

ACT EQUESTRIAN ASSOCIATION - A MESSAGE FROM EMMA DAVIDSON

13 OCTOBER 2020

I am writing to you as the ACT Greens Spokesperson for Sports and Recreation. Having kept horses in the ACT Government paddocks in Canberra myself, and used the Stromlo Forest trails back in the day when it was still a forest, I know that our horses are our companions as we enjoy our bush capital surroundings.

The ACT Greens understand that everything is interconnected. Sports and recreation activities take place in facilities and open spaces managed by different government agencies, including Education, City Services, Sport and Recreation, and Parks and Conservation Services. We want a Canberra where all activities are respectful of our city as a biodiversity sanctuary, and where spaces are shared with respect and understanding.

But this understanding and respect has not always been shown to some equestrian users of our nature parks, reserves, and urban open spaces. Decisions for funding infrastructure upgrades or new facilities tend to be made for individual sports groups, rather than as part of a long term holistic plan that takes into account all the sports and recreation groups in our city.

Plans for development of future facilities and land use need to include everyone. This is why we want to reestablish a sport and recreation peak body for Canberra, with \$200,000 in funding for the first two years of operation. A permanent sport and recreation peak body will liaise with all the community groups in our city, especially those grassroots level associations that don't have the resources to advocate on their own across so many government agencies and ministers. The peak body will work collaboratively with groups and ACT Government to create a long term plan - beyond election cycles - for the growth and support of the diversity of activities in our city. This includes land use, needs analysis, and funding requirements. It will enable competing needs and access to be addressed earlier, and will have a leadership role in advocating for sports and recreation needs during the COVID-19 recovery phase.

As per our response to the ACT Equestrian Association's election requests, we also want:

- the development of an overarching equestrian concept plan;
- ongoing support and maintenance for Equestrian Park;
- continued open, safe access to the Bicentennial National Trail; and
- retaining or replacing existing government paddock space, in a way that is consistent with environment values and in consultation with horse-users.

I have met with community members affected by the NCA's land swap deal for the North Curtin horse paddocks, and have offered my support once they have reached a consensus on the objective they want to achieve. The Greens would be strongly in support of using this opportunity to invest in local area improvements such as protecting the area along Yarralumla Creek for community use for walking, as well as wildlife corridor and bird habitat use.

I also support inclusion of equestrian users in planning for infrastructure in Stromlo Forest Park.

Thank you for the opportunity to expand on our plans for equestrian activities in the ACT.

You can keep up to date with all of our election initiatives here:

<https://greens.org.au/act/better-normal>

Our full [policy platform can be found here](#).

Emma Davidson

ACT Greens lead candidate for Murrumbidgee

ACT Greens Spokesperson for Sport and Recreation

You can find more detail about me here: <https://greens.org.au/act/person/emma-davidson>, or follow me on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/emmadavidsonACT>