

Combined Community Councils of the ACT

To Candidates ACT Government elections October 2016

Statement of Election Policy Priorities

This document is the outcome of consultation between participating Community Councils in the ACT.

What has prompted this statement?

Canberra residents want to engage more fully in planning for the future of our city, including about:

- Sustainability of Canberra's town centres;
- Meaningful community engagement at an early stage of planning for major urban developments;
- Better alignment of urban development proposals with ACT Government and national capital planning strategy;
- Greater transparency and accountability in reclassification and deconcessionalisation of community land and facilities that are sold for private use;
- Greater transparency and accountability concerning encroachment on aspects of Canberra's character and the features of the National Capital;
- Improved whole-of-Government approach by ACT Government agencies, for example on climate change adaptation;
- Enhanced focus on maintaining existing infrastructure, including footpaths, urban forest, open space and community facilities

In this context, the Combined Communities Councils advocates the following objectives:

1. *Ensure the long term sustainability of Canberra's town centres*
2. *Ensure preservation of Canberra's character as the national capital*
3. *Ensure that development proposals are consistent with an ACT-wide planning framework developed through active community engagement*
4. *Make it easier for Canberra residents to find out and understand the planning rules and criteria, including those relevant to their suburb*
5. *Protect Canberra's uniqueness as a city in the landscape (bush capital), while providing for greater urban density*
6. *Protect the amenity and environment of ACT residents, in particular the public domain and access to community facilities and services.*
7. *Secure a transport strategy for Canberra and region that is better integrated with land use planning*
8. *Ensure continued government support for community councils*
9. *Ensure ongoing Government commitment to substantive community engagement on planning*
10. *Ensure all existing residences' rights to solar access are protected and not compromised by new developments.*

We are inviting ACT election candidates to reflect on these issues in developing your election policies. We welcome your advice on how your policies address our concerns and will advise our members of your response.

1. Reform the planning system and its governance

A. Improve alignment of national capital and territory planning

- i. Strengthen strategies for sustainability of the town centres, including employment generation;
- ii. Improve co-ordination between the National Capital Authority, relevant federal agencies and the ACT Government:
 - a. in support of (i) above, and
 - b. to ensure an integrated approach to Canberra's development as the national capital.

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- iii. Support national heritage listing of Canberra, including these national capital features:
 - a. The Parliamentary Triangle, main avenues and approach routes; processional route to Government House;
 - b. Lake Burley Griffin and its foreshores;
 - c. The layout of the streets, the avenues of street trees and the location of local parks in the early garden suburbs of Barton, Ainslie, Braddon, Deakin, Forrest, Griffith, Kingston, Reid, Turner and Yarralumla;
 - d. The Inner Hills and buffers and broader National Capital Open Space System (reserves associated with Black Mountain, Mt Ainslie, Red Hill, Isaacs Ridge, Mt Taylor and Mt Stromlo);
 - e. The 'Y-Plan' for Canberra and the resultant establishment (but not the form) of decentralised town centres in their current locations.

B. Review and reform ACT planning legislation, system and governance

Review the ACT Planning and Development Act, the Territory Plan, and governance of the planning system to:

- i. Ensure that they align with global best practice in relation to sustainability;
- ii. Ensure that they are easy for the layperson to understand;
- iii. Re-establish an independent planning authority that includes community representation, and that is accountable directly to the Legislative Assembly;
- iv. Ensure effective enforcement arrangements;
- v. Strengthen legislative and regulatory arrangements for protection of Canberra's heritage;
- vi. Ensure ongoing community engagement during the development and construction of major urban precincts, e.g. through better master planning and use of community panels.

2. Support action to ensure adequate provision and maintenance of community facilities and public domain

- A. Increase funding for maintaining Canberra's urban forest;
- B. Increase funding to care for the public domain, including for maintenance of parks, sportsgrounds, footpaths and other open space;
- C. Legislate a requirement for a minimum percentage of accessible urban open space and community use land in each suburb;
- D. Provide a regular collection service for green/food waste, and a six-monthly pick-up of unwanted household goods, both on an opt-in basis.
- E. Improve transparency and consistency of the deconcessionalisation process.

3. Support a transport strategy for Canberra and region that is better integrated with land use planning

- A. Develop an integrated transport strategy for all methods of transport, both rapid and feeder routes, that will serve all the ACT;
- B. Ensure better integration of transport and land use planning
- C. Ensure appropriate traffic, public transport and parking arrangements in suburbs facing high traffic and parking pressure.

4. Government support for community councils

Re-affirm commitment to the role of community councils:

- A. Provide financial assistance to the Community Councils to assist the community to participate in planning decision-making.