

# WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

*- Your Local Voice -*

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Ms Lyla Rogan  
RPR Consulting  
2/42 Thesiger Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

**"From Purchaser Provider to Partnerships"  
ACT Draft Policy Paper on  
Funding community organisations by the ACT Government.**

Dear Ms Rogan

This letter is provided as a submission to the above policy review.

Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) has been actively involved in Weston Creek as a consultation conduit for the local community since 1991. The WCCC is a non-party political, voluntary lobby group representing the residents of Weston Creek and is an informed, active and pragmatic contributor to public debates in Weston Creek. Our website ([www.wccc.com.au](http://www.wccc.com.au)) has further details about the WCCC.

The WCCC has always provided unencumbered information and political lobbying to all ACT Governments since its formation. Labour, Liberal and Alliance Governments have received frank and fearless advice from the Executive of the WCCC. We have been able to represent our 24,000 residents on topics ranging from school closures to the ravages of the recent bushfires.

The WCCC receives a small amount of financial support from the Government which is utilised so that we can inform them of the issues which are important to our local community. We continually attract a range of the 17 MLA's from the Legislative Assembly. The WCCC is an extremely pro-active lobby group and a very accurate measure of voter concerns.

The WCCC is therefore presenting this submission to the policy review of **"From Purchaser Provider to Partnerships"**. The WCCC started to receive funding only in recent years. We commenced with no government funding and have become a significant factor in community consultation with Government and especially MLA's in the Molonglo Electorate

The respective Governments are cognisant of the influence that a non-aligned, well connected (both electronically and through regular monthly meetings) lobby group can have. In our district we use the free local media as well as extensive, concentrated and omnipresent electronic information flow - it is a major tool in the arsenal of a political lobby group.

The WCCC is an organisation which we understand has had the respect of governments of all persuasions. With or without Government funding we are able to bring to Ministers the issues of concern of residents. The roll call of our regular monthly meetings is a tribute to the respect we hold in the ACT Legislative Assembly in London Circuit. We regularly provide written submissions to numerous Assembly Committees and are sometimes requested to give evidence in person at Committee hearings.

How does a review of policy such as yours cope with what we do? We are outside the "ideal" purchaser - provider model set out in the policy paper. Do we need to conform to the "ideal" to get funding? Also, the WCCC is but one of six Community Councils in Canberra that are presently funded through purchaser-provider agreements, with a collective Government expenditure of \$24,000 per annum for all six Councils. This level of funding is well below the \$50,000 threshold required for formal approval as set out in the policy paper.

We hope that your policy review can cope with such extraneous factors as a community-based, non-party political lobby group funded by Government and providing advice to all sides of politics. All sides of politics know that they have immeasurable (as well as uncosted) access to the political information which they could not possibly buy through polling. The regular attendance of a melange of the 17 MLA's gives credence to the usefulness of the WCCC as a conduit for public consultation.

Weston Creek is but a microcosmism of the 'real' Canberra. The WCCC is currently receiving funds of \$3,000pa from the Community Liaison Unit in the Chief Minister's Department. This is on a year to year basis. In the last financial year we requested additional funds - as our funding level had not changed in a significant period. As one of the most active Community Councils in Canberra we were provided with a "performance bonuses" of \$1,000. In terms of accurate information on the concerns of residents - how do you price this information?

We agree with the paper suggesting that 3-year funding would be extremely valuable to allow for forward planning. However the policy paper does not appear to make provision for streamlining the process of managing small grants to recipients. This policy review is

not the forum to debate the level of funding only its management by the provider and the recipient.

We look forward to an innovative, pro-active and new approach to funding organisations which provide the government of the day with the information required for informed decisions to be made that benefit the Canberra community.

The Executive of the WCCC is available to discuss any of the above at a mutually convenient opportunity.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Jeff Carl  
Chairperson, Weston Creek Community Council.