Canberrans choose dangerous vehicles
page 3

Giveaway

Win tickets to see Avenue Q
page 21

Feature

Our suburbs– buy locally

Support your local shops
pages 25-40

Friends of Majura coordinator Waltraud Pix, Watson resident Gillian Helyer and Watson Community Association chair Richard Larson are concerned the development of the Australian Heritage Park will cause problems with traffic, living conditions and the environment. Mr Larson is standing in front of an endangered yellow box gum which will be cleared for the development.

Residents defeated on woodland

By Elliot Woods

WATSON residents have all but given up defending precious woodland and buildings around the Australian Heritage Village.

A development application has been lodged with the ACT Planning and Land Authority, almost certainly spelling the end for several hectares of native bushland in north Watson.

The village is set to be rezoned from leisure and accommodation to residential with about 300 new homes established in the coming years.

Watson Community Association chair Richard Larson said he and his fellow residents were tired of fighting the development.

Mr Larson said dramatic traffic increases, the loss of about two hectares of native bushland and the demolition of functional, attractive buildings had made the development a nightmare.

He said having read the application, none of his original fears had been allayed.

"The DA was all very predictable – none of the issues we raised have been properly addressed and I've pretty much given up, everyone's just washed out on the issue," Mr Larson said.

"We could go to the environmental defenders office, but what for? Unfortunately I really can't see that it would make any difference."

When *The Chronicle* visited two hectares of the development on Monday, Mr Larson pointed out just nine trees which would survive in that area.

This is despite the land being home to endangered species like the regent honeyeater and yellow box gum, Mr Larson said.

Watson resident Gillian Helyar said now that the development application had been submitted it was time to ensure the homes were built with the environment in mind. Ms Helyar said solar had to be a priority. "Once the plans go through, and things really get started that's too late, by that stage not only will we have lost all this precious woodland but we will be looking at providing extra energy for 300 homes," Ms Helyar said.

"There is just so much building going on around here, right through to areas like Bonner, Crace and Ford – the environmental concerns are major."

Continued on page 8