



Deakin Residents Association
A garden Community for the Future

ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry into Nature and the City

The Deakin Residents' Association (DRA) welcomes this opportunity. We acknowledge with great appreciation the role of our Secretary, Helen Allnut, in drafting the submission. She is unwell and sorry not to be here.

The following are some of the key points in that submission.

The objects and principles of the Deakin Residents' Association are to:

“enhance the residential, social and environment of Deakin consistent with garden city planning principles

Some issues in our submission are ACT-wide; some are of particular relevance to Deakin –

1. Nature Strips and Parking;
2. Red Hill Nature Reserve, other parks and Green Space;
3. Renovation, redevelopment and enforcement of regulations
4. Emissions' targets and transport

We note the pressures from a rapidly growing population, ACTs relatively smaller revenue base, - rates, land sales and property development - and the need for the ACT Government to fund its costly infrastructure projects such as Light Rail.

Inner suburbs such as Deakin, are particularly affected by revenue raising policy of infill and densification to help meet these demands.

As an older suburb, Deakin is also fortunate in its residential amenity, wide tree-lined verges, mature gardens and proximity to employment hubs.

This amenity extends to several schools, a commercial /medical precinct, national institutions including the Mint and the Lodge and many embassies.

Because of its age and location Deakin has been the subject of ongoing redevelopment and regeneration; and an increase in multi-dwelling units such



as duplexes and townhouses. New and renovated dwellings are typically larger with increased hardscape and decreased soft landscaping. Construction of multi-storey apartments has been minimal.

1. Nature Strips and parking

Vibrant nature strips and their trees are a quintessential component of the garden city and one of its strongest natural assets.

Traffic flows through Deakin are increasing, particularly on Kent Street and Hopetoun Circuit.

While some increases are locally generated much is due to office and hospital development to West Deakin.

Consequently, off-street parking is increasing on these transit roads and of particular concern to this inquiry -residents park on the nature strip.

Tradesmen working on the many renovations in the suburb add to this process and appear to be immune from prosecution.

- Except where paid parking and other restrictions are in place, the ACT Government doesn't enforce regulations.

Death of vegetation, soil compaction and soil erosion follow.

2. Red Hill Nature Reserve, other parks and green space;

Deakin is home to the northern portion of the Red Hill Nature Reserve. It is part of the Canberra Nature Park and very important to the Canberra landscape. The Reserve is of significant historical value and provides a source of recreational enjoyment for Deakin and Canberra residents and is a major tourist attraction for visitors to the National Capital.

The NR is a prominent wooded back-drop to the Parliamentary Triangle and contains historic red-flowering plantings, which Walter Burley Griffin directed to be planted to enhance Red Hill's landscape value.



Collaboration between the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and the Red Hill Regeneration Group, is excellent and contributes greatly to the value of the Reserve.

- DRA welcomes the ACT legislative Assembly decision to call for a moratorium on future development of the Red Hill Nature Reserve and its surrounds, pending the development of an Integrated Strategy for the area.

The gazetted smaller parks and other green spaces in Deakin contribute substantially to the 'garden city'. These include Latrobe Park, the Lodge Park, Rosemary Dobson Park as well as the small park area surrounding the geological formation behind the Deakin shops and the sporting ovals near the Mint.

DRA members would resist removing these ovals. Members of sporting groups who use the ovals would also have similar views.

Latrobe Park is one of the original gazetted parks in Canberra. It provides a sweep of grassland and green space extending from the Scout Hall in the north to the revamped Preschool in the south and lies adjacent to the Red Hill Reserve. It is widely used for recreational purposes. The trunks of dead gums in the park are also used for nesting by various bird and mammal species.

Residents have expressed concern at

- the removal of electric barbecues and seating from the Park which have not been replaced. This occurred without any reference to the local community or the Scout Group.
- the public toilets which were built a few years ago to replace the unsightly and ageing concrete toilet block have been decommissioned, once again without any reference to the community.

On the positive side DRA is pleased to note an allocation of funds for enhancement of public parks and places in Deakin. We are establishing a Friends of Latrobe Park sub group and are keen to link with the agency managing the Park.



As an aside, can I mention that it maybe that new households are not aware of and/or are availing themselves of the long standing and successful Plant Allocation Scheme operated by the Yarralumla Nursery. The Scheme provides a selection of free trees and shrubs to encourage and assist with the establishment of gardens in new areas.

3. Renovation, redevelopment and enforcement of regulations

DRA is concerned about the lack of enforcement of building regulations and of particular interest to this inquiry - plot ratios.

Some single dwelling knock downs are now wall to wall with removal of practically all vegetation and soft landscaping and a significant increase in hard landscaping.

DRA supports an Independent Planning Authority that would report directly to the Legislative Assembly.

Enforcement of ACT planning and building rules would be transferred to that body.

4. Emissions' targets and transport

The ACT Government is to be commended for its commitment to the use of renewables and its ambitious targets for reducing its net greenhouse emissions to zero by the middle of this century— the first Australian jurisdiction to do so.

- Wall to wall adjacent building without gardens and trees is not conducive to combatting the effects of climate change or reducing carbon emissions.
- DRA supports an integrated public transport infrastructure and bikeways, lane-separated where possible from other vehicle traffic

While there was support for Light Rail as a concept with in Deakin, the strongest response to our recent survey – See DRA website - was for further consideration of electric powered public transport and recognition of a need for a cost-benefit analysis.



- DRA ponders the cost effectiveness of spending the proposed \$200m injection promised by Labor on light rail infrastructure
 - \$200m on bike ways would bring huge (much larger) benefit to **all** of Canberra in decongestion, pollution reduction and human health.

Respondents to our survey were also in favour of protecting trees in Commonwealth Avenue and maintaining overhead free wires in Deakin

Other Inquiries

DRA is aware of a number of other Inquiries currently being conducted by the Legislative Assembly and ACT Government Agencies that overlap this Inquiry,

- It would seem sensible for relevant aspects of the outcomes of the Inquiries referred to above to be incorporated into this exercise.

Conclusion

People in other Australian cities and in other parts of the world envy much of what we have in Canberra and the ACT.

DRA believes the aim should be to safeguard the special and unique features of Canberra, in particular its garden city values and principles as well as its status as “the bush capital”.

These features should be protected, maintained and enhanced, not destroyed.

DRA is concerned that the needs and interests of developers are taking precedence over those of the wider community.

We trust that with proper and balanced planning and management, this can be reversed.

The last thing we want is for Canberra to become just like everywhere else.

George Wilson
President



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June 2018