

Your local voice



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**Minutes of WCCC General Meeting
Wednesday, 27 June 2018
Raiders Weston Club, Liardet St, Weston**

1. Opening of Meeting

Tom Anderson opened the meeting at 7.40pm. He welcomed Caroline Le Couteur, and Chris Steel, MLAs for Murrumbidgee; also Ian McGlinn, Peter Steele, Vanessa, and Patrick Fischer-Reid from Transport Canberra. Tom noted that WCCC had put a number of questions to Transport Canberra about the proposed bus routes and had got responses from them very promptly, which Tom appreciated.

44 people were present.

2. Apologies: Val Bland, Max Kwiatkowski, Jenny Adams.

3. Presentation on the proposed Bus Network 2019

Peter Steele and Ian McGlinn gave a joint presentation. Transport Canberra wants to hear the responses of the community to the proposed changes, and they want feedback.

- Transport Canberra often hears that Canberra needs more frequent bus services.
- In a survey conducted in 2017, many people indicated they would be willing to walk a bit further to catch a bus.
- Rapid Network: The city is booming. The bus services used to carry 7.4 million people per year, but the target for 2019 is 8.7 million. This year already the service has carried 8.4 million passengers.
- One of the big changes is that Route 182 (from Denman Prospect to Civic via Cooleman Court) has been split; now the buses will run with much more frequency, and routes will be more direct.
- The proposed increase in the amount of frequent transport will mean that 55 percent of Canberrans will have access to frequent bus services. The network will operate 7 days a week, although with reduced frequency at weekends and evenings. However, weekend and evening services will be built up as need is demonstrated.
- A new depot is being built at Woden, and the fleet will expand, with 80 new buses. There will be three bus depots.
- Operating hours will be extended, for example, till 10pm on Sundays and holidays.

School buses

- Only 5 percent of primary students take buses, but 26 percent of high school students do.

- In the proposed network, 30 percent more buses will go past schools each morning.
- Students use buses a lot, and some school buses will still be needed, where schools are not close to other bus routes. Some of these routes will go through suburbs, some will operate on a “hub and spokes” system.
- Bus stops will be improved.
- Signage and information will be improved. Journey-planning will be improved, and access made easier.
- Next-generation ticketing will be introduced, with an account-based system that can be used on mobile phones and other devices.
- Customer Service Officers and Student Safety Officers will be on duty at interchanges during the hours when students are travelling.

Mr Steele listed several points that Transport Canberra has heard from WCCC:

- We want to keep some of the local routes and bus stops, such as in Heysen Street.
- It would be good to have connections to Woden and Tuggeranong.
- We want Transport Canberra to advise how people will be able to get to Cooleman Court if present bus services are discontinued.
- Xpresso services are used a lot and are very popular.
- Need clarification about how students will travel to school.
- ParkNRide spaces may need to be increased in number.
- Need clarification about how Cooleman Court will cope with more buses.

He noted that the North Weston ParkNRide facility is full most days, and that this changed when all-day services were introduced. He said that Transport Canberra needs to look at the ParkNRide strategy, and may need to find another location to increase the number of spaces available.

The Master Plan for the Weston Town Centre of 2014 envisaged more bus stops in Parkinson Street, and there is funding in the 2018-19 Budget to improve the bus stops there. They will do consultations in late 2018.

Timetable and Network

- There will be a roadshow at Cooleman Court on 20 July, then widespread consultation over an 8-week period until the end of August.
- For Weston Creek, direct service via Cotter Road is the key.
- A Rapid Service into Denman Prospect will be started very early. The roads in that suburb are coming in quickly, to routes may change over time. Denman Prospect shops will need a bus service.
- Rapid 6 will provide connections to Woden and the Canberra Hospital then through South Canberra to Civic.

Q: How will Route 182 change?

A: Currently that route goes from Civic to Denman Prospect and on to Cooleman Court. Under the new proposals, that route will go directly into Civic, thus reducing the time for that trip by 10 minutes. All connections from Cooleman Court to Civic to be as quick as possible. The frequency of services will be increased as demand grows.

Q: For people who live at the northern end of Mulley Street, how will they get to Cooleman Court if there are no buses along Mulley Street?

A: They will have to walk to the junction of Blackwood Terrace and Mulley Street.

Q: Some vulnerable users are not catered for with these changes. For school students, some of the changes are retrograde. My household students will have to take 3 buses to get to school. Off-peak Rapid services will travel every 15 minutes, but other services only every 30 minutes. At Deakin High, for example, there will be 200 students trying to get to the bus stops outside the school all at the same time. Also, staff give supervision now because the buses go into the school grounds. If students have to wait at public bus stops, will they be supervised? How long will the last student have to wait to catch a bus?

A: We talked to the P&C at Deakin High today, and agreed that we will have to try and manage these issues. Some buses will go into the school grounds. Some buses will start at the school, go to Woden, and then continue on normal routes. We will try to clarify the services for each school - where buses will start, whether public buses will just divert to the school, whether buses will go into school grounds.

