

Your local voice

■ ■ ■ weston creek
■ ■ ■ community
■ ■ ■ council

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Minutes of General Meeting Wednesday, 30 October, 2014

Opening of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7.35pm. The Chair welcomed members and guests

Apologies: Nil

17 +people attended the meeting.

PRESENTATION

Improving Long Term Water Quality in the ACT” (mainly lakes and streams for non-potable use) and the Murrumbidgee River System

Presenters:

- Matt Kendall – Water Policy and Catchment Management – ACT Basin Priority Project
- Nigel Dears - ACT Basin Priority Project -EPD
- Jennie Gillies – Urban Waterways Program – EPD
- Peter Dixon – EPD

ACT Basin Priority Project

- In 2008 the Federal Government approved \$85 million to improve the water quality in the ACT. The ACT Government approved a further \$8.5 million bringing the total to \$93.5 million.
- The Objective is “To improve the Long Term Water Quality in the ACT” (mainly lakes and streams for non-potable use) and the Murrumbidgee River System.
- This is a National Water Initiative and is part of the Murray-Darling Basin Reform including improving water quality in the Murray-Darling Basin
- It is seeking to achieve positive social outcomes for the Canberra community
- The project will be done in two stages. The first will cost \$8.6 million and runs from February 2014 to February 2016. It will design, develop and implement detailed monitoring frameworks for the six identified priority, representative sub catchments. It will audit the infrastructure and it will also develop a business case outlining, among other things, baseline data and interventions.
- The six sites are
 - Riverview (West Belconnen) – green field site
 - Pappalunga Creek developed site

- Fyshwick – industrial site
- Upper Molonglo – semi rural site
- Lower Molonglo (Weston Creek)– developing catchment
- Lake Tuggeranong – highly urbanised catchment flowing into a lake
- The Governance includes:
 - Joint Commonwealth/ACT Steering Committee
 - Project advisory group including community councils and scientific experts
 - Inter-jurisdictional committee
 - ACT cross agency working group
 - Project management team
- Phase Two will look at the results and analysis of Phase One and will determine the nature and extent of construction works. It runs from May 2016 to March 2019 and will cost \$76 million.

Phase One has three projects.

- Project One is to collect data, do analysis, do modelling, determine what the issues are and determine what infrastructure is needed.
- This is an issue because of the growing population, leaves in the drains, gardens needing watering and fertilizing being used. The load is building on existing infrastructure leading to blue-green algae and sediment in urban areas.
- The testing of the water quality is going well. The waterways are achieving the required levels of salinity and water quality as the water leaves the ACT.

Project Two

- ACT wide monitoring, looking at the current state and identifying gaps.

Project Three

- Audit of infrastructure to see how things are working
- Provide advice
- Determine the cost and type of any remedial measures
- Inform the second phase of the ACT Basin Priority Project

The results of Phase One will determine the nature and extent of the construction works in Phase Two.

Questions and Answers:

Q. Can you describe what you would like to happen and what you are actually doing?

A. ACT government doesn't have in house expertise. They have commissioned consultants to collect and collate the data, fill the gaps and do the analysis. Work that has previously been done is being reused. This includes where the sources of the water is, what pollutants there are and what is the load of the pollutants.

Q. You need to have an education programme including community engagement. This draws attention to the costs of not doing anything.

A. Community engagement is essential. It stops people putting grass and leaves etc into the storm water

Q. You need the community on board to get government buy in.

A. We have a good budget for it.

Q. Do you have a communication budget?

A. Yes, we have a lot of money for stakeholder engagement. We use professional marketing people. We need one clear message to go out throughout the project.

Q. Have you considered using the Combined Community Councils?

A. We didn't know it existed. We will use it.

The Chair of the WCCC advised that each Community Council chair has been invited to sit on the advisory council but it has only met once.

Urban Waters Program 2007-2011

- Storm water harvesting infrastructure includes:
 - Pumps
 - Pipes
 - Flow meters
 - Valves
 - WQ testing
 - Tanks
- Ponds were built in Lyneham, O'Connor, Gungahlin, Dickson and Flemington Road to improve water quality.
- The water that is captured was used close to where it was captured.

Q. Does it cost or save money to harvest water?

A. Yes if it is built properly. It depends on each site and the weather. If it rains less water is used from the catchment. Potable water costs over \$5 per kilolitre where water harvested from ponds costs \$0.25 per kilolitre. If there is not enough water the costs to the consumer go up.

Q. When the economic analysis was done did you consider the cost of sediment removal?

A. Yes but the ponds were built anyway. The ponds will have to be excavated once in 50 years to remove the sediment.

Q. What was planted and why?

A. Macrophytes because they absorb nutrients.

Q. What are advantages and disadvantages of having houses around?

A. Houses make the infrastructure safe. Locals become very attached to the ponds and look after them.

Q. Will there be difficulties from the locals when the Macrophytes need to be harvested?

A. No. New ones have to be planted to get rid of sediment and improve the water quality. The community is told and are fine with it.

