

Yarralumla Residents Association  
Annual General Meeting  
Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2005 1pm at YMCA Yacht Club

There were about 50 people present.

### **Introduction and apologies**

Mac West (President) introduced the meeting and tendered the apologies received for Karen Ahrling, Malise Arnstein, Karen Ahrling, Hugh Campbell and Neville and Jean Thompson

### **Previous Minutes**

Mac West presented the minutes of the 2004 AGM and they were passed as a true record of that meeting (Proposed by Sue Banks, Seconded by John Soderbaum).

It was noted from the previous minutes, that the same kind of issues come up for the YRA each year, often to do with planning, but any issue is relevant and the committee is happy to hear from any resident in Yarralumla on issues that affect Yarralumla.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The treasurer (Mike Roarty) presented his report.

The YRA has funds currently. We started with \$951.16 with \$357.79 income (from membership, donations, petty cash and credit interest). Expenses of \$542.40 were for the newsletter, website, hall hire, fees and taxes.

The accounts closed at \$766.55

A copy of the accounts will be sent to anyone interested, and Phillipa Muller asked for a copy. Mike Roarty suggested that the Treasurer's report may be available via the YRA website.

### **2005-2006 Committee**

Mac West called for nominations for office bearers in the YRA Committee. Received were:

Mac West	President
Les Landau	Secretary
Mike Roarty	Treasurer
Sue Banks	Committee
Hugh Campbell	Committee
Rick Parker	Committee
Helen Parker	Committee (assistance)

These positions were uncontested and so proposed and seconded by Phillipa Muller and all the above were elected.

In addition, Margaret Wace offered to help.

### **Guest Speaker – Neil Savery**

Mac West welcomed Neil Savery, Executive of ACTPLA to address the meeting. Mac thanked Neil for his past helpfulness and his prompt and complete responses to questions raised by the YRA.

Neil then addressed the meeting regarding planning issues in general, and also some of the planning issues identified before the meeting and answered questions.

A summary of his presentation is below:

Neil thanked the YRA for asking him to address the meeting.

Planning is usually done by local governments of which there are about 719 in Australia, and state bodies. Local residents are often concerned by what happens in their own areas. Change is inevitable and planning authorities have to manage that change. An example of this is the changing demographics of an aging population, so schools may close and there may be a growing need for aged care facilities and smaller houses. There may be changes due to global warming, and so there may be a focus on public transportation and a discouragement in taking your own car - something that is difficult for Canberra. Equity issues also need to be considered, e.g. the rising price of petrol vs who can afford to be transported.

The ACT Government is currently in the throws of implementing the Canberra Plan. This involves:

- The Spatial plan (25-30 years)
- Economic whitepaper (growth outside of Government)
- Social plan, involving social services

The sustainable transport plan is part of the spatial plan

Currently, some areas that ACTPLA is looking at include:

- Possible future suburb of Molonglo between Duffy and Belconnen. Doing the environment and transport planning now, and it could be 10 years away for an estimated 50-60,000 people.
- Looking at infill at Eastlake from Kingston to the Monaro highway being for 5-6,000 people. Looking at very high quality environmental design with some working opportunities there, building on the CIT. Looking at 5 years away. Plan to keep the Fyshwick markets.
- Gungahlin continues (at about 35% development currently) and will be for about 90,000 people. Some of the land has been handed over for preservation (green/open areas).
- The Canberra Central project, focused on Civic and London Circuit – what pace should it develop at? Depends on growth rate and priorities of other areas too, and could take 15-25 years
- Commencement of the evaluation of the Garden City provision (variation 200). This will start in October, and will have a discussion paper. The Garden City provisions confined development (largely) to core areas.
- Planning system reform project.  
This is not just about planning regulations but also about the leasehold system and role and function of the Territory Plan, and how they interact. We have an archaic system and is unclear and difficult to follow. This will take 12 months (maybe August next year for new legislation). procedures, practices and processes will be streamlined. Currently, planning approvals need to be given to fences, pergolas, outbuildings etc, and this is bogging the system down.

