

*Your local voice*



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## **Minutes of the General Meeting Wednesday, 24 June 2009, 7.30pm**

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

1. Meeting opened 7.40pm. 80 persons were present.

### **2. Apologies**

Malcolm Whyte, Susan McMaster, Shirley Gourgaud (President, Belconnen Community Council), Marie-Anne Gigon (Orana School), Tom Anderson, Rosemary Drabsch

### **3. Minutes**

The minutes of public meetings held on 27 May were distributed.

Motion: That the minutes of the last meeting be accepted. (Moved: Tim Walshaw; Seconded Trevor Wilson) Motion was passed.

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

The Treasurer reported that WCCC has approximately \$3000 on hand. It is estimated that about \$500 will remain to be passed on to the next committee.

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

### **5. Presentation: Canberra Community Care**

**Jacqui Burke**, former MLA for Molonglo, spoke about the work of Canberra Community Care, the welfare arm of the Parkway Apostolic Church, which runs The Retro Rack at Cooleman Court selling second-hand clothing. Canberra Community Care was established five years ago and has over 700 clients on its books. They provide food parcels, advocacy support and other assistance to families. A major program is the Slipstream Child Development Program, for young people who want to follow non-academic pursuits. Jacqui said volunteers are needed, and donations of money or tinned food are greatly welcomed.

**6. Superintendent Lesa Gale** and **Sergeant Bob Wynn** from the Australian Federal Police introduced themselves and said they would like to attend WCCC meetings regularly and would be happy to answer any questions from WCCC members.

### **7. Presentation: Update on Developments in North Weston and Molonglo**

1. Bruce Frazer, ACTPLA
2. Amanda Jorgenson and Joanne Mitchell, Land Development Agency

1. **Bruce Frazer** from **ACTPLA** began his presentation by explaining what has happened since December 2008, when the **Concept Plan for Molonglo and North Weston** was finally adopted by the ACT Government. The essence of the plan was the change in zoning of the Molonglo Valley, especially East Molonglo, from rural land to urban land. Development is planned to proceed over the next thirty years, with East Molonglo and North Weston to be developed first. The estimated final population of the Molonglo Valley will be around 55,000 persons, with 25,000 dwellings. The Concept Plan is a tool to ensure that the detail of the plan comes to fruition.

URL for Concept Plan <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2008-352/current/pdf/2008-352.pdf>

The first suburbs to be developed will be **North Weston, Coombs and Wright**. The first parcel of land in North Weston has been sold to a developer. (Note: The sale took place today, 24 June, and the land was sold for \$11.7 million.)

It has taken between ten and twelve years for Gungahlin to develop to its present stage.

Mr Frazer showed a map of the alignment of **the proposed arterial road** (possibly to be named **John Gorton Drive**) that will go from the Cotter Road through the Molonglo Valley. This road will be roughly 200 metres from the front boundaries of houses in Dixon Drive, Holder. It will be constructed with two-and-a-half lanes in each direction at first, but eventually is planned to have three-and-a-half lanes in each direction. It will be similar to Northbourne Avenue, and will have two travelling lanes, 1 bus lane, and a cycle lane in each direction.

**Population trends in Weston Creek:** Mr Frazer said that in 1981 Weston Creek had 27,000 residents; 28,000 in 1986 (high point), but by 2006, the population had dropped to 22,886 persons. Projections are that the population will continue to decline, and by 2014 it will be approximately 22,150 persons.

From this point, Mr Frazer responded to questions from the audience.

Q: What about parking at Cooleman Court? Will it be increased?

A: Parking is the responsibility of TAMS (Dept of Territory and Municipal Services). They will respond to complaints from the community.

Q: When will Dixon Drive be realigned?

A: The changes to Dixon Drive and Streeton Drive are in design stage now, and will be completed over the next few years. Streeton Dve is most important; Dixon Dve will be realigned to meet Unwin Place and a roundabout will be installed there.

Q: Are the roadworks to be completed before North Weston becomes residential?

