

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Established 1991

(Weston Creek Citizens Council Inc. – Reg.No. A2637)

Record of Monthly Meeting

22nd June 2005

Small Business Forum

Welcome

The WCCC Chairperson, Mr Jeff Carl welcomed the guest speakers, Committee and residents. Mr Carl advised that the order of the speakers would be :

- Linda di Mauro - AusIndustry
- Robert Holgate - BusinessACT
- Chris Peters - ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In addition Mr Carl advised that Superintendent Mick Kilfoyle and Sergeant Stephen Cooke, Officer in Charge, Woden Police Station would be giving brief information as their time was limited.

Other Business would follow. Mr Carl acknowledged the attendance of the Legislative Assembly member Mr Richard Mulchay MLA

Apologies

Pat McGinn, Jacqui Burke MLA, Jane Smyth – Community Representative ESA

Australian Federal Police

Superintendent Kilfoyle advised the meeting that he is the Commander of the Southern District based in Tuggeranong and that his area of responsibility was Southern Canberra, defined as all areas south of the Lake. The Woden Patrol Area extended from the Lake to Sulwood Drive and covered from Weston Creek to Fyshwick.

Supt Kilfoyle indicated that issues of concern at present were anti-social behaviour and the unusually high road toll. A new Task Force had been formed and was having an impact. There

has been a 34% decrease in anti-social incidents. These are described as alcohol related street offences.

The road toll is a concern because it is very high so early in the year, and this is not an ACT only concern as the road toll was higher in other jurisdictions also. The Police are stepping up the road safety campaign. The AFP deals with small business concerns through Chris Peters and the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Supt Kilfoyle asked if there were any questions.

Q&A

- What is the number to report anti-social behaviour? If it is urgent ring 000 otherwise 131444.
- What resources are available to Police in Weston Creek? There are an additional 10 new Police announced in the ACT Budget. This is added to the 3 groups of 20 cadets which will be available this year. The cadet training course takes 20 weeks and the next course starts on 4 July.
- Can there be extra presence of police in Weston Creek? The Southern District does have an extra patrol for crime.
- Can there be more police walking in shopping centres? At a recent executive retreat the response time was the number 1 priority.

Mr Carl thanked Supt Kilfoyle and Sgt Cooke.

AusIndustry

Linda di Mauro advised that she was the Manager of the ACT Regional Office for AusIndustry. AusIndustry provides \$2B in industry assistance, has 30 products and assists 10,000 customers Australia wide. Ms di Mauro gave a PowerPoint presentation of the activities and services provided by AusIndustry.

The types of assistance are for; small business; research and development; venture capital; general industry assistance; and specific sector industry assistance.

Ms di Mauro outlined the range of assistance available for small business. Details could be found on the AusIndustry website www.ausindustry.gov.au or by telephone to 132846.

Q&A

- Many small Canberra companies are innovative but the ideas are bought out by larger firms, is there any assistance? The main assistance is helping firms with an intellectual property strategy. Not all ideas need to be patented but there is a need to have a strategy in place within the firm.
- What is the assistance in dollars to the ACT? The amount last financial year was \$16.7M

- Is there a small business network for local firms? Canbaz is a small business incubator and there is one nearby in Erindale. If you need assistance, please telephone and efforts will be made to track down what you need.

Mr Carl thanked Ms di Mauro and indicated that speakers would be available at the end of the meeting for informal questions.

While speakers changed AV equipment Mr Carl acknowledged the assistance of the speakers for using their contacts to publicize the meeting as well as *The Chronicle*. In addition he indicated to the meeting that the WCCC Committee had attended meetings of behalf of the community which included the Transport Reform Advisory Group (TRAG), the Community and Expert Reference Group (CERG), the Planning and Development Forum (PDF) and the Community Councils Forum (CCF).

ACTPLA Meeting

Mr Carl advised the meeting that the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) were having a meeting on 29th June at The Weston Club to discuss the Planning System Reform Project and Guidelines for the Duffy Local Centre.

Community Announcements

Barbara Brinton advised the meeting that:

The Community Art wall is to be repainted at Weston Creek. The coordinating artist will hold community workshops in Weston on school holiday weekends in July. The community is encouraged to participate.

A new Community Recovery and Emergency Planning Unit, previously the Bushfire Recovery Unit, has been established. Kerry Webb & Kahmen Schrader are key links for people requiring counselling. Calls for the Community Recovery and Emergency Planning Unit will now go via 'Canberra Connect' rather than direct. A brochure is being produced.

A possible production, gang show style, of a series of poems, stories etc about January 18, 2003 is to be performed after the opening of the Bushfire Memorial next year. The aim is to establish some life at the site. Interested parties are to contact Communities @ Work.

News from Mt Taylor Estate, the opening of their carved fire tree is Sunday October 9th.

