

# WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Mr Peter Johns  
Major Projects  
Land Group  
Department of Urban Services  
GPO BOX 158  
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

## NEW CREATION MINISTRIES

### Request for a Direct Sale of a Lease

Dear Mr Johns

The Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) has been actively involved in Weston Creek as a consultation conduit for the local community since 1991. The WCCC is a non-political, voluntary lobby group representing the residents of Weston Creek and is an informed, active and pragmatic contributor to public debates in Weston Creek. Our website ([www.wccc.com.au](http://www.wccc.com.au)) has further details about the WCCC.

The WCCC therefore is presenting this submission to the Land Group on the (undated) **Application for the Direct Sale of a Lease from New Creation Ministries (NCM)**. With respect, the decision on the possible direct sale of the lease needs to wait until after the Broadacre Estate Plan (Weston) consultancy work is completed.

We believe no decision on the request for a direct sale should be made prior to the public release of the Broadacre Estate Plan (Weston). The WCCC will be making a separate submission on the Broadacre Estate Plan (Weston) to the consultant who wins the tender process for that work.

It is understood that the application is for the lease and is not a development application (DA) per se, although the functionality of the proposed building is described in detail. If the document later becomes a development application the WCCC reserves the right to make a further submission.

Attached is our submission on the proposed direct sale of the lease for your consideration and deliberation. The Executive of the WCCC is available to discuss any of the above, and the attached comments, at a mutually convenient opportunity.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Jeff Carl  
Chairperson, Weston Creek Community Council.

**Submission of the  
Weston Creek Community Council  
to the  
Land Group, Department of Urban Services  
on the  
NEW CREATION MINISTRIES  
Request for a Direct Sale of a Lease**

**Introduction**

1. The Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) is pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission to the Land Group on the proposed direct sale of a lease of Block 5 Section 94 Weston to the New Creation Ministries (NCM).
2. The timing of our regular monthly meetings and the consultation period have enabled us to call for suggestions through our website. However the WCCC has not had the opportunity to raise this issue at its regular public meetings but this will be done at the earliest opportunity. The WCCC will notify the Land Group if there are substantial changes to points of view expressed in this submission.
3. By way of background it is understood that the application is by NCM to purchase the block of land which is on the southeastern corner of the intersection of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive, Weston.
4. The application is made by the "parent company" the Apostolic Church of Australia of 216 Beales Road, Greensborough, Victoria, 3088. The parent company banks with the Bank of Melbourne in Greensborough, Victoria.
5. The decision on the possible direct sale of the lease needs to be deferred until after the Broadacre Estate Plan (Weston) consultancy work is completed. We believe no decision on the request for a direct sale should be made prior to the public release of the Broadacre Estate Plan (Weston)

**Issues sourced from the Application**

6. Page 4 details current and projected membership of the NCM. The NCM current membership is 1,000 members but the expectation is that membership will expand to 5,000 by 2013. The NCM considers that its present site in Dixon Drive Holder is not big enough for present needs and will not cope with any expansion in membership. This is the main reason for seeking a larger site.
7. In its application the NCM has said that it supports the community principally through charitable activities (Page 5) which includes op-shops and services for the not so well off. Also "secondary physical amenity will form part of the infrastructure of the new

church building program; Meeting Halls, School Recreation Facilities, Tennis Courts, Skate Parks, Playgrounds and Landscaped settings". This implies that the site, if fully developed, will be used on a 7 day a week basis and not just on Sundays.

