

Your local voice



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PUBLIC MEETING. WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2021

MINUTES

See also video of meeting, live streamed and uploaded to WCCC Facebook page

Committee in attendance: Bill Gemmell (Chair), Michelle Bourdet, Michelle Weston, Mark Boast, Liam Foley, Louise Hughes, Dianna Terry

MLAs in attendance: Minister Rebecca Vassarotti, Jeremy Hanson MLA, Emma Davidson MLA.

Apologies: Dr Marisa Patterson MLA, Giulia Jones MLA, Peter Cain MLA.

Meeting opened: 7:37pm. 12 signed in attendance plus guests and MLAs and WCCC committee members. Others in attendance signed in through QR code.

Unique Facebook 191 views of meeting video (at 18 February 2022).

MEETING:

7:39 pm Welcome to members and guests. Chair, Bill Gemmell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Acknowledgment of Country

We are honoured to be meeting on the ancestral lands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge these First Australians as the traditional custodians of this land, whose cultures are among the oldest living in human history. We pay respect to the Elders of the communities in the Murrumbidgee region and extend our recognition to their descendants – past, present, and future.

7:42 pm PRESENTATION and Q&A: Minister Rebecca Vassarotti.

Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan

Presentation points:

- Healthy air is important for our health and well-being
 - Important to Canberrans
 - Reduce the health ill effects of poor air quality
- The fires highlighted the impact of fires and poor air quality on our lives
- COVID and the Royal Commission delayed work on the Air Quality Strategy
- In February 2021 Government announced that they intended to release the Strategy and hence respond to the resolution previously put forward by Minister Shane Rattenbury

- Bush Fire and Smoke Strategy
 - Support healthy communities smoke, bush fire and wood burning,
 - 8 directives over next 4 years including monitoring of air quality
 - Include ensuring city is live-able, wood fire heaters
 - Transport emissions as we transition to electric vehicles
- Government will engage with community, particularly with the action plan with 20 actions in the 8 categories
- Air quality monitoring network
- National Construction Code for 2022 will include ventilation, sealing buildings
- \$5 million energy efficient upgrade fund
- Where can vulnerable people go in emergency events
- Issues for wood fire heaters:
 - Steps to phase out non-compliant heaters
 - Improve education campaign on this topic
 - Ensure wood sold is sustainably sourced
 - Move towards houses heated by clean energy

Questions from the audience:

- Q: Concerns about fire pits and old fireplaces. A: This is an important education area
- Q: Air quality. How will we know what the air quality in all areas of Canberra is and be informed in a timely manner. For example, the use of Purple Air.
- Q: Proposed actions. Firm time frames for the actions as impacts of poor air quality and wood burning can impact for 9 months.
- Regulation of unregulated wood. What will the strategy be? A: Firewood sources will be a specific action
- Q: Concerns of electricity and gas bills. Use of filters A: Energy poverty is an issue.
- Q: Tree planting helps the air quality. Mapping out a fire break and appropriate trees. A: We need to think carefully about the species being planted. There is research guiding the planting.
- Q: Efficient wood heaters and data to help purchasing would help. There is technology to retro fit old heaters. It also depends on what people burn; you can smell it in the air. Concerns also about VOC in houses. A: Molonglo will not have wood fire heating. Will take question on notice about retro fitting. Older heaters are a significant issue. A lot of education needed in these areas. The community feels that this is a very important issue.
- Q: Dust is missing from the strategy. This is an issue in Weston Creek. What else is in that dusty air? A: Certainly, there is work to be done in the environment protection area. There are some planning conversations that are important. Greens will have a conversation about these codes. A discussion paper will be published about soils
- Releasing Strategy next week. Happy to come back to council to discuss.

8:25 pm MURRUMBIDGEE MLAs:

Apologies from Dr. Marisa Patterson. Report points from her office.

Apologies from Giulia Jones MLA

Mr. Jeremy Hanson MLA. Introduction of Bill for extra sitting days in the Legislative Assembly.

