

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2017/18**

This has been a busy year, culminating in the ACT Government's community consultation initiative with numerous major inquiries on issues relevant to this association. Submissions were lodged to the Planning Inquiry into Nature in our City and to several development applications, one involving a new electricity substation and extension of the electricity transmission lines in the Ginninderry vicinity.

Over recent years, the Ginninderra Falls Association and Ginninderra Catchment Group have met with Ginninderry in the Ginninderra Falls Working Group to discuss common issues. The last meeting was held on 5 Jul 2017 on the ground that the Parkwood part of the proposal was in the process of being resubmitted to Yass Valley Council.

That month, GFA paid for a preliminary study of bushfire risk in the area using money raised in a Chuffed online campaign. At the AGM on 3 August, Jason Sharples gave the first of his fire talks for GFA. At this AGM, approval was given to changes to the objects of the Association designed to clarify the intent in the constitution.

In August, the decision to approve the Development Application for Ginninderry Stage 1 was received. GFA had made a submission questioning the lodgment of this DA in the Merit Track. This meant that the DA did not have to comply fully with the planning rules nor did it require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Given the location of Stage 1 only 200 metres from a known Little Eagle nesting tree, GFA considered an EIS was mandatory. In concern that this would set a precedent for future stages in the Ginninderry project, GFA appealed the decision to the ACT Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

After failed mediation at the Tribunal and a further hearing in which GFA's standing to appeal was examined and approved, a negotiated settlement was reached on 8 Feb 2018. In this settlement, Ginninderry committed to a series of measures to be undertaken in Stages 8 and 10 which will be near the nesting tree. GFA then withdrew its appeal. Immediately thereafter, Ginninderry applied to the ACT Planning Minister for EIS exemption on all future stages in the ACT section to be valid for fifty years. GFA lodged an objection to this application with the assistance of the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO). A decision is still awaited.

During September and October, GFA had a display at Trader & Co in Yass highlighting the history and ecology of the area and concerns about urban development. Discussions were held with Ed Wensing about a possible meeting with aboriginal groups with a particular focus on intangible heritage.

At the YVC meeting on 25 Oct 2017, GFA made a presentation to the Council but councillors agreed unanimously to forward the Parkwood proposal to the NSW Government for assessment. Throughout January to the end of May, a GFA stall was held at the Yass, Murrumbateman and Hall markets to publicise the Parkwood proposal. This involved two to three GFA members devoting much of the day to travel, setting up and manning the stall to inform local residents of the urban

plan and associated issues. Two petitions were raised, one for NSW residents and one for ACT residents.

Throughout the year, GFA has liaised with other groups with common interests, such as the Ginninderra Catchment Group, contributing to a discussion group on the Kippax Master Plan on 22 Feb 2018, attending the Nature Conservation Council conference on 26 May, meeting with Kate Auty, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment, on 20 March and participating in a meeting and tour of the Ginninderra Falls area with the President of the National Parks Association of NSW on 26 June. GFA was also contacted by the RU6 Group of NSW residents adjacent to the ACT who were concerned about a Yass Valley proposal to exclude urban densification in a five-kilometre area along the border but exempting the Parkwood extension of Ginninderry.

A vote of thanks is needed to the Environmental Defenders Office for their continuing support and input; to Camilla Taylor and Bruce Chalmers for their help in 2017 and to Steph Booker and Nicola Silbert in 2018. Others who provided much-needed assistance include Seyi Onitiri (barrister), Geoffrey Dabb (Canberra Ornithologists Group) and Stephen Debus and Jerry Olsen (ornithologists). Lastly, we are delighted to welcome to our group, Ian Trapnell, who has offered his graphic design skills to promote GFA concerns.



**Robyn Coghlan**  
**President,**  
**Ginninderra Falls Association Incorporated**

25 September 2018