

Your local voice



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Minutes of General Meeting Wednesday, 27 February 2013

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7.36pm by Chair Tom Anderson. Tom welcomed members and guests, Kerry Snell and Heather McGowan from the Health Consumers Care Association (HCCA)

Tom also welcomed Meredith Clisby from the Canberra Southside Chronicle.

Approximately thirty persons attended the meeting.

2. Apologies were received from John Burke and Jenny Adams.

3. Presentation: The work of the Health Consumers Care Association

Kerry Snell said that HCCA is funded by the ACT Government to represent consumers who use the health system. At present HCCA staff are all women.

- HCCA trains representatives to sit on ACT health committees, and these representatives try as much as possible to inform the ACT government and bureaucracy about what consumers think and want. Any questions raised at tonight's meeting will be reported to the appropriate government body.
- Improvements to the health system are needed for several reasons: because Australia, and Canberra in particular, has an ageing population; because we need to introduce new technology; and because of increasing consumer demands. It is foreshadowed that funds up to one billion dollars will be needed to provide services and facilities in the next few years.
- Gungahlin Community Health Centre opened in 2012, and several other health centres around Canberra will either be built or refurbished. Belconnen Enhanced Community health Centre will open in 2013.
- The new Mental Health Unit at Canberra Hospital is now open.
- The Centenary Hospital for Women and Children has also opened, with Stage 1 complete. Stage 2 will be built on the site of the old Maternity Wing. Stage 3 will be an in-patient unit for gynaecological and paediatric cases.
- A Canberra Region Cancer Centre will open late in 2013, and will have oncology, radiography and other cancer services located in the same building. This will be mainly for out-patient treatments, not for in-patients. The aim is to make the hospital more patient-centric.
- The ACT Government is guarded about what it tells the HCCA. It is known that there

have been problems in recruiting doctors, nurses and allied staff.

- A Medi-Hotel will open in mid-to late 2013 for relatives of patients from areas outside Canberra (35 percent of cancer patients are from outside the ACT). The Medi-Hotel will have a nurse, but residents have to be independent.
- Duffy House, in Jemalong St, is for cancer patients.
- There is a walk-in centre at Phillip, and two more have been promised, probably for Tuggeranong and Belconnen. The Walk-in Centre works well, but cannot deal with major illness. It was staffed originally with a Nurse Practitioner, but the work for them was limited in scope, which meant that no Nurse Practitioner was keen to stay. The Centre is not so popular with doctors either. The Walk-in Centre was a trial, and its operation will be reviewed.
- The Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit at Canberra Hospital will be expanded, by 8 and 7 beds respectively. This should happen by late 2013.
- The ACT Government has signed an agreement to build a hospital at the Belconnen campus of the University of Canberra (UC). It is expected to open in 2016-2017. It will be a sub-acute hospital, mainly for rehabilitation and aged care. Allied health practitioners, such as physiotherapists, will do their training at UC.

Q: Why are all the health centres on the north side of Canberra?

A: There is a growth corridor with Gungahlin developing quickly and the north side needs new facilities. The ACT is small and can't afford to duplicate every facility. The main hospital is at Woden, and the Tuggeranong Health Centre is being refurbished. (At present the Tuggeranong centre is in temporary premises, and there are no dental facilities there, but when refurbishment is completed, all facilities will be available.)

Q: We need a health centre in Weston Creek, especially in view of the fact that people will be moving into Molonglo in the coming years.

Q: There is no parking for cars near the Pathology Unit at the hospital, and that is a problem for some people.

Q: It is a very long way from the car park for people who are not well. It needs better linkage, such as a traveller. Another option would be to have volunteers in golf buggy-type vehicles to roam the hospital to give people a ride to where they need to go.

Q: Access for old, frail people is difficult, and many need to use the Emergency entrance, which means they have to double-park. That is a problem. Also, Signage is not good.

A: HCCA will follow up all these matters.

Q: Weston Creek has no facilities, and there is an impending crisis as many GPs are reaching retiring age and are not being replaced.

Q: Some people have had bad experiences at Canberra Hospital, and have been sent home too early then had to go back to Emergency. This wastes resources.

Q: Does the ACT Health Department ever consult HCCA about the ratio of administration staff to professional staff, or provide information to HCCA on this?

A: It is probably that HCCA has not asked about this issue, but we have asked about the quality of administration staff and intake staff (telephonists, receptionists). The hospital (?and health centres?) is aiming to have a centralised booking centre, and wants to use new technology for alerting clinicians to the arrival of a patient.

Q: Some of the processes used for administration need to be reviewed.

Q: Could we have a walk-in centre in Weston Creek?

Q: Is there any proposal to enlarge Woden walk-in centre, especially with Molonglo residents increasing?

A: Woden will eventually become an Enhanced Community Health Centre.

Q: With the funding of \$1 billion, are the States contributing to this?

A: There will be some funding from the federal government.

Q: How often does HCCA meet with the ACT Government?

A: Probably we would phone and email every day; we have meetings once or twice a month. Anyone who would like to join HCCA can apply, and some members are trained to be a consumer representative. We produce a e-newsletter every fortnight.

Q: Where will professional staff for the new centres come from?

A: Shortages are well recognised, and the ACT Government is trying to address the issue.

Q: We have a message for the ACT Government, that Weston Creek residents feel they have been forgotten by the ACT Government and by the Health Department.

A short break followed. After the break, the business meeting began at 9.30pm.

