

News from the Mountain

Something You Should Know About the Old Ainslie Tip Site

On Friday afternoon, March 20th, Parks, Conservation and Lands (PCL) staff informed me that contamination had been discovered at the old Ainslie tip site the place where volunteers have spent many happy hours planting and maintaining young seedlings.

As a precautionary measure, PCL staff have since closed the site while a detailed inspection is conducted. On Monday 23rd, at a meeting with staff of Parks, Conservation and Lands and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), I was informed that bonded asbestos was discovered in the form of old construction material, such as small fragments of asbestos cement sheeting and roofing and sections of asbestos cement water pipe. These materials were and still are - in common use in buildings and as water supply infrastructure built before 1985. I understand that the asbestos in such products only becomes dangerous to human health if it is cut or drilled and the fine dust enters the lungs. This is in sharp contrast to the deadly loose fibrous asbestos that was sprayed in roof cavities as insulation and removed by the Government in the 1980s.

Advice from the Environmental Consultant's engaged by PCL to assess the site and remove the asbestos fragments is that the health risk of the asbestos discovered in the discarded and buried construction material is extremely low, however as a precautionary measure the old Ainslie tip site will be a no-go area until the detailed assessment and remedial works by the Environmental Consultant, PCL and EPA staff is completed.

We can be disappointed that we cannot go there to water our plantings, but I understand that there is no reason to be concerned about the health risks of our past visits. I reiterate that the site has been closed as a precautionary measure, not because it is already known to be a dangerous place.

I will keep you informed of any relevant information and developments communicated to me by any ACT Government Agency.

Waltraud Pix, FoMM coordinator

The Curse of Domestic Rabbits

During the recent ACT Election campaign I sent questions to the Greens, ALP and all others contesting, enquiring about their policies regarding keeping pet rabbits. Only the Greens responded, and agreed broadly with my proposition that this aspect of domestic life in Canberra is poorly administered, if at all.

Their inclination was that it would be hard to monitor. No, it wouldn't. **Pet shops must not be permitted to sell rabbits that can breed...simple as that**, just like they're not supposed to sell other domestic pets of any sort, but particularly cats and dogs that are not neutered, except the pedigree offspring sold to people who can demonstrate a licence for breeding purposes. Too hard, apparently.

And frankly, it isn't the lovely Belgian Peter Rabbits, the children's pets, which are the culprits for the exponential escalation of the rabbit population.

I believe I am correct in stating that the ACT is the only State/Territory where it is permitted to keep rabbits for raising for the pot - in Queensland you can't keep any sort of rabbit, pet or for food, and banning this practice would go a long way to reducing the rabbit population explosion in the ACT....that together with my suggestion that no pet shop (after an agreed suitable lead-in time) may sell any rabbit that has not been neutered.

Jean Hamilton, HACKETT

Meg's Toy Box:

a volunteer-run community toy library, provides toys at a minimal hire fee for children up to 6 years of age.

Opening hours: Wed 10am-noon, Sat 2pm-4pm.

Located at the back of St Margaret's Uniting Church, corner Antill St and Phillip Ave, Hackett.

Phone Helen 0416 568 024, or just drop in.

Hackett Traffic: SAMPLE LETTER

Mr Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister and Minister for Transport, GPO Box 1020, Canberra, ACT 2601; Stanhope@act.gov.au

RE: Traffic lights at the corner of Majura/Phillip Ave in North Canberra

Dear Mr Stanhope,

I am writing to you as a resident of Hackett to express my concern regarding the number of vehicles using Hackett as a short-cut in the mornings. Almost a thousand vehicles each morning are entering Hackett - the majority of which are cutting through to get right-of-way onto Majura Avenue. Our suburban streets were not planned for this volume of traffic and it is potentially dangerous for children on their way to school, for older people and affects the quality of life of everyone in the suburb.

I am therefore seeking your support to give priority to installing traffic lights at the corner of Phillip Avenue and Majura Avenue. These lights would help avoid the traffic snarl we get every morning at that intersection and would therefore remove the incentive for cars to go through Hackett.

I understand that a number of political parties, including the ACT Labor Party and the ACT Greens, supported the prioritised installation of the traffic lights at that intersection at the North Canberra "Meet the Candidates" meeting held at Dickson College on 17 September.

I request that you please both acknowledge the receipt of this letter and let me know your response to this issue in writing. I can be contacted at the above address and/or phone number

Yours sincerely,

For more details and an electronic copy of this letter visit:

<http://northcanberra.org.au/suburbs/hackett/hackett-community-association/hackett-traffic-issues/>

SIR JOHN HACKETT ESSAY COMPETITION

All young people living in Hackett and in school years 5-12 are invited to enter this competition being held by the Hackett Community Association with the support of local schools and the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

Essays should be
250-500 words long for Years 5-6;
about 600 words for Years 7-8;
900-1000 words for Years 9-10 and
1000-1200 words for Years 11-12.

The topic is:
“**The person after whom your street
in Hackett is named**”.

Where the street is named after more than one person (eg. Rivett Street) you can choose which person to write about.

Prizes and certificates will be offered for the best essays. Entries will close in early August. Further details will be provided in later newsletters.

The contact for the competition is the HCA Chair, James Walker, who can

Hackett Traffic continued:

Short-term solutions: There are a number of things which could be done in the short-term to address the problem. Most of these involve some form of traffic-calming or traffic redirection which will discourage or prevent rat-runners from using Hackett.

The problem with these is that while they could be done quickly and could solve the problem, all of them involve some kind of trade-off for residents as well. For example, measures to directly stop vehicles turning into Madigan St from 7.30-9.00am would affect parents returning after dropping children off, parents taking children to school within Hackett, and people from out of the suburb wanting to use our shops.

The Hackett Community Association is continuing to talk to ACT Roads about these options, and may organize a community meeting later this year to see if there is support for any of the ideas.

Long-term solutions: ACT Roads has indicated that the best solution is to install traffic lights at the corner of Majura Ave/ Phillip Ave, which will regulate traffic flow and decrease the incentive to cut through the suburb.

Unfortunately this is a major funding item, and is not part of the current construction program. At the North Canberra Community Council “Meet the Candidates” meeting in October we asked the political parties about the traffic problem, and both the Labor Party and the Greens made commitments to bring forward the installation of traffic lights.

The Hackett Community Association believes that there needs to be continuing community pressure to ensure that the Government commits to the construction of the traffic lights as soon as possible.

It would be good to have as many Hackett residents as possible write to our local members to bring this issue to their attention and to urge them to get moving on this issue. A draft letter (which can be changed or adapted) is attached and is available on the Hackett website.

More information about the traffic issue, including a copy of the sample letter, can be found at <http://northcanberra.org.au/suburbs/hackett/hackett-community-association/hackett-traffic-issues/>

A note from ACT Parks Conservation and Lands:

Dumped and Potentially Contaminated Building Material.

Members of the public who see material that may contain asbestos (eg. fibro sheeting) within urban open space or a nature reserve should notify Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

Canberra Connect will collect the relevant information and pass it onto the appropriate authority.

Please do not take samples of the material or disturb the site. Parents should ensure children are kept clear of the site.

Anyone who has health concerns in relation to asbestos should contact ACT Health on 6205 1700 from 9am to 4:30pm.

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