



NEWSLETTER Vol 43 April 2020

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Fire, Smoke, Hail and now COVID 19

Welcome to 2020 in Canberra, and we aren't even halfway through it. The devastation from the bushfires was shocking. Fortunately, our city was spared the disasters of 2003, but we had to endure the claustrophobic smoke for days on end. It is estimated that more people (over 400) died in Australia from smoke inhalation than from fire. In Canberra it is estimated there were 31 excess deaths, 82 cardiovascular hospital admissions, 147 respiratory admissions and 89 asthma related attendances from the smoke haze.

(<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.5694/mja2.50545>).

The total damage from the hailstorm was more than half a billion dollars including over 7000 vehicles written off. Griffith was badly affected, and many residents had smashed skylights, broken tiles and windows. Fortunately, no-one was killed.

Finally, the apocalyptic COVID 19

Finally, the COVID 19 attack. At the time of writing (16 Apr), the number of cases per day is now down to less than 50. We have over 6400 confirmed cases and 63 deaths. Assuming 8000 confirmed cases** and a fatality rate of 2%# Australia could expect about 160 deaths. This is better than the 1918 Spanish flu, when approximately 13500 Australians died.

The socio-economic disruption will affect everybody. Ironically, this is because we are a wealthy nation. Consequently, a large percentage of our jobs are not essential for providing our basic needs. We do not need so many sporting events, restaurants, coffee shops, beauty parlours, gyms, concerts, or second homes on the coast to survive. And yet, these activities are worth billions, provide millions of jobs and are a crucial part of our culture.

What can our community do to help?

We can protect others by practising good hygiene, social distancing (at least 1.5m apart), following the limits for public gatherings, checking on the well-being of our neighbours, family and friends, and be able to self-isolate if we need to.

But this is not enough. Our local shops and businesses are central to our local community and they are having a tough time as result of COVID 19. We are particularly thinking of our sponsors. Some of them have had to reduce their services and some have closed completely, until the effects of the virus are over.

So, we urge you to go to the Griffith Shops and Manuka and support our local businesses. Without our support some may be gone for ever.

Should we have been better prepared?

Ross Garnaut, in 2008, forecast that, as a result of climate change, fire seasons would start earlier, end later and be more intense. He also said, "This effect increases over time, but should be directly observable by 2020"? SARS and MERS gave us ample warning of the risk of new corona viruses. Why weren't we better prepared?

**This Newsletter was distributed by Australia Post, rather than GNCA volunteers, because of COVID 19 restrictions. Note that all areas north of Canberra Avenue are served by KBRG*

http://www.kingstonandbarton.net/not_GNCA.

***www.visualcapitalist.com/infection-trajectory-flattening-the-covid19-curve/*

#www.cebm.net/global-covid-19-case-fatality-rates/

Millions to be spent on Light Rail and in-filling Lake Burley Griffin

It's almost as if COVID 19 was infecting another planet, the way the ACT government is proceeding with the light rail link from Civic to Woden and the infill of LBG in West Basin.

Costs and benefits of Light Rail Stage 2 still unknown

The Business Case for Light Rail Stage 2A, from Civic to Regatta Point contains no costings, so the public, who will be paying for it, has no idea what commitment the government will be making. We still don't know:-

The cost of raising London Circuit; are there cheaper/better options?

How the tram will cross Lake Burly Griffin and how much this will cost.

The congestion costs of the nine new sets of traffic lights to be installed in Civic, mostly on London Circuit.

The congestion costs of removing the two clover-leaf connectors between Canberra Avenue and Parkes Way to make way for mixed-use development.

The disruption costs to Canberrans during construction, particularly the congestion imposed on the 67,000 vehicles that use the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge every working day.

Whether the proposed technology is the best available to meet the current requirements.

What plans are being made (if any) to develop land along Adelaide Avenue and Yarra Glen.

We do know that if Stage 2 is completed, it will take longer to travel from Woden to the City than it does now by bus (25-30m vs 13-20m).

