

Your local voice



www.wccc.com.au
info@wccc.com.au

PO Box 3701
Weston Creek ACT 2611

Telephone **(02) 6288 8975**

Minutes of the WCCC General Meeting Wednesday, 29 June 2011

1. Meeting opened

Deputy Chair Tom Anderson opened the meeting at 7.35pm.

Thirty-seven persons were present.

Tom welcomed the guest speaker, Caroline Le Couteur.

2. Apologies

Katy Gallagher, Shane Rattenbury, Simon Corbell, Jeremy Hanson, Simon Hearder, Chris and Julie Braddick, Tim Dalton, John Burke, Paula Barnett, Heather Hughes, Sergeant Steve Hogarth (AFP).

3. Presentation by Caroline Le Couteur, Greens ACT MLA for Molonglo Electorate

Ms Le Couteur said that if one takes a 50 to 100 year perspective, major issues facing ACT residents and governments include:

- **Climate Change** - the ACT Government is committed to a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020
- **Population Growth** - the ACT has the second highest growth rate in Australia, at 2.0 percent. Western Australia is slightly higher at 2.1 percent. Seventy percent of ACT growth is local: the average age of the population is 32 years, a very young population.
- **Peak Oil** - According to the International Energy Agency, production of crude oil peaked in 2006. Some oil is still being discovered, and new forms of fossil fuels, such as coal seam gas, are being developed, but overall production is going down. This will affect Canberra's residents, and particularly those of us living in Weston Creek as our transport requirements are high.

Transport is a big issue for Weston Creek. The bus service is not adequate, and poor timetabling means that services come only once an hour but within ten minutes of each other. We also need to avoid having Molonglo make transport problems in Weston Creek worse.

- The Greens would support provision of an Express Bus service and a Park 'N' Ride service. When the new Weston Ponds (Lake Asbestos) are formed, there will be a lot of parking available, and this could be used for Park 'N' ride. The Greens are going to make a proposal in relation to this matter.
- They would also push for better timetables for bus services.
- When the new development in Molonglo begins to have people living there, the new suburbs will need a good bus service, right from the beginning. If the bus service is not

good, every family will need to have two cars, and would then be unlikely to start to using buses.

- A dedicated cycle highway from Molonglo to Civic should be installed from the beginning, to encourage commuting by cycle.

Infrastructure is another issue for Weston Creek. Much of the present infrastructure (roads, footpaths, community facilities) is ageing and needs to be upgraded or replaced. Ms Le Couteur urged residents to use the FIX MY STREET website for reporting problems to the government. She said that if this did not bring action, then residents could email or write to her directly.

Cotter Road upgrade - \$7 million had been provided in the 2011-2012 budget for improvements to Cotter Road, from Yarralumla Creek (near the equestrian centre) to Dunrossil Drive. That is not a great distance, but is a start. The Government is planning to install a new **interchange** for where Cotter Road, Adelaide Avenue and Yamba Drive meet. Proposals for this interchange were outlined at the community consultation on development at the Yarralumla Brickworks.

Community facilities - Cooleman Court is stretched, with increased numbers of people coming to shop and to use the gym and other facilities. Parking has become difficult, and has been discussed many times at WCCC meetings.

- Much of the parking area is only for two hours, not only during the day but also at night.
- There is no parking for trucks.
- Parking near the Scout Hall could be made for longer hours.

The Greens would like to see a bigger transport solution for the whole of Canberra, first for Gungahlin to Civic, and then from Civic to other areas. What appeals would be something that runs on rails and uses electricity. Such a form of transport would be stable over a long period, but would require long-term commitment from successive governments.

The Greens are also asking why doesn't the Government re-use some of the empty office space in Civic, rather than build a completely new building.

The Greens have asked the government to re-introduce **neighbourhood planning**, but the Government has not agreed.

There is a **Master Plan for Cooleman Court**, but the Government will only do two Master Plans per year and this is not our year. The Master Plan for Kambah gives some hope: part of it was to enlarge the shopping precinct, enlarge Woolworths, and put in a multi-storey carpark.

Ms Le Couteur said that Weston Creek is not a new frontier, and most land is owned privately, so the Government has little control. However, the Greens will try to get the **Master Plan** brought in sooner than might otherwise happen.

Q: The population of Molonglo will be three times that of Weston Creek. The Group Centre in Molonglo will eventually be close to the size of Gungahlin. What is the balance between Weston Creek and Molonglo?

A: Ms Le Couteur said that for a period, the facilities at Cooleman Court will be over-stretched, as Molonglo develops, but eventually residents of Molonglo will be able to use facilities within Molonglo, and then Cooleman Court will return to servicing only Weston Creek residents. However, this is no reason NOT to do something for Weston Creek now.

Q. There were rumours that the Edge Gym and the Indoor Cricket Centre were to close because a change of lease had occurred for this site.

A: Ms Le Couteur said she had heard that a change of lease had occurred for the site where the Edge Gym and Indoor Cricket Centre are located, but has not heard if any changes are planned. Deputy Chair Tom Anderson commented that he had spoken to the proprietors of both venues during June and both had indicated that they had long term leases and there was no likelihood of these venues changing in the foreseeable future.

