

Your local voice



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Minutes of the WCCC General Meeting Wednesday, 2 May 2012

1. Meeting opened

Chair Tom Anderson opened the meeting at 7.35pm. About fifteen persons were present. Tom welcomed WCCC members and guest speaker Ms Lynne Harwood, CEO of Communities at Work.

2. Apologies: Tim Dalton, Caroline Le Couteur, Trevor Wilson, Lance Williamson, Heather Hughes.

3. Presentation: Ms Lynne Harwood, CEO, Communities@Work

Ms Harwood began by explaining that Communities@Work is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. It has a vision for a resilient and socially inclusive community that cares for the well-being of all, and sees its mission as being to deliver quality community services of social value and practical benefit to the people of Canberra.

- Communities@Work has operated for nearly 35 years in the ACT and provides a wide range of programs, including child care and foster care, parenting and family support, youth programs, educational programs, transitional housing, assistance for those experiencing hardship, respite and disability services, as well as transport, in-home support, and social activities for seniors.
- Its programs are funded through payment of fees for service (63%) and through contracts with the Australian Federal and ACT governments (29%) and through generous donations from business and individuals. Communities@Work seeks donations so that it can fund certain philanthropic programs that otherwise could not be operated.
- The main headquarters of Communities@Work is in Tuggeranong, and there is a large office at Cooleman Court in Weston. There is also a hub in Woden, at the Pearce Community Centre.
- Communities@Work employs about 450 paid staff, and is helped by around 200 volunteers. It also has 150 self-employed Family Day Care carers. Services are delivered to more than 13,000 people annually.
- There are 25 **before and after-school programs**. Nine before-school programs operate from 7.30 till 9am, and provide breakfast for the children; fourteen after-school programs run from 3 to 6pm (except in school holidays)
- **School holiday programs** operate in Gungahlin (Northside) and Monash (Southside), and for the first time at Easter this year, at Malkara School in Hughes.
- Communities@Work runs **childcare centres** at 13 locations across Canberra. The largest is in the Treasury Building, with 147 children, while the smallest is at Stirling, with 25 places.

One day a week there is a **Paint and Play program** for kids and parents at the Weston Community Hub 9 in the former Weston primary school).

- **Aged Care programs** include the following:
 - **Centre4Seniors**, located at the Weston Creek Community Centre, where Seniors can meet, enjoy activities, join an exercise class, and participate in workshops and seminars;
 - **Seniors Activities**, social and recreational programs specifically for Seniors in the Tuggeranong and Weston Creek regions: Lanyon Men's Group, Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club, Tuggeranong Learning Circle, Tuggeranong Men's Shed, Tuggeranong Sing-along Group, Women's Neighbourhood Group.
 - **Support Services**, to assist the frail aged, people with disabilities, and their carers to live independently in their own homes
 - **Transport**, provides transport for elderly people to medical and para-medical appointments, social and community activities, shopping centres, and to visit loved ones who are living in residential care. Communities@Work provides about 18,000 trips per year.
 - **Tuggeranong Seniors Centre**, which provides a place where people can go to have a chat, learn a new hobby or meet friends and reduce the risk of feeling isolated.
- Through its **Community Development programs**, Communities@Work looks to create and/or support development of initiatives that connect people and form new community groups or activities for disadvantaged, disconnected or socially isolated people, with the aim of helping communities to become self-sufficient. Communities@Work provides **Information Hubs** at Cooleman Court and Lanyon, network meetings, and assists with the ACT Government's Energy Efficiency Program, through which assessors inspect homes and give advice on how to improve energy efficiency in their homes.
- Communities@Work runs a range of **programs to assist disabled people**:
 - Inclusions Support, to help families with disabled children to feel included;
 - Connections at Cooleman
 - Fun for Youth, after-school and school holiday programs for disabled teenagers
 - Respite options, to support carers.

Ms Harwood said that one of the most important roles of Communities@Work is to help people to find their way through the maze of government services and work out what they need to do.

Q: WCCC member Bob Sutherland asked about the “**Virtual Village**” concept.

A: Ms Harwood said that Communities@Work has done a full scoping study, funded by the ACT Government, and recommended that a three-year program be started. However, the Government has not pursued this recommendation. If it were possible to get seed funding for a three-year pilot program, to get the initiative off the ground, it is likely the program would pay for itself after the initial period. It would need the equivalent of one full-time person for three years (i.e., about \$120,000 - \$150,000 per year for three years).

- Communities@Work has been running **OzHarvest** in Canberra since February 2008, to salvage food from restaurants, bakeries and supermarkets. Food is delivered to about 70 charities in Canberra and Queanbeyan, including church groups, youth and women's refuges, and school breakfast programs. The program aims to keep meals of 350gm in size to a cost of less than one dollar. The cost of the program is about \$500,000 per year, but there is no government funding; it is all done through donations.
- **Galilee Foster Care program** cares for sixty children in more than forty foster care families. Some families provide respite foster care, about once a month or so. Communities@Work recruits, trains and supports foster carers, and has a supervision and transport program for fostered children.

