

Residents need to have their say on big issues

By Darryl Johnston

President

ONE of the major issues to come out of the ACT Government's Time to Talk consultation program was the community's call for a fully integrated mass public transport system in Canberra or light rail.

The ACT Light Rail group has long campaigned for such a network covering Canberra and Queanbeyan.

However, the proposal failed to gain any Federal Government support under the Building Australia Fund. Is Canberra's light rail proposal now off the tracks?

ACT Light Rail convenor, Damien Haas will be guest speaker at the next TCC meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 1. The meeting will commence at 7.30pm and will be held in the upstairs conference room of the Tuggeranong Southern Cross Club.

Two major planning projects are underway that will significantly influence the future of the Tuggeranong Valley and it is important that residents get involved or at least are aware of them.

They are the Greenway Master Plan and the Tuggeranong Erindale Centres Planning Project. I know that future planning and development projects sound complicated and as dull as dishwater, however, in these cases it is important that residents inform themselves of each project and have their say.

A lack of community interest and involvement could lead to decisions being made that we may regret in the future.

Initial options and recommendations coming forward from each project call for, among other things, an increase in residential development in both Tuggeranong and Erindale.

For example, one option being considered is to site as many as 1000 new dwellings housing up to 2500

residents on the land opposite Bunnings at Greenway.

This could be a mixture of lake front housing to include aged accommodation.

While this will help boost the Tuggeranong town centre and existing businesses, it could have a significant impact on traffic and parking.

Already parking around the Tuggeranong Town Centre is at a premium with some businesses claiming the lack of parking is driving customers away.

One idea to overcome traffic congestion is to build another lake crossing from the site opposite Bunnings to Drakeford Drive where an additional set of traffic lights will be installed between the Soward Way intersection and the Isabella Drive round-about.

The Greenway proposal also calls for the inclusion of mixed business.

Now, here is a real opportunity for the community to help put right the planning mistakes of the Tuggeranong Town Centre foreshore and assist in the planning and development of an attractive outdoor café restaurant strip along the Greenway lakefront.

Then again, we must be careful in what businesses are located at Greenway and that customers aren't drawn away from the existing town centre.

Other issues we need to consider are public access to the lake foreshore and public transport. All this is still in the mix and must be thought through very carefully.

That is why it is important that residents get involved and have their say. Lake Tuggeranong is a valuable asset and we don't want it ruined by ill-conceived planning and development through a lack of community interest. For more information and to participate in the consultation process, visit www.lda.act.gov.au, email greenway@act.gov.au or phone 6205 0600.