

*Your local voice*

■ ■ ■ weston creek  
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## **Minutes of the General Meeting Wednesday, 25 March 2009, 7.30pm**

### **1. Opening of meeting**

1. Meeting opened 7.40pm.  
45 persons were present.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Susan McMaster, June Mackenzie, Jane Hyden, Clinton White, and Malcolm Whyte.

### **3. Minutes**

The minutes of public meetings held on 25 February were distributed and approved as presented. (Moved: Heather Hughes; Seconded: Tim Dalton)

### **4. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that WCCC has \$9496.47 on hand in two bank accounts. Several invoices are yet to be paid, in particular approximately \$1407 for printing and delivery of flyers about the Open Forum meeting.

- A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was passed. (Moved: Chris Wilson; Seconded Tom Anderson)

### **5. Correspondence**

The Chairman read out a notice from Old Narrabundah Community Council about Narrabundah Community Festival, to be held on Saturday, 28 March 2009.

WCCC has also received a letter about the 2009 Actively Ageing Funding Program, which provides assistance to eligible organisations to support participation in active lifestyles for people over 55. Applications for the Actively Ageing Grants Program are now open; the closing date is 5pm on Thursday, 9 April 2009. For information please contact Kim Polsen, Tel: 6207-2077; Email: [kim.polsen@act.gov.au](mailto:kim.polsen@act.gov.au).

### **6. Presentation by Tony Gill of Roads ACT, and Patrick Paynter of ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA).**

6.1 Tony Gill said that he would be happy to speak about anything to do with roads in the ACT, and would take questions about roads. He said he would do his best to give answers tonight, but would respond later to WCCC members if necessary, if members would give him their contact details.

He spoke about existing projects in the Weston Creek area, particularly around Cotter Road.

- Development of on-road cycle lanes from Civic Centre to Stromlo Forest Park;
- Development of a car park at the bushfire memorial, and a connection from there to Stromlo Forest Park;
- Work to improve the Cotter Road from Weston Creek out to the Cotter Dam area, before construction of the new dam wall. This work is necessary because there will be a lot of traffic using the road and the surface must be in good shape before heavy construction traffic starts;
- Development of suburbs in the Molonglo Valley will start within the next 12 to 18 months.

6.2 Patrick Paynter said that work on the initial infrastructure for Coombs (on the right as you look at a map of Molonglo) and Wright (on the left) would begin within 12 to 18 months. Infrastructure construction will include sewers, water supply, minor roads, etc.

**6.3 Roadworks:** Planning proposal covers the next 20 to 30 years. The urban arterial road that will go from the Cotter Road through to William Hovell Drive in Belconnen is to be called John Gorton Drive, and will merge with Coppins Crossing Road. John Gorton Drive will be similar to Flemington Road in Mitchell, and will have intersections with traffic lights.

#### **6.4 Roadworks along the Cotter Road:**

- 3 sets of traffic lights at the intersection of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive, to allow traffic to move more freely through the intersection;
- Roundabout to be installed at intersection of Streeton Drive, Dixon Drive and Unwin Place;
- Roundabout outside the Defence Staff College will be replaced with traffic lights and the intersection will be extended to give access into North Weston south of Cotter Road.

**6.5 Pond at former Weston Creek sewerage works:** This pond will handle storm water from Weston Creek area, which will then flow into the Molonglo River. There has been some work done to control odour from the former sewerage works.

A Question and Answer session followed.

#### **7.1 Q: What are the plans for John Gorton Drive?**

**A:** John Gorton Drive will be an urban arterial road, and a major bus route and major transport corridor. The ACT Government wants to encourage more use of public transport.

- From now to about 15 years on, John Gorton Drive will have 2 lanes each way, but eventually there will be 3 lanes each way. Service roads will be constructed along much of the length of John Gorton Drive. Traffic will be coordinated in both directions in off-peak periods, to promote the smooth flow of traffic;
- Cotter Road is to be widened, with one extra lane in each direction;
- Demographic projections indicate that traffic from Tuggeranong will decrease over the next ten years or so, due to ageing of the population.