## Questions

We then worked through each of the issues listed on the flier that was distributed in advance of the meeting, and took questions from the floor as they arose; the discussion was limited to the available time of approximately an hour and a quarter, and the Committee undertook to answer any additional questions that people noted down on the paper provided.

### **Core Areas:**

Garden City provisions (variation 200) was described. The philosophy is to put greater density around suburban shopping centres and along public transport routes in the established suburbs to restrict the ad hoc and piecemeal development that had been occurring throughout the suburbs, and to help make public transport more viable. The Garden City provisions are more about what can no longer happen in suburban areas that what has been included.

Since this came into effect, there has been a reduction in the number of dual occupancy proposals outside core areas (dual occupancies outside core areas have block size limitations and cannot be strata titled).

The Garden City Provisions of the Territory Plan can be found at <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/publications/factsheets/gardencity.pdf>

The Yarralumla Neighbourhood Plan was approved by the Minister for Planning on 9 September 2004 and is available from the Government shopfront or you can view it online at the Authority's website along with the associated activity reports that show the findings from the 6 week public comments period, surveys and public information sessions. Here is a direct link to it:

[http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/neighbourhood\\_plans/suburbs/ghy/index.htm](http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/neighbourhood_plans/suburbs/ghy/index.htm)

**Question:** Some questions were raised saying that the way it seems to be operating is that large houses are being built but not so much higher density. There was also concern that there should be affordable housing, and it was unclear what ACT Housing was doing in the sale of their stock.

Old Government houses are being demolished and 3 storey large houses are going up. Affordable housing is NOT happening.

### **Response:**

ACT Housing Authority owns some houses in the areas. Housing Commission sales of stock aim to ensure where there is a sale of a multi-site they seek a level of affordable housing. Neil attended a Ministerial Council on affordability, and there is no easy solution. The Garden City provisions did not have as an objective to provide more affordable housing, it was to provide choice.

In core areas you can consolidate sites. Open space and plot ratios have not changed. Growth boundaries have been drawn around a number of cities (e.g. Adelaide, Melbourne) as a way to try to protect the city hinterland.

Trying to make a move towards adaptable housing as part of house design, so that the house is adaptable for "whole of life", i.e. can be occupied in different ways as the same or different residents occupy it.

**Question:** Is the ACT Housing stock on the increase or decrease in Yarralumla?

**Response:** The YRA committee will follow this up and report back.

**Question:** If the house next door to you is bulldozed, what rights do you have?

**Response:** People do have a right to have a say on the development next door. When a submission is lodged, in most cases public notification is triggered, and adjoining neighbours are informed (adjoining is defined as those sharing a border). ACTPLA can inform a wider group, which they often do where there is block consolidation. There is about 14 working days for respondents to lodge a submission, and then there is 30-45 days for ACTPLA to consider and decide depending on whether or not submissions are received. If there are objections, the proponent needs to wait 28 days in case there is an appeal. The Administrative Appeals Tribunal has 120 days to determine an appeal, which they try to resolve initially through mediation, then directions hearing, then a formal hearing.

The neighbourhood plan is not a set of rules and regulations but policy issues (e.g. local centres, traffic, open space etc). Largely due to interest from Griffith residents, there was a request for the Government to develop “sympathetic guidelines” for development. They are *character* guidelines. Heritage is cultural, historical. Character is more aesthetic (e.g. scale, form, material). ACTPLA sought a budget for the provision of these guidelines, but didn’t get it, and instead hope to develop key characteristics as part of the forthcoming evaluation of the Garden City provisions.

**Question:** Is there any sort of limitation on the size of house? For example, O’Malley houses overwhelm the ground space.

