

DRAFT
WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

held on 27 September 2006

at the Weston Club, Liardet Street WESTON

1. Apologies

An apology was received from the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Richard Mulcahy, MLA. (?)

2. Welcome

The Chairman, Mr Allan Synfield welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced himself as the newly elected Chairman of the Community Council.

3. Report by the Australian Federal Police

The Chairman invited the newly appointed commander of the Woden Police Station, Sergeant ? Jamieson to address the meeting.

Sgt Jamieson said that last year in the Woden Police District there were 22,000 reported incidents. There were three patrol cars on the road at a time and 12 people to handle this work. Police relied on the public reporting incidents and the police needed to hear from the public about problems in the community.

Questions from the floor were about community policing plans and Neighbourhood Watch. Sgt Jamieson said that new shift arrangements meant that responses were generally quicker than they used to be and when Neighbourhood Watch was working well it was very valuable. We will look at this to make it work.

The Chairman thanked Sgt Jamieson and said that the Community Council would, to the best of its ability, keep the police informed about community concerns.

4. Report by Communities at Work on the Weston Creek Youth Centre

The Chairman introduce Mr Tony Ashworth from Communities at Work to talk about the Weston Creek Youth Centre.

Mr Ashworth said that the viability of the present Youth Centre at Weston was under review and he was seeking community comment. C@W proposed that the present Centre be operated only on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays instead of the present six day a week service and taking some services to the Stromlo High School Outreach service. If this happened there would be more focussed activities. This change is necessary because of the decreasing number of young people making use of the Centre's facilities.

Comments from the floor were that there were decreasing numbers of young people using the skate park and the New Creationg Ministries has a strong youth group attracting many people from the district. Mr Ashworth said that he did not know the demographics of Weston Creek but it could be that the community is now an older community compared to the time when the Youth Centre was opened.

5. Report by the Department of Education on proposed school closures.

The Chairman introduced Ms Carol Harris from the Department of Education to talk about proposed school closures under the Department's "2020" initiative.

Ms Harris said that the ACT was divided into eight regions. In Weston Creek both Rivett and Weston Creek were quite small primary schools. Previous studies had suggested that the ideal size for a primary school was between 200 to 400 students. Part of this was due to the demand by parents for a broad range of educational oppportunities to be offered in each school. This was compounded by the fact that the proportion and number of school age people in the ACT was falling. In addition in recent years there has been a one per cent decrease per annum due to parents opting for private school education. Should schools close in Weston Creek the Department would endeavour to provide the support necessary to cope with the change.

Questions and comments from the floor raised the issue of the confusing school patterns emerging, for example, year 6 to year 10 schools, year 7 to year 12 schools and parents were looking for some certainty in this regard. It has been suggested that Stromlo High School start accepting year 6 students putting added pressure on small primary schools in the district. Ms Harris said that year 6 students at Stromlo, should this proposal eventuate, would be a separate part of the school.

Other comments were that the 2020 plan did nothing to address the major issue of the continued drift to private school education. Proposals to use the savings made by closing schools to enhance the ones remaining meant that public schools would enter a race with private schools as to which had the better facilities and this was a race that public schools could not win. Particularly, the proposed expenditures on remaining schools were only political promises which could be cancelled in changed circumstances. The 2020 plan under-estimated the strength of the private school lobby particularly with allocations to private schools from the Federal Government. Comment in the press from the United Kingdom suggested that recent increased expenditures on technology in public schools had not brought about the improvement in educational standards being sought compared to other countries in the European Union.

Another comment was that closure of public schools meant that students would have further to travel to get to school. However, this has to be balanced by the fact that parents seeking private education were prepared to send their children to distant schools as a matter of course.

Ms Harris said she appreciated the comments and these would be considered.

6. Other Business

(a) Web site

A new improved web site will be possible now that the WCCC has its own domain name. It will be valuable for compiling and publishing the history of Weston Creek project. The new site, when established, will enable people to make their own contributions to the WCCC by this means.

(b) Duffy Petrol Station site

It was reported that this is back before ACTPLA.

(c) Recent petrol station closures

Another report received was that Chapman, Rivett and Fisher petrol stations have now closed.

(d) Woolworths new petrol station at Weston

Contrasting recent closures the petrol station at Weston is now offering discounts to Woolworths customers.

(e) A better street festival for Weston Creek

A larger Weston Creek festival "Up the Creek" will be held outside Coolaman Court on 21 October.

7 Meeting closure

The meeting closed at 9:30 pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 25 October 2006.