

Works to commence soon at Data Centre site



An artist's impression of the proposed Hume Data Centre.

Works associated with the construction of the Hume Data Centre are expected to commence soon. Meanwhile the installation of a gas pipeline is well underway to service an expanded Hume Industrial Estate and a land sale notice has appeared on the site of the old Hume Saw Mill. (See separate story on page 2)

All the activity at Hume has raised the interest of local residents, especially those involved in the lengthy struggle against a proposed gas fired power station and data centre.

Senior Development Manager for Challenger, Karlyn Maldonado, said the pipeline was being laid by ActewAGL.

"We understand that residents have made enquiries of the Tuggeranong Community Council regarding the laying of gas pipes along the Monaro Highway, prompting requests for an update on the progress of the Technology Campus Canberra," Ms Maldonado said.

"Our understanding, which has subsequently been confirmed by ActewAGL, is

that this pipeline is part of the essential services infrastructure that will facilitate the ongoing creation of the ACT government's "eastern employment corridor", consistent with the objectives of the Canberra Spatial Plan and Eastern Broadacre Economic and Strategic Planning Study," she said.

"As for the Technology Campus, our planned investment in local infrastructure has not yet commenced, but is expected to do so in coming months. This will include the provision of sewerage, stormwater and water infrastructure, as well as the extension of John Cory Road and associated landscaping and street lighting. The campus itself will be built in stages once tenant pre-commitment is obtained."

"Full development of the Technology Centre in coming years would see 45,200 sqm for data halls constructed alongside 40 megawatts of power generation capacity (28 megawatts production and 12 megawatts back up), which is only 40% of the capacity originally contemplated at the Mugga Lane site."

"The gas tri-generation technology to be employed by the Technology Centre is proven and currently in use at Canberra Airport and at various medical facilities around the world. "The Technology Centre will help ensure that government and public data is stored and protected adjacent to the Australian Capital. It is also expected to reduce the migration of IT sector employment and expertise to other states."

"We look forward to providing further updates as the status of the Technology Centre progresses and welcome any direct enquiries from residents," Ms Maldonado concluded.

Meanwhile residents who objected to the project were labelled as NIMBYs (Not In My Backyard).

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At one point there were over 4500 residents from all over Canberra signed up to the cause.

Not only were residents concerned that the proposed development was too close to homes, they also questioned the way in which the ACT Government had dealt with the sale of the land and aspects of the original development application. They also believed little or no unbiased studies had been undertaken into its full impact on the environment and on residents.

After a long campaign the community eventually scored some successes when the proposed site was moved, if only a little further away from homes. And then it was announced the project had been scaled down and ActewAGL had pulled out of the consortium. However, this has not eased their major concerns over noise and air pollution from the gas turbines.

The residents' campaign has been led by Canberrans for Power Station Relocation (CPR) President Bill Reid, who believes the threat from large polluting gas turbines is still very real.

He said the land was sold and approval given for the complex to be built without the need for an EIS to be completed. He said although it is now smaller the scope still exists for the developer to install additional gas turbines at a later date if they wished.

"Being roughly equidistant from the Tuggeranong and Woden town centres and Jerrabomberra, this should be of concern to all Canberrans, especially considering there has been talk of comparable data centres being built in Belconnen," he said.

Mr Reid says CPR has never been opposed to the development of a data centre or the creation of jobs in Tuggeranong. "What we object to is the use of gas turbines (to power the proposed facility) so close to a residential area," he added.

"While our calls for a full independent environmental impact study have been ignored (and the need for one has since been waived by the Stanhope Government), our research shows that the exhaust gas plume (187,000 tonnes per hour) generated by the gas turbines, each weighing 75 tonnes – far larger than a jumbo jet engine - will cover eastern Tuggeranong, Hume, most of Woden the Alexander Maconochie Centre and the proposed new suburbs of Tralee. It may also interfere with the flight path to Canberra Airport," he said.

Planning overhauled in PS shake up

Future planning and development in the ACT is set for a major shake up. The ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) and Land Development Agency (LDA) could be abolished and ACTPLA moved into a new directorate of sustainable development. Chief Minister Jon Stanhope has announced that the ACT Government was to adopt the proposal recommended by the Hawke Review into the ACT public service to establish a single agency, of nine directorates as the administrative basis of the ACT Public Service.