**Response:** The controls to regulate the maximum sizes are largely the plot ratio, which is usually 35%. The undercroft carpark in the past has NOT been part of the calculation, but the Tribunal has determined that in some circumstances some or all of an undercroft might be, and so may now be calculated in the plot ratio. Large paved areas are considered as part of the landscape.

### **Brickworks:**

Several issues were raised regarding the brickworks. There was a consultants report that we can look at (<http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/publications/brickworks>) ACTPLA have responded to the Minister on the 35 odd issues in Option B. They have engaged with all the government agencies to seek their views on their responsibility in the proposal (e.g. Parks and Places would look after the extra open space). ACTPLA has had general agreement from all the relevant agencies (1<sup>st</sup> September meeting), and the next step is to seek Government endorsement.

There is a pocket of land outside the excavation which is intended to be for a small number of houses.[A number of 35 was spoken of, and one member stated the consultant’s paper quoted 25. Neil was not sure of the exact number, but it had not changed from what was stated in the report] Subsequent to the meeting it can be confirmed that it is 25 in all three options.

With this development the Government could use income generated to maintain the brickworks, trees, fences etc.

The current heritage listing on the Brickworks stays but currently there is no conservation management plan. It is this plan that would advise whether it is appropriate to have other activity in the Brickworks, to for example, produce income to help maintain. Such things as Arts and crafts, coffee shops etc.

The YRA has said, and still maintains, that the Brickworks are worthy of preservation and that this is *not* dependent on of the development of houses there.

It is expected that there will now be consideration by Government early in the New Year (based on the public document mentioned above) and if agreed a conservation management plan, lead by Heritage ACT, can be developed.

Mac West has a one page summary of the history of the Brickworks development prepared by Frances Perkins, and this is something the YRA is to expand upon and then put on our website.

Other links that were mentioned were:

Google Earth:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?q=canberra&ll=-35.329585,149.154553&spn=0.005182,0.007381&t=k&hl=en> which has Yarralumla Primary School and the Shops in it. You can zoom and pan from there to find a particular location.

The ACTPLA geographic information system at ACTMAPi. This is currently not accessible outside Governemnt.

The YRA Website:

[www.yra.org.au](http://www.yra.org.au)

A question was asked as to whether the pine forest would be cut down, and it was suggested that we should contact Catherine Kiernan at ACTPLA to find out.

**Question:** Have any heritage sites in the suburb been added or removed?

**Response:** [Mac West] There were two Heritage issues in the past year that the committee has been aware of, namely a proposal to redevelop land in front of a property on Schlich St that was the subject of a planning appeal and also the addition of houses known as the 'Yarralumla Brickworks precinct' near the shops to the Heritage Register, which again was the subject of appeal.

**Question:** How is it possible to nominate sites or buildings for heritage protection? Who can do it?

**Response:** Anyone can nominate a site for national listing, which would go to Heritage ACT and then to the Commonwealth.

There is new Heritage legislation in the ACT. Last year all matters went to ACTPLA and now Heritage ACT deals with it solely and ACTPLA only deals with development applications, which they refer to Heritage ACT, including if the proposed development is on the interim register. ACTPLA does not have to agree but then Heritage ACT can appeal against ACTPLA.

The rate at which new properties are listed is slow, mainly due to funding. ACTPLA

has helped and Heritage is about consider 150 properties (over Canberra) for the register.

**Question:** What is the process of adding to the Heritage list?

**Response:** Contact Sandy Blair at Heritage ACT for the details. If there is a threat to development, then they will treat it as urgent, as there have been some heritage claims that are seen to be a delaying tactic for development.

### **Stirling Ridge Redevelopment for PM's Lodge Rumour:**

The National Establishments Trust has had a 'reservation' on Stirling Ridge as a possible site for a future PM's lodge since the 1960s. There is no specific area delineated. There has been no move on this, but the NCA has asked the NET if they still wish this reservation to continue, and if they do, suggested that it would be prudent of them to commission a Heritage and Environmental Survey to see what if any issues there are that affect the different parts of the Ridge. News of this may have led to the idea that something is about to happen; he assured me that this was not the case.

