

Your local voice



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**Minutes of General Meeting
Wednesday, 28 February 2018
Raiders Weston Club, Liardet St, Weston**

1. Opening of Meeting

Tom Anderson opened the meeting at 7.35pm. He welcomed WCCC members and guests. Apologies were received from Shelby Scholfield, Bec Cody and Gai Brodtmann. 26 people were present.

Tom introduced Senior Sergeant Karen Drake of the Australian Federal Police, Officer in Charge, Woden Police Station.

2. Presentation by Senior Sergeant Drake

- Sgt Drake said that recently there had been a lot of media attention given to robberies in Weston Creek, and the AFP recognised the increased incidence of such crime as a major priority for them. The AFP has increased the number of patrols in the area, especially around clubs at closing time. There are more problems in South Canberra than in North Canberra.
- A Neighbourhood Watch group has been established in Coombs, where there have been numerous thefts from vehicles and work sites. It is difficult to prevent such thefts in an area where not all houses are yet occupied.
- There have been some positive developments; the latest quarterly report shows some decreases in some types of crime in Weston Creek.

Q: One Holder resident who lives near the old school oval said that there is a lot of anti-social behaviour on the oval. Drivers remove the poles that are intended to stop vehicles and just drive their cars onto the oval. When the resident has rung the police, he has been asked to get the number plates of the cars, but has not felt safe enough to do that. The resident has been told that there are no patrol cars for the Weston Creek area. What can the police do in this situation?

A: There are some issues around communication between residents and the police. Residents should call 131-444 or Triple Zero in such cases. They should NOT call the Woden police station. It is helpful if the caller can give number plates, but residents should not put themselves in danger. In many cases, number plates have been stolen and do not relate to that specific car.

Q: Weston Creek has been quite safe until recent years.

A: Weston Creek is still rated as one of the safest areas of Canberra, judging by the latest quarterly reports. Weston Creek and the Inner South are regarded as “better” areas in terms of crime activity. This does not apply to the new suburbs of Molonglo. In general, where people are isolated because there is poor public transport, problems are more likely to occur.

Q: One resident reported his concern at drug deals that he thinks he has seen happening around Weston Ponds.

A: I am happy to take note of that and will follow up.

Q: One resident said he has the impression that the AFP structure is a bit old-fashioned, that just waiting until someone calls in a problem and just doing random patrols may not be very effective. He suggested that the police could do better if they put resources into places where they know offenders are likely to gather.

A: The police do target crime hotspots.

Q: Are the CCTV cameras in Denman Prospect helping to identify problems?

A: We use CCTV a lot, but I don't know specifically about Denman Prospect. I will have to get back to you on that.

Q: CCTV is used a lot in the UK. Is facial recognition used here in Canberra?

A: The police would love to have that technology, but CCTV coverage is not as comprehensive here as in the UK.

Q: In Holder vehicles are frequently driven up and down Dixon Drive in a very anti-social manner.

Q: If there was CCTV capability up at Holder Oval, it could help identify those people who drive their cars there.

A: The laws relating to tracking people through CCTV put limits on the police.

Q: Are there any traffic black spots in Weston Creek?

Sgt Drake finished the question and answer session at 7.50.

2. Presentation on Climate Strategy

Tom Anderson introduced Kate Roggeveen and Catherine Keirnan from the Climate Change policy team of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

The ACT Government has developed a *Community Engagement Strategy on Climate Change*, which sets out how the ACT Government will communicate with the community about climate change, including by making sustainability and climate change information readily available to households, schools, businesses and community groups.

In December 2017 the Government released a new discussion paper, *Climate Strategy to a Net Zero Emissions Territory*, to build on and expand measures that are already being taken. Why do we need a new climate strategy?

- We are already seeing the effects of climate change;
- The Government's current *Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan*, known as AP2, covers the period from 2012 until 2020;
- Its target was to reduce emissions by 40% compared with 1990 emissions;
- The ACT Government is now aiming to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2020;
- The Government has committed to a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest;
- The new strategy lists 27 actions that aim for raise energy efficiency, including community-focused actions;
- The new strategy document covers the years up to 2025 and foreshadows targets up to 2050.

ACT is on track to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2020 as wind farms and solar farms come on line. The next steps will be more challenging because they require behaviour change. This will mean the community has to become more involved, and everyone will need to adjust to leading lives that are less carbon-intensive.

Overview of the Discussion Paper

- The focus is on actions to 2025;
- The Paper looks at how far we have come to date;
- It presents advice from the ACT Climate Council;
- It sets out a pathway to net zero emissions by 2050;
- The Government invites members of the community to share their ideas and expertise to

help achieve climate change targets and to decide what the next priorities should be and how best to achieve them.

- The Paper sets out interim targets, and suggests that the ACT could achieve zero emissions by 2045, five years earlier than the 2050 target.