Q: Residents in Mulley Street could walk to Streeton Drive but there are not enough bus stops on Streeton Drive. Also, there are child care and health services on Dixon Drive which are not being serviced under the new plan. What about buses to Stromlo Forest Park? A new bus stop on Eucumbene Drive is needed to give access.

Q: We have the same issue with the new network as we had in 2014, that having a bus stop at the top of Hindmarsh Drive is not a good substitute for safer stops on Wyangala Street. The Government listened to us in 2014, please listen now.

A: We will take this on board.

Q:

- Students going to college don't want to have to change buses. They won't go to the interchange and then walk.
- The regular routes into Civic are great at present, it would not be good to have to go to Cooleman court and then change.
- The bus stop at Streeton Drive gives no protection in bad weather.
- Xpresso services are very good.
- The signs on the front of each bus need to be more understandable and legible; also signs at each interchange.

A: We are trying to improve the signs on buses. We will think about connectivity from Duffy to Woden, since it seems people do not want to have to go via Cooleman Court.

Q: Cooleman Court is not set up as an interchange.

A: We hear you. We have talked to Infrastructure people about Parkinson Street, and there is money in the Budget.

- The old bunker-type shelters were good for weather protection.
- Good connections are part of the new system.
- We don't want people to be waiting 30 minutes for the next bus. We will focus on outbound connections.
- There are good apps available to inform the travelling public about bus arrivals, but many passengers still prefer printed material.

Q:

- Bus routes within Weston have disappeared, and under the new plan passengers will have to go to Cooleman Court to catch a bus, unless they want to go to Molonglo.
- We won't be able to get directly to Woden from anywhere in Weston Creek.
- We need a bus stop at Hilder Street on Streeton Drive.
- I love Route 182.
- We need more ParkNRide spaces at North Weston.
- On the Transport Canberra website, if you type in "North Weston", it gives Route 83 as the route to take. There is no mention of North Weston.

- Arawang Primary School is not taking children from Weston, they have to go to Duffy Primary. The bus along McInnes Street to Duffy School is being scrapped, so there will be no way to get a bus from Weston to the only school where children can be enrolled.

Q:

- Weston suburb is often considered as part of Cooleman Court, but it is a long suburb.
- Weston has no public schools, so feeder routes are important. The new routes will require people and students to walk up to 20 minutes and then wait for a bus.
- The top corner of Weston is not well serviced.

Q: Could there be more bus stops near the Tradies site in Woden, as many people work in that area.

Q: What about a school bus to Stromlo High from Molonglo?

A: School routes are based on demand. We will look at the coverage for Duffy Primary, from Weston and from Coombs and Wright. School buses are trying to do too many things, which mean that some buses arrive late for bell time. Using regular routes for schools that are accessible can help to reduce car trips.

Q: In Weston we will lose pretty much all access to bus routes. Also, when the former AFP site is developed, there will be 250 more dwellings and up to 750 people living there.

A: We are getting good feedback from drivers as well as from members of the community to help us work through some of these issues.

Q: We love Route 83.

Q: Bus stops at Cooleman Court: not all buses go from the same stop. Traffic at Cooleman Court is busy now, and with more buses it could become dangerous.

A: We will need to look at the traffic movement in Cooleman Court and in particular at Parkinson Street. A pedestrian crossing will probably be installed.

Q: Will there be any staffing at Cooleman Court interchange?

A: We will focus on the needs of new interchanges.

Q: Parkinson Street is even further away from the northern end of Weston.

Q: Need to look at pedestrian access to Parkinson Street.

Q: What is the estimated time for a journey from Cooleman Court to Civic via South Canberra and Barton?

A: I will find out and let WCCC know. Perhaps WCCC can put the answer up on its website.

Q:

- I am upset that Route 705 direct to Belconnen will disappear. Demand for 705 has been increasing but it is now being phased out. That is disappointing.
- Will there be a Rapid route through Coppins Crossing in future?
- Why are the new routes feeding everyone through Civic?

A: About 5 million people move through Civic annually at present.

Q: When will the changes be announced?

A: After the end of consultations, which is 10 August.

The presentation ended at 8.55pm.

Tom Anderson said that there is a survey on the YourSay website, and he urged people to do the survey. He reminded people that there will be a consultation on 20 July at Cooleman Court. WCCC will pass on any comments from members, and will put a report of tonight's meeting up on the WCCC website. Tom said that WCCC will invite Transport Canberra to come back in future to report on the outcome of consultations and decision-making.

4. Chris Steel (Labor party MLA) gave an update on Assembly affairs.

- There is funding of \$2 million in the Budget for a walk-in medical centre for Cooleman Court. The Government is looking for a suitable site.

