

ACT ELECTION

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ACT ELECTION

What do Inner North residents want from this ACT election?

Genevieve Jacobs - 15 September 2020 number of comments 18

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Dickson is the centre of intense development activity. Photo: Daniella Jukic.

As the election nears, how do we ensure the voices of ordinary voters are heard? We're in election forum season and the first cab off the rank is the North Canberra Community Council which will hold a virtual election debate tomorrow night (16 September).

Region Media has partnered with the Inner North, Inner South, Tuggeranong and Weston Creek Community Councils to present election debates over the coming weeks, several of which will be filmed and live-streamed across our social media channels.

Challenges in the Inner North are plain as the area develops rapidly, encompassing multiple urban infill developments along the new light rail route. There are huge changes afoot for Dickson, along Northbourne Avenue and around West Basin.

ACT Election Round-Up

Every week, we'll package up the announcements, promises and policies for the 2020 ACT election and send them straight to your inbox.

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So what do local residents want and need from the ACT Government as their neighbourhood is transformed?

North Canberra Community Council chair Joachim Zeil says their concerns fall into three categories: planning, consultation and compliance. But the Council's frustration centres on a single theme: the persistent sense that the only recourse available to ordinary citizens is fiddling around the edges of developments that are a foregone conclusion.

"A typical example is Dickson where the whole area is piecemeal developed into little bits," Joachim says. While he's insistent that the Council was not opposed to the Common Ground development, for

example, he says there should have been consultation about the best location.

“That lack of meaningful consultations means it’s now going to the cheapest place, furthest away from public transport and facilities. Typically, we have locations and designs presented to us and we’re allowed to fiddle around the edges.

“I’d rather see a design competition, the chance for more input from the beginning. Is there an interesting alternative that provides community facilities, that does some good for everyone? Does the design for a project facilitate community spaces and interactions?”

Joachim says that while there’s a planning system review taking place, it’s hard to penetrate and that the environment and planning forum convened by Ben Ponton, the Director-General of Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development, doesn’t allow for much flexibility around the processes.

The Council has asked for a simpler and more straightforward approach, but Jochen says they often find the processes and rationales behind decision making obscure because there’s no easy way for the community to examine them

He’s also concerned by compliance, feeling that too many development applications have basic problems like solar access and parking issues. “Many of us are repeatedly involved with drilling down into compliance issues,” he says.

“That’s not our job, that’s the responsibility of the planning agencies. Yet some of us end up in ACAT, arguing about basic matters that should have been addressed in the development application in the first place.

“Why should that be necessary?”

The North Canberra Community Council's election forum will be held on Wednesday from 7:00 pm. You can find the Zoom meeting details [here](#).



The North Canberra Community Council and The RiotACT are hosting the 2020 ACT Election Candidates Forum. Image: Supplied.

The forum will include candidates for the seat of Kurrajong from Labor, the Liberals, the Greens, the Canberra Progressives and independent Bruce Paine.

The North Canberra Community Council represents the interests of the local residents, businesses and organisations including the Campbell Community Association; the Dickson Residents Group; the Downer Community Association; the Hackett Community Association; the Lyneham Community Association; the O'Connor Community Inc; the Pialligo Residents' Association; the Reid Residents' Association; the Turner Residents' Association and the Watson Community Association.

What do you think are the most urgent community issues in the Inner North?

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WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

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18 Responses to

What do Inner North residents want from this ACT election?

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Order



Acton 6:36 am 22 Sep 20

A stop to excessive rate increases. Rate increases on Canberra properties have exceeded 10%pa, which means higher costs for home owners, mortgage payers, low income renters and local businesses. Higher rates = housing unaffordability.

REPLY

SHOW 1 REPLY



t2owe 10:01 pm 21 Sep 20

How about a change of government. It's way over due,. ACT government is consult in name only, and planning is off the wall.

REPLY



azel 8:46 pm 18 Sep 20

It's time to change the government, they been in power to long time for some fresh ideas . Drain the swamp

REPLY

SHOW 2 REPLIES



John Ryan 4:48 pm 16 Sep 20

My predictions for this event: a lot of people complaining about new housing being built, particularly high-rise housing.

I don't think these people represent most North Canberrans. Most North Canberra residents want affordable housing.

They want a city for everyone, not just for people who were lucky enough to buy a three-bedroom house in Ainslie before the housing market skyrocketed.

I want the voice of people like me to be heard at this forum, but I know it won't be - we can't afford the time to participate, because we're too busy trying to stay ahead of housing costs.

REPLY



seafix 11:58 am 16 Sep 20

Q: Would the politicians support a “Moratorium on residential development on Community Facilities Land while a review is undertaken on their need and value to the local community”

 REPLY



Coral Bartlett 9:15 am 16 Sep 20

We need to see respect for our heritage & existing green spaces. Unchecked urban infill will destroy the heat sink provided by the inner north.

Preserve the old north Ainslie pre school (Bill Pye Park) & return preschoolers to the beautiful site. This will relieve overcrowding at North Ainslie and Majura Primary Schools.

 REPLY

 SHOW 1 REPLY



Hanh Dinh 9:14 pm 15 Sep 20

We would like to have more than one Supermarket rather than just one crowded WW. Bring on proper shopping centre with ALDI

 REPLY



seafix 8:07 pm 15 Sep 20

Would like politicians to agree to a ‘Review of the management of Community Facilities Land and importance to communities’. The government is currently converting community facilities land to residential developments. Relative to land zoned residential, community facilities land is a scarce resource. Community facilities are important in encouraging connection in the community and the benefits that come from this.

Unfortunately, Community Facilities Land is considered to have a low value by government. The rationale for this is that it can’t be used for any other purpose than community services or activities. One block zoned community facilities has been rented to a non-government organisation for 5 cents a year for 99 years. The lease outlined that the organisation must deliver “childcare and community activities”. The organisation has not delivered these services from the site for the last ten years and has subleased the site to another non-government organisation not delivering these services.

The organisation has developed a proposal to inject an RZ4 medium density development on community facilities land when all residential land in Ainslie is zoned RZ1 low density. This can happen because community facilities land has not been included in the multi-unit policy that includes all residential zones.

Allowing community facilities land to be given away cheaply is a fraud because:

- . The community gets no betterment payment after losing the facility
- . land valuers would be embarrassed as the lands market value is “best & highest” use – multi unit residential
- . If valued fairly the total cost of the project can be accurately compared with alternatives.

If this deal was given to a developer there would be a public inquiry.
Special deals for mates.

↩ REPLY

▼ SHOW 4 REPLIES



seafix 6:49 pm 15 Sep 20

Thanks for organising an opportunity for discussion about the planning and infill development process. We're in total agreement with Joachim Zeil believing the planning process is opaque and heavily weighted to the proponent. Residents are given 15 days to lodge objections to a development and can only comment on a narrow range of technical criteria. It is usually a small number of residents who are impacted and care against a team of property development specialists. There is no requirement to assess the social or environmental impact on the residents impacted or an understanding of their demography. For residents to have a real voice and operate on a level playing field they need to be provided with resources and access to expertise. Joachim asks an important question that goes to the health of community and building quality of life, “Does the design for a project facilitate community spaces and interaction?”

Unfortunately the Government through the planning process doesn't care about this issue and is in fact giving away community facilities and replacing these spaces with residential developments. How is this being allowed to happen?

↩ REPLY

▼ SHOW 1 REPLY