General Business

1. Glenys Patulny, Chair of the Southern ACT Catchment Group Inc. introduced herself and spoke briefly. The Southern ACT Catchment Group is linked with ACT LandCare, and WaterWatch. The Group can give information and advice about landcare and water.

2. Minutes. The minutes of the last public meeting (November 2012) were accepted. (Moved: Lance Williamson; Seconded Rosemary Drabsch) Motion passed.

3. Treasurer's Report. WCCC has \$16,213.72 in its main bank account, and \$6,600 in the Festival account. The Festival grant will be returned to the ACT Government as it is not possible to organise a festival this year.

Motion: That the Treasurer's report be accepted. (Moved: Simon Hearder; Seconded Mal Ferguson) Motion passed.

The Treasurer said that WCCC needs a new data projector, which would probably cost between \$1500 and \$2000.

Motion: That the committee be authorised to spend up to \$2000 to purchase a data projector. (Moved: Simon Hearder; Seconded Pat McGinn) Motion passed.

4. Car park at Cooleman Court. No one thinks the resurfacing has been done well, and the end result is that there are stones all over the place, which makes pushing a shopping trolley really difficult. Residents have been asking how it could be worse than it was before the resurfacing. Apparently the travellator at the south end of Cooleman Court has broken down at least five times due to stones from the car park getting in it. Also, bitumen has been carried on to the floors inside Cooleman Court and has been difficult to clean off. Further, the surface of the car park is not level, and the depressions that were in the old car park have not disappeared. Residents ask if there is any penalty clause in the contract to resurface the car park in the case that the work has not been done satisfactorily.

WCCC Chair Tom Anderson said he would contact Roads ACT about this matter.

5. Roadworks. Residents are asking when the roadworks on Cotter Road, in front of the Defence Staff College, will be completed. The original completion date was September 2012.

6. Draft Master Plan for Weston Group Precinct. The Stakeholders Group met in January. The Draft Mast Plan will not be released until June 2013.

7. Defence Housing Australia development. The roadworks on Heysen Street have started. DHA want to have an Open Day to explain their plans to Weston Creek residents. This will probably be in April, on a Saturday or Sunday. DHA will do a letter-box drop to advise residents of the date.

Q: A Heysen St resident reported that after the fence was put in, about 15 to 16 kangaroos were trapped and became very distressed. The resident phoned the ACT rangers to report this incident.

WCCC Chair advised that residents can try the ACT Rangers - Park Care Athllon base if they see any similar matters that need to be dealt with.

8. Fetherston Gardens. The Friends group is working with TAMS, who is trying to get the allocated funds spent within this financial year. Work to repair and refurbish infrastructure in the Gardens is proceeding well.

9. Review of size of Legislative Assembly. WCCC has written a submission to the Review Committee, emphasising that WCCC believes district communities should be kept together in one electorate. One resident said he thought an Assembly of 25 members would be better than one with only 21 members, and would give more equal representation. Submissions were due on 1 March 2013; so far twenty-five have been lodged.

10. Merger of Communities at Work and Gungahlin Regional Community Service (GRCS) will become effective from 1 July 2013.

11. DV306. This Draft Variation embodies changes to the ACT Building Code. WCCC has received the committee report, but it only lists the wording of amendments, so it is difficult to work out what the effect of the changes will be. Pat McGinn will look at the substance of DV306 on behalf of WCCC.

12. Transport: Light Rail and Bus Routes. A review of bus routes is due out later in 2013. Light rail is a controversial issue, as it will be very costly and may provide a poorer service than buses. Some people are strongly opposed to installing light rail.

One WCCC member proposed that WCCC write a strong letter to the ACT Government opposing light rail. The Gungahlin Community Council is lobbying for more departments to be set up in Gungahlin, but still want to have light rail, which would be useful only for workers going to Civic and back, and would probably be empty eighteen hours per day.

Tom Anderson said that the Land Development Agency had withdrawn a development application for three blocks in Woden (Section 9, from the Tradies car park to the Seniors Centre), and are now going ahead with an 850-car parking building, following lobbying by heads of agencies in Woden who are pushing for parking for staff.

Other Business

13. Molonglo Park. The Government has had a consultation about its plans to develop a 14-kilometre area along the Molonglo River as a park. The first stage will be 2-3 km. There is a plan to develop a big park early on, but there will be no small parks in Molonglo suburbs.

14. Waramanga Shops. The Government announced on 26 February that Waramanga shops will be modernised. Notices and a draft plan were put up at Waramanga shops, but there was no general announcement more widely in Weston Creek.

15. One WCCC member has just heard that the Goyder St Library has closed, and suggested that

a Book Club for exchanging books could be started in Weston Creek.

16. ACT assets and landscape. A WCCC member asked if the ACT Government does any inspection of government assets to assess the need for maintenance or protection. The government should not rely on residents to report problems, but should be pro-active itself. Residents agree that more work needs to be done to clean up nature strips, dead trees, trees blocking line-of-sight on roads, and similar matters.

Tom Anderson pointed out that responses to the survey carried out by WCCC last year rated preservation of the public domain as the No. 1 issue.

Some residents feel that the Government does not put enough consideration into “local” issues as opposed to bigger issues that in other areas of Australia are handled by State governments. Removal of large rubbish items is frequently raised by WCCC members as an issue.

The meeting closed at 9.52.

Next meeting: Wednesday, 27 March 2013, at 7.30. The speaker will be Noel McCann, Director Planning and Government Relations, Canberra Airport.