

Good morning, my name is Margot Sachse. I am the President of the JRA – the Jerrabomberra Residents Association.

The Jerrabomberra Residents Association is one of the most active and vocal community organisations in the Queanbeyan City–Canberra region.

We were formed by volunteers from the newly established Jerrabomberra community in the early 1990s, to help foster community spirit and develop caring relationships between local families.

Over time, the JRA became increasingly involved with advocacy and lobbying for the particular needs of our community, at a Local, State and Federal level.

We now represent around 7000 residents in the Queanbeyan City Council area, who reside in the 2619 postcode.

This makes us larger than Cooma.

While we maintain our ‘community’ focus and desire to make Jerrabomberra a special place to live, we now also draw on the collective experience, qualifications, and skills of our JRA members to

ensure infrastructure and resourcing concerns are addressed by Governments.

Many years of having a single entry and exit point has resulted in a harmonious, 'village' environment and it is one of the great attractions of living in Jerrabomberra. We have developed a very strong sense of 'community' and it is this ambiance that we wish to preserve.

However, we acknowledge that future development is inevitable. We wish to work with you to meet the challenge in balancing the benefits brought by new residential developments, and minimising the loss of 'community' that may come with it.

The JRA does not recommend a definitive position for new residential proposals. There are mixed views within the JRA on each of the various proposals, just as there are mixed views within the broader Jerrabomberra and Queanbeyan communities.

However, we do hold very strong views on what **should** happen if different proposals are approved. Just as we hold strong views about the shortcomings of much of the existing infrastructure and its ability to meet current needs.

I will outline these in detail with you today.

The JRA recognises that there are pros and cons to further development, just as there are benefits and disadvantages to no future residential areas.

However, we want to make it clear that we ***completely reject*** the desires of some to see the land around Jerrabomberra developed into industrial and commercial areas.

It is firmly held that proposed residential developments offer more to Jerrabomberra and Queanbeyan than no further development – but it must be done right.

Many members are reluctant to support uncontrolled residential development. This reluctance stems from the mishandling of infrastructure and community development within our neighbourhood, and not just a reluctance to expand our ‘village’ environment.

TRAFFIC

Traffic congestion and safety is one of the largest concerns held by Jerrabomberra residents.

Current road infrastructure will not cope with the additional traffic that will develop from the proposed rezoning of the Poplars, Tralee, Environa and Googong.

A number of statistics relating to road use are included within the JRA's written submission, which clearly support this view. While I won't reiterate them here today, I would like to draw your attention to them and point out that they are drawn from a number of independent sources – including Commonwealth and NSW Government departments.

The current traffic planning, management and infrastructure is insufficient for present traffic volumes, and will be unable to cope with the large increase in vehicles that new developments will bring.

Lanyon Drive and Tharwa Road are already the major route from southern Canberra to the NSW coast; the major ACT bypass for NSW traffic to the snowfields, and the major northern access road to the ACT industrial suburb of Hume.

The roundabout at the intersection of Tompsitt and Lanyon Drives is dual lane and with southern bound traffic moving on Lanyon Drive/Tharwa Road, this narrows to two lanes and crosses a narrow railway bridge on the ACT/NSW border all of which are able to flow at 80 km/h.

In their current form, the Lanyon Drive/Tharwa road junction and Monaro Highway intersection are not adequately coping with the current traffic flow to and from NSW residents. The additional vehicle traffic from the Poplars, Tralee, Environa and Googong would only add further congestion.

Recent NSW-ACT Government costing estimates for the duplication of Tharwa Drive and the upgrade of the Monaro Highway intersection was placed at about \$25 million. In its present state, the road is unsafe, and an inhibitor to residential and economic development in the proposed land release area.

However, due to the geography of the road – approximately three of the four kilometres of road in question are in the ACT, but with the railway bridge and crossing falling under NSW responsibility – intergovernmental cooperation is vital to the road's upgrade.

After intense lobbying from the JRA, the Federal Government funding has been provided to the ACT to duplicate the section of road from the Monaro Highway to Shepherd Street in Hume in 2007.

The NSW government will be duplicating its section of the road from the Tomsitt Drive round about including the railway bridge in 2007/08.

However, the intersection with the Monaro Highway and Lanyon Drive and the remaining section of the road are the ACT government's responsibility – and due to the precarious state of the ACT finances this remains unfunded.

I suggest that rather than take the stage managed tour of this area, you should take a drive down Lanyon Drive at 8.15am and take your life in your hands, like we do each day and turn right onto the Monaro Highway heading to the city.

At 5.15pm travel back to Jerrabomberra via Lanyon Drive from the Monaro Highway, then ask yourself '*can this road handle double the traffic?*'

Your answer will be a resounding 'NO'.

Regardless of future Queanbeyan developments, traffic on this road will only increase over the next two to three years. This is because of the construction of the Defence Force's Command Centre near Bungendore (approximately 17 km from Queanbeyan CBD and in Palerang Shire).

