

Dear Minister/Member

We seek your expression of opposition to the Federal Golf Club's latest plan to stem its financial losses at the expense of the community.

As you are no doubt aware, the Club has on six occasions proposed high density housing on an unused fairway it leases for 'recreational purposes,' and has on each occasion been turned down by the Legislature. Its members' inability to fund their activities, despite numerous government grants, has led them to display their indifference, even contempt, toward the community once again by proposing development of the fairway. We ask that you support the community in refusing the Club a seventh time, hopefully so emphatically that it will heed the message in future. Our reasons are:

1. Canberra derives much of its charm and liveability from its system of reserves and open space. These reserves and open spaces are a national asset, any reduction or degradation of which represents a permanent loss. While we support infill in built-up areas, with higher density housing near town centres, ad hoc development of open space surrounding and sympathetic in character and use to the Canberra Nature Reserve is unsustainable and incompatible with the 'linked green belts' intent of the Territory Plan.

2. Many people pay significant annual rates for the privilege of owning homes near the Reserve. Its proximity underlies much of their homes' value. They enjoy walking, exercising and viewing the wildlife there, and value the Reserve as a shared amenity, link between habitats and urban lung. They do not wish to see it irreparably reduced, carved up or otherwise degraded, all of which the Club's proposal threatens due to:

- the immediate need for new roads and infrastructure, and bushfire prevention clearance;
- an influx of additional cars and invasive species;
- the inevitable call for additional road access to Red Hill and Woden; and
- likely expansion of the development sphere as the Club continues to lose money and tries to repeat any success it might have in developing unused leased land.

3. It is offensive that the Club's membership, instead of paying its own way, seeks to profit from the sale of an asset it does not own. If it no longer needs the leased land for recreational purposes, it should return it to the community. It should then be added to the Reserve.

4. The proposed development would not likely resolve the Club's financial woes. Water is getting more expensive and golf less popular.

5. The proposed development would cause loss of endangered tree species, with attendant harm to native wildlife which depend on it. Decent members of the community have laboured for years to remove weeds and protect endangered flora and fauna in the Reserve. Their selfless efforts should not be undermined in the interests of a few.

This issue is important to many of us in surrounding suburbs. We believe the majority throughout the ACT would support the arguments above. We are pleased to acknowledge that Labor, Liberal and Green members have expressed in the past their concerns about such proposals. We now ask that you do so, not with assurances that the Club must follow a planning process, but by promising that you will do whatever you can to stop the proposal at the earliest stages of that process.