

# Population drop must stop

## Faster roll out of plan needed

By Meredith Clisby

TUGGERANONG Community Council is calling for key construction projects in the town centre to be fast-tracked to provide work and attract more residents to live in the south.

The council hopes this will help combat the population decline Tuggeranong has experienced during the past decade.

There are also calls for more park-and-rides, greater express bus services and T3 car lanes to make travelling between local group centres and the town centre faster and easier.

ACT chief minister Katy Gallagher alluded to the issues the area would face in the next 20 years during a question and answer session at the council's recent meeting.

"I think it's fair to say there are some challenges ahead for us in Tuggeranong," she said.

"It is one of the districts that's going to experience some population decline over the next 10, 15, 20 years despite some of the development opportunities that will come from the master plan."

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics based on the 2011 census showed that during the past decade Canberra's north increased by 46,000 people while the south only grew by 2400.

Tuggeranong's population has decreased by 1700 people. The largest declines were in Kanbah (1100 people) and Wanniasa (680 people).

In a recent meeting with the chief minister the council called for the government to start some of the key construction projects outlined in the master plan in the next three to five years.

The plan, released in September last year, will guide the growth and



Tuggeranong Community Council hopes that fast-tracking the master plan will help curb the population decline in the area.

Picture: Elesa Lee

development of the town centre during the next 30 years. It paves the way for a complete transformation of the area, including an extra 7800 residences.

Under the plan Ahlton Drive and Solward Way would become pedestrian-friendly boulevards, two community gardens are proposed and

in the longer term the government intends to sell the large surface car park to the west of Lake Tuggeranong College for a mixed use development.

Tuggeranong Community Council president Nick Tsoulis said fast-tracking projects would be the key to seeing Tuggeranong's population grow

and many jobs would be created in the building sector. He said another option to boost the number of residents was attracting Commonwealth departments to the town centre.

Chief minister Gallagher said one of the challenges for the government was that the demand for urban infrastruc-

ture and services remained despite the shifts in population seen around the territory.

"That's not easy, it does require a lot of work to be done," she said.

Ms Gallagher said the government was undertaking a needs assessment of the services in south Tuggeranong.