- **Galilee School**, on Kambah Pool Road, provides an alternative education program for disadvantaged and at-risk young people aged 12- to 16 years, catering for the needs of students who do not fit the mainstream schooling system. The primary focus is to encourage young people to return to the education system, but the School also provides training and skills for young people moving into the workforce. Course content focuses on literacy and numeracy skills, but also covers other curriculum subjects, as well as interpersonal skills, life skills, and training in transition to independence skills.
- Communities@Work operates a **youth homelessness program**, as there are up to 1500 young people on the street on any night in Canberra.
- **Buoyed Up** is a new program for disadvantaged young people to learn yachting.
- There is also a program to assist **victims of crime**, with matters such as paperwork, support during the court process, and so on. A new program is to start at the end of May 2012.

Q: When is the Information Centre at Cooleman Court open?

A: From 9 to 4.30 every day at the Community Centre, to give general guidance and help people who need more specific information to find out where to go. The Information Hub operates on Thursdays from 11am till 2pm, upstairs at Cooleman Court.

Q: What fund-raising does Communities@Work do?

A: We raise funds in particular for the Galilee Foster Care program, Galilee School, and OzHarvest in a number of ways, through: getting other organisations to raise money (e.g., departmental trivia nights); bequests; work-lace giving; donations; signature events such as theatre nights, movie previews, etc; and also applications to philanthropic foundations and community organisations such as Rotary, Lions, etc.

Q: What is happening with the empty block of land on Dixon Drive in Holder, where WCCC was told Communities@Work was to build a day respite centre?

A: The ACT Government is to build a childcare centre on the front of that block, and has called for tenders to run the centre. Communities@Work will tender. On the back part of the block, Communities@Work plans to build a facility for aged and disability programs, to service Weston Creek and Molonglo. It is hoped that a contract will be signed by the end of June 2012. Financial support will be needed for this project. It is planned to build in two stages, first to have daytime facilities, and later to provide overnight facilities.

After the presentation there was a short break for tea and coffee.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous public meeting (March 2012) were accepted as circulated. (Moved: Simon Header; Seconded: Margaret Anderson. Motion passed.)

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that WCCC had a credit balance of \$13,522.61. There are two bill to pay: Display material for Fetherston Gardens, \$124.99; and a new laptop and software, \$1018.45.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was passed. (Moved: Simon Header; Seconded Rosemary Drabsch).

6. General Business

1. Tom Anderson gave a tribute to Heather Hughes, a member of the WCCC committee, who has resigned as she is moving away from Canberra. He said Heather worked quietly but very effectively behind the scenes, and her contribution and practical common sense would be missed. A Vote of Thanks to Heather was moved and passed with acclamation (moved: Rosemary Drabsch; seconded Simon Header).

2. **Weston Group Centre Master Plan:** A Stakeholders Reference Group meeting planned for next week has been postponed. Tom Anderson will attend.

3. **Development in Stirling:** A block of land zoned for community activities, leisure and accommodation has been released by the ACT Government. The block is adjacent to the Labor Club.

4. **Fetherston Gardens:** The Concept Plan drawn up by consultants has been made public and is up on the WCCC website. The deadline for comments is today (2 May). The response of the Fetherston Garden Friends (FGF) group to the Concept Plan is that it is good and includes many of the features FGF suggested, but so far the Government has not indicated that it will provide any funding to implement the Plan.

- Water is an issue, as there is currently no provision of water at all.
- Working bees are held on the last Sunday of each month, from 10am till 1pm.

5. There was a meeting of the **Combined Community Councils** on Saturday, 28 April. Ewan Brown from Gungahlin Community Council was voted as convenor. Issues covered included planning; appeals against planning decisions and the proposal for a community advocate; transport, especially in the Inner South. The chairpersons of all Community Councils met with the Chief Minister and raised a number of issues with her, including suggestions for kerbside green waste pick-up and large-item pick-up.

6. The Government is sponsoring four **seminars on Carbon Advantage Landscapes**, on 10, 15, 17 and 22 May.

7. The Canberra Liberal Party held a **seminar on Health and Ageing** on 17 April, to discuss issues such as aging in the home, the future for aged care, changes in disabled parking spots, etc. Disabled parking spots have been made smaller and the number of spots has been reduced.

8. **Weston Creek Festival:** Proposed date is Saturday, 29 September. This is a long weekend. The Government has give WCCC a grant for the Festival, and the sub-committee that is organising the Festival has drawn up a draft plan of activities.

9. **Molonglo Stage 2:** WCCC Chair Tom Anderson attended a meeting of the Community and Industry Reference Group. It is planned that eventually there will be 7000 to 9000 living in the vicinity of the town centre. The concept for the town centre seems good, with low-rise buildings, 4 to 6 storeys. A new bridge near the town centre, to cross the Molonglo northwards, will not be built until 2018–2020, so most traffic will come south on to Cotter Road, adding to the amount of traffic going into Civic and the Parliamentary Triangle, especially in peak hours. Another bridge is also planned, to go east to the Tuggeranong Parkway, but the cost of bridges means they will not be built in the immediate future.

10. Bob Sutherland asked about **planned changes to the Cotter Road at Curtin**, and suggested that it might be better to realign Lady Denman Drive with McCulloch St rather than to install traffic lights at the Lady Denman Drive-Cotter Road junction so close to the traffic lights already in place at the junction of Cotter Road and McCulloch Street.

11. Other issues mentioned were a request for information about the former Weston homestead, located at what is now Calder Crescent, Holder; and a request by residents of Stapyllton St for the Government to clean up the Bill Kennedy Memorial Park beside the pre-school.

The meeting was closed at 9.15pm.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 30 May 2012, at 7.30pm