

Your local voice



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Minutes of General Meeting Wednesday 27 March 2019

Opening of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7.34pm. The Chair, Tom Anderson, welcomed members and guests.

Guests: Paul Costigan

Apologies:

19 people attended the meeting.

PRESENTATION

Forest Management and Measurement – Cris Brack Associate Professor at Australian National University

The Griffin Plan designed a city for 20,000 people. There was provision for urban plantings in parks and gardens but it did not provide species or preferences. The Plan clearly saw the need to use native species for symbolic reasons e.g. red plants in Red Hill. The major roads have eucalypts. The Plan included a continental arboretum all around Lake Burley Griffin with all continents represented.

In 1913 Charles Weston set about developing a garden city.

Lindsay Prior undertook active management i.e. cut down the trees that did not work.

In the 1920s people planted trees in their new subdivision blocks. There were 65 different species of trees, mainly exotics, in Canberra. In the 1960s there were 30 species of trees, mainly eucalypts, and now there are 35-40 species of trees.

Trees can be valued by a number of different categories. Different standards provide different values.

Value of trees – amenity

- Location
- Life expectancy
- Form
- Health/evidence of stress
- Vigour
- Species

- Heritage
- Visual impact
- Special value
- Occurrence
- Age

Detracting properties are

- Are people allergic?
- Are they spiky?
- Do they drop branches?

Value of trees – restoring our natural environment

- Amelioration of urban climate extremes
- Mitigation of urban heat islands
- Store and sequester carbon
- Reduce noise pollution
- Improve air quality (eucalypts are good at this)
- Improve water quality / reduce the need for storm water mitigation
- Lower temperatures of parked cars
- Reduce volatilisation of bitumen
- Reduce consumption of electricity for heating and cooling.

It is estimated that the total forest value in this area over 5 years (2008-2012) is \$20m saved.

Value of trees – restoring animal habitat

- Increased diversity and the number of Indigenous and woodland birds as approached treed areas.
- Decrease number of exotic and grassland birds as approached treed areas.
- Expanded habitat range
 - Grey-headed fling fox
 - Wallaby

Value of trees – restoring our soul

- Aesthetic contribution, scenic beauty, visual amenity
- Provide opportunity for outdoor recreation and enjoyment
- Contribute to human health and relaxation, reduce stress and anxiety levels
 - Combat obesity and poor health
 - Modify crime rates
- Symbolic and traditional values
- Scared places
 - Shared and structured symbols
- Loss would reorder or destroy social and psychological processes

Value – peace

- Trees are an analogue for peace e.g. Lone Pine

Value – need for dedication

- Humans have the ability to foresee and plan for their future
- Need acts of faith, renewal, ritual confirmations of continuity e.g. the Arboretum

Value – dignity

- Humans have a longing for dignity
- At odds with mobility and transference
- Block out ugly things

Condition of trees – 700,000 trees publicly planted in Canberra parks and streets

- End of the 1990s - over 50% were in perfect condition
- 2005 – most doing ok
- 2010 – 45% of trees had a life span of 40+ years, 10% 0-5 years
- 2012 – 45% 50+ years, 15% 20-30 years, 30% 10-20 years, 25% less than 10 years
- 2015 – problems – many are dying earlier than expected. May be due to hotter, harsher, drier climate
- Average life expectancy of trees has reduced by 20-40 years in 5 years

Conclusions

- Trees and groups of trees are valuable for a wide range of reasons
- Planting patterns have changed as the city has grown
- Trees also grow and age
- Harsh climate may cause problems for tree growth and health but also makes them more valuable
- \$5-10m per year of age expectancy

Q. Are there any 100 year old trees left?

A. Yes and there are some older than that in Canberra.

Q. What impact is light rail having on the life expectancy of trees? Are they going to tag them and say they are not healthy as they did for light rail Stage 1?

A. In the parliamentary triangle the rules are different for heritage trees.

Q. Are large buildings (towers) taking trees away?

A. we should be making the developers pay for the trees.

Q. Was the Arboretum overplanted with a view to thinning?

A. Yes. Trees will be systematically reduced once they are fully grown.

Q. The Arboretum lost 80% of its Wollemi pines. Was it too hot?

A. Where you find them is not necessarily the only place they will grow. Do not look after Wollemi Pines - they like to be left alone.

Q. Should you water in the heat? Shouldn't you water first thing in the morning and last thing at night?

A. Most of the Arboretum uses dripirators.

Q. Lots of old trees in my area are dying due to soil compaction etc. what arguments can we use to government to replace them.

A. Can make arguments based on the value of trees as outlined earlier.

Q. What sort of education do we need about trees? People do not like putting in trees because of leaves, falling branches etc. we need to disseminate the value as outlined earlier.

A. there are many ACT government employees who know a lot about trees but they get overridden.

Caroline Le Couteur – many trees are old and need replacing. We asked residents what they wanted which was a big mistake – nobody was in agreement. We want people to want trees.

There is a PhD student doing enhanced reality. Let people know – make it a game especially for teenagers. Many people don't know the species or the number of trees in their street.

Q. Are they studying the reasons for the reduction in life expectancy?

A. There are no simple answers. It maybe climate change. The Autumn signal is getting shorter – we are getting to Winter without enough Autumn.