Q. Weston Ponds have concrete drains. Why don't they have wetlands?

A. North Weston Ponds have three gross pollutant traps and there are other concrete streams in Weston.

Q. Will we get wetlands?

A. The concrete drains were existing but they were reconstructed. The two ponds were designed for water quality. They were not designed to achieve the same objectives as wetlands. The rocks were designed to slow the velocity of the run off. You may get planting when the developers hand over the project to the ACT government.

- The North Weston Pond was designed in 2009 to be one on line pond of 15 hectares. It would have had 71 Megalitres per annum available for water harvesting.
- The ponds were revised in 2011 and became two off line ponds the upper is four hectares containing 12 Megalitres and the lower is 6 Hectares containing 33 Megalitres
- The amount of asbestos that was discovered led to a loss of \$30 million so there was less available for planting, swings etc

Q. There is some good work being done in the Inner North but nothing here. We still

have concrete drains. The Weston Ponds are very bare and no one has asked the community what they want. Why haven't the lessons from the Inner North been translated here?

A. There are no houses adjacent so it is harder to get community engagement. We will get it when there are more houses around.

Q. The eight hectare buffer zone between Dixon Drive and the Cotter Road is a good spot but we believe that there is completion for sporting grounds rather than wetlands?

A. We look at as a wide a range of sites as possible including what services there are such as gas, sewerage and water.

The Chair of the WCCC commented that the Inner North is getting a lot of money. There are great ponds here but there is no money for landscaping. It makes us feel left out. You can make two ponds good wetland areas.

Q. What do you think we as a community can do now to get focus on North Weston Ponds?

A. The Community Council needs to be on the advisory group, needs to engage more broadly through the community and be the squeaky wheel.

Q. Simon Corbell told us that North Weston Ponds were supposed to be reticulated to water ovals in Stirling, Waramanga and Fetherston Gardens.

A. The three reticulation projects got pared back to one in the Inner North. Weston Ponds and one other missed out. There was a Weston Creek Reticulation Network but there was no funds for it. The redesign of the pond meant that there was less water available and it couldn't be done.

Q. What is the minimum size?

A. 5 Megalitres per hectare.

Q. It sounds like enough to do Fetherston Gardens.

A. They are being considered.

The presentation ended at 9.00pm and the presenters were thanked for their time and willingness to discuss the issues. They are happy to come back to talk again about the ACT Basin Priority Project.

BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of 24 September 2014

Motion: That the Minutes of the previous meeting be approved as circulated.

Moved: Jenny Adams Seconded: Chris Wilson Motion carried.

Business arising from the minutes of the meeting of 24 September 2014

- Nil

Treasurer's Report

- \$6994.04 in general account
- \$953.63 in Fetherston Gardens account

A new grant of \$12,821.00 has been received from the ACT Government.

Motion: That the Treasurer's report be approved.

Moved: Chris Wilson Seconded: Pat McGinn Motion Carried

General Business

Fetherston Gardens

- Fetherston Gardens has been successful in receiving a Gallipoli grant of \$13,000 from the Department of Veterans' Affairs
- The grant is to develop a separate section of Fetherston Gardens with plants found at Gallipoli. It is not a memorial.
- DHA would like to sponsor a community picnic in the Gardens at the beginning of December. They will do most of the organising. The friends of Fetherston Gardens are meeting 30 October to discuss it but it is expected that they will be in favour.
- TAMS are doing some work such as providing extra seating at the Gardens at the moment.

Electoral Boundaries

- The ACT Electoral Commission has released a submission for comment on the ACT electoral boundaries. They are also seeking suggestions for names for the electorates
- The proposal is for the Legislative Assembly to go from 3 electorates with 17 members to 5 electorates with 25 members. This will have an impact on the Molonglo electorate
- WCCC will put up a further submission following up on one that was submitted earlier.

ACT 2015-16 Budget Submission

- WCCC submission is up on the website.
- WCCC has an appointment with Mick Gentleman on 12 November 2014 to discuss the draft Masterplan for the Weston Group Centre which was included in our submission.

Chapman Territory Plan Variation Block 1 Section 45

- The proposal to rezone this block for aged care or retirement village has been withdrawn. LDA are reconsidering what the block will be used for.
- WCCC has suggested single block development in keeping with the surrounding area or RZ2 town houses.

Roads

- Tony Gill from ACT Roads and John Husband from EDD will be attending the November meeting. Issues include ramp metering, when the bridge over the Molonglo will be built, duplication of Cotter Road from Yarralumla Creek to the Tuggeranong Parkway.

Equestrian Centre at the end of Hindmarsh Drive

- This has been sold to the DOMA Group who say that they have no intention of developing the block.
- They want to buy more equestrian centres and set up a chain of them.

Mowing

- Large areas of Canberra are now scheduled to be mowed only twice per year.
- This is a fire hazard as well as being unsightly.
- If the equestrian centre doesn't have horses this will be a bigger problem.
- The government can issue landowners with an order to mow.
- WCCC submission on the 2015-16 ACT Budget talked about the lack of funding for TAMS.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

**Next Meeting Wednesday 26 November, 2014
Weston Club, 1 Liardet St, Weston**