Concerns have been raised by JRA members regarding the development of Edwin Land Parkway.

The highest concern regards the proposed plan to further develop this road into the Queanbeyan by-pass, which will literally cut Jerrabomberra into two.

It was always designed as a major road, providing another entry/exit point for our community. It was never planned as a by-pass for Queanbeyan.

The JRA is very concerned that the Edwin Land Parkway will become the primary road network for the majority of people in the proposed suburb of Googong to access the ACT.

There will be significant impacts on traffic safety and congestion in Jerrabomberra unless an alternative around Jerrabomberra is planned.

The JRA believes that roads should be upgraded now to meet current demand.

The approval of any future residential development **MUST** be done in conjunction with the upgrade of these roads, or serious safety issues will arise, let alone the worries about congestion and travel time.

Environment and heritage

Jerrabomberra Creek is considered a significant natural asset and has significant environmental values that warrant its restoration, protection and enhancement. The JRA has worked closely with the Queanbeyan City Council in the development of a management plan for the creek.

The creek flows through the nationally significant Jerrabomberra Wetlands in the ACT and lies within the Molongolo River Catchment, which in turn feeds the Murrumbidgee River.

The proposal in North Tralee and the Poplars developments to regenerate and restore Jerrabomberra Creek and provide landscaped areas on the banks of the creek for community recreation is a positive step for the environment that will benefit Queanbeyan and Canberra residents as a whole.

The Jerrabomberra area has important heritage values.

These values must be preserved and included in all proposed development.

EDUCATION

The JRA supports a new high school in the proposed development areas.

It is eagerly supported by Jerrabomberra residents and identified by 24% of the community as their number one priority. This is the single highest-ranking priority for residents.

I will again point out that this statistic is drawn from independent sources – this time the Queanbeyan City Council survey – and not a figure of convenience for the JRA.

However, our own feedback reflects the QCC survey results.

One of the strongest reasons provided for the support of Tralee, Poplars, and Environa, is the establishment of a High School.

With previously set-aside land within Jerrabomberra now developed for residential use, these new residential proposals are seen by most locals as our last chance to gain the infrastructure we were promised and the population now warrants.

Jerrabomberra and Queanbeyan parents of school age children have expressed a great deal of support for the plan to build an Anglican Secondary School in the proposed Tralee development.

More high school students leave Queanbeyan to further their education than stay in the city.

According to bus transport figures, 3444 Queanbeyan area students travel to Canberra everyday to attend government and non-government schools.

All but 590 of them go to high schools. About 1950 attend non-government high schools.

Clearly, there is a need for another high school within the Queanbeyan City Council, and the figures indicate that there would be broad support for the establishment of a private high school within the new developments to meet the demand of different educational choices.

It is imperative that with any increase in development / population, that current issues and problems be dealt with prior to, or concurrently with, any new residential developments.

If this issue is not thoroughly considered, and solutions found, the current system will fail to cope and the exodus of students across the border will continue.

The JRA also supports a new primary school, or upgrade of Jerrabomberra Public School.

The school took ten years to be established, mainly due to Department of Education forecasts that it would not be viable for twenty years and was therefore not required.

These forecasts were wrong, and we hope that foresight can be used to address obvious future demands, as well as the shortcomings of the present facilities.

The Jerrabomberra Public School had its first intake of students in 2003 and was officially opened in 2004.

The school has well and truly surpassed its infrastructure capacity, as it was originally designed as a '14 core' school, and as of June 2006, is now a '29 core' school with over 700 students.

The development of North Tralee/Poplars - opposite the school - will put further pressure on a primary school that is already stressed to its limits. Due to the lack of space the school is already unable to accept students from North Terrace, which is part of the 2619 postcode.

Jerrabomberra is a young suburb with a large number of young families. There are also a large number of Defence families. When they move on these families are generally replaced with another young Defence family.

This makes Jerrabomberra demographically unusual; instead of the community gradually ageing it is continually being regenerated. This situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

In fact, the recent expansion of DHA properties within Jerrabomberra, and the future Defence Headquarters near Bungendore, is likely to see the situation grow.

It is therefore imperative that educational requirements are thoroughly investigated prior to approval of any further residential development, particularly in the Poplar, Tralee and Environa areas.

WATER

The JRA is firm in its belief that NSW residents must have equitable access to water. This is in stark contrast to the ACT Government's submission to this Inquiry, and one of the reasons why the JRA objects so strongly to their views on development within our region.

But more on this later.

The increasing pressure on the provision of water for urban communities is felt no more keenly than within this region. However, it is not entirely due to water shortages, and the recent drought.

It is also due to inter-jurisdictional disputes over water use.

The drought and water shortages have resulted in water restrictions within the ACT and Queanbeyan Council. More efficient use of water supplies has been pursued by Governments, but a number of JRA members have questioned the capacity of the region's water supplies to service additional residential development in Queanbeyan, and the ACT.