8. The NCM envisages that the design for the buildings will commence in March 2003 (Page 7) which indicates that this process is already well under way. All going well construction should start in October 2003 for the Preliminary Project Program.
9. It is indicated that the NCM's preferred site is Block 5 Section 94 Weston, no other optional leases are requested. The WCCC has advised NCM of other blocks to consider in Weston Creek and the WCCC has also alerted the applicant to others who are interested in this same block. No details of the design of the buildings have been supplied. (Page 8).
10. It is indicated that the total expenditure envisaged by the NCM is \$3,600,000 (Page 9). It is not clear whether this is for the whole project or for the Preliminary Project. Site works are estimated to cost \$500,000; Plant and Equipment \$500,000; Carparking \$300,000 and other expenditure \$300,000.
11. A sketch plan of the development proposals (Page 12) shows no details of the construction of buildings, as these were not attached to the application. Apparently these will be provided under the "Building Procurement Process" to PALM. This might mean that the community will not see a copy of these building plans prior to the filing of the Development Application (DA).
12. The New Building Brief states that the NCM services a local population. However, the word local does not seem to imply Weston Creek. It is not known if the Apostolic Church of Australia has any other congregations in Canberra or any plans to establish other congregations. The Statutory Declaration on the NCM's behalf was signed by a person living in Ngunnawal. It is also not known what relationship the New Creation Ministries has with other Christian or other religious groups.
13. It is again indicated on Page 4 that up to 1200 people could attend the NCM on "a daily or weekly" basis for worship. In addition there will be business meetings involving 20 to 30 people on a daily basis and other interest groups which could attract 50 to 80 attendees. This would indicate that the NCM is servicing all of Canberra from this one location. The NCM will need space to accommodate overflows in attendance during special occasions and ceremonies. Carparking will be needed for 250 cars (say being generous 750 people) with future overflow capacity of a further 250 cars.
14. Under the heading "Aesthetic Value and Image" the building will be contemporary, artistic, creative ie "New Creation" and "courageous and unafraid of forging new ground". This is of major concern in respect to planned building structure (if the lease is granted). The Sukyo Mahakari is an example where PALM, after granting a lease could not control the building design. As a "gateway" to Weston Creek there are major concerns with a design which will be "forging new ground". Once again we understand that the document is not a DA.

15. Page 25 says that signage "is to be considered in conjunction with the building colour scheme and that statutory signage is to be provided in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. Carparking is to be provided for a minimum of 500 cars (this contradicts earlier requirements of 250 cars stated on Page 4 of the New Building Brief).

### **Recent History of the site**

16. The site selected by the New Creation Ministries is a significant site in Weston Creek. This intersection is one of the main, if not the main, entrances into Weston Creek with large numbers of visitors and residents approaching Weston Creek passing through this intersection. At different meetings of the WCCC this fact has been pointed out with general agreement that any development should be in sympathy with the importance of this location.
17. In a "straw poll" conducted by the WCCC over the last twelve months the majority of respondents indicated that they preferred that the forest be replaced or failing that the area be replanted with suitable native species and the area left as a small nature park. Officials from the planning agencies in the ACT Government indicated that this option was not viable. Despite receiving this advice some residents are still in favour of retaining the area as open space.
18. At several meetings of the WCCC a proposal was discussed for the development of the site for a village for older people. The developer indicated that his proposal would still see much of the area left as open space. He was of the opinion that older people appreciated living in an aesthetic environment. It is not known whether the ACT Government has considered this proposal or not.

### **The proposal by the New Creation Ministries (NCM)**

19. The proposal by the NCM follows the destruction of its former premises in Dixon Drive, Holder in the January 2003 bush fires. The site at Holder consisted of a main NCM building and some demountable buildings. The site was becoming cluttered and it is the opinion of some NCM members that this site was now far too small for the NCM's needs.
20. Following the loss of the NCM buildings at the Holder site, the NCM took the opportunity to search for more suitable land and this led to the application to use the site at the corner of the Cotter Road and Streeton Drive. The WCCC Executive met with representatives of NCM and discussed a range of possible sites located within Weston Creek prior to the preparation of the present application.
21. The NCM has been part of the life of Weston Creek for many years now and it is clear that it makes a contribution to community life within the district especially through its charitable activities.