Mr. Stanhope said that last month he flagged that, 21 years after being granted self-government, the time was right for significant structural changes to allow greater coordination between areas of the bureaucracy. "The government has considered in detail many of the Hawke recommendations and has today decided to proceed with a crucial first step through the creation of a single and cohesive ACT Public Service Agency, designed to best meet the needs and challenges of the ACT as a city-state."

The single agency model will report to a single Chief Executive through nine directorates, each headed by a Director-General. The new position of Head of Service will also serve as Director-General of the Chief Minister's Department. The directorates are: Chief Minister's, Treasury, Community Services, Economic Development, Education and Training, Health, Justice and Community Safety, Sustainable Development and Territory and Municipal Services Mr. Andrew Cappie-Wood will be appointed Head of Service and Director-General of the Chief Minister's Directorate. The most significant changes to the ACTPS relate to the Economic Development and Sustainable Development directorates.

The Economic Development Directorate, to be headed by Mr. David Dawes, will have primary responsibility for working with the business community in relation to economic development and business support programs, the design and delivery of the government's land release program, tourism and events and sport and recreation.

Mr. Dawes will also fulfill the role of Coordinator-General, which was integral to the successful delivery of economic stimulus measures in 2009-10 during the height of the Global Financial Crisis.

Building on Dr Hawke's recommendations, the government has decided to

bring together responsibility for business, tourism and events in this directorate, together with responsibility for the operation of major venues including Canberra Stadium, Stromlo Forest Park, Manuka Oval and EPIC and for government services and support to the sport and recreation sector. The Economic Development Directorate will continue to be responsible for the strategic management of the Government's property portfolio, but ownership and responsibility for day-to-day repairs and maintenance will return to the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate.

The Sustainable Development Directorate, to be headed by Mr. David Papps, will bring together elements of the ACTPS with responsibilities in the planning and development sphere. These will include planning policy (including transport planning), environmental policies and programs, heritage and the Government Architect and the ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA). Overall responsibility for planning policy will vest in Mr. Papps as Director-General with some formal statutory powers primarily related to development approvals, to remain the responsibility of the Chief Planning Executive.

The Directors-General will formally commence their new roles on 1 July 2011 however, work will commence immediately on the integration and alignment of roles, responsibilities and administration to reflect the new arrangements. To ensure greater coordination and alignment of effort across the 'one government' model, a new ACT Public Service Strategic Board, chaired by the Head of the Service and comprising all other Directors-General has already been created and is meeting regularly.

In a departure from recommendations of Dr Hawke, the Government has decided that responsibilities for CIT and vocational education will remain with the Minister for Education and Training and Canberra Connect will remain within the Department of Territory and Municipal Services.

"I am confident this new structure, and further changes resulting from the Hawke Review and still to be announced, will lead the change management and cultural changes required to embed a new way of working which is essential to the success of the new single agency model," Mr. Stanhope added.

Hume industrial expansion begins



The Land Development Agency (LDA), on behalf of the ACT Government, is commencing construction of an industrial estate at Hume, to be known as New West Industry Park.

New West Industry Park is approximately 56ha in size, including open spaces, roads and verges. It is located to the south-west of the suburb of Hume, with frontage to the Monaro Highway.

The site has a Territory Plan land use

zoning of IZ1, General Industrial. It is primarily used as horse agistment paddocks and, prior to that, was used for grazing purposes.

The approved Estate Development Plan enables the site to be divided into 34 blocks with a range of block sizes and configurations. It is anticipated that delivery of New West Industry Park will be achieved in three construction stages over a five year program, depending on market demand.

Staging will be influenced by terrain and infrastructure services, as well as the costs associated with construction of each stage. Staging will also be influenced by the Government's Land Release Program.

Courage and Tralee Homesteads are within the site area. The homesteads and surrounding areas have, however, been heritage listed and excluded from the development.

The LDA undertook public consultation during planning for the estate. The development application was publicly notified as part of the approval process and a recent letter box drop advised nearby businesses that construction will be commencing shortly.

Meanwhile, ActewAGL has commenced major capital works to enhance the capacity and reliability of natural gas supply to Hume and Tuggeranong to meet future commercial and residential growth in these areas.

