



NATIONAL TRUST

Unit 3.9, Level 3, Griffin Centre  
20 Genge Street, Canberra ACT 2600

## **2016 ELECTION HERITAGE FORUM - SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS**

A Forum on 22 September 2016, was attended by 100 people and chaired by Mr Ian Meikle Editor of the City News. The summary of presentations made by the candidates is as follows:

### **MR MICK GENTLEMAN MLA (ACT LABOR)**

- ACT Labor is committed to a 5 year strategy recognising heritage places. Consultations closed in March 2016.
- The Strategy is intended to set a clear direction and framework for the recognition, protection, conservation and promotion of our heritage places and objects over the next five years and will re-focus Government priorities in this area.
- The strategy is linked to the Canberra Plan and Social Plan.
- A statement of planning intent is intended to create sustainable liveable neighbourhoods, recognise high quality places, promote outcome focused design and increase engagement with the private sector.
- Future growth of Canberra is likely but should not be at the expense of heritage values. The ACT Heritage Council will have a broader role in the ACT Government.
- There will be an emphasis on adaptive reuse and a focus on underutilised places.
- Heritage conservation can be a sensitive subject but we need to preserve a sample group of each housing form. The Government recognises you can't save everything but there needs to be a balance struck.
- Need to articulate the reasons, effects and role of heritage conservation in the community and develop new ways of conserving, promoting and protecting the places and objects we have.
- Recognise the importance of interpretive signage, Canberra Tracks app and cultural heritage in Canberra.
- The ACT Heritage Register will have all aboriginal sites including 500 places and objects.

### **MR ALISTAIR COE (CANBERRA LIBERALS)**

- There needs to be an increase in housing density in the town centres which will take the pressure off the suburban areas.
- The ACT needs a well thought out heritage strategy with proper consultation. A Liberal heritage strategy will include a heritage tourism plan, including cultural heritage with genuine partnerships.
- Canberra Liberals see an over-reach by the LDA and will devolve planning responsibilities to the planning departments.
- While preservation is an important part of any strategy there needs to be good reasoning and integrity behind the listings. Heritage protection is often seen as a liability and development happens around it. Any new estates and development need to treat heritage as an asset, not a liability.
- ACT Liberals would commission a heritage app to broaden the appeal of heritage in the city.

- Community organisations with heritage expertise are not adequately funded. ACT Liberals would commit to ongoing rolling funding of \$200,000 per year to fund bodies such as the Trust to provide expert advice to Government.
- ACT Liberals would establish an Engineers Panel with a Chief Engineer including engineering heritage expertise to improve capacity and capability in Government.

#### **MS VERONICA WENSING (ACT GREENS)**

- The ACT Greens believe that Canberra needs, and deserves, a vision and rolling 10-year plan for protection of natural, cultural and built heritage sites.
- ACT Greens support the 12 heritage election issues identified by the Trust.
- Government, non-government bodies, the private sector and private individuals should fund developments and projects that involve our shared heritage.
- There should be a history and heritage tourism strategy.
- ACT Greens would commit \$100,000 each year to maintain heritage assets around the city.
- There needs to be a conservation management plan for all heritage precincts but there needs to be a balance between heritage places and growth. This is in the context of protecting heritage places and allowing our city to meet the demands of growth and sustainability.
- Government-owned heritage-listed properties should be audited in respect of energy efficiency to allow for adaptive re-use and environmentally sustainable design in their refurbishment and maintenance.
- Heritage protection is not limited to preservation of buildings and other places and objects; it also includes preservation of cultural and natural heritage, such as the memories and stories of Aboriginal elders. ACT Greens recognise, respect and seek active engagement with traditional custodians and other Aboriginal peoples in relation to their skills and knowledge of conservation and heritage places.
- The Government should ensure that heritage repositories are available for libraries, museums and other institutions with collections. This will ensure a safe and centralised repository to store objects, ACT publications and records.

#### **MR RICHARD FARMER (CANBERRA COMMUNITY VOTERS PARTY)**

- Canberra Community Voters Party are independent thinkers not bound by rigid party political dogma. The party does not have a specific heritage policy however members are united in wanting a more open decision making process.
- Need a sufficiently resourced ACT National Trust body to provide evidence and advice to Government and the community before decisions are made.

#### **MS MAREA FATSEAS (INDEPENDENT)**

- Sees a disconnect between the community and the Assembly and notices of development are made too late in the process. Cited examples of Yarralumla Brickworks and Manuka Oval.
- Need an independent Integrity Commissioner to improve transparency and accountability.
- Canberra is a young city but we need to preserve what we have now. The planning system needs an overhaul including better governance, legislation being more user friendly and a change to the LDA.
- Supports the National Trust's major issues. In particular more emphasis on the character of individual precincts. review the Canberra Y plan, demonstration that developments will have benefits to the economy and the community, establishment of design review panels.
- Planning processes for new development should not just be about demographics but include international best practice in community engagement so that everyone has a say.
- Protecting community amenity and public open space, including the heritage of these sites should be core business of the municipal function of Government.

## **GENERAL ASSESSMENT**

**ACT LABOR** The Strategy referred to by Mr Gentleman has yet to be developed. Subsequently a spokesperson for the party has advised that they do not have a Heritage Policy document and would intend to continue with what they have been doing. There has been no response to the issues raised by the Trust.

**CANBERRA LIBERALS** Would commit to ongoing rolling funding of \$200,000 per year to fund bodies such as the Trust. Other policy announcements were subsequently made and a Heritage Policy released. See copy on NT(ACT) website.

**GREENS** They support the 12 heritage election issues identified by the Trust.

## **SUMMARY MOTION**

The following motion was passed at the conclusion of the Forum:

*The meeting calls on the incoming ACT Government to adopt a strong, effective and properly resourced heritage policy and supports the resolution of the 12 issues identified by the National Trust (ACT).*