

*Your local voice*



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## **Minutes of the WCCC General Meeting Wednesday, 18 May 2011**

### **1. Meeting opened**

Former Chair Tim Dalton opened the meeting at 7.35pm.

Twenty persons were present.

Tim welcomed the guest speaker, Jeremy Hanson, and AFP representatives, Superintendent Lesa Gale and Sergeant Steve Hogarth. He also welcomed a representative from the *Canberra Chronicle*.

### **2. Apologies**

Katy Gallagher, Caroline Le Couteur, Tom Anderson, Simon Hearder, Rosemary Drabsch.

### **3. Brief Introduction by AFP representatives**

Superintendent Gale introduced Sergeant Steve Hogarth, Officer in Charge of Woden Police Station. Steve said "This is my community", explaining that he had grown up in Weston and is now living in Lyons. He said crime statistics for the area are lower this year than for some time. Also, the number of vehicle collisions that cause fatalities is going down, but collisions that cause injury are going up, especially at peak times.

Sergeant Hogarth answered a number of questions from the audience, and said that at present there are 946 officers with the AFP in Canberra. Random drug testing of drivers is to continue; the testing is for methamphetamines and marijuana.

### **4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous public meeting (March 2011) were accepted as circulated. (Moved: Barbara Brinton; Seconded: Heather Hughes)

### **5. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that WCCC has \$10,399.95 in the bank.

### **6. Presentation by Jeremy Hanson, Liberal Party MLA for Molonglo electorate**

Mr Hanson began by saying that Weston Creek rates high in terms of "liveability", and that there is a good sense of community in the area. However, Weston Creek is in danger of moving backwards because of a lack of services. He quoted WCCC Deputy Chairman Tom Anderson, who said of the ACT Budget, "There is nothing in it for Weston Creek, except for one small facility in Holder. It is like we have been forgotten." Mr Hanson noted that Weston Creek has no seniors centre, has an old and inadequate community centre, public transport has been

neglected, and that Weston Creek has even missed out on public art!

Mr Hanson said that WCCC could consider the option of putting a budget submission to the ACT Government and follow up by attending meetings of the Estimates Committee. “The squeaky wheel gets oiled”, he said. “The community needs to make its voice heard.”

Coleman Court is a hub for our community. With Phase 1 of development in Molonglo, about 10,000 people will come to live there, and there will be more when Phase 2 is completed. Even the ACT Government says that Molonglo residents will use the facilities in Weston Creek at first, while infrastructure is being built in Molonglo, and this will put pressure on Weston Creek. The community of Weston Creek is ageing, but Molonglo will be a young community.

Mr Hanson suggested that there are three elements to consider if the Weston Creek community wants to take action to get government to give some attention to its concerns.

### **1. Master Plan**

Mr Hanson said there should be a Master Plan for Coleman Court and an Infrastructure Plan for the region, to be prepared by experts who could look at all the issues and make some suggestions. Mr Hanson had moved a motion for a Master Plan in September 2010 but the Government had knocked it back. Two weeks later the Chief Minister announced a Master Plan for Hawker shops. The Liberal Party had kept pressing, with the result that the 2011 budget has provision for four Master Plans to be prepared, one of which is for Weston Creek.

He said WCCC needs to engage with the people working on the Master Plan, such as the politicians and people in ACTPLA. We should try to get some facilities in Molonglo earlier than may otherwise be planned. He added that it is possible Coleman Court might be the de facto regional hub for much longer than is currently envisaged, which might mean that Coleman Court will need to be extended.

### **2. Infrastructure Plan - Infrastructure Canberra**

Infrastructure Canberra is a bill that has been introduced into the Assembly.

- It covers all sorts of services and facilities
- It provides for a Commissioner and Board to determine what is needed, and to consult with the community
- It is an important measure for all communities.

### **3. Local Action**

Politicians need to engage with the community on a local level, to find out what the local issues are. Mr Hanson said he has sent out a survey, and asked everyone to respond and send it back to him. He will convey the information he gathers from survey responses to the various ministers and will try to get action.

Members of the community need to tell politicians what they see as important issues, and need to be pro-active to ensure both politicians and public servants are informed about local issues.

Weston Creek has been neglected, but it is not the only area that has.

Mr Hanson answered a number of questions from WCCC members.

Q: When is a small business not a small business, and when can it operate in a residential area? For example, a business that installs air conditioners, or a landscaping supplier?

A: As long as the business does not interfere with residential amenity, it should be OK, but I would have to look at the legislation. If there is a particular issue, I would be happy to write to the minister about it.

Q: Purdon Associates has been involved in a number of “community consultations” in this area. They seem to do what the government wants, rather than what the community wants.

A: I do not want to comment on this matter. Perhaps Canberra needs a bit more competition in this field of consultancy. There has been a lot of criticism of the consultation process in the last couple of years.

Mr Hanson said that as a politician he could help with the process of approaching the government but could not himself deal with the bureaucracy on behalf of a particular organisation.

Q: In relation to community consultations, is there any government protocol that departments must follow? Is there any way of finding out if such protocols are followed in practice?

A: The government needs to be honest. If decisions have been made, it should not pretend there is still room for change.

Q: On urban infill, does the public still support this? It has some advantages but there are also some disadvantages, so perhaps the political parties need to review the whole issue.

A: Planning issues, such as urban infill, can be very difficult to manage. If Canberra is to grow, where can it grow? All parties support the principle of infill. The job for politicians is to balance the growing of the city with the needs and wishes of the community.

Q: Is there any likelihood that portfolios in the Liberal party will be juggled?

A: No. The Liberal Party is comfortable with the present situation and is waiting to see who will be selected in the former Chief Minister’s place. If suitable, that person may go straight into the ministry.

Q: As a young person who is single, lives in a converted garage, has no landline and no letter-box, I tend to miss out on community information. What can be done to help people like me keep in touch with what is going on?

A: It can be very difficult to communicate with young people. If you have any suggestions, please talk with me afterwards.

Other questions raised included: redevelopment of the Indoor Cricket Centre and Gymnasium, improved access for the service station so cars don’t block the street, truck parking, rubbish from MacDonalDs, a move by the AFP to recruit police who would be willing to become ACT specialists and stay in the ACT region.

On parking in Civic, Mr Hanson said that sites in Civic are being sold off and parking areas are becoming fewer in number. He said that he is pro-car, and that the Liberal Party is also. It is his opinion that Canberra people will continue to need cars, even if public transport improves. Mr Hanson said he is very mindful of the inconvenience caused if there is no place to park, and of the cost of parking, which has risen in recent years.

He said that over the last ten years, rates have risen more than 100 percent and water by 200 percent. It is a problem if the people who dictate social policy do not understand how other people, especially those living in outer areas, live. Practical realities should be kept in mind.

Q: ACT residents have been conserving water for almost the last ten years, but now the cost of water is to rise by 10 percent in order to pay for new infrastructure.

A: It is possible that if the Murray-Darling Plan goes ahead, ACT will not even own the water in ACT dams. If infrastructure projects or decisions turn out not to be successful, it can be a huge cost for the community.

Chairperson Tim Dalton thanked Mr Hanson.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

**NEXT MEETING**

**Carolyn Le Couteur, Greens ACT MLA for Molonglo**

**Wednesday, 29 June 2011, at 7.30pm**