Stage one of the project, which is currently underway, involves installing 2.4km of natural gas main along the Monaro Highway between Lanyon Drive and Tralee Street, Hume. Stage one is due for completion late April 2011. This project will be completed in three stages:

- Stage one – Installation of gas main along the Monaro Highway between Lanyon Drive and Tralee Street, Hume– due for completion in April 2011.
- Stage two – Construction of a 5km main between Narrabundah and Hume, together with the construction a new pressure regulating station in Hume – commencing April 2012.
- Stage three – Construction of a further 5.3km of natural gas main along the Monaro Highway and Isabella Drive down to Ashley Drive, Monash – commencing 2013.

The project is estimated to cost \$15 million and due for completion by winter 2013.

ActewAGL Manager Gas Networks, Macleay Connolly said, based on forecasted natural gas demand growth, ActewAGL is further investing in its natural gas network through project like this to ensure we can meet the expected peak demands for the areas of Tuggeranong, Hume, Queanbeyan and Jerrabomberra post 2013."

Article supplied by Land Development Agency and ActewAGL

Maureen takes out top gong

Community advocate and not-for-profit organization CEO, Maureen Cane, has been named the 2011 Canberra Citizen of the Year.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope made the announcement at a special ceremony coincide with Canberra's 98th birthday celebrations.

In presenting the award to Ms Cane, Mr. Stanhope said,

"Her decade as Chief Executive Officer of Communities@Work has been marked by the organisation's success in providing valuable services to our community in the areas of disability support, aged care, and family services.

"Under Ms Cane's guidance, Communities@Work now provides services to an estimated 140,000 Canberrans a year and employs 360 staff and 200 volunteers.

"It is also recognised nationally as a registered training organisation for community services and health industries."

Mr. Stanhope said Ms Cane was instrumental in the establishment of the Canberra arm of OzHarvest, which collects



Around 100 guests attended a special function on 8 March to farewell Maureen Cane as Communities @Work CEO. Pictured are Maureen's husband Peter (far left), Dawn McKay, Maureen Cane and former president of Tuggeranong Community Service (now Communities @Work) Peter McKay.

excess food from restaurants and supermarkets for distribution to charities and refuges.

"Over 700,000 meals have been supplied to Canberrans since the operation began in February 2008," Mr. Stanhope said.

"Ms Cane's extraordinary and long-term commitment to helping some of the most vulnerable in our community makes her one of our finest citizens."

Seniors dig in for new centre



L to R: Minister Joy Burch, 55 Plus Club President, Rusty Woodward and Communities @Work

CEO, Maureen Cane, turn the first sod for the new Tuggeranong Senior Citizens Centre.

Photo: courtesy of the Southside Chronicle

The Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club reached a new milestone recently with the turning of the first sod for the new Tuggeranong Senior Citizens Centre.

The new centre is being constructed on a site in Cowlishaw Street Greenway.

Minister for Community Services and Member for Brindabella, Joy Burch, was given the honour of turning the first sod marking commencement of works. She was joined by outgoing Communities @Work CEO, Maureen Cane and 55 Plus Club President, Rusty Woodward.

The ceremony was also attended by about 50 guests and members of the 55 Plus Club.

Ms Woodward said the day marked the culmination of a Communities@Work and ACT Government initiative dating back to 2008.

Ms Woodward said the facility will be a home-from-home for Tuggeranong residents 50 years of age and over. She said the Club currently operates out of the Communities@Work Community and Function Centre.

"Having a permanent home will enable more flexibility of activities and a safe and welcoming meeting place for the seniors of the area.

The Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club was incorporated in January 2010 and has been actively involved in the development of the new centre. Members are eagerly awaiting the completion of this

development," she added.

The building has been designed by architects Collins Caddaye to make best use of its location on the shores of Lake Tuggeranong.

Ms Woodward said it will be a centre that the residents of Tuggeranong will appreciate for many years to come.

Ms Burch said the new centre will help reduce the social isolation experienced by many older people, encourage them to remain in contact with their community and pass on their life skills and experience.

"The building will include a large hall that will be used for a variety of activities and two smaller rooms that can be used for meetings or casual gatherings," Ms Burch said.

"The site is well located for the large catchment area of Tuggeranong, is easily accessed by public transport and close to shops and other services."

