

# Rally for Red Hill

## Save our most treasured neighbourhood resource from development

The Federal Golf Club wants a developer to build housing for 200 people on 4.26ha of land which was leased to them for golfing use. The Club, which has a declining membership of 1350, hopes to raise \$10 million. The development would require bulldozing valuable woodland and major works within the Red Hill Nature Park and road reserve to provide roads, fire protection and kilometres of service connections. This is the same scheme which was rejected by the Canberra community in 1999.



Speckled Warbler (photo H Fallow)

### Environmental impact

The Red Hill Nature Park woodland, with over 175 woodland plant species, 40 threatened or rare animals and plants and one of the largest areas of endangered woodland remaining in Australia, is of national importance. The proposal would have a significant impact on the Nature Park and its wildlife. It would clear over 300 mature trees, hectares of nationally endangered woodland, and 5% of the hollow bearing trees found on Red Hill which are important for maintaining bird, possum and bat populations. Indirect impacts such as weed and exotic animal spread would be very damaging.

The proponent's own consultant considered the local extinction of the rare Speckled Warbler a likely result. The survival of several other plants and animals (pictured below) on Red Hill would also be threatened by the development.



Perunga Grasshopper



Scarlet Robin (photo H Fallow)



Woodland to be bulldozed

### Poor planning

The proposed development would create a small, isolated enclave, in an area of high fire danger, that is inefficient to service and relies entirely on the private motor car. It includes no low cost housing. There would be an estimated increase of at least 500 vehicle journeys a day on the Red Hill access road and along Stonehaven Crescent and Mugga Way. Traffic along these streets is already double their environmental traffic capacity. Emergency Services favour an access point suitable for water tankers via Brereton Street. This could lead to pressure for the road to be upgraded and kept permanently open.

## Issues for the Golf Club

Red Hill Regenerators support the Federal Golf Club and want it to remain viable, but not in a way that threatens the survival of the woodland and its wildlife. The Club argues that it needs funds from the development to continue to drought proof its greens. However, it appears that the majority of money to be raised by the development is proposed to be spent on club house facilities including a million dollar green-keeper's shed!

In 2008, the Club President told Red Hill Regenerators that construction of new ponds for drought proofing could be funded within the existing Club resources and land sale would not be needed. The Club has already received a \$0.25m government grant for drought works, and its annual land rent is subsidised by ACT ratepayers. A core issue seems to be the ongoing financial viability of the Club. This is a matter of public interest if the Canberra community is now being asked to sacrifice some of the conservation value and public amenity of the Red Hill Nature Park to, in effect, subsidise the private interests of the Club and its members. Can the golf course in fact be effectively drought proofed, and at what cost? Is this development proposal a 'short term fix' that will be followed by others to keep the Club financially afloat? Will membership continue to decline?

### What do the authorities say?

- *“Any proposal that could result in reduction of Yellow Box or Red Gum trees or increased edge effects on the grassy habitat within the Nature Reserve is not supported.”* (Dept of Territory and Municipal Services email to ACTPLA 7/7/2009).
- *“Treasury does have concern about ‘windfall’ gains being bestowed through changes in concessional leases ... in principle all the economic and financial benefits should be recouped by the Territory”.* (Letter to ACTPLA 3/7/09)
- *“Design Policy (ACTPLA) has reviewed the Report and does not support the proposed development ... revision would need to be made in light of supporting future provision of public transport and local services whether it is through increasing densities or altering road structure so that a through road is provided (rather than a dead end).”* (Internal ACTPLA email 8/7/2009)

### What can you do?

**Your silence on the proposal will be judged by our politicians as support! Please voice your concern:**

- Complete and mail the tear off slip below, or send your comments by email to [info@rehillregenerators.org.au](mailto:info@rehillregenerators.org.au);
  - Write letters to the Canberra Times and ask questions on talk-back radio;
  - Write letters (GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601), emails or phone Mr Andrew Barr, Minister for Planning ([barr@act.gov.au](mailto:barr@act.gov.au)), Mr Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister ([stanhope@act.gov.au](mailto:stanhope@act.gov.au)), or Mr Simon Corbell, Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water ([corbell@act.gov.au](mailto:corbell@act.gov.au));
  - Check the latest developments on the Red Hill Regenerators website at [www.redhillregenerators.org.au](http://www.redhillregenerators.org.au).
- Red Hill Regenerators is a Park Care group which since 1989 has undertaken extensive voluntary work to conserve and rehabilitate the Red Hill Nature Park. New members are welcome.

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To Chief Minister Jon Stanhope

I wish to register my objection to the proposed Federal Golf Course development, which will destroy valuable woodland and damage the Red Hill Nature Park

Name: ..... Signed: ..... Date: .....

(Please mail to: Secretary, Red Hill Regenerators, 21 Bass Gardens, Griffith, ACT 2602)

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**This notice was produced and distributed by Red Hill Regenerators. For more information and enquiries please email to**

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