

- Police bicycle patrols have commenced in South Canberra to enable the patrol of areas that are not accessible by vehicle and are time consuming on foot. They provide a highly visible police presence and enhance the ability to be more accessible to the public.
- Home Security Reminder: Hot weather conditions during the summer months prompts many residents to leave windows and doors open to allow homes to cool down overnight. Unfortunately this provides greater scope for opportunistic offenders to enter premises and commit thefts and burglaries during night-time hours. Police remind householders to remain aware of appropriate security measures during this period.
- Fire Season: All ACT Policing members have been tasked to remain vigilant during the summer period in relation to suspicious persons and activities particularly in more remote areas. The ACT Policing Rural Patrol based at Tuggeranong Station has been particularly active in this regard conducting regular patrols of rural ACT areas looking out for signs of bushfire and/or suspicious persons and vehicles. A new Fire Danger Rating system was released with the commencement of the bushfire season on 1st October 2010. Further details relating to that rating system and bushfires in general can be obtained from the ACT Emergency Services Agency at www.esa.act.gov.au or call Canberra Connect on 132281.

Questions from the floor:

No matters were raised by members.

President, Darryl Johnston, invited Colin Petrie (Vice President) to present a report on the outcome of the Public Consultation Meeting held on 25 February for the proposed Southern Cemetery. Colin indicated that the session was conducted by Hamish Horne from the ACT Cemeteries Authority, who had addressed our February Meeting on the topic, and he fielded various questions from the group of about 20 attendees, including the following:

- Have other sites than Long Gully Road / Mugga Lane been considered?
Yes, sites in Symonston and adjacent localities which are similarly close to residential areas.
- How close to residences will the southern border of the Cemetery be?
Approximately 300 metres, although exact location of crematorium building is yet to be determined, but expected to be close to Macarthur Ridge rather than close to the road.
- What is the extent of the emissions from the Crematorium and what impact is expected on Macarthur homes?
It is expected that they will produce plumes of relatively large particles with low toxicity, but obviously subject to prevailing seasonal wind conditions which are likely to adversely impact on Macarthur residences.
- If delays in clearing funerals is linked to availability of chapels as claimed, why not build more chapels or hold more funerals in churches in the traditional manner?
It was stated that all Australian cemeteries have crematoria on site.
- If the Mitchell Crematorium is under utilised as indicated, why not hold services elsewhere and transport bodies to Mitchell in refrigerated trucks instead of building another Crematorium?
It was claimed that the Crematorium is almost fully booked.
- If a cemetery and crematorium are considered necessary in South Canberra, has the vacant site adjacent to the ACT Prison been considered?
This possibility has not been investigated due to leasing restrictions. Why could that particular lease not be bought back by the ACT Government?
- The impact of fencing the boundary and the noise of heavy earth moving machinery on wildlife and kangaroo population in the area was queried.
Not considered a major concern based on the experience at the Gungahlin Cemetery where a mob of kangaroos had lived for the past 20 years.
- How would the decomposition of buried bodies affect the chemical structure of the soil in the area?
No evidence of any alteration of chemistry at Gungahlin at present.

It was stated that the planning stage would take place during 2010/2011, followed by the construction stage during 2012/2013, with operations expected to commence in 2014.

Various concerns were expressed by members on this issue, including the following matters:

- The location of vehicle entrance to the site appears to be contentious and is unclear on the artist's impression displayed.
- Heavy machinery on site will cause damage to the area and the adjacent wildlife corridor.
- Is another Cemetery really needed – Woden Cemetery expected to be fully occupied within 10 years.
- Query on timeframe for recycling of plots – not applicable in the ACT.
- Concerns about the ongoing capacity of Gungahlin.

Guest Speaker: Mr Ron Collins

Darryl Johnston introduced our guest speaker, Ron Collins from NRMA, who was replacing our planned speaker, Professor Gabrielle Cooper from University of Canberra. Ron provided a brief background on his role and area of responsibility, followed by a PowerPoint presentation featuring some information on the history of NRMA and its services, including the following details:

- Established over 90 years ago, originally as an advocacy and lobby organisation;
- Membership of 2.1 million – 1.5 million stranded motorists rescued last year;
- Over 1,000 employees in NSW and ACT, including 400 patrol officers;
- Separate entity from NRMA Insurance Company (IAG);
- Own Thrifty Car Rentals, also 5 Holiday Parks – 50% share of Travelodge Hotels;
- ACT operations include 22 Patrols, 2 road service admin staff, 1 policy specialist;
- Average of 55,000 roadside assistance calls per year;
- Road safety statistics in ACT – 76 fatalities in 5 year period 2004-2008 inclusive;
- 7,200 “on road” crashes in 2008 – 14 fatalities has a huge impact in such a small community;
- Comparison of road fatalities around the world.

Mr Collins provided the following basic information on drug driving:

- Definition used in the legislation;
- 3 categories of drugs of particular concern impacting on driver performance are: Depressants, Stimulants, Hallucinogens;
- Suitable testing methods available but no accurate statistics yet.

He mentioned the following statistics on drink driving offences:

- Responsible for 60% of fatal crashes (over 0.15 blood alcohol content);
- Mainly single vehicle crashes;
- 2 out of 5 offenders have a previous drink drive offence.

Ron also indicated that many accidents are also caused by “inattention”, which has become quite a common problem, particularly with the use of mobile phones while driving. He confirmed that NRMA is supportive of Random Roadside Drug Testing based on the decision adopted in other jurisdictions.

Questions from the floor:

Some concerns were expressed by attendees and the following points were made:

- What proof is there that roadside testing works? No firm evidence to indicate that it actually improves road safety.
- Introduction of random breath testing certainly resulted in marked reduction in road fatalities.
- Fatigue and speed are known major factors – public need to take responsibility and action to discourage known drunk drivers.
- No national standard in force and inappropriate sentences are being imposed in most cases.
- Technology is likely to improve the detection process.
- Reference to NRMA Youth Trauma Forum – huge impact in schools evident.
- Strong message needs to be passed on to local Government authorities, including Roads ACT.

General and Other Business:

Nora Preston suggested that we invite a speaker to address a forthcoming Meeting on the non-smoking regulations and policy in force in local public places. The President agreed to follow up and perhaps arrange for someone from the ACT Department of Health to come along. This concern was previously raised in relation to the apparent breaches at the Tuggeranong Hyperdome and the President had suggested that the matter be taken up direct with the Centre Management.

Upcoming Events / Next meeting:

Darryl reminded members about the Workshop for the development of the TCC Code of Conduct and the "Future Directions" Strategic Plan documents - to be held on Saturday, 13 March at the Tuggeranong Community Centre commencing at 8.30am.

Colin Petrie pointed out that the new venue for this Meeting was most satisfactory and suggested that a formal acknowledgement should be sent to the Southern Cross Club, which was generally supported. A vote of thanks to our previous hosts, the Vikings Town Centre Club, had been included in the President's recent column in *The Chronicle*.

The next TCC General Meeting is to be held on Tuesday, 6 April (after Easter weekend) at the same venue, with guest speaker to be confirmed. The meeting concluded at approximately 8.50pm and members were invited to stay on for the usual light refreshments and informal chat.