"It sits between a child care centre and Lake Tuggeranong College. That will provide an opportunity for interaction between seniors using the centre, students and young children," Ms Burch added.

For more information on the Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club visit: <http://www.commsatwork.org/Seniors/Tuggeranong55PlusClubInc/tabid/319/Default.aspx>

Call for Festival team and ideas

Planning for the 23rd Tuggeranong Festival is underway and the call has gone our for volunteers and new ideas to make the event even bigger and better.

Festival President, Michael Lindfield said the Festival relies on the voluntary contributions from community groups, local businesses, associations, sporting bodies and individuals.

He said volunteering is a great way to contribute to your community and can be personally rewarding.

"The Festival invites members of the public to share their skills, experience and ideas with the rest of the community. Your level of involvement is entirely up to you," he added.

For more information go to the Festival's website www.tuggeranongfestival.org.au or contact the Secretary, Holly Keenan at secretary@tuggeranongfestival.org.au.

New vision for Kambah

The ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) has begun a master planning study for the Kambah Group Centre to investigate a range of potential options to update and reinvigorate the centre over the next 20-30 years.

ACTPLA is seeking the community's views on:

1. How we can make it a more sustainable, interesting and vibrant place
2. What we can do to ensure the local shops and services remain viable
3. If the surrounding vacant land can be used to support the community in future.

Community information display

- When: Saturday 9 April 2011
- Where: Kambah Village Shopping Centre (outside Woolworths)
- Time: 11am – 2pm (ACTPLA planners will be on hand to discuss the study so feel free to drop in any time between 11 and 2).

For more information please visit the ACTPLA website at: www.actpla.act.gov.au/Kambah or email kambah@act.gov.au.

Combined Councils draw up action plan



Inner South Canberra Community Council Chairperson, Kevin Gill, addressed members of the Combined Community Councils meeting.

The Combined Community Councils of Canberra are formulating a list of action areas that will be used to lobby the ACT Government and Opposition in the lead up to the 2014 ACT Election. High on the list are the issues of planning and development in the ACT, future population growth and public transport.

Councils have a unique opportunity between now and the next election

The Combined Community Councils meeting was held on Saturday, 19 March and hosted by Woden Valley Community Council.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Gungahlin, Belconnen, Weston Creek, North Canberra, Inner South and

Tuggeranong Community Councils along with representatives of the Jerrabomberra Residents Association. Combined Community Councils meeting chairperson, Dr Jenny Stewart, told the gathering that Councils have a unique opportunity between now and the next election to ensure that the government and opposition parties clearly articulated their policies on the action areas identified by Councils.

In formulating the list of action areas, Inner South Canberra Community Council Chairman, Kevin Gill, highlighted concerns over the disposal of land originally granted for public use under concessional lease arrangements.

He pointed to examples where there had been attempts to sell land for future development that had originally been set

aside as community sporting or recreation areas. Following discussion a motion was passed calling on the ACT Government to ensure that land under concessional lease can only be sold on the condition that money raised from the sale is returned to the local community in the form of other public amenities.

Planning and development was again high on the agenda in presentations by Managing Director of Doma Group, Jure Domazet, and convenor of the Dickson Residents Group, noted Canberra citizen and activist, Marie Coleman.

Mr Domazet, who has recently been appointed President of the ACT Division of the Property Council of Australia, spoke on his experiences as a property developer and dealing with government and the community.

He said his company had engaged the community at many levels and on many projects. He pointed to recent Doma Group Projects such as the Hotel Realm, Sirius Building and Aviation House in Woden as examples.

Mr. Domazet added that he found Councils unique community consultation forums and said he had a good working relationship with Woden Valley Community Council. However, Mr. Domazet admitted the processes can be extremely long and exhaustive for some developers.

Ms Coleman reflected on the relationship between the community and development, and how community members can best influence government.

(See page 7 for an edited version of Ms Coleman's address)

Heritage grants

Member for Canberra, Gai Brodtmann MP, has invited community organisations to apply for Community Heritage Grants of up to \$15,000.

The grants are available to historical societies, regional museums, public libraries community and other not-for-profit organizations.

The funding will assist work in preserving heritage collections of national significance.

For more information visit:
www.nla.gov.au/chg or phone 62621147.