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- Introduction of Bill for extra sitting days in the Legislative Assembly.
- Debating the Budget in the Assembly
- Liberal Party motions – mowing strategy
- Jeremy calling for extra sitting days 25/11/21. Calling that also sit on Fridays with a local focus 35 days next year, other jurisdictions 50 days. Calling for 12 extra sitting days. Local issues are missing out in the debates.
- Calling on the Government concerning the Cooleman Park car park. Resolution will only come when Molonglo gets their shopping centre. This centre has been delayed for a few more years.
- Q: from online. Concerned about car theft. Police have also made an announcement. A: Follow advice of police. Report thefts to police. Police are short on numbers, about 150 extra police are needed. Canberra Liberal Party support an increase in police numbers and police presence in the Weston Creek area. Molonglo would be a good site for a police station.
- Concerns of lack of amenities and services for Molonglo was raised.
- ACT Government have put *Coolo Park* on the land release schedule. Concerns raised from the floor. Can one of the Murrumbidgee MLAs move an amendment? A: Canberra Liberal Party support *Coolo Park* zoning as green open space.

Emma Davidson MLA

- Greens are still supportive of *Coolo Park* being open green space. Will speak to Murrumbidgee MLAs.
 - Q: Council has sought to clarify land release schedule with Dr Marisa Paterson. Concerns of the response. Emma Davidson MLA intends to have this area (*Coolo Park*) protected.
- Need for sport and recreation facilities in Woden and Molonglo is putting increased pressure on Weston Creek. Greens have recommended a *Facilities Management Plan*
- Q: Reactivating Holder Oval would be good, and it needs maintenance. A: Would be a good conversation.
- Q: Lack of green space in the Weston Creek/Molonglo Valley areas. Too many delays for services in Molonglo, lack of good planning. A: A wholistic plan is needed for this, such as a *Facilities Management Plan*.
- 2021 Resilience Awards, Canberra Relief Network has been helping people with great empathy and care.

Points given from office of Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

- A petition to improve lighting at Waramanga Playing Fields has recently been tabled, and Dr Paterson just wanted to thank everyone who signed the petition the supported the campaign.
- Marisa released her 'Her Way' Recommendation Report to support women with public transport and active travel on 22 November, and used Private member's Business to table the report, calling on the ACT Government to seek to incorporate the 43 recommendations where possible. Marisa wished to thank everyone in Weston Creek who engaged with the consultation and encourages them to view the report on her website and continue to remain engaged in this campaign.
- Dr Paterson also moved a motion in the sitting week at the start of this month to encourage the ACT Government to engage with local artists to develop sun smart murals for adults in children's playgrounds across the ACT, so keep an eye out for any news that develops here!!
- The ACT Government's listening report for Brierly Street upgrades has also been released, so if people are interested, they can check that out on the Your Say website.

9:10 pm GENERAL MEETING: Chair, Bill Gemmell

- Minutes of the meeting of October 2021
Moved: Rosemary Drabsch Seconded: Louise Hughes Accepted: Yes.
- Business arising from the minutes of the meeting of October 2021. None.

General Business

- Chair report/newsletter: Copies available at the public meeting and have been emailed out to those on the mailing list. Included:
 - Moving towards a greater digital presence
 - Surveys have been useful. Looking at suburb by suburb surveys in 2022 to hear community views
 - Floriade pop up and scarecrow competition were fun
 - Council have actively been involved in the Planning Reviews
 - Council will continue fight for rezoning of *Coolo Park*
 - Invite suggestions for topics for public meetings in 2022
 - Issues for the year ahead: light rail and impact for Weston Creek, Brierly Street upgrade, increased police presence, development pressures for the area.
 - Air Quality Strategy monitoring system for Weston Creek

HAVE YOUR SAY FROM THE FLOOR:

- Fire pits will be a debated issue
- Shops and services for Molonglo and the impacts on Weston Creek, including traffic

CLOSE OF MEETING: 9:35pm. Chair thanked everyone for their participation.

We would appreciate any assistance packing up the hall. Thank you in advance.

Have a happy and safe Christmas and a relaxing new year!

**Next meeting:
Wednesday 23 February 2022
Weston Creek Community Centre**