

Canberrans for Power Station Relocation, Inc
PO BOX 40
ERINDALE CENTRE ACT 2903

27 November 2008

Chief Minister and MLAs
Legislative Assembly

Dear Mr Stanhope,

Tuggeranong Power Station and Data Warehouses – Block 1610

As you may be aware I am writing on behalf of a community group Canberrans for Power Station Relocation (CPR) Inc. CPR has a large membership and the support of the wider Southern Canberra residents.

I am writing to express an increasing concern voiced by the community regarding the complete lack of support or consideration being given to the community by you and a number of MLAs within the Assembly. This has become more so apparent in comparison to the instant and positive way you, the Minister for Health Katy Gallagher and the Minister for Planning Andrew Barr, respond to the proponents of this project.

Not only have you conducted joint press interviews and briefings with the proponents in the past, but you continue:

- to recommend this proposal to the people and the Assembly throughout the mis-named “consultation” stage;
- minimised, belittled and joked about real and reasonable concerns voiced by the community;
- threatened and mis-informed the community by publicly reacting to proponent claims for compensation; and
- somewhat confusingly demand that other members of the Assembly, “not engage in political interference with this process”.

It has become obvious to many members of the community that you have deliberately dismissed from your responsibility, a large section of the Canberra community, ignored their concerns, and have no intention of recognising or acknowledging the stress, anxiety and isolation you have created by your obvious consistent and unswerving support of the proponents in the above matter.

Last week Mr Andrew Campbell, director of Technical Real Estate,(TRE) was again speaking on the radio, referring to “his” block of land, “his” process and minimising the community opposition to “his proposal” as “a handful of trouble makers” “[the CPR Spokesperson] and a few boys”. The community waited in vain for you, the deputy Chief Minister or the Minister for Planning to correct Mr Campbell, defend the community, the process and the rights of any member of the community to oppose and express an opposition to any development.

Likewise we have waited in vain for you to speak out publicly acknowledging the enormous pressure and anxiety this particular proposal has caused, more so as this development comprises of a privately owned gas-fired power station 440 metres from a health facility and 660 metres from established homes, on land that has no site-specific surveys of note and remains Broadacre.

It is not a project this community asked for. It is not a project, the creation of which or the selection of the site, the community has been involved with. Nowhere in this proposal has the community been allowed meaningful consultation or engagement with those planning, deciding or commenting in the media about this process.

We have responded when it has been demanded of us and these responses have clearly been ignored. As one example in this latest “opinion”, the draft EIS by GHD, the issue of the water usage has been minimised and the extent of full use and effect on Canberra has been buried under misleading figures. It is only by ordinary members of the community extrapolating overall usage per GWh will reveal the real impact. This entire draft EIS is delivered on the assumption that this project is essential infrastructure for the Territory rather than considering it as a private real estate development. The same insufficient, inadequate data has been used to compile their opinion on the noise concerns and where there has been no data available to address the concerns raised by the community, rather than conduct their own research, GHD have merely taken data from another site in Australia, compiled in 2003.

You have responded immediately to meetings, letters and claims for compensation made by the proponents. You have responded in the media and in action. You have met them personally, innumerable times, to discuss this proposal. You have tasked your most senior public servants to support, assist and preserve their good will.

You, the Minister for Planning Andrew Barr and the Minister for Health Katy Gallagher, have excluded the community from meaningful consultation. Even the basic responses to letters, if they come at all, take weeks or months and are likely to be formulaic and do not address the issue.

You have deliberately and knowingly, in your media interviews and press release of 27 May 2008, blamed the community for the so called “down scaling” of the original proposal when you knew as early as 7 February 2008 it was going to be down scaled. You knew it had nothing to do with the community concerns. The application to alter was filed weeks before the first information day. You knew the down scaling occurred because it was “not economically feasible on this site”. In the same statement you told the media “this showed what good corporate citizens the proponents are”.

Below are several quotes taken from the Chief Minister’s Department, July 2008, “Citizen Centred Governance”.

“The OECD notes that engaging citizens in policy making is both a “sound investment” and a “core element of good governance” and that it “contributes to building in public trust in government”.

“This work then encompasses the entirety of government and the community’s engagement with government – not just as a recipient of services, or consultation on specific issues, but as an active participant in:

- *wider discussions about the future of our city;*

- *the shaping of services provided; and*
- *the receipt and use of government information.”*

*“It should be noted that citizen engagement in public policy is not a substitution for representative democracy. Nor is it a form of direct democracy. Citizen engagement aims to give citizens a **voice** and **choices** on matters that most affect them.”*

“The ACT Government has a strong commitment to community engagement, demonstrated by the launch in 2005 of the ACT Government’s Community Engagement Manual and Service Charter

“The Manual provides valuable guidance to public service staff on how to engage the community in the development of policy. It defines community engagement as ‘any activity that enables the government to:

- *Respond to issues raised by the community;*
- *Inform the community about proposed policies and actions;*
- *Provide the opportunity for the community to voice an opinion proposed government policies and proposals;*
- *Invite the community to submit proposals for government consideration; or*
- *Work more closely with the community to shape policy options and priorities”*

On behalf of the community, who await your reply to this letter, I ask at what point is the Chief Minister of this Territory going to allow the views and wishes of the people of Southern Canberra to be acknowledged, heard and acted upon?

When are you, as Chief Minister, going to acknowledge in a positive and supportive way those who have considered this proposal and have rejected it as being in their best interests to proceed on this site?

I ask at what point in any process, administered by your government, will the views and wishes of the community be heard and taken into account in a meaningful way?

In line with the sentiments, quoted above, that you have recently placed before the people as examples of how you intend to improve access to good governance to all citizens, giving them a voice and choices, when can the residents of Southern Canberra expect those sentiments to be put into practice?

We await your prompt reply.

Yours sincerely



Bill Reid
President of CPR Inc