NCA forum

The National Capital Authority (NCA) is inviting the community to a public forum on Wednesday 13 April, in the Australian War Memorial theatre from 6pm.

The forum is an opportunity for the public to help guide the decisions that will shape the national capital of the future. NCA members and senior staff will answer questions on the planning, promotion, enhancement, and maintenance of the national capital. To post your questions for discussion or RSVP please visit: www.nationalcapital.gov.au/haveyoursay.

Justice system in the spotlight

ACT Attorney General, Simon Corbell has agreed to address the next TCC meeting on the ACT Justice system.

Mr. Corbell recently announced that the ACT Government will introduce reforms to the process of election for judge-alone trials and re-affirm the important role of juries in serious criminal trials.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, 5 April commencing at 7.30pm in the upstairs conference room of the Tuggeranong Southern Cross Club at Greenway.

Harvesting a new crop in the community



OzHarvest volunteers hard at work collecting food donations.

OzHarvest is celebrating its third birthday working for the Canberra community.

OzHarvest is a non-denominational charity that rescues excess food which would otherwise be discarded.

OzHarvest Manager, David Burnet, says this excess food is distributed to charities supporting the vulnerable in Canberra. "OzHarvest Canberra has been operating since February 2008 and has delivered over 800,000 meals to more than 57 charities and refuges in Canberra and Queanbeyan. To date we have saved over 250 tonnes of good food from being wasted. Our food donors include food retailers, restaurants, event caterers, manufacturers, institutions and corporate offices," he said.

Mr. Burnet said OzHarvest believes that

good food should not go to waste. "In fact, by distributing it to those in need, we turn excess food into a resource and save thousands of kilograms of food from being dumped as landfill each year," he added.

"Food is generously donated by those with excess supplies. By distributing this food to various charities, we assist them to better and more efficiently address the underlying social problems in our society. With this support charities are able to redirect funding to programs assisting those who are disadvantaged," Mr. Burnet said.

OzHarvest Canberra is managed and supported by Communities@Work, a community based not-for-profit organisation in the ACT. Communities@Work is the major sponsor and generator of funds for OzHarvest Canberra.

Cyclists ride against compo Bill

Pedal Power ACT has expressed concerns over the ACT Government's moves to reform compensation entitlements for motor crash victims including cyclists.

Pedal Power has written to the Government calling on it to reconsider its proposals and not proceed with the new legislation in its current form.

It has also called on the Greens and Liberals asking them to send the Bill to a committee where it can be discussed in detail and the public can have its say.

For more information visit: http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/b/db_40825/default.asp.

A welcome voice

Welcome to the *Valley Voice*, Tuggeranong Community Council's newsletter.

Valley Voice is designed to inform Valley residents of issues that impact on them and to act as a vehicle for other community groups and organisations to communicate with residents.

Valley Voice will be produced on a regular basis and will be circulated amongst TCC members and beyond. If you wish to receive copies of *Valley Voice* in the future please email info@tuggcc.com.

Meanwhile if you have articles or images you wish to contribute to *Valley Voice* please email them to info@tuggcc.com.

Please feel free to pass *Valley Voice* on to those who you think will be interested in its contents.

Valley Voice is published by the Tuggeranong Community Council (TCC). Material in this publication comes from a variety of community and government based sources and therefore does not necessarily reflect the views of the TCC.

Material submitted to the TCC for inclusion in *Valley Voice* may be subject to editorial changes. Material that includes dates, times and contact details is correct at the time of publishing. Therefore, the TCC cannot be held responsible if it is not informed of any changes to that information prior to publication.

Tuggeranong Community Council.
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W: www.tuggcc.com



Tuggeranong Community Council Inc. (TCC) is an incorporated, voluntary, not for profit, non political, community based association operating within the Tuggeranong district of the Australian Capital Territory.

TCC is formally recognised as the peak community representative body in Tuggeranong promoting the goals and aspirations of local residents and other community groups and organisations within the Tuggeranong Valley. TCC receives partial funding from the ACT Government.

Help to clear Valley wood smoke

Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water, Simon Corbell has encouraged Valley residents to replace their wood heaters this winter with a new natural gas heater. Mr. Corbell made the comment while launching the 2011 Wood Heater Replacement Program.