Among the ideas for action to achieve targets are:

- Energy: (a) focus on the electricity demand side
(b) reduce emissions from natural gas
- Housing: (a) get people to use more solar power
(b) improve energy efficiency of buildings

If use of natural gas is to be reduced, people will have to change the appliances they use, and there will have to be support for the transition from natural gas.

Q: Is there any strategy on how to replace gas?

A: Reverse-cycle heat pumps could replace gas heating. What appliances could be used would depend on individual houses.

After 2020 the focus of actions and targets will have to change to a focus on other sectors such as transport, waste, and land use. Any change in regard to transport will rely on behaviour change. There is good potential for electric cars. The *Transport for Canberra* strategy is also being reviewed.

With waste, at present that produces on 3% of ACT emissions, but that figure can be reduced. New technologies could reduce the amount of organic material going into landfill, and could increase the recovery rates for mixed wastes.

Land use: A more compact city could mean reduced emissions, but could also make urban heat islands worse. Trees can make up to 13 degrees difference on very hot days. More trees would increase the uptake of carbon through natural processes.

Q: It is difficult to get a balance between densification and having enough area to grow trees. What is the Government doing to address that issue?

A: A report on Urban Heat Islands was released today.

Q: In some cases when a resident plants trees, the rangers insist the trees be removed.

A: There will be more room for volunteering under the new strategy.

Q: One obvious thing would be to increase the budget for trees in the ACT. The existing budget is something like \$7 to cover the life of a tree, so there is no capacity to look after trees by measure such as pruning or spraying. The Government cannot expect the community to do all the maintenance of trees.

A: There is an opportunity now to increase the number of trees through this new strategy. We can report your comments to the Suburban Development Agency. The Government recognises that it must have community involvement and participation in new ways of trying to change.

Q: The plans for the West Basin show that it is going to be all concrete.

A: There will be a strip with landscaping and trees.

Q: We want to protect informal public green space. The ACT Government still works on the idea that the root system of a tree is the same size as the canopy of the tree, but this is NOT correct - in some cases the root area is four times the area of the canopy. This means the area for protection of roots needs to be much greater than is usually the case at present.

Q: There is no maintenance of trees, or replacement, in green areas that are not formal parks.

The presentation finished at 8.40. Tom Anderson said he would ask for a copy of the presentation and would put link up on the WCCC website.

3. Presentation on plans for a new playground at Waramanga Shops

Tom introduced Elizabeth Hoyt (playground support group convenor) and Paul Brookbanks (landscape architect). Elizabeth said they had put a submission to the Government for funds to

build a playground behind the Waramanga Shops and she hoped they might get some money in the next budget. It would be good if money was granted in time for the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Waramanga, later in 2018. She noted that Waramanga has elements of Radburn design, and needs some renewal. There is new seating at the shops. She said that it would improve connectivity for the community to have a park beside the shops, and would be of great benefit to parents and children when they go shopping. The proposed playground would be right at the cross-point of an open-space spine. Other playgrounds in Waramanga are not accessible by car, and many have other infrastructure nearby. The plans drawn up by Paul Brookbanks use casuarina trees to create a series of spaces and connections, and aim to make the playground unique. Elizabeth asked residents to write to the Minister, Meegan Fitzharris, to support the playground proposal.

Q: Has the group been able to get any sponsorship?

A: We talked about that with TCCS at first but were discouraged on the grounds that it could create problems for ownership of the playground. However, recently the group has received a letter from TCCS to ask about co-funding of the project. This has caused confusion.

Q: Would the group consider refreshing an old playground rather than building a new playground? What about a car park?

A: It is easier to get a car park than to get a playground. There is a gap in amenity at the heart of Waramanga; there is a need for something new, and for a play space with easy access from the shops, to give people and children somewhere to go. The group is not wanting to do away with other playgrounds.

Q: Can you give us an idea of the costs?

A: Plans for the playground have been developed for three levels, starting with a basic level that would be relatively cheap and easy to create, but with the possibility of adding more features later. Costs would start at \$100,000 for cheap and easy; \$250,000 for a mid-level playground; while \$500,000 would build a more spacious playground with more extensive landscaping and great equipment. Planting would start with casuarinas, but more shade trees could be added later. Casuarinas would soak up water that might collect in low areas and as a result of run-off from hard-surface areas near the shops, and the cockatoos would be happy.

Q: Community engagement is very important. We need to have more input and more thinking from the community and from citizens, so we don't have just government thinking. The presentation and Q&A session ended at 9.10.

4. MLA Corner

Caroline Le Couteur (ACT Greens MLA for Murrumbidgee) said that Murrumbidgee is the most marginal seat in the ACT, which is an electoral plus for voters.

