



Frencham Place, Downer ACT 2602

Around Downer

Downer Community Association

Newsletter April 2017

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IMPORTANT DATES

Dickson-Downer Heritage Walks

Sat 6th & Sun 7th May,
2pm-5pm

School site Development Application

Closed 26th April

*Check our website later
for the outcome*

DCA Management Committee meetings

DCA members and other Downer residents are always welcome to attend these meetings, held on the 1st Monday of each month at 7 pm.

DCA Management Committee, 2017

Convenor: Miles Boak
Secretary: Denys Garden
Treasurer: Stephen Sedgwick
Public Officer: Brian Callahan

Other Committee members are:
Amit Barkay, Patti Kendall, Jacqui Pinkava, Robyn Rennie, Simon Stratton and Philida Sturgiss-Hoy.

You can contact the Committee on our email address:
downerassociation@gmail.com

Want to become a DCA member?

Membership is free, and allows us to contact you more easily when we have important information.

Membership forms are available on our website. Print out form, fill in and give to a Committee member, or put through the slot in the DCA Office door at the Community Centre.

Dickson-Downer Heritage Walks 'Opium farm to Children's Library' 6th & 7th May, 2pm-5pm

Heritage walks, organised by North Canberra Community Council and Dicksonia Magnifica (<https://www.facebook.com/dicksoniamagnifica/>), will tell the stories of the Dickson-Downer area and discuss the planning history of this rapidly changing part of the nation's capital.

Tour Dickson Library and the 1960s shopping centre with heritage architects and urban planners, exploring the significance of the layout, then traipse along Sullivan's Creek through mixed community uses to the Monterey pine windbreaks, former paddocks and workshop buildings of the CSIRO's Dickson Experiment Station (1940-64) in Downer.

The heritage-listed Dickson Library, which opened in 1969, was the first district library in the national capital and part of the National Library. Commissioned by the NCDC, designed by famous Italian architect Enrico Taglietti, the library was opened in 1969 and was known as the Children's Library.

In 1927, Dr Bertram Dickson (a Canadian botanist) was recruited by the nascent CSIRO, and in 1940, established an experimental farm at the northern edge of the new capital, next to the city's first airfield. From 1940 to 1964 the land was used to produce opium for the war effort and to trial experimental crops and pastures. Long rows of Monterey pines were planted as windbreaks, as well as other trees such as yellow box, apple box and Californian redwood. A central group of farm buildings used as workshops and for storage later became the local shops and community centre of Downer.

The walks are free, but get tickets at Eventbrite to help planning (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dickson-downer-heritage-walk-from-opium-farm-to-childrens-library-tickets-33354487169>).

Dickson-Downer area as CSIRO's Experiment Station, and in 1965



COMMUNITY CENTRE

For room rentals and any other issues to do with the Centre, contact the Centre Coordinator, Mara Pangallo on downercentre@gmail.com For further information about the Centre facilities see our website (address below).

DOWNER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

To reach the Management Committee by email for other matters, use downerassociation@gmail.com

DCA WEBSITE

www.downercommunityassociation.org

The website has information about the Community Centre, room rentals, membership and other forms, etc. There are also copies of previous Minutes and Newsletters, information on planning issues, and photos from previous Fairs.

BOOKS & CDs

There are still copies of the book 'Downer@50' and the follow up CD released in 2010. If you don't have these, they are available at \$10 for the pair. Phone 0414 813 403 or email downerassociation@gmail.com

DO YOU GET OUR EMAILS?

If you are a DCA member (and give us an email address) we can send you more frequent information. Joining is easy. Forms are on the DCA website. You can also contact us by email

Downer Shops

The saga of the Downer shops continues, but we are getting closer. Construction is complete, and the fences are down. The building is looking nice, with the red Canberra bricks restored to their original state. Fit-out crews for the first tenants are starting work. The Village Vet and Gang Gang Café have been confirmed as tenants, and we have heard about a Coffee Roaster and Wellness Centre in the other shops. Be sure you check the building out if you come on the Heritage walk.



Downer Shops in 1981 and 2017

DOWNER'S DECIDUOUS TREES

Do you know that Downer has one the highest proportion of deciduous street trees, and the autumn display in Downer is equal to any in other Canberra suburbs. Downer streets figure prominently in the Canberra-wide autumn leaves map. See:

www.tccs.act.gov.au/city-living/trees/canberra-tree-week/canberra-autumn-leaves-map

We know for a lot of people there is a love/hate relationship with the falling leaves bringing a lot of work. But we should celebrate our deciduous trees. A recent CSIRO study found that older suburbs in Canberra with more trees were up to 7°C cooler than newer, less leafy suburbs in summer.

So with colour changes now in full swing, and Downer streets changing into a brilliant display of gold, red, ochre and crimson, we encourage local residents to take some time out and visit some of our streets to see our

trees in full colour. Many of these trees are shedding their leaves rapidly, so the timeframe for checking them is short. Some the best examples include:

Edkins Street: Red oak (*Quercus rubra*)
Tardent Street: Desert ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia*)
Atherton Street: Claret ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia* subsp. *oxycarpa* 'Raywood')
Cowan Street: American sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
Allport street: Linden tree (*Tilia americana*)
Gardiner Street: Chinese pistachio (*Pistacia chinensis*)

The Government street sweeper schedule is four times a year in Downer (May, June, July and August) rather the usual two, because of autumn leaves. ACT Urban Treescapes encourages residents not to rake leaves off their lawn and nature strips onto the street. This can cause the gutters and drains to become blocked, and ultimately leads to high nutrient levels in our lakes once the leaves reach the lakes through the stormwater network. People are encouraged to recycle fallen autumn leaves by using them as garden mulch or composting them.

Upgrading of Downer Square

Now that the Shops are close to completion, we want to make sure the ACT Government makes good on its promise to refurbish Downer Square, which was constructed in its present form in 1987/88 using a Bicentennial grant. Recently, DCA met with CHC (developers of the School site) and the Shops owners to discuss and plan what might be done. We will keep you informed of progress.