However, the ACT's plans to substantially grow the ACT population indicates that there should be sufficient water to service the region if done efficiently. However, the ACT wants all future development contained within the ACT.

Their argument that there is not enough water to service Queanbeyan residential development proposals is therefore nonsense - they simply wish to ensure future developments are within their borders.

Googong and Tralee developers have outlined ambitious programmes for the efficient use of potable water, the recycling of grey water and the capture of stormwater.

The JRA is also aware that the ACT and NSW Governments have reached agreement for the supply of water to new residential developments in Queanbeyan.

The Inquiry must satisfy itself that there is a sustainable supply of water, which does not reduce the supply available to current residents.

While current disputes around water usage are centred on arguments between the ACT and Queanbeyan Council about where future residential development can occur, the JRA is strongly of the opinion

that all local residents – regardless of which side of the NSW/ACT border they live on – are *equally* entitled to water.

Everyone in the Canberra-Queanbeyan district is entitled to choose where they will live. This should not be restricted by a superficial argument about the supply of the *same* water to the *same* resident because of the particular suburb or town they wish to make home.

Similarly, the Inquiry must be satisfied that future residential developments do not compromise the capacity of current sewerage infrastructure.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The JRA believes that the current Jerrabomberra – North Terrace population warrants a greater police and Emergency Services presence.

Should the new residential proposals be approved, then the JRA supports a base for emergency and police services within the new developments.

The population will warrant it, as will the drawing southward of the geographical centre of the Queanbeyan Council area by the new developments.

ELECTRICITY AND COMMUNICATIONS

One of the benefits of the new residential proposals for the existing Jerrabomberra residents is an upgraded electricity and communications services.

The JRA also wants the best electricity and telecommunications infrastructure in the new proposals from day one – so residents don't suffer the same inconvenience and 'infrastructure-lag' that we have.

Jerrabomberra frequently suffers from electricity outages, with the last one just a few days ago. It is clear that the current infrastructure cannot handle the current capacity, let alone further residential expansion.

Future electricity infrastructure within Googong, Tralee, Environa and the Poplars must meet their requirements so current Jerrabomberra residents are not adversely impacted upon.

You should also be aware that Jerrabomberra has limited ADSL capacity due to the current telecommunications infrastructure.

The JRA understands that we are unable to be connected to the TransACT network due to the limitations of the underground wiring.

The JRA believes that all the proposed developments must have access to modern communications infrastructure.

I now come to the matter of other submissions, and the JRA views of them.

Firstly, the ACT submission.

ACT Government submission

The JRA totally and categorically rejects everything stated in the ACT Government submission. We find the ACT governments approach as totally hypocritical.

We are insulted that the ACT Government considers Jerrabomberra a dormitory suburb of Canberra that (and I quote) “lacks all but basic services and community facilities”.

By choice we live in NSW, we are a suburb of Queanbeyan. Our young community has far more services than the average Canberra suburb - for example a school!

The ACT government are currently constructing a prison at Hume.

We were excluded from the consultation process because we did not vote in the ACT. The JRA with our Federal, State and local representative were treated with total disrespect by the ACT government through out this whole process.

In order to get the prison approved, the ACT Planning Minister had to use his ‘call-in powers’ on 1 February.

However I see that the MOU on cross border agreement was signed by the Chief Minister on 17 March. It is clear that if we had our time in the AAT, that not only the location of this prison makes poor planning sense (when a better location was available) but that the MOU would prevent its construction in the current location as well.

Now to add further insult to injury they want to flex their muscle on the NSW developments and wish to be part of the process, after excluding NSW totally from the jail process.

We totally reject the ACT's push to make the land around us industrial development, while they horde all future residential development.

Airport submission

It is JRA policy that the Canberra Airport must have a curfew from 11pm to 6am.

We believe that the airport is a regional inner city airport servicing the community and as such it must operate within this framework. The airports desire to operate as a 24hr/freight hub should be curbed with a legislated curfew.

We, like all residents of the region are entitled to a good nights sleep.

We totally reject the airports recommendations that the land surrounding Jerrabomberra be rezoned for industrial or commercial purposes.

CONCLUSION

The vast majority of the submissions before you are about profitability and commercial use.

Our submission is unique as it focuses on community benefit and the people factor. It comes from the people who will be directly affected by the development.

In an ideal world we would love to have the open space like we have today, however if this is taken away by further development then the JRA outrightly rejects industrial development of these areas.

We hope that the lessons learnt from the development of Jerrabomberra are not replicated and that we get the community infrastructure that we were initially promised.

We wish to preserve the ambiance that we have today, and we ask that you please do not embrace the recommendations of the ACT government and Canberra Airport and turn our community into a village in a sea of factories and prisons.

Thank you for your time and consideration of JRA positions.

I would be very happy to take any questions, or to provide you with further information about our submission or views that you may need.

ENDS