It is irresponsible to make open-ended commitments to large infrastructure projects. It does not make any sense to embark on stage 2A, until the technical challenges involved in Stage 2B are overcome. Stage 2A should be put on hold, until the full cost benefits are revealed.

Bizarre land swap deal with National Capital Authority

The ACT Government will hand over 31.6 hectares of prime land in North Curtin to the National Capital Authority, in exchange for 2.8 hectares of the lakebed at West Basin.

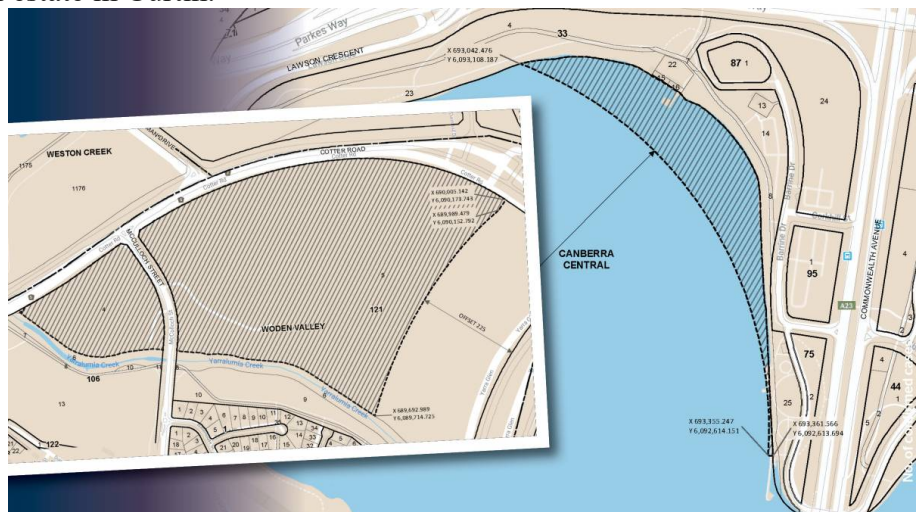
It plans to spend \$35 million to extend the lake edge boardwalk by 500 metres and construct two more public jetties. The deal includes the planned redevelopment of the West Basin area, where the building of up to 2000 apartments has been signalled.

The NCA plans to use the Curtin site to develop a diplomatic estate to fill the requests from a number of countries to establish or expand diplomatic representation in Australia. This has not been possible recently because of the lack of suitable sites.

The benefits to Canberrans of this deal are not evident. It takes away more of the original lake shore, will cause more congestion in Civic and deprive future governments an opportunity to develop prime real estate in Curtin.

Map, courtesy Canberra Times 25 March 2020, showing the two blocks of land. The scales are obviously different. The stippled area in blue is where the board walk is planned.

The Curtin site is the shaded area south of the Cotter Road and divided by McCulloch Street.



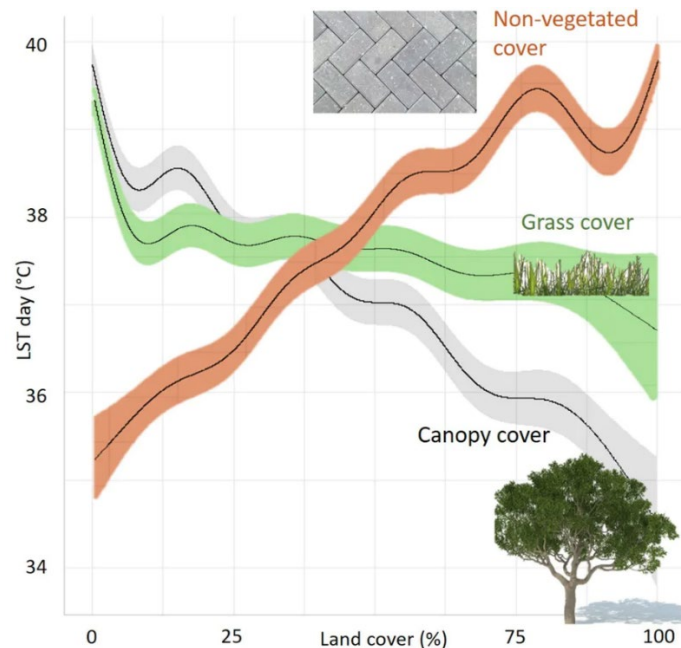
Maintaining our Garden City - trees and parks are vital

Trees, whether in streets, parks or gardens, feature in the top three most valued characteristics for residents in most recent surveys. As the climate continues to warm and become drier, trees will become even more valuable as we adapt our landscapes to mitigate the unsavoury effects of climate change.