News from 'Knitting Duffy Together' bushfire recovery group was that their creation is hanging in the Healthpact Building 13 London Ct, and will have its final home at Duffy Primary School.

BusinessACT

Robert Holgate advised that BusinessACT is in the new ACT Department of Economic Development. Mr Holgate gave a PowerPoint presentation of the services available and encouraged small business to visit the website www.business.act.gov.au

The range of assistance available starts with the establishment of small businesses through to established firms exporting their products overseas. In addition he advised that free assistance is also available through the Canberra Business Advisory Service.

Grants provided are highly competitive and the owner/manager skills are considered in the process. A current focus is export growth and export management assistance is available.

The contact number is 1800 244 650.

ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mr Chris Peters advised that the Chamber had its origins in Canberra in 1936. It is an industry Association with a Board of 9 people. The Chamber has a staff of 14 and handles between 50 to 200 telephone calls a day.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has recently indicated that there are about 25,000 businesses in the ACT and of these about 15,000 are home-based businesses. The Chamber has 900 members.

In regard to Weston Creek the January 18, 2003 bushfire revealed that there were 200 homes which had small and micro businesses operating from them.

Mr Peters then elaborated on the many ACT Government Committees which the Chamber is an invited member and discussed the many services and types of assistance that the Chamber can provide for its members.

Mr Carl called for questions.

Q&A

- There appears to be an anti-business approach from the current ACT Government which is putting up obstacles for small business? The quarterly survey of business sentiment reinforces this view, the view of the last survey was ok but the next quarter is predicted to be difficult for ACT businesses.
- The support in the USA appears to be very different and more targeted than in the ACT, what is the Chamber's view? Yes small business in the USA is much more strongly supported as it is seen as the engine for growth in employment. This does seem to be understood by the ACT Government. The Federal Government Industrial Relations reforms may help.
- There is constant talk of skills shortage, is this real? Yes many employment areas in the ACT cannot attract people.
- What is needed for Weston Creek is accommodation for small business, we need it now. There is a small business incubator in Erindale and another in Narrabundah.
- What we need is a Traders Association in Weston Creek to help us now. There was a traders group in both Mitchell and Fyshwick and both have folded. In the Chamber's experience, localised traders' groups prosper whilst there are local issues that bind them together, and there are people available to drive them forward. However, when the issues are resolved and/or the driving forces move on, then the groups tend to wither and fold.

The way to move forward is to join the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry which can assist small business by holding localised meetings as required.

- How much does it cost? It varies depending on the business size.
- Can you please answer the question? The average small business with three employees pays \$550.

Barbara Brinton, from the WCCC Committee, advised the meeting that as an outcome of the WCCC *'Taking it to the Streets'* initiative the Committee talked to over 600 residents at Weston Creek shopping centres. Interesting findings were people from Bathurst visiting the archery shop at Holder, described as the best in Australia. Also the Bike Shop at Fisher has an Australian wide reputation.

- The answer may be a small business network in Weston Creek, how do you get small business to talk to each other to learn? There are many options for example a local association set up by enthusiastic people but these usually don't last. Monthly meetings usually don't attract many members. Mr Richard Mulcahy MLA advised that it is probably better to join an established group to avoid the need for the paperwork of a new association, its registration, committee members and ongoing management.
- Is there a need for a WCCC portal, so we can get the information we need, when we need it and we can talk to other businesses? Mr Carl indicated that the WCCC could investigate the potential for such a service for small businesses in Weston Creek.
- Mr Holgate advised that BusinessACT sent out a monthly newsletter and contact details could be provided this evening.
- I have established Sassy Hair and Beauty in Brierly Street. The biggest problem was information. Tonight has been great with three organisations willing to help! Where have you been? How are you so difficult to find? This is not a question but a statement of your lack of accessibility.
- The network of information needs to be improved. A portal of useful information for Weston Creek is a must have. Weston Creek must have hundreds of small and micro business who need information.

Mr Carl called an end to questions of Mr Peters and advised the meeting that the speakers would be available after the meeting.

Other Business

Mr Carl advised that other business would be brief so that informal questions of the speakers could occur.

Constitution

The WCCC has a new Constitution to assist in the streamlined management of the organisation. Copies are available on the website.

Community engagement manual

The ACT Government has launched a new manual to help their own departments and agencies to talk to the community and to properly engage the community.

ACTPLA Meeting

As already mentioned the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) were having a meeting on 29th June here at The Weston Club to discuss the Planning System Reform Project and the Guidelines for the Duffy Local Centre.

Mobile library

Mr Sutherland advised the meeting that there was now a mobile library visiting Weston Creek on Saturday mornings and he encouraged all local residents to use the facility to show that Weston Creek needed a library.

Mr Carl closed the meeting at 9.35pm

Next Meeting

Wednesday 27th July, 2005 at 7.45pm