#### **7.2 Q: How much longer will it take to commute into Civic?**

**A:** Tony Gill said there is no doubt that there will be more traffic, but we cannot give an estimate of what effect that will have on commuting times. He added that it is possible that one extra lane each way will be added to Tuggeranong Parkway and Parkes Way. When asked what would happen then at Glenloch interchange, he said that what we see at Glenloch now is only half of what it may become. It would be extended as necessary to cope with the extra traffic.

**7.3 Q: What will the population density be in Molonglo?**

**A:** Along John Gorton Drive will be medium density housing, up to 4 stories high. It will be more dense than in other areas of Canberra.

**7.4 Q: How many traffic signals will there be on John Gorton Drive?**

**A:** Signals will be located approximately 800 metres apart all the way along John Gorton Drive.

- This will allow ‘platooning’ of traffic;
- There will be underpasses for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Roundabouts have less capacity to handle large volumes of traffic than signals, and are not so safe for cyclists and pedestrians.

**7.5 Comments from audience:** Some WCCC members commented that this kind of development would take away the character of Canberra, which many people want to preserve. They do not want Canberra to become like the heavily developed areas of cities such as Sydney and Melbourne. People come here to live precisely because they don’t like Sydney or Melbourne.

**7.6 Q: How will it work to have two lanes only in each direction on John Gorton Drive with buses and cycle lanes as well?**

**A:** It is envisaged that John Gorton Drive will have 2 lanes in each direction from when it is first built until about 15 years from now.

- With 2 traffic lanes, one will be primarily a bus lane, to be shared with left-turning traffic. Most cars will use the lane in the centre;
- The road will have footpaths that are 1.5 metres wide, and 2-metre-wide cycle lanes on each side;
- Eventually John Gorton Drive will have 3 lanes in each direction.

**7.7a Q: Part 1: When will Cotter Road between Streeton Drive and Adelaide Avenue be widened?**

**7.7b Q: Part 2: Is a roundabout the best option for the intersection of Streeton Drive, Dixon Drive and Unwin Place? If a roundabout is the solution, will it be installed before development of North Weston takes place?**

**A:** Roads ACT is looking into development of the whole Cotter Road, and widening is being considered.

- Mr Paynter gave no clear indication of when this might occur, and said that construction was done on a “just in time” basis, because there is no budget for advance work. Construction of roadworks would happen at the same time as residential development occurred.
- Plans are for there to be 250 dwellings in North Weston, while Coombs and Wright will each have 4000-5000.

**7.8 Q: What roadworks will be done in North Weston?**

**A:** 1. Signals intersection at the Defence Staff College;  
2. A roundabout will be constructed at the intersection of Heysen Street and Gruner Street. Gruner St will be extended into North Weston;  
3. There will also be a major intersection where Heysen Street meets Hilder Street, as Hilder St will be extended to give access to North Weston.

**7.9 Q: What are the estimates of vehicle numbers when Molonglo opens?**

**A:** It is estimated that there will be 6-10 vehicle movements per day per dwelling. Some of these will be within the suburbs (to schools, local shops) and some will go beyond the suburbs.

**7.10 Q: Why is the government building so many kilometres of on-road cycle lanes? Why are we not getting more off-road cycle paths? Many cyclists find on-road cycle lanes intimidating, and they are certainly not safe for children. If Stromlo Park is intended for recreational use and family use, why don't we have more off-road cycle paths that cyclists and families can use to get there?**

**A:** Tony Gill said that the ACT government is committed to promoting more walking and cycling and more use of public transport.

- The on-road system is for commuter cycling;
- On-road cycle lanes will increase each year;
- Off-road cycle paths are very expensive to build. The government is proposing to build an off-road cycle path on the south side of Cotter Road, from the intersection of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive, through the recreation area between Dixon Drive and Cotter Road, to Stromlo Forest Park.

**7.11 Comment from a resident of Heysen Street** on the situation at the intersection of Streeton Drive, Dixon Drive and Unwin Place: Because of the amount of traffic in peak times, there are many accidents and it is extremely difficult to turn out of Unwin Place and get to Cotter Road.

**7.12 Q: Will there be high-density housing where the Police College now stands?**

**A:** The specific proposal is for 4-storey aged care residences on that site, although there will be a limit of 2 stories for residences facing Heysen Street. The rest of North Weston will be mixed land use.

