



Mr Malcolm Snow
Chief Executive
National Capital Authority
Treasury Building
King Edward Terrace
Parkes ACT 2600

Dear Mr Snow

Block 10 Section 13 Forrest ACT

We are writing to you with respect to the rezoning from 'Community facility' to 'Mixed Use' of Block 10 Section 13 in the Canberra suburb of Forrest. This was incorporated into the recent revision of the National Capital Plan (NCP).

As you are aware, the rezoning of this block was a last-minute proposal in the process leading to the revised NCP. It did not appear in the Exposure Draft of the revised plan released in June 2015, and only emerged in Draft Amendment 86 released on 1 October 2015.

Local community groups opposed the rezoning in their comments on Draft Amendment 86. These concerns, as summarised by the National Capital Authority (NCA) in its Consultation Report on the draft amendment, are:

- the Forrest Primary School out of school hours' care, which engages children in outdoor and nature-based activities, currently uses the site for their 'Beyond the Fence' program and would like to continue this arrangement
- residents in nearby areas use the site for recreational purposes
- development of a hotel or serviced apartments may compromise child safety by introducing a transient population which overlooks the primary school and child care centre. Child safety may also be compromised by increased traffic, particularly those who exceed the current 40km/hour speed limit
- surrounding residential areas are experiencing an increase in population, which is likely to increase enrolments and demand for both the child care centre and Forrest Primary School. The site offers an opportunity for the existing education facilities to expand to cater for this demand
- the site could be used for Deakin Preschool or Manuka Childcare Centre

- using the site for expanded education facilities and co-locating child care, preschool and primary school facilities has a number of benefits, including in relation to reducing the number of trips taken by families with multiple children and strengthening community engagement through continuity of association with the facilities
- accommodation options are already increasing throughout the area and further hotel/serviced apartments may not be necessary
- traffic congestion and parking problems, already evident in the area, are likely to be exacerbated by traffic generated by a hotel or serviced apartments. An assessment would need to be performed to determine traffic and parking impacts resulting from main vehicular access to Block 10 Section 13 Forrest being located off Hobart Avenue
- there is currently no block separation between Block 10 Section 13 Forrest and adjacent school and child care sites. This raises concerns regarding student safety
- building setbacks need to be sufficient having regard to adjacent uses such as the school and child care centre.

Despite our objections, the rezoning was retained in the revised version of the NCP approved by Minister Fletcher earlier this year and subsequently tabled in Federal Parliament.

We were alarmed by advice in the *ACT Government Indicative Land Release Program 2016-17 to 2019-20* that a 168-unit development has identified as an option for Block 10 Section 13, under the new zoning. We understand also that 6 storey buildings may be permitted on the site. The ACT Jewish Community has significant concerns from a security perspective and they have communicated those concerns to the NCA and the LDA.

The proposed vehicular access from Canberra Avenue is also hugely problematical. We cannot see such access being safe for motorists and pedestrians. In fact, car access to and from Canberra Avenue at that intersection would be quite clearly unsafe and hazardous.

We appreciate that any works on the site will require Works Approval from the NCA, which will involve community consultation at the detailed design stage, in accordance with the Authority's 'Commitment to Community Engagement (August 2015)'. However, this will occur only after the land has been sold by the ACT Government and, in view of obvious commercial realities, we fear will be too late for other than cosmetic changes.

Finally, we are at a loss to understand why such a prominent and nationally significant piece of land, just a stone's throw from Parliament House, is considered for disposal. Revenue considerations should not be paramount in determining the best use for this site. Surely, there are many potential uses for this site which would take full advantage of its high profile location.

In view of our deep concerns, we respectfully ask the NCA to review new zoning of Block 10 Section 13. Our preference is that the previous community zoning be reinstated and the land retained for national or community purposes. We request that the review should proceed as a matter of urgency given the rapidly approaching sale of the block by the ACT Government. We also seek an urgent meeting between the NCA and all community groups that border on this site to discuss a satisfactory outcome for all.

We would be happy to discuss this with you. This could be arranged through Gary Kent, Chair of the Inner South Canberra Community Council, telephone 0419 854 211, info@isccc.org.au

Yours sincerely,

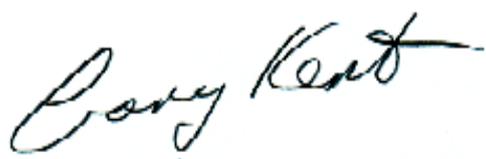
Tui Davidson
President, Forrest Parents & Citizens Assoc.

Maureen Blewitt
Director, Forrest Early
Childcare Centre

Amanda Tobler
CEO, Community Services #1
(previously known
as Southside Community Services)

Robert Cussel
Vice-President
ACT Jewish Community (Inc)

John-Paul Romano
Convenor, Steering Committee
Forrest Residents Group



Gary Kent
Chair
Inner South Canberra Community Council

23 September 2016

cc Minister for Local Government and Territories