

Mr Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Planning and Land Management
and Environment and Heritage
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

I am writing to about the motion passed by the Legislative Assembly on 25 October 2017 concerning the protection of Red Hill.

As you are aware six conservation and residents' organisations that were members of the Federal Golf Club Community Panel have written their own Panel report. This Report was sent to all Members of the Legislative Assembly on 20 November 2017.

The Report recommended that the ACT Government suspends all development activity in the Red Hill open space area until an overarching planning and management framework for the area has been prepared and implemented. The Report also calls on the ACT Government to implement the Legislative Assembly motion in a manner which ensures genuine and lasting protection for Red Hill and in so doing takes into account the key issues set out in the Attachment to this letter.

On 13 November 2017 at a hearing of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal Mr Ponton, Director General of EPSDD advised that he was to shortly provide advice to you about implementation of the Legislative Assembly motion. In considering the manner in which the motion is to be implemented it is imperative that the area which is to be covered by an integrated plan includes the Red Hill Nature Reserve and the Federal Golf Course lease area, together with the large adjacent vacant blocks of land in Garran, Hughes and Deakin as well as Section 66 Deakin. It is also imperative that the preparation of an integrated plan addresses the matters listed in the Attachment to this letter. To not deal with these matters in the development and implementation of an integrated plan would not provide the necessary protection for Red Hill.

Over 3,100 voters, mainly located in suburbs close to Red Hill in the electorates of Kurrajong and Murrumbidgee signed a Petition which calls on the ACT Government to ensure that a comprehensive integrated plan for the open space on Red Hill is prepared that provides genuine protection for the area. The Petition was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 30 November 2017. There are many thousands of other voters that are of the same view.

Given the level of public concern about proposed developments on Red Hill and the fact that the preparation of an integrated plan for the area involves a new process I urge you to consult with relevant interests about the manner in which the ACT Government intends to implement the Legislative Assembly motion. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and/or your officials to discuss the matter. I am sure representatives of the other organisations that prepared the Community Panel Report would equally welcome the opportunity to be involved in such discussions.

I have copied this letter to the other five organisations as well, as the Chief Minister, and Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA and Ms Nicole Lawder MLA who sponsored the Legislative Assembly motion

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Wayne Fletcher
Co-Convenor
Garran and Hughes Residents' Action Group
30 November 2017

Copies to

Mr Andrew Barr MLA Chief Minister
Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA Member for Murrumbidgee
Ms Nicole Lawder MLA Member for Brindabella
Larry O'Loughlin Conservation Council ACT Region
George Wilson Deakin Residents' Association
Geoff Robertson Friends of Grasslands
Ruth Cully Hughes Residents' Association
Ross Kingsland Red Hill Regenerators

Attachment

Preparation of an overarching planning and management framework for Red Hill.

Preparation of any framework should address the following issues:

- (1) Providing the means to protect the remaining Red Hill open space and its values.
- (2) Putting in place mechanisms to ensure that there are no detrimental impacts on the critically endangered woodland and its components.
- (3) Providing the means to protect mature trees and hollow bearing trees.
- (4) Identifying the steps to be taken to facilitate important areas of woodland outside the Red Hill Nature Reserve being incorporated into the Reserve.
- (5) The establishment of criteria and management guidelines to govern decision making in relation to all activities and proposed developments to be undertaken in the area. The development of these criteria and guidelines should take into account the existing requirements governing the management of the Nature Reserve and the golf course lease requirements.
- (6) Enabling the identification and assessment of indigenous heritage in the area.
- (7) Providing the means to protect the heritage values of the area including the landscape values and the view field.
- (8) Protecting community use and sense of belonging to the area.
- (9) Criteria and mechanisms for ensuring that the amenity of adjacent residents is not eroded.
- (10) Giving careful consideration to the existence of the high risk Bushfire Zone in the area and the potential damage that can result from the need to “scrub” areas of woodland to protect poorly located residential developments or their access roads.
- (11) Ensuring the extraction of ground water is less than the discharge rate.
- (12) The means to ensure traffic flows do not result in detrimental impacts on the environment and public safety and result in additional congestion on roads in surrounding suburbs.
- (13) Development of a plan to transition land in the FGC lease area into the Red Hill Nature Reserve, in a number of stages, in the event that the FGC is no longer financially viable.

Implementation of the planning and management framework will involve the use of a range of ACT Government processes, plans and regulatory instruments.