- The Budget also has \$420 million for improvements at Canberra Hospital, including for ageing.
- There will be more investment in City Services, and an amount of \$19.8 million has been allocated for this. Thirteen hundred trees are to be planted.
- The roof of Stromlo High School will be replaced.
- Investment in transport will continue. There will be a new interchange at Woden, to complement Light Rail Stage 2, and Callum Street will become a major interchange.
- A shared bike and pedestrian path will be built along the top part of Heysen Street, over into Lyons.
- The government has allocated \$1.9 million in the budget for playgrounds and a Citizen Forum will decide how that money is to be used.

Q: When will construction of Stromlo Pool start and finish?

A: It is expected that construction will be completed in early 2020.

Q: Are Duffy Shops to be upgraded?

A: The Government has a program to upgrade shopping centres but Duffy is not yet on the list, as far as I know.

A: Tom Anderson reported that WCCC has had discussions with planners about possible design for Duffy Shops.

Q: We are concerned about traffic in Heysen Street and how much it will increase when the former AFP site is developed.

Q: What is happening about curtains or blinds for government housing in Coombs?

A: Don't have any update, but I will follow up.

Q: Thanks for the mural at the skate park.

Q: Could the lights at the skate park be turned off before 10pm, to discourage people from messing around there late at night?

A: A new contractor has been appointed to be responsible for all lights in the ACT. There is a smart network and it is possible to know when lights are on or if they have been broken.

Q: Pat McGinn said that in her neighbourhood there are movement-operated lights along the path to the shops.

Q: Funding for police is very low, and police don't respond to complaints from the public.

A: Police are funded especially to combat organised crime. Work is being done on future needs for community policing. Canberra has relatively low rates of crime compared with other parts of Australia.

Q: Weston Pre-School has been closed. Why could it not be used for some community activity, such as a Men's Shed?

A: The Government is looking at the future needs for education in Weston Creek.

5. Caroline le Couteur (Greens MLA) gave an update on Assembly affairs.

- It is inspiring to have a whole meeting about buses with so many people in attendance.
- In the Budget more funding has been allocated to improve hospital in the Home services. Thirty more nurses and six doctors will be engaged to treat people in their homes.
- To combat cost-of-living issues for the vulnerable, from 1 July the Utilities concession will be increased by \$50 per annum for people with a Pension or Health Card, bringing it to \$654 per year.
- The Government is working to reduce energy use in the ACT and leaflets are available if people want information.
- Off-peak transport on buses is free for Seniors.
- Rates continue to be an issue. Rates payment can be deferred by anyone over 65 years of age, which can help with cash-flow. That debt will have to be repaid when the property is sold.

- The Greens have been working to establish an Integrity Commission. Two lots of legislation are currently being prepared, one by the Government and one by the Liberal party. It is hoped that an Integrity Commission will be established by the end of 2018.

Q: We have rebuilt our house on a Mr Fluffy block, and the energy rating is 9-star, but we have been told that we can only sell it as a 6-star house.

A: The reason is that when legislation for mandatory disclosure of the energy rating was passed as a Private Member's Bill, 6-star was the highest level rating. The legislation can't be changed easily. In the Budget, \$300,000 has been set aside for looking into energy ratings.

A: Chris Steel said he has agreed to look at this issue.

Q: At the last ACT election the Government promised to appoint the equivalent of 20 psychologists for ACT schools.

A: As of last Tuesday, 5 were funded in the last Budget, 10 were funded in the current Budget, and 5 in the 2019 Budget. Five started in January 2018, and I understand that there have been no problems in recruiting suitable staff.

Q: Street cleaning by City Services is not done regularly so leaves and gravel block the drains. The Government is pushing on with Light Rail but city services are not being carried out properly.

A: The Better Suburbs program has earmarked \$1.9 million for playgrounds. Twenty percent of the TCCS budget is to be determined by participatory democracy. We are trying to do what our constituents tell us they want.

Tom thanked the two MLAs, and opened the Business meeting at 9.30pm.

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as circulated (moved, seconded by Shelby Schofield, Pat McGinn).

Treasurer's Report: WCCC has \$18,112.36 in the main account and \$8,642.58 in the Fetherston Gardens account.

- Tom reported that the birthday cake celebration for the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Weston Creek, held outside Coleman Court on 2 June 2018, had been a great success.
- WCCC is now looking to collect stories about Weston Creek, and would like to get copies of old photos. WCCC is aiming to assemble a Storybook about Weston Creek.
- The second service station site has a fence around it, so construction might be about to begin.
- Coombs Shops: There was a petition on change.org which went to the Suburban Land Agency, the Minister and to MLAs. We are waiting for a reply. WCCC has been agitation since 2011 and is very disappointing that no shops are yet open.
- Former AFP site in Weston: Village Building Company will give another presentation at WCCC's July public meeting, on Wednesday, 25 July, from 7.30, at Chapman Primary School. Tom pointed out that the site has been zoned for medium-density development since 2007.

The meeting closed at 9.36.