"Wood smoke has a detrimental impact on air quality in the ACT, particularly in the Tuggeranong Valley, and this program is an important way that individual households can help to protect our environment," Mr. Corbell said.

The Wood Heater Replacement Program is a partnership between the ACT Government and ActewAGL and encourages people to remove, and replace their wood heater with a new mains-supplied natural gas heater.

"Since the program was launched in 2004, 894 wood heaters have been replaced with cleaner heating alternatives," Mr. Corbell said.

"There are great incentives for Valley residents to make the change from wood heaters to gas heaters, with the rebate for replacing wood heaters with ducted gas systems remaining at \$800, and \$600 for new flued gas installations.

TCC President, Darryl Johnston said he welcomed the continuation of the Wood Heater Buyback Program in Canberra.

"It's one of the most generous schemes in Australia. However, I am disappointed that this scheme does not also give Valley residents the choice of transferring to an efficient form of electric heating, such as an electric heat pump or reverse cycle air conditioning. It must be recognised that many residents are not on the natural gas grid and, although they want to, they can not take advantage of this program.

He said that while he agreed there had been a reduction of wood smoke pollution in Tuggeranong many neighbourhoods with large numbers of wood heat-



Domestic wood smoke can trigger asthma attacks.

ers still suffer high to extremely high levels of fine particle [air pollution](#) every winter.

He said according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the ACT Government less than 4 per cent of Canberra households burn wood for domestic heating, yet the Federal Government's National Pollution Inventory states they generate 67 percent of Canberra's PM10 air pollution compared to 22 percent from vehicles.

Mr. Johnston added that after more than 25 years of health and environmental research it has been proven that domestic wood smoke pollution has real serious health impacts, similar to that from cigarette smoke.

"Wood smoke affects the health of the very young, the elderly and those with existing heart and lung conditions."

[The Australian Lung Foundation \(ALF\)](#) estimates that about 30,000 people live in the ACT with some form of degenerative lung disease. Many of these residents are imprisoned in their homes on their doctors advice because of neighbourhood winter wood smoke pollution," he said.

For more information visit <http://www.environment.act.gov.au/> or call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharing land

Landshare Australia brings together people who have a passion for home-grown food, connecting those who have land to share with those who need land for cultivating food.

The concept of Landshare began in the UK, launched through the River Cottage television program in 2009, and has since grown into a thriving community of more than 57,000 growers, sharers and helpers across the country.

Now that Landshare is here in Australia, we welcome you to come and take part in this fantastic initiative. Landshare is for people who:

- Want to grow vegetables but don't have anywhere to do it;
- Have a spare bit of land they're prepared to share;
- Can help in some way – sharing knowledge, lending tools, etc;
- Support the idea of freeing up more land for growing;
- Are already growing and want to join in the community visit: <http://www.landshareaustralia.com.au/>

Trolleys arrested

The ACT Government has introduced a scheme aimed at arresting wayward shopping trolleys.

Under the new legislation introduced by the ACT Greens city rangers and police have new powers allowing them to direct people who are taking, using, or leaving a trolley beyond a retail precinct, to return it to the retailer, or to face a fine.

Individuals could face a \$60 on-the-spot fine for failing to return a trolley when directed. Higher fines of up to \$1100 could apply if an offence was prosecuted through court. Retailers can be fined if their trolleys are littering their local area.



"Why fork out all that money on a walking frame when you can get a free shopping trolley from the lake?"

Cooma supports Park and Ride

Cooma-Monaro Shire Council has backed plans for a commuter park and ride facility at Calwell. Councillors resolved to formally support the proposed Calwell Park and Ride concept at their meeting on 17 January.

Calwell Park and Ride Project Committee Chairman and Calwell businessman, Nick Tsoulias said, Councillors fully support the Park and Ride concept and are

looking forward to seeing it progress.

He said a park and ride facility would greatly benefit people travelling to the ACT from regional centres such as Cooma, as well as service the suburbs in southern Tuggeranong.

For more information on the Calwell Park and Ride project email Nick Tsoulias: nicktsoulias@hotmail.com.

Good planning with and for the community



The following is an edited version of the presentation to the Combined Community Council meeting by Convenor of the Dickson Residents Group Ms Marie Coleman.

