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Planning changes

Suburb centres to offer greater housing choice

By Adam Mobbs

MODIFIED suburban residential core areas would allow medium density housing and enable a variety of developments, Planning Minister Simon Corbell said last week.

Mr Corbell last week announced changes to be made to the Territory Plan affecting inner south suburbs' Residential Core Areas (A10).

The modifications affect Griffith, Garran, Narrabundah, Yarralumla and Hackett, and result from the government's neighbourhood plans developed for Canberra's inner suburbs.

Mr Corbell said the residential core areas would offer the opportunity for residents to age in the one place, meet the demand for housing choices, and promote the vitality and viability of local shops and amenities.

"These modified residential core areas will remain, because they help us achieve a more sustainable Canberra," Mr Corbell said.

He said it helped achieve the strategic direction of The Canberra Spatial Plan — to contain urban growth within 15km of the city centre over the next 30 years.

Planners, developers and communities can also get design guidance that will complement the existing constraints on development in the A10 areas.

The residential core (A10) areas were established in August 2003 as part of the Garden City Variation.

"It is important to understand that until this variation was introduced, multi-unit development could occur almost anywhere in a suburb," Mr Corbell said.

ACT Planning and Land Authority chief executive Neil Savery said neighbourhood planning would offer the chance to revitalise local shopping centres.

He also said consultation for neighbourhood planning was widespread and took into account the community's views.

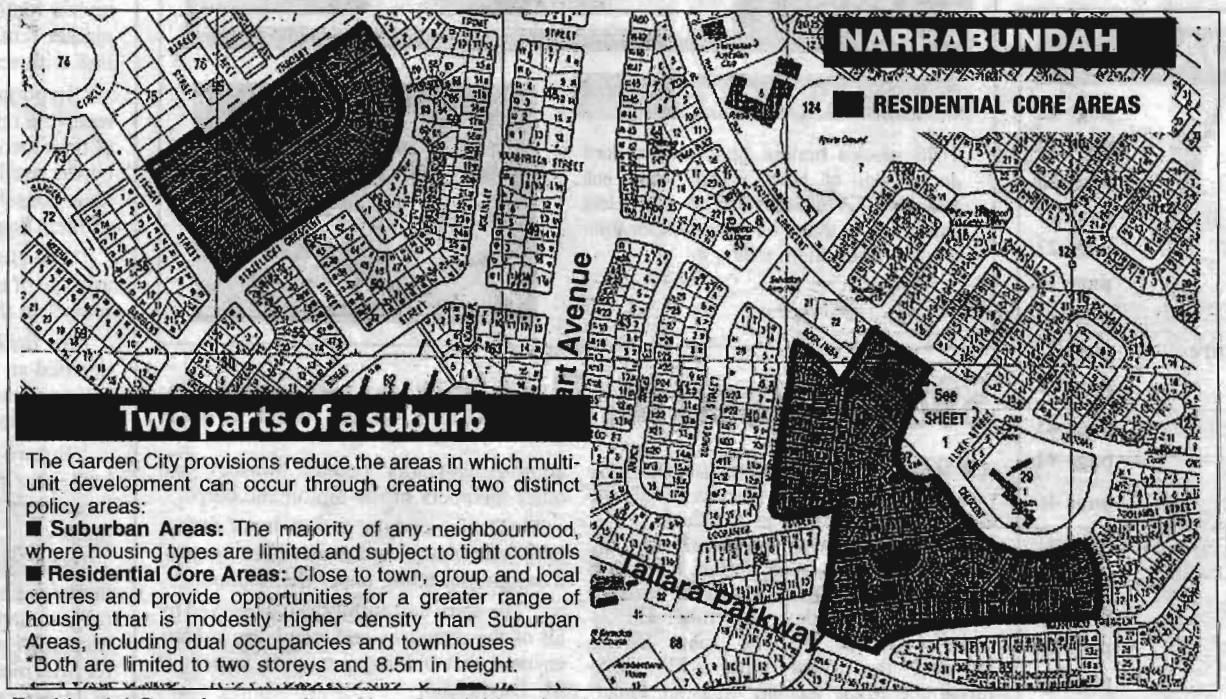
He said the purpose of consultation was not to totally remove residential core areas, but to see if they should be modified, which was why some residents said their views were not considered. "If the community says 'the only thing we want you to do is remove A10', well we weren't in a position to remove A10 and I don't think it is a good outcome," Mr Savery said

"I don't think it's a good outcome if there isn't any capacity within the local neighbourhood to provide new housing choice."

Liberals planning spokeswoman Vicki Dunne said there was no need for core areas.

"The truth is that planned new suburbs in Gungahlin, 'brownfields' redevelopments such as West Fyshwick, and already-identified large-scale redevelopments such as the Kingston foreshore and Northbourne Avenue corridor, are more than adequate to meet the needs of the spatial plan," she said.

Ms Dunne said the Liberals would restrict redevelopment to areas around group centres like Dickson, Erindale and Jamison.



Two parts of a suburb

The Garden City provisions reduce the areas in which multi-unit development can occur through creating two distinct policy areas:

- **Suburban Areas:** The majority of any neighbourhood, where housing types are limited and subject to tight controls
- **Residential Core Areas:** Close to town, group and local centres and provide opportunities for a greater range of housing that is modestly higher density than Suburban Areas, including dual occupancies and townhouses

*Both are limited to two storeys and 8.5m in height.

Residential Core Areas such as Narrabundah's, pictured above, will allow medium density housing, compared to the rest of the suburb. Some residents are against the zoning, claiming they will ruin the suburb's amenity.

Residents feel ignored

RESIDENTS have come out in opposition of Residential Core Areas (A10), claiming it is not what they want for their suburbs.

Although the government has refined its residential core areas, some residents are against them totally and want them removed from their suburb.

The Canberrans Against Residential Core Areas (CARCAS) group said its community views on the future of Griffith as a garden suburb were ignored by the ACT Government.

It welcomed the government's decision to modify some areas, but felt let down by the retention of the majority of the A10 areas proposed for Griffith.

CARCAS spokesperson and Griffith resident David Kindon said the achievement of the Garden City vision outlined by the ACT Planning and Land Authority in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan would not be realised until all the A10 zones in Griffith were removed.

He said the community was united with similar groups elsewhere in the city in strongly opposing A10 zoning of current residential areas, claiming the government's argument that it was sustainable planning was flawed.

"The bottom line is that the garden city character of the A10 areas will be lost as each area is developed on an ad hoc basis by developers aiming for maximum profit," Mr Kindon said.

Mr Kindon said additional planning policies to make sure development in the residential core areas would fail to achieve the desired objective.