**7.13 Q: Could proposals for on-road and off-road cycle paths be circulated directly to WCCC, for communication to members?**

**A:** We will take that on board.

**7.14 Q: Why has a new cycle lane been installed on Streeton Drive [near intersection with Namatjira Drive]?**

**A:** That intersection has had a number of accidents in the last five years, including one fatal accident and four that caused injuries. The intersection has, as a result, been identified as being among the twenty worst intersections in the ACT. The problem is that cars moving southwards along Streeton Drive, heading towards Rivett and Chapman, would screen cars in the outer lane from cars wanting to turn right out of Namatjira Drive into Streeton Drive.

- Roads ACT accepts that the solution they have put in place (the new cycle lane) has not been widely embraced. They have proposed another solution, and will inform WCCC in due course. Mr Gill acknowledge that a response to WCCC, promised when WCCC had a meeting on site with the Chief Minister and Tony Gill on 19 February, was overdue.

[Click here for Roads ACT new proposal](#)  
13 Jun 09

**7.15 Q: Are traffic lights an option for this intersection?**

**A:** Yes.

**7.16 Comment from audience:** The present solution upsets everyone, even cyclists.

**7.17 Q: How much extra traffic is expected to use Eucumbene Drive when Molonglo development starts? How much of the Cotter Dam construction traffic is expected to use Eucumbene Drive, as happened when Stromlo Park and the Gungahlin Drive Extension were being built? Since GDE was finished, the traffic has not dropped back to its previous level.**

**A:** We can't give any specific figures, but need to have the problem brought to our attention. When Roads ACT is discussing contracts, they can specify that construction traffic not use certain roads such as Eucumbene Drive.

**7.18 Q: Will there be any provision for extra parking at Coleman Court?**

**A:** There are no specific proposals for any change to parking arrangements. No doubt, since Aldi opened, parking has become tighter.

**7.19 Q: Why are cycle lanes built on the road, and not off to one side? Surely they do not need the same quality of engineered roadway as cars need?**

**A:** In the past roads were built quite wide. Now we are trying to make better use of available space. Roads are built for all traffic, and it is easier to allocate already-built roads than to build new cycle paths.

**7.20 Q: In relation to the intersection at Streeon Drive and Namatjira Drive, you have talked about sharing the roads, but there the road is NOT being shared.** The situation is much worse than it was before. Please develop solutions that are standard across Canberra, so similar intersections are all treated in the same way. In places where there is no cycle lane, bikes go in the same lane as cars, which is common sense and may even be safer for them.

**Also, could you provide recent crash data for the intersection.**

**A:** Roads ACT has crash data up to the last three months, and will arrange to send that data to any resident who wants it. Just give us your contact details. The pattern of crashes at the Streeon-Namatjira intersection means that the intersection needs some attention. Since the meeting between WCCC and the Chief Minister on site (19 February 2009), Roads ACT has been looking at five options. We will provide our suggestions to WCCC in due course.

**7.21 Comment from audience:** Just remove the cycle lane paint!

**7.22 Comment from audience:** : The new markings on Streeon Drive have made it more dangerous for cars turning left out of Hilder Street into Streeon Drive, because now there is only one lane, and all traffic is moving into that lane from Hilder Street on.

**7.23** John Burke said the WCCC had proposed that the new markings on Streeon Drive be removed, and a slip lane for turning left into Namatjira Drive be created. If this were done, Streeon Drive should be able to have two lanes as previously, i.e., go back to normal.

**7.24 Q: Has Roads ACT considered the problem of parking at Coleman Court? Mirvac is not interested in providing more parking spaces, but there is a need for more long-term parking, particularly for people who park and ride.**

**7.25 Q: If a pond is established where the old Weston sewerage works used to be, will it cause a health problem when the lake flows into the Molonglo River?**

**A:** The ACT is a leader in water quality control, especially in handling urban run-off. The new pond will take the run-off from Weston Creek, and later from the suburbs of Molonglo. It will enhance the amenity of the area. Before the pond is established, the ACT Government will remediate contaminated soil in the area (there have been reports that asbestos was dumped there), and ensure the quality of water in the Molonglo River is protected.

**7.26 Q: Will the pond be of swimming quality? Is there any proposal for a heated pool in Weston Creek. We need that, with the increase of aged people.**

**A:** No, swimming will not be allowed in the pond, as the water quality may vary. There has been a proposal for a development that would include a swimming pool near Stromlo Park.