A: No. Residents of North Weston may not have direct access to the Cotter Road from North Weston for some years. Access will only be through Unwin Place.

Q: The pond to the south-west of Coombs, is that there now?

A: No. The pond will be constructed on the site of the old sewerage works. ACTPLA has elaborate plans for a large pond, water will come from Weston Creek.

Q: What about the Molonglo River corridor?

A: At present the river corridor is degraded up to Scrivener Dam. ACTPLA is looking at getting funding to improve the river. The goal is to have one continuous area all the way along the Molonglo River up to Scrivener Dam. There may be a lake with a dam at West Molonglo, but that is not on the plan at present.

Q: Will Cotter Road remain?

A: Yes. It will meet John Gorton Drive at right angles, and the junction will have traffic lights. Access from the suburb of Wright to Cotter Road will be limited.

Q: With roads in the new suburbs, what about kangaroos on the roads? Will crossings be at level, or will there be grade separation?

A: No grade separation on the arterial road until it meets Bindubi St and Coulter Dve at the Belconnen end of the arterial road. There will be traffic signals every 800 metres. The gradient of the arterial road will be kept at 5 percent, to ensure the road will be good for public transport, including possibly light rail in the future. Buildings in the local centre, as in Gungahlin, could be up to six storeys, in order to increase housing density along the arterial road.

Q: There will presumably be generational changes in population in the older suburbs of Weston Creek. What about pressure on facilities in Weston Creek from the new suburbs?

A: Development in the new suburbs will happen before services arrive, and this will inevitably have an impact on Weston Creek.

Q: In the next five years, what will be the extra population in the new suburbs?

A: Up to 4000 in Coombs, and up to 3000 in Wright.

Q: From the figures you gave us a few minutes ago, the drop in population in Weston Creek (approx. 730 persons) will be considerably smaller than the increase in population from the new suburbs, won't it?

A: Yes, that is correct.

Q: Proposed small local shops in Coombs and Wright will not be able to cater for most needs of the population of those suburbs, so it is likely people will go to Weston Creek to shop.

A: Yes, that is true. It will take time to put in a group centre, as it did in Gungahlin. Some community facilities will be provided, and are allowed for in the Concept Plan, such as sites for primary schools and pre-schools, and a one-hectare community area. However, schools may not be built in line with the development front, although they will be built in due course. There will be a site for an independent school, probably a high school.

A group centre will be built in due course, located in a central position. It may not be built for ten years, but could be earlier.

Q: Was an Enviromental Impact Assessment done?

A: Yes, a preliminary assessment was done, and was released for public comment in 2007.

Q: What about parks and ovals? In Weston Creek we have seen a significant decline in the maintenance of parks and ovals, and some have been taken over for residential development. What about using water from ponds for parks and ovals?

A: Developers provide what ACTPLA tells them has to be provided. There are plans for an oval and some parks at sites along Uriarra Road. Under normal guidelines, local parks and neighbourhood parks have to be provided. There will be playing grounds. As well, there is the Stromlo Forest Park, the river corridor, and the buffer zone between Cotter Road and Dixon Dve. There are also plans to construct a running trail, Deek's Run, to the Arboretum.

Q: What about the arboretum at CIT on Heysen St in Weston?

A: The Government is well aware of the value of the arboretum. The Minister has told ACTPLA to put in guidelines for preservation of the arboretum. It is embedded in the Concept Plan. The arboretum will be surveyed, its boundaries decided and it will be locked in as public land. The xeriscape garden will also be protected, although this is more complicated than the arboretum.

Q: What will be the size of blocks in Coombs and Wright?

A: These suburbs will be 'standard residential' areas. ACTPLA has not yet decided what density of housing will be in these suburbs, because of the topography. Blocks will generally be 350 square metres or more, which is bigger than the average. The Territory Plan allows for compact blocks that are less than 250 square metres. The Government is aware of the implications for having too many small blocks, or too many large blocks.

Q: In Forde, blocks are about 250 sq metres, but the gap between houses is often less than 6 feet (2 metres). How will ACTPLA control the development of MacMansions on small blocks?