Q. Who is looking at what grows in Canberra?

A. the Arboretum.

Q. Are there any studies of the effect of increased dust due to clearing large areas such as in Molonglo?

A. Not in Canberra.

Q. What is the response of ACTEW etc. to these statistics? The trees are in a terrible state of decay in Holder.

A. I cannot talk for government but there are some difficult things being done. Some individuals in government are fighting but not winning.

Q. How does timber make people feel good? E.g. timber floors

A. Naturalness is good for humans. Wood floors are good – carpet is bad. Views are good for you so use picture windows.

Q. how can you turn this around? What is the plan to replant? Caroline Le Couteur wants to plan for 7000 trees per annum.

A. replace 10% of trees per annum. There are 700,000 trees so 7000 is correct but this does not allow for increased numbers of trees. When trees are removed, they are often chipped and burnt. This is tragic. The timber should be given to millers to cut it up and then give it to schools, mens sheds, TAFES, craftsmen etc. to do something with it.

Q. In some counties people plant trees for events in children's lives. As adults they can harvest the trees for dowry's coffins, sell for money to do things like university etc.

A. This is good for the buy in of the importance of trees. They relate to the life span of adults.

Murrumbidgee MLA's – five minutes

Caroline Le Couteur

- The petition about losing 3000 trees per year that was circulated last meeting was lodged last week. It had 1400 signatures. It was important to raise this particularly in the budget context. There is a Question on Notice about the urban forest reducing by 3000 trees per annum.
- The school strike was very effective. I walked with some very enthusiastic young people. Then started to receive messages about Christchurch.
- Last Wednesday there was a private members note about hot dwellings. Houses are built to work well in the cold weather but not in summer. The problem is mainly in apartments (and some houses). They are not being built for the future. Both Liberal and Labor voted against it. It is not a problem in Weston Creek but it is in Molonglo.

Q. Are there any thoughts about doing good design in the ACT?

A. The greens wanted to do something like s.65 in NSW (Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development) but Labor and the Liberals voted against it.

Q. We took the ACT government through ACAT last year. The bureaucrats and ACTEW are very anti. Buildings are not meeting the criteria of five or six star developments but it is not being policed regularly. The Territory Plan needs its own code on sustainability.

Q. There is no person responsible for quality of life in design. The bureaucrats are tick and flick people. There is no mandate to do anything else above DA level.

A. there is a half day planning committee meeting on 29 March 2019 to discuss planning strategy.

Q. Are plumbers and electricians the only ones who inspect?

A. They are the only trades licensed but the ACT government does do some inspections.

WCCC meeting with Caroline Le Couteur.

The following things were discussed:

- The bridge over the Molonglo River
- Trees
- Bus interchange
- Coombs Playspace

- West Basin
- Setbacks on Northbourne Avenue – parking, trees etc. The Combined Community Councils (except Belconnen) are trying to do something as a combined force. Woden Valley Community Council. Inner South Combined Community Council and Weston Creek Community Council are trying to do something for Adelaide Avenue ahead of Light Rail 2.

Meeting with the National Capital Authority

- There is a draft amendment about minimum sizes, ceiling heights and balconies due to a failure of performance management.
- Hopefully the standards will come in.
- NCA is challenging some decisions.
- In relation to Light Rail 2 there say stops at Blue Ridge.

BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of 27 February 2019

Amendment: To add the word nationally on Page 3 Section A

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

Moved: Chris Wilson Seconded: Trevor Wilson Carried.

Business arising from the minutes of the meeting of 27 February 2019

- Nil

Treasurer's Report

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| • Main Account | \$8,280.52 |
| • Fetherston Garden Account | \$9,079.14 |

Business arising from the Treasurer's Report

- Nil

Other Business

Bus Interchange/Timetable

- The timetable has been improved with more buses going to Woden
- The network is better
- Buses are going through Coleman Court every 15 minutes from 7.00am-7.00pm
- The routes to and from Woden seem to be extended
- There are more frequent and longer routes through the suburbs
- There are six buses from Woden to Weston Creek in one hour
- There are 28 through Coleman Court
- WCCC has written to Transport Canberra and City Services about the need for a pedestrian crossing, a bigger bus shelter and improved signage in the car park.

Q. Do we have clarity about where platforms 1, 2 and 3 are?

A. We will find out.

Q. There is no safe crossing in Williamson Street Holder.

A. We will follow up.

Q. Has route 25 been cancelled?

A. It is now route 65 and most of it is in place. Maps are available on the TCCS website to see the new network.

Molonglo developments

- Zapari is scheduled to come to the next meeting on 1 May 2019
- POD and Luxe have been refused
- Still waiting on the KFC proposal
- The DA for the Coombs Play Space is coming out soon.

Submission on ACT Electoral Boundaries

- Suggested 25% of Kambah go to Brindabella and the rest of Kambah, Molonglo, Weston Creek and Woden to stay in Murrumbidgee.

Publicity

- Tom Anderson will be on ABC Radio tomorrow (28 March).

Next meeting

- The next meeting will be on Wednesday 1 May 2019 not 24 April 2019 due to Easter and Anzac Day holidays.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

**Next Meeting Wednesday 1 May 2019
Raiders Club, Liardet Street Weston**