**7.27 Q: Is there provision for dual reticulation in Molonglo?**

**A:** Yes. The Greens have asked the ACT Government to look at it. For Molonglo, the Government intends to use water from the North Weston pond for watering sports ovals and other public spaces. ACTPLA has considered 18 strategies, including storm water harvesting for

such (non-potable) purposes.

**7.28 Q: With John Gorton Drive, what measures will be required to deal with traffic noise?**

**A:** Development will be set back 25 metres from the arterial road. This will be less than is the case on Belconnen Way, where buildings are set back 100 metres. ACTPLA will require use of sound reflective materials in buildings along the arterial road.

**7.29 Comment from audience:** I am an acoustic consultant. Noise is a real problem, and ACTPLA requires the use of certain materials. There will be significant noise reflected from the arterial road, and the building standards may require that windows cannot be opened. The set-back from the road should be sufficient to minimise noise, and the use of varied building facades will reduce noise.

**7.30 Q: The Canberra Times has reported that lower speed limits may be introduced in Canberra, especially around shopping centres. What about the limit along Namatjira Drive outside Mirinjani?**

**A:** The government has agreed with the Greens to review speed limits. A committee has been set up and will report back to the Government by the end of 2009. There have also been discussions with the NRMA, and a report is to be made by May 2009.

**7.31 Q: What about a fading red arrow for the traffic lights at the intersection of Cotter Road and Tuggeranong Parkway? Also, could the three sets of lights at the junction of Hindmarsh Drive and Tuggeranong Parkway be synchronised?**

**A:** Tony Gill will look at those. Many traffic lights are synchronised all over Canberra, even if it does not seem so. Most intersections are controlled, and big intersections are tightly controlled. There is always a trade-off between safety and mobility.

Tom Anderson: I thought the issue of a 25 metre indoor pool had been raised while Hill and Paynter were there and they pointed to the pool to be built at Stromlo Park. The argument was that with an ageing population in Weston Creek, access to a heated pool would provide some relief from the heavy use of the health system. I thought the issue of a 25 metre indoor pool had been raised while Hill and Paynter were there and they pointed to the pool to be built at Stromlo Park. The argument was that with an ageing population in Weston Creek, access to a heated pool would provide some relief from the heavy use of the health system.

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The Q&A session was closed, and participants invited to have tea and coffee. The ACT Government representatives spoke to members of the audience, then left the meeting. After a brief interval, the meeting resumed, the Chairman inviting questions on other topics of concern to residents.

## **1. Skating Park in Weston**

One person said he lived near this park, but had a feeling of apprehension when he had to pass through or near the park. He had been yelled at by young people using the park, but the police had said they were not interested except if there was an assault.

**WCCC Chair** John Burke said that a letter had been sent to Sergeant Frank Jamieson at Woden Police about problems recounted by residents. That area is to be Open Community Space, i.e., a Community Park, and the Government wanted to harness Weston Creek (which is underground at that point) for watering the area.

John said there had been some complaints to police about teenagers driving cars through the

centre of the area. If residents saw such things happening, they should ring the police, email the WCCC, and could write to the relevant minister. The more emails the Government received on a particular topic, the more likely there would be some action.

## **2. Lack of information about progress of plans for Molonglo and North Weston developments**

**Q: There has been a lack of information about the North Weston and Molonglo developments recently. The ACTPLA maps on the website are hard to find, and it is difficult to find out what criteria there will be on buildings, etc, such as the height of buildings along Heysen St. Could WCCC ask the relevant minister/s to a meeting to answer questions as the bureaucrats duck questions and don't give full answers?**

Also, what about getting some sort of display about the developments for Cooleman Court, where it would be easy for residents to see what is planned?

WCCC Chair said ACTPLA have agreed to come to a meeting on 24 June 2009 and give a presentation to WCCC members. Perhaps WCCC could ask Andrew Barr to come as well.

**WCCC Chair:** The Government wants “sustainable growth”, which is a contradiction in terms. The Government insists on a certain number of dwellings to cater for a growing population. So if the government gives up some land for community use, it insists that the density of buildings on remaining land be higher. Given that there is to be growth, one has to go up or out and the Government has put heavy emphasis on “up”.