ACT governance is unique, a city state without a municipal government, the level where in other jurisdictions most planning decisions are taken and community interaction with planning commonly occurs.

There should never be any doubt that there is and should be a symbiotic relationship between government and community. Government should be responsive to community aspirations, while necessarily being in a position to set final priorities for government action/expenditure among competing objectives/different interest groups.

This process is generally extremely poorly handled.

Not every interest group can prevail, there is always need for negotiation, win some, lose some. Yet all parties ought try to establish and keep in focus congruent longer-term objectives. Discussion, consultation, negotiation; these are always preferable to confrontation and brush fires in the suburbs where development is concerned. But there have been local brush fires.

Current ACT planning processes puts the initial responsibility for consultation on individual development applications with the developer. This process is generally extremely poorly handled. Subsequent re-consideration by ACTPLA of a revised development application can

mean that original objectors find little change has occurred, leaving open only a difficult process of appeal through the Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Residents feel disenfranchised and resentful.

A more effective system of original consultation would lead to better outcomes all round, and reduce delays consequent on the appeal processes against disputed decision-making processes. The Territory Plan itself is poorly understood by most residents, who are commonly ignorant of the zone system, and what is permitted. In actuality, the residential zoning system is proving to be the cause of many brush fires. From the outside observer perspective so much seems left to guidelines, and interpretation. Few residents in an RZ2 zone expect to find a large multi-unit development in their midst. Many miss the opportunity to make initial comment because the developer is not obligated to undertake wide local consultation.

Developers as a whole fail to engage with legitimate community concerns.

Developers as a whole fail to engage with legitimate community concerns. If consequent costs are encountered as a result of appeals, there is a clear course of action open, earlier and genuine consultation. We have planners who state, publicly, they have no duty to consult. More importantly, we clearly have planners who do not understand that in a Westminster system the elected Government sets policy, and statutory office holders execute their duties within the parameters of that policy.

There is a significant problem with the current state of Territory planning law. Only ACTPLA can put forward changes to the Territory Plan. No other body, including the ACT Government, can promote a new precinct code to have statutory effect. Precinct codes clearly articulated would do much to reduce the current levels of uncertainty, anger and frustration.

This is quite extraordinary. In Commonwealth practice, chief executives of statutory bodies are answerable to oversighting boards or councils appointed by the Government.

The ACT Government has created a statutory office which need not recognise the Government's authority. Only the ACT Government can legislate to change that. The ACT Government has clearly articulated policies on sustainability, on housing affordability, on housing design suited to allow residents to age in place. The elected Government has every right to expect that its officers will work to put those policies in practice. In my view, the elected ACT Government does wish to achieve agreed outcomes with the community on the thorny issues around re-development of urban areas. There are numbers of individual one-off consultation processes currently underway. But something more is needed.

This may well be a thorough revision of the legislation establishing ACTPLA, and ensuring that the statutory office holder of Chief Planner is answerable to the elected government. This revision may be appropriate as the changes to ACT administration flow from the recent Hawke Report.

Here in Canberra as we look to increases in population in a very tightly constricted land mass, seeking to simultaneously achieve policies of affordability, sustainability, and a mix of housing types, we must work through issues around urban redevelopment, a process which will inevitably bring planners and community into conflict, unless plans are made with some degree of initial genuine collaboration.

Good planning is planning with and for the community.

Future concentration of dense development along major transport routes, and on such brownfield sites as can be identified will lessen the pressures on the suburbs, and hopefully lead to better public transport. Urban redevelopment and planning touch many people, and badly handled can and do lead to governments losing office. While change is inevitable and cities do grow we must recognise that at the core we are dealing with humans and their environments. Good planning is planning with and for the community.

Marie Coleman
19 March 2011

ATTENTION TUGGERANONG RESIDENTS

A Special Meeting of the
TUGGERANONG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

will be held on

Tuesday 12 April 2011

to hear updated reports on the Tuggeranong/Eindale Master Plans and development plans for land opposite Bunnings at Greenway.

This meeting will commence at

7.30pm, upstairs of the Tuggeranong Southern Cross Club,

cnr Pitman and Holwell Streets, Tuggeranong. For further information please visit www.tuggcc.com or phone 0431 235970

Tuggeranong Community Council gratefully acknowledges the support of our sponsors.



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