A recent study in Adelaide shows the effect of canopy cover.

(<https://researchers.mq.edu.au/en/publications/urban-trees-and-peoples-yards-mitigate-extreme-heat-in-western-ad>)

The image on the right shows up to a 6°C difference between concrete and 100% canopy cover. The contribution from trees is huge. We therefore support the Government's goal **“to achieve 30% tree canopy cover (or equivalent) and 30% permeable surfaces in urban areas by 2045”**



Unfortunately, the legislation (DV 369) introduced by the government to achieve this outcome is very complex and we have doubts it will be effective. We recommend two simple changes to the Territory Plan.

1. The Plot Ratio rule, which does not work, (buildings can comply with the rule and all the block can be covered by concrete) be replaced with a mandatory Site Coverage rule and
2. A mandatory Planting Area rule be introduced that specifies the percentage of the block to be covered by soft landscaping/planting areas for each residential zone.

Because the current urban canopy cover is only about 20% there also needs to be a huge financial investment by the government to meet the 30% target, particularly if The Greens estimate of a current annual loss of 3000 trees is correct.

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 is a member of the Combined Community Councils of the ACT and provides a representative voice to government for the whole of Canberra's Inner South. It has been very active on many issues affecting our area. Visit the website (www.isccc.org.au) for more details of its activities and plans for 2020.

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 and the ACT government to manage and maintain these valued facilities. In Blaxland Park the goal is to make a home for a variety of eucalyptus and deciduous trees and provide an attractive area for local residents to relax and walk in. The Griffith Woodland group is restoring and maintaining a site off La Perouse Street, which contains a wealth of native trees, shrubs and grasses and the Griffith Park group has just started clearing the weeds and discarded bongs from the edges of Griffith Oval No1. We are now all ready to work again after-COVID19 has been defeated.



The three convenors: Mac Howell (*machowell@homemail.com.au*), watching a tree grow in Blaxland Park, Libby McCutchan (*griffithwoodland@gmail.com*) with the native grass at Griffith Woodland and Colin Walters (*colinj.walters@outlook.com*) preparing to plant at Griffith Park.

Eat, Drink and be Healthy in Griffith

Every year we hold a raffle to raise the funds to operate the GNCA. The theme for 2020 was **Eat, Drink and be Healthy in Griffith**. We received outstanding support from Griffith businesses and the prize winners are listed below.

Donors	Prize Winners
Aerie Village 1	Jill Allen
Aerie Village 2	Gary Stevens
Aubergine	David Rangiah
Bambusa	Theresa Perry
Body Temple	Peta Tannahill
Caphs Manuka	Iain Macinnis
Escala Shoes Manuka	Caroline Atkins
Essence Salon & Spa	Colin Walters
Fox Antiques	Rietcke Chenoweth
Gryphons 1	John Worcester
Gryphons 2	Libby McCutchan
InSync Institute	Kate Goodyear
Macka's Newsagency	Caroline Atkins
Mountain Creek 1	Jackie Bennett
Mountain Creek 2	Clark Gallagher
Organic Energy	Jenny Morison
Pro Thai Massage	Gabrielle Tryon
Rubicon	Alaine King
Shoprite	Susan Gardiner
Soi Soi-8 Thai Griffith	Sheilla Kellock
Studio Sky	Stan Piperoglou
Sweet Little Café	Joanna Hewitt
The Hierophant 1	Tony Webster
The Hierophant 2	Michael Cullen



Tim Thomas from the Hierophant, with COVID19 separation and gloves, draws the winners.

The Hierophant 3	Cath Barlow
Your Discount Chemist	Judy Lees