**Q: What protection will there be for the CIT Arboretum on Heysen Street?**

**WCCC Chair:** We need to follow this up. We will need help for residents, as the committee does not have enough people for all that needs to be done.

**Q: Is there anything on the WCCC website about the outcomes from the rallies that were held last year?**

**WCCC Chair:** We had several meetings with the minister and with ACTPLA, and discussed lots of detail, particularly in regard to North Weston. ACTPLA gave us some undertakings about matters such as:

- Preserving the CIT Arboretum
- Setback of development on the north side of Cotter Road
- Preserving space around the Bahai Centre and the Sikh Temple
- Height of buildings along Heysen Street
- Keeping open space along the ridge above North Weston.

The WCCC needs to follow up with ACTPLA and ask for details of what they are now proposing.

## **3. Waramanga: Street lights that are too bright**

**Q: In Waramanga, the bulbs in the street lights are being changed, so now it is very bright at night and keeps people awake. It is a problem on Nemarang Crescent.**

**WCCC Chair:** Please write to ACTPLA and/or the minister, and send WCCC a copy of your letter. If you prefer, send a letter to WCCC and we will pass it on to the appropriate authorities.

## **4. Re-surfacing of roads and noise thus created**

**Q: When roads are re-surfaced, they use materials that look like a black glue with sharp stones. This takes time to become smooth and is also extremely noisy. Why doesn't Roads ACT use a smoother surface?**

**Q: That surface is a problem for cyclists as well, because the stones get pushed to the side, creating a surface that is very difficult for cyclists to ride on.**

**WCCC Chair:** WCCC has had several letters from Weston Creek residents about the noise created by this new road surface. Probably it is a question of noise vs cost. Again, please write to WCCC with your concerns, and write to Roads ACT and/or the minister.

## **5. Unused petrol stations**

**Q:** On Friday, the Chief Minister said on radio that he had asked Andrew Barr to do a report on unused petrol stations. There are unused sites at Chapman, Duffy, Fisher and Rivett.

### **Comments:**

- Petrol companies probably want to redevelop the sites, but this causes a problem because they want to put up multi-storey units and local residents complain.
- One member of the audience said he had been involved with remediation of a petrol station at Queanbeyan. Ground water was contaminated up to 100 metres away, and it cost more than \$1 million for remediation. In such a case, the only way a developer can recoup costs is to put up multi-storey units
- A development application (DA) has been made for the Chapman site, which is an eyesore, but residents complained about potential traffic problems and approval of the DA has been held up.
- Avoid the queues at Weston, and use the petrol station at Waramanga instead, to help it keep going.

## **6. Proposal for 100 one-bedroom units in Gungahlin**

WCCC has received information about a proposal for building 100 one-bedroom units in Gungahlin, with no communal area, and no visitor carparking. The DA notice went out around Christmas, and was not widely noticed.

**WCCC Chair:** The WCCC has discussed the question of DA notifications published over the Christmas period with ACTPLA and they are considering taking into account that there is a general shutdown of building activity during January with many public servants on holidays.,

## **7. New community centre for Weston Creek**

- In December 2007 WCCC made a submission to the ACT Government about setting up a new community centre near Cooleman Court. The submission proposed that the current community centre be sold for retail development right next to Cooleman Court, and the money raised be used to help fund a new centre on the empty land at the corner of Brierley Street and Hindmarsh Drive. A swimming pool, large hall, and a library annex were among the suggestions made to government.
- The President of the Weston Creek Community Association, Kath Paton spoke to say that the Community Association endorsed the proposal.
- WCCC Chair said that WCCC would like Weston Creek residents to tell WCCC what kind of facilities they want in a community centre, and that we need to start pushing the Government.
- The Government has said the hall at former Weston Primary School could be used for community activities, but that hall is not designed for the uses that the Community needs and it is not convenient to Cooleman Court, which has become the centre of Weston Creek region.

**Q: Could some of the former CIT Horticulture College buildings be retained and used for particular activities, such as an Arts Centre?**

**Q: Are there any plans by the ACT Government to bring government agencies into Weston Creek, to create employment?**

**WCCC Chair:** NO, not as far as WCCC knows.

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

**Next Public Meeting: THURSDAY, 30 APRIL, 2009, 7.30pm**