A: The size of houses on blocks depends on the building codes, and is not the subject of legislation by government.

2. **Amanda Jorgenson** from the **Land Development Agency** said the ACT has three methods of land release: Englobo, LDA development, and joint ventures (as in Crace and Forde).

**Englobo** release is when land is sold to a developer as one parcel. The developer will put in roads, services, trees, paths, etc and will divide up the land into blocks. The developer will also put in dwellings, as determined by the Territory Plan (which controls such things as density, height of buildings, etc) and will sell blocks. Under current government policy, 15 percent of housing in any development has to be "affordable housing".

The construction components of this kind of development are:

- Designing the layout of a suburb or estate;
- Deciding how houses are built.

Approval processes apply in all cases. The size of blocks is driven by the market, and larger blocks sell less quickly than smaller blocks.

The LDA does not set prices; it only acts as the government's agent for selling land.

The first parcel of land sold in North Weston will have up to 100 dwellings; 15 percent will be affordable housing. Website for information is: [www.cnd.act.gov.au](http://www.cnd.act.gov.au)

Between now and 2013-2014, around 2000-2200 residential blocks will be released. Release sites will be a mixture of Englobo sales, LDA developments, and joint venture areas. The exact break-up has not been decided.

When land is sold, there needs to be a hierarchy or road layout, because you need to know where one developer starts and another finishes. These decisions will be made over the next few months. By the end of June 2010, two Englobo parcels of land are to be released. One will be 500 blocks, the other 300 blocks. LDA will also do some development, on both sides of the arterial road. In the peninsula area of Coombs, there will be a joint venture area.

Land on the other side of North Weston, across the Cotter Road and near where the RSPCA now is, will not be developed for a while.

Q: What about selling of land at the top of Heysen St, above Hilder St?

A: A second site in North Weston, along the strip above the CIT, will be sold next. The CIT is relocating the School of Horticulture to Bruce from 2010, and the Government is investigating the future use of that site.

Q: What is planned for the buffer zone between Cotter Road and Dixon Dve?

A: That buffer zone will not become forest again. It has been designated as Hills, Ridges and Buffer Space, and will remain as open space.

Q: What will be the impact of extra traffic from Molonglo on existing traffic flow along Cotter Road up to the Tuggeranong Parkway? What is the timing of construction of the arterial road vis-a-vis the development of Coombs and Wright? When will the northern end of the arterial road be connected?

A: Undoubtedly there will be more traffic on Cotter Road. John Gorton Dve will go in over the next two to three years, with a temporary connection to Uriarra Road. It will join Coppins Crossing Road at some point. A north-south link will be maintained.

Q: Environmental issues? EIS?

A: Environmental issues relate mainly to the river corridor. Much of the area is degraded former forest, so an EIS is not relevant.

Q: Will cats have to be contained in the new suburbs?

A: Possible, perhaps likely. This would have to be done by legislation.

Q: When will Dixon Dve be realigned and the junction with Unwin Place be constructed?

A: The developer will do an estate development plan, which will have to be approved. Road construction cannot start until the plans are approved, so it is likely to take 6-12 months before construction of roads can start. After that, it will probably be 9-12 months before blocks are available to start construction, and construction of houses will take 6-9 months on top of that.

Q: Will power lines be underground?

A: All power now has to be underground.

Q: Are the requirements imposed on developers publicly available?

A: Yes, they are in the Concept Plan. The Plan will be revised to add detail in due course. WCCC has a copy on CD of the requirements for developers for the North Weston parcel that has just been sold.

Q: Will houses be required to have improved energy efficiency?

A: Yes. The ACT Government promotes sustainability.

Q: Will there be community consultation on the group centre? When?

A: The next concept plan, for Sulman, is being designed now. It will become available in draft form, and ACTPLA expects they will be; asking for public input over the next year or two.

The meeting was closed at 9.20.

**Next Public Meeting: WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2009, 7.30pm**  
**Topic: New Southern Cemetery**