



**The ACT Equestrian Association Incorporated**

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**Development Application 201630881 - construction of a new community use dog park including landscaping, car parking signage and associated works.**

The ACT Equestrian Association makes the following comments on the proposal to construct a community dog park on Eucumbene Drive, Duffy as a representative of local horse riders associated with its 20 affiliated recreational and sporting equestrian clubs.

ACTEA has no objection to the dog park itself which is well concealed behind mature vegetation and makes sensible use of a neglected piece of land. In November 2016, however, ACTEA discovered that it was proposed to upgrade an existing gravel track to a 6m two-way vehicle access for up to 30 cars a day directly off Warragamba Avenue and crossing the route of the Bicentennial National Trail. There had been no attempt to consult with ACTEA about this decision and its impact on the use of the BNT despite the negative reaction to the earlier Chapman option. There are other potential points of access to the dog park site not creating the safety issues of the Warragamba option. Entering off Eucumbene Drive through the original site is one of them.

The Warragamba Avenue verge has been used by equestrians travelling in the Weston Creek area for 40 years. It is an integral part of the network of connections between:

- the private and government horse agistment on the western edge of Weston Creek,
- agistment in Curtin and Yarralumla,
- the Molonglo River corridor,
- Stromlo Forest Park,
- the National Arboretum and
- Equestrian Park.

The government has installed a horse rider operated signalised crossing at the intersection of Dixon and Streeton Drives to facilitate this connection.

**ACTEA supported by funding from Sport and Recreation Services ACT**

## The Issues

- horses travelling up the hill from the bottom of Warragamba Avenue need to canter as it is a relatively steep climb and hard work for horse and rider at a trot. A horse's canter speed is anything between 16-27kph and creating a barrier across their path is not a safe thing to do and could potentially cause injury to horses and riders;
- horses will shy at vehicles appearing out of the trees surrounding the Dog Park, if either party is travelling at speed or not;
- the vicinity of the access track is bounded by two heavily used urban streets, on one of which traffic travels at 80kph and above. This is not a space where you want to lose control of a horse;
- the wide green verge from Eucumbene to Streeton Drive is a **dog-off-leash area**. While meeting one or two dogs being walked in this space, as happens now, is not much of an issue, encouraging numerous owners with unrestrained animals to wander across the horse trail to the dog park entrance gate is extremely worrying. We know from experience on Narrabundah Hill that dog owners can be inconsiderate, indeed malicious, about their unrestrained dogs around horses. Numbers of dogs having great fun together chasing horses into traffic is a nightmare vision;
- the dog park will be busiest on weekends when people also want to ride their horses;
- even dogs in cars will potentially be barking at horses and horses have extremely good hearing;
- the existence of a formal access road will not ensure drivers won't simply climb the curb in their 4x4s and drive across the open green space around the horse trail.

**The ACT government has a duty of care to all users of Canberra's open space and it unfair that the equestrian community should carry all the risk associated with this project. ACTEA is strongly of the view that the access to the dog park should be off Eucumbene Drive or the Cotter Road.**

## The Development Application

The DA description of the proposed works under this *application for the proposed Weston Creek Dog Park that is on the Southern end of Block 5, Section 55 of Duffy* does not include any mention of an access road or its design.<sup>1</sup> Is the access road subject to the approval process or not?

The design for the intersection of the equestrian trail and the vehicle access appears quite inconsistently throughout the DA material.

5m wide concrete speed humps close to the crossing 10kmph and horse crossing signs at the speed humps constructed from compressed gravel as approved by ACTEA	Parking – 201630881 – 01 Lscape – 201630881 - 01
35m wide concrete speed humps close to vehicle approach points 10kmph and horse crossing sign only at Warragamba Av approach	Plan – 201630881 -Hardscape Elements -01 Lscape 201630881 -01
c35m wide concrete speed humps close to vehicle approach points 10kmph and horse crossing sign at Warragamba Av approach and at exit from carpark inside dog park	Road Long Sect 201630881-01

<sup>1</sup>. APP-201630881-01

At an on-site meeting to discuss our concerns on 9 December 2017 ACTEA was also offered the following:

- the vehicle track when widened would not form a significant change of surface or obstruction for horses when the plans seem to indicate the entry track will be elevated for drainage purposes
- 'give way to horses' signs to be erected at either end of the entrance track which do not appear;
- warning signs on the horse trail to let riders know a vehicle crossing is coming up which do not appear
- information provided to dog park users about the Bicentennial National Trail

These do not appear on any of the plans included in the DA

**ACTEA would like to comment on a Development Application which is telling us exactly what we are being offered.**

### Traffic Management During Construction

There is no traffic management plan for vehicles using the entrance track during construction<sup>2</sup>. Horse riders will continue to ride on the hill as they have always done and there needs to be some agreed protocols around the behaviour of drivers of cars and heavy machinery while the dog park is being prepared.

### ACTEA Requests

- The full width of the Warragamba Drive verge for horses (NOT 5m) for safety reasons
- Appropriate gravel surfacing on the vehicle track consistent with equestrian standards
- A soft transition from grass to gravel to grass with no challenges for horses balance or footing
- Speed bumps at either end of the open space to slow vehicles down as early as possible and to give drivers time to look for horses
- A speed limit of 10kph for vehicles
- Give way to horse signs at the point where vehicles encounter speed bumps
- If necessary trees on the outer boundary of the existing tree line be pruned/lifted to ensure drivers have a clear view up and down the verge
- Warning signs on the equestrian route to alert riders to the possibility of traffic crossing
- Information IN the dog park area about the Bicentennial National Trail that passes the facility
- Dogs being walked to the Dog Park on the gravel track be on a leash.
- Clear guidelines for contractors etc engaged in construction of the dog park about their actions around horses

Given the inconsistent nature of the material offered to the equestrian community about a significant part of this project ACTEA requests a clear statement of intent by City Services.

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<sup>2</sup> Tree – 201630881 - 01