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The Office of the Chief Executive



March 11th, 2010

UNDER EMBARGO, 12 NOON, 11 MARCH 2010

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

NORTH WATSON HERITAGE VILLAGE

COLLABORATION PRODUCES POSITIVE COMMUNITY OUTCOME

The Village Building Company, North Canberra Community Council, Friends of Mount Majura, Watson Community Association and The Conservation Council ACT Region have reached an agreement on additional conservation and traffic measures to mitigate impacts to areas around the proposed North Watson Heritage Village estate. This has removed the necessity for an appeal of ACTPLA's Development Approval for 316 homes in the estate.

The development was approved by ACTPLA on February 4th, 2010 and was then potentially subject to third party appeal.

The Village Building Company has held a series of very constructive meetings with representatives of the above community groups over the past two weeks, resulting in a mutual agreement with regard to mitigating the potential environmental and traffic impacts of the proposed project.

Bob Winnel from Village Building said: "The outcomes of these meetings will benefit the broader North Canberra community. The Village Building Company recognises that a healthy natural and built environment is vital to achieving its sustainability objectives for the site at North Watson and we are pleased to be able to work with the community representatives to address their concerns in a constructive and agreed manner."

Collectively, Village Building and the community groups will be redirecting significant resources that would have otherwise been employed during a lengthy appeals process into producing positive community outcomes. Agreed initiatives include the establishment of a walking trail and interpretive displays in the Mt Majura Nature Reserve, subject to ACT Government approval, the establishment of an enforceable community pet containment policy, and the active engagement and education of community residents to create awareness of, and appropriate behaviour in environmentally sensitive areas of the Reserve.

Village Building and community groups intend to work together to tackle the downstream effects of large-scale developments, including increased traffic and the maintenance of the integrity of the remaining nature reserves.



The North Canberra Community Council and Village Building have also agreed to work with government and other developers to improve future consultation processes to avoid last minute negotiations following the approval of Development Applications.

Jochen Zeil, Chair of the North Canberra Community Council said: “This result is good for all concerned. While the NCCC remains generally concerned about the long-distance effects of large scale developments, we have, through open discussion, been able to align our objectives and we can now get on with minimising the inevitable local traffic impacts and the environmental impacts to the Mt Majura Nature Park. Given the development approval, it is a good outcome for the local community”.

Waltraud Pix, Coordinator of the Friends of Mount Majura said: “Considering the tight time frame, this agreement is a positive outcome both for the environment and for the people who will be living close to the Nature Reserve. It will help to foster community stewardship over the significant values of the Park and to protect these values for the enjoyment of locals and visitors alike”.

The development will ultimately provide 316 affordable houses in a highly desirable urban location in the inner North of Canberra consistent with the ACT Government’s housing affordability and sustainability objectives for the site.

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