- Trees: There was a motion in 2017 to force the Government to increase tree coverage in the ACT.
- The LDA and Tradies sale of land at Dickson: The Auditor-General has made a report into the sale of land at Dickson, which made clear that there was at least incompetence or corruption or both in relation to this sale of land. The Auditor-General did not name people suspected of involvement. The Greens MLAs are considering what to do. If an Integrity Commission is set up, they will refer the matter to it. An Integrity Commission may be funded in the 2019-2020 budget, but will not be funded at present. There is some question of whether an Integrity Commission would be able to look into matters retrospectively.

Q: In discussions about an Integrity Commission there does not seem to be much emphasis on an education role for it, compared with the NSW ICAC.

A: Yes, we need something like that here in the ACT. The Auditor-General does not refer matters to the police for investigation. Resourcing and political will is a problem for establishment of an Integrity Commission. We would want an Integrity Commission to be politically independent.

Q: We would need a strong corrupt practices bill, with strong, enforceable penalties.

A: The intent is that the recommendations of the committee should be put into the legislation.

Q: The perception that the Government is corrupt is widespread, and could lead to a loss of trust in government by the community. There is also a perception that this government is vindictive.

5. General Business

Tom Anderson opened the business meeting.

1. Minutes of the last public meeting on 29 November 2017 were accepted as presented.

(Moved: Jenny Adams; Seconded: Janice Paull)

2. Treasurer's Report: WCCC has \$20,145.29 in its main bank account, and \$5109.67 in the Fetherston Gardens account.

3. Tom reported on various activities undertaken by the WCCC committee.

- Weston Group Centre: A report of the hearings have now been published. Only three submissions were received, one of which was from WCCC. Many of WCCC's points have been accepted. However, residential dwellings on car parks will have to be six storeys because they will need to have three storeys of basement. WCCC suggested that heights be limited to 15 metres rather than 'x storeys'. The suggestion for a new community centre was also accepted. The report make recommendations only; it will go to the government but may not get funded. WCCC has been asking for a new community centre for 15 years.
- Housing Choices Paper: Submissions close on 9 March. There is a fear that the Government will move to allow more dual-occupancies in RZ1 zones.
- Molonglo River Reserve Draft Plan: There was a meeting on 8 March. The river corridor extends from the Tuggeranong Parkway down to where the Molonglo River joins the Murrumbidgee River.
- Mammal emblem for the ACT: The Legislative Assembly is looking for a mammal emblem for the ACT. We have the gang-gang as a bird emblem, and the ACT bluebell as floral emblem.
- The Government has put out a Whole of Government Communications and Engagement Strategy.
- Public Housing: ACTPLA has made decisions to approve the Development Applications for the sites in Holder and Chapman (14 February 2018), and Wright (23 January 2018).

Q: The Darwinia Park Community Group is very disappointed in the WCCC submission, which was the only submission to support the proposal for the site in Chapman. The Group cannot see how WCCC can justify its submission. The Darwinia Group will appeal to ACAT.

A: Tom Anderson replied that WCCC has some concerns about the remoteness of the Chapman site, which is 800 metres from the Rivett shops, and 1.8 - 2 kilometres from the Chapman shops (nearest chemist) and primary school (nearest school). WCCC considered that it was very clear that the Government was determined to proceed with development of public housing at the three sites, and that as far as the Chapman site is concerned, WCCC considers that the final plans as submitted for DA represent the best outcome that could be achieved in light of the Government's position.

Q: The Chapman resident recommended that WCCC should read the other submissions from Darwinia Park Community Group members.

- Suburban Bus Routes: The implementation of the bus routes originally proposed has been delayed. In the Inner North, buses will stop at Dickson and passengers wanting to go further south will be obliged to transfer to the light rail. WCCC has pointed out that the change to make bus stops further apart will not help passengers who have difficulty in walking 750 metres. Nine Rapid routes are to be implemented.
- Second Service Station: The DA has been approved but is subject to a number of conditions:

Subdivision of the block into two parcels, one for Macdonalds and one for the service station.; it was noted that there are not enough parking spaces, but the DA was approved anyway; ingress and egress has been improved.

Q: Is there anything about protection of the river corridor from pollution from the service station?

A: Any runoff will feed into Weston Creek and Weston Ponds.

- Woden Town Centre: Tom Anderson went with representatives of the Woden Valley Community Council to ask the Government to look again at keeping some green space in Woden. It is proposed that some high-rise buildings will be as high as 28 storeys. There will be two high-rise buildings on the old Medibank site.

Q: One WCCC member noted that the new building on the Tradies site in Woden will be limited in height so as not to be higher than Curtin Ridge, because it would be visible from Yarralumla House (the Governor-General's residence).

- 50th Anniversary of Weston Creek: Waramanga and Fisher were gazetted on 4 June 1968. WCCC is planning to have a celebration in Trenerry Square to mark the occasion.

Q: What about the Stromlo Park swimming pool?

A: There is funding for the pool in the budget this year. The pool will be 50 metres long, and will be covered. Building is to start in the next financial year, with completing expected in 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.50.