Q: Christine Lawrence, President of the Equestrian Association, said that the population of Weston Creek is ageing because no one wants to leave. There is a high proportion of open area, and as a result, there are a number of equestrian centres. She said there may be some danger that we could lose our remaining open space - for transport, public housing, etc - and we should act to protect current amenities.

A: Ms Le Couteur said she totally agreed, that we need high quality public open space that is linked to other open space. We also need to have good, well designed, sustainable buildings.

Q: What about the buffer zone between Cotter Road and Dixon Drive? When are trees to be planted, especially around the Gross Pollutant Trap beside the veterinary centre on Dixon Drive and between the new arterial road and Dixon Drive? In Beijing, green parks are very noticeable, but in Canberra parks are being replaced by concrete.

A: WCCC Deputy Chair Tom Anderson said that WCCC has written to the Government about the buffer zone, but the response was very disappointing, as no plans are forthcoming.

Q: Several Weston Creek suburbs have dropped below ACT standards in terms of urban parks and green spaces. What is the policy of the Greens on this issue?

A: Greens' policy is to keep urban parks, and that trees and shrubs, and playgrounds, should be maintained or replaced as necessary. The Greens did an enquiry on street trees. The Government has said it will notify people BEFORE trees are cut down, and has committed to replacing and maintaining trees.

Q: One resident said he had rung TAMS about a dangerous street tree/branch, and was told it would have to wait four months. He was willing to pay for the work in order to get it done, but no tree surgeons would do the work as they would be fined.

A: Ms Le Couteur said he would need to phone Canberra Connect and get an application form for a permit to damage the tree. The Tree Protection Unit deals with these matters.

Q: Do you have any comments on Draft Variation 306?

A: It is better than previous versions in some respects, particularly in relation to solar access, designs for cul de sac streets, and secondary dwellings (granny flats or student flats) being added on to existing houses. People don't want old houses to be knocked down and replaced with much bigger houses or apartment blocks.

Q: With the ban on plastic bags, what can we use for rubbish bin liners?

A: The ban is only on bags of a certain thickness, like the ones you get at the check-out. Biodegradable bags are OK. Rubbish can be wrapped in newspaper, as we used to do in the past.

Q: When are we going to get bins for green rubbish like they have in Queanbeyan? Also, Queanbeyan has a clean-up once a year on demand, and a chemical clean-up.

A: That is not in Government policy.

Q: Is there any proposal for hard rubbish collection?

A: No, although there is a trial at the moment but this is only for pensioners.

Q: The new public housing units at Rivett will be fully occupied by the end of July, and they are really nice units. Unfortunately, the bus service only runs once an hour. Could that be improved?

A: Ms Le Couteur said that she had previously said that she would raise the issue of timetabling with ACTION and TAMS.

After Ms Le Couteur finished her presentation, there was a short break.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous public meeting (May 2011) were accepted as circulated. (Moved: Mal Ferguson; Seconded: Lance Williamson)

5. Treasurer's Report

The Acting Treasurer reported that WCCC has \$10,270 in the bank, and that \$4500 has been committed for distribution of flyers prior to public meetings.

6. General Business

1. Electoral Boundaries. The Gungahlin Community Council put a submission to the committee deciding the electoral boundaries for the 2010 ACT election that asked for all suburbs of Gungahlin to be included in Molonglo and for Weston Creek to be moved into Brindabella electorate.

2. Airport Consultative Committee. Tom Anderson attended the regular 3-monthly meeting of this committee.

3. Dead trees in Cooleman Court parking areas. WCCC has raised the issue of removal of dead trees and maintenance of living trees in the parking areas with TAMS. Some trees have been marked but nothing much has been done yet.

4. Fetherston Gardens. TAMS wants to have a Master Plan for the Gardens prepared, and there will be a public consultation on 3 August, at the Weston Club, from 6 to 8pm. A firm of consultants, Red Box, is drawing up a Concept Plan. The WCCC Gardens Working Group will submit some suggestions before 3 August.

- We need more volunteers for working bees.

- The former plan from the 1970s when the Gardens were established still exist and are being used to guide current planning, but some new areas will need to be created.

5. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the **National Arboretum** will stop at the big power line and will not go further south. The Molonglo East-West road will go south of the power line.

6. One member suggested that the **parking area** at the end of the old Weston School oval, which is now locked off, could be used for Park 'N' Ride, with a dedicated bus from the end of McCubbin Street.

7. Mowing of ovals. Since last December Holder Oval has been mown, but not the whole oval, only part of it each time. This is a problem for people who walk their dogs there. Apparently TAMS had trouble getting enough contractors to help out with mowing after the heavy rains at the end of 2010. There has also been a problem with the block of land on Dixon Drive between the Buddhist temple and the veterinary centre. A resident had written to the Chief Minister to ask for it to be done, and was told it would be done by March, but nothing happened.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

NEXT MEETING

**Bruce Frazer, Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate
(formerly ACTPLA) will speak on Draft Variation 306**

Wednesday, 27 July 2011, at 7.30pm