sustainable, accessible and active city through innovative planning, design and delivery.*"

At present 6 projects have been approved with a site and 4 without a site.

So far not a single Development Application has been approved and the evaluation process has not been determined. The DA for the Manor House is still being worked on.

Is this another project that does not deliver value for money?

### **Contact our Kurrajong Members of the Legislative Assembly**

***If Access Canberra is not working for you, try your local MLA***

**Andrew Barr (ALP)**

[barr@act.gov.au](mailto:barr@act.gov.au)

6205 2661

**Rachel Stephen-Smith (ALP)**

[stephen-smith@act.gov.au](mailto:stephen-smith@act.gov.au)

6205 0011

**Elizabeth Lee (Liberal)**

[lee@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:lee@parliament.act.gov.au)

6205 1919

**Rebecca Vassarotti (Greens)**

[vassarotti@act.gov.au](mailto:vassarotti@act.gov.au)

6207 8975

**Shane Rattenbury (Greens)**

[rattenbury@act.gov.au](mailto:rattenbury@act.gov.au)

6205 0005



## Membership Form

### GNCA - Membership Application / Renewal Form (for 2023)

If you are not already a GNCA member, please consider becoming one. The more members we have, the greater our influence with the ACT Government and in the wider community

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

Name (s):

.....

Full Address:

.....

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

Email Address:

.....

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

Donation: \$.....Donations are appreciated      Total amount:.....

**The GNCA has four (4) Membership payment methods. Your support is highly valued!**

1. Online EFT payments to Griffith/Narrabundah Community Association, BSB 032 722; Account 134058 (**preferred option**) or
2. Pay by credit card at <https://www.ticketebo.com.au/gnca> (*the GNCA incurs a fee of around 10% using this method*) or
3. In Person at a Westpac Branch - please provide your *telephone number* to the teller, Westpac cannot process your name when paying in person.
4. Cheques addressed to the GNCA & posted to PO Box 4127, MANUKA ACT 2603.

***When using methods 1 or 2 please ensure you add your NAME to the payment description. Otherwise, we will not know who the payment is from!***

### Membership Renewals

Providing you have identified yourself via the payment description, we do not require a new Membership Renewal Form unless your contact details have changed.

**Attention New Members:** Welcome! Please ensure you scan the completed Membership Application Form and forward to [info@gnca.org.au](mailto:info@gnca.org.au) OR please mail the form to PO Box 4127, MANUKA ACT 2603. Enquiries or questions, please contact the Secretary at [info@gnca.org.au](mailto:info@gnca.org.au).