### **Powerboats on the lake:**

Les Landau reported that he had contacted the National Capital Authority, who had been very helpful and expressed a desire to be on our mailing list and vice versa. They were considering a limited 3 month trial in East Basin, next to Kings Avenue Bridge for a 300m buoyed course for one special boat for the Water Ski ACT's elite skiers. They had done some initial noise testing, which due to the special boat, proved no more noise than a car on the bridge. There is no proposal to extend the area or extend powerboats beyond the area, apart from special functions such as the Jet Ski exercise in Central Basin in conjunction with Australia Day.

**Question:** The Federal Minister had stated on TV that he'd like to see powerboats on the lake. How does that statement affect the likelihood?

**Response:** The YRA will write to the NCA expressing the overwhelming view that the Yarralumla Residents are opposed to powerboats on the lake for a variety of reasons, including that of the amount of noise and disturbance the residential amenity powerboats would cause.

### **Child Care Centre**

Property Group in Urban Services owned the old baby health clinic on 2/53, which was found to be riddled with asbestos and lead paint. They therefore terminated the tenancy and recently demolished the building. It is their intention to transfer the cleared land to whichever agency can hold or dispose of it depending on the land use. Obviously if it is intended to change the land use then the Variation is triggered and the community, as well as this and other agencies, have the ability to comment on what is proposed.

ACTPLA have to make the decision what to do with it - transfer it to the Land Development Authority to sell land off, develop it or return it to open space. However, the matter has not yet been passed back to ACTPLA so nothing has happened yet - but it inevitably will.

**Question:** What is the status of asbestos in buildings? In particular the scout hall?

**Response:** The Government established Asbestos task force has been operating since legislation was passed in 2004 and has initiated an audit of every Government building.

The YRA will need to follow-up on the Scout Hall in particular.

### **Embassy Motel:**

This is a little difficult to explain due to the relationship between the NCA and the National Capital Plan. The Canberra Investment Corporation has a proposal for a 7 storey (above ground) development on the Embassy Motel site. They applied to ACTPLA to amend the land use to allow residential development. The community saw this as allowing 7 storeys, but ACTPLA say that the NCA controls height in that area and they were enabling a land use change. The NCA will write to the ACT Government to ask them if they would support a 7 storey development, and the Minister is on public record as supporting it. Can we expect more such development? The NCA and Territory Government are “comfortable with iconic structures at key nodes”. It was unclear how a 7 storey residential block could be thought iconic, and why Deakin could be thought of as a key node.

Neil stated that a not dissimilar location on the Yarralumla side – namely the former Catholic Convent on Guilfoyle Street – was not in the same situation because whereas the Embassy Motel site is low and reduces the impact of a development, the Convent site is already elevated.

The meeting concluded at 3:15pm, and there were residual questions submitted in writing (see below) that will be followed up by the committee.

### **Residual Questions:**

There were a number of questions left behind with the committee to follow-up and report back on. These were:

- What was the ACT Housing stock in 2000
- What is the ACT Housing stock in 2005-09-25 What ACT Housing stock is expected to be removed in the next 5 years
- What ACT Housing stock is to be replaced in the next 5 years
- What percentage of ACT Housing stock is rented at full market rate
- What are the plans for pine tree removal or preservation near the Brickworks, or as part of the Brickworks redevelopment plan
- Is any of the pine forest adjacent to the Brickworks to be cut down?
- What are the rules for dogs in Weston Park, and how are they enforced? There are quite a number of dogs there and many not on leads.
- There is a “No Through Road” sign on Denman St at the corner of Woolls St, but the sign faces *down* Denman St and so cannot be seen by motorists approaching down Denman St. Can something be done about an appropriately located sign?
- There have been quite a number of outages of electricity in Yarralumla. Is it possible to find out how many we have had and why?