22. There is no doubt that the proposal is a very substantial one and if brought to fruition would result in all or a substantial part of the block being occupied by large buildings and carparks. While the WCCC has no doubt that landscaping will be an important part of the development, it would appear that most of the land would be occupied by buildings. The present membership of the NCM is around 1,000 and the NCM has announced that it intends to increase its membership up to 5,000 over a ten-year period. The NCM intends to employ over 20 full-time staff and 25 lay workers who will presumably work on a part-time basis. In addition up to 200 people could use the facilities on ordinary days and up to 1,200 people could use the site on Sundays and other special religious occasion days.
23. This will see a considerable increase in the usage of this area on what is one of the busiest intersections in Weston Creek. The WCCC would oppose any vehicular entry to the site from Streeton Drive, as this is likely to lead to road accidents. This leaves Unwin Place as the only possible entry point into the site. This will make it difficult for people using the main entry to the Police complex and also for people accessing schools and other religious sites in this area during times of peak usage.
24. The WCCC notes that a Broadacre Estate Plan is in progress and a traffic and public transport component will be part of the investigations into this Section Master Plan. At present the nearest public transport is provided in Heysen Street with a limited bus service to the Woden Interchange via Lyons. Intending passengers for other parts of Canberra would be required to change at Woden. The WCCC is not aware of plans to change the public transport arrangements in the near future. While the NCM proposal should see some increased use of public transport the WCCC expects that the majority of the people will use private cars to access the site.
25. In its lease application the NCM has said that it wants an on-site carpark with a capacity of 250 cars and an overflow capacity of a further 250 cars. Given that the NCM currently attracts about 1,000 people to its services on a Sunday this carparking would appear to be a minimum requirement. This raises stormwater run-off and landscaping considerations for the site. On-street parking in Unwin Place in the immediate vicinity of the Police complex is already at capacity and it is unlikely that any further on-street parking can be provided. The traffic issues are likely to be difficult to solve and it may be difficult to persuade residents that they won't be any worse off from a traffic point of view. The advantage of the Dixon Drive site was that there was more room available for on-street parking. (see below) Any traffic issues will need to be addressed in the Broadacre Estate Plan.
26. The NCM has indicated in its lease application that signage will be "considered in conjunction with the building colour scheme". One of the greatest fears expressed by attendees at WCCC meetings is that the outdoor signage to be used by the NCM will be obvious and intrusive and not in keeping with the aesthetics of the area. Some residents fear that the opportunity will be taken to make a "statement" or there will be full-blown advertising. As a minimum the WCCC believes that the present ACT restrictions on outside advertising should be strictly enforced. Given the sensitivity of this issue it is not good enough to say that "it will be considered".

## **Other considerations**

27. There is no doubt that the NCM has outgrown the site on Dixon Drive and that it needs more room. However, some consideration should be given to expanding the lease area of the site. This opportunity becomes available because the ACT Government has decided that to sell part of the former Holder High School oval to the Canberra Montessorri School. The Montessorri School community does not appear to have indicated that it will only build on part of it. Many people at WCCC meetings advocated the establishment of a community oval on this site. This proposal had the support of nearby residents. However, the lease of part of the site to the Montessorri School has meant that the public part of the land left over is too small to be developed for any public purpose.
28. If this remnant area was added to the existing New Creation NCM site on Dixon Drive the space restrictions currently facing the NCM may be overcome. It would also overcome the problem of the Montessorri School authorities placing restrictions on public access on that part of the site that they do not own.
29. If this solution were adopted then this would overcome some of the traffic problems facing development of the site on the corner of Streeton Drive and Cotter Road.
30. However, this solution is not likely to attract the support of nearby residences although some of them may prefer this as a “trade-off” for having some more environmentally friendly development on Streeton Drive and Cotter Road. This would have to be tested.

## **Summary**

31. The proposal by the NCM to relocate to the vacant site at the corner of Cotter Road and Streeton Drive will have many advantages for the NCM. It would enable the NCM authorities to continue to expand their services on one site without the need to go looking for another congregational site in another part of the city.
32. However, this is an important site in Weston Creek especially as it is one of the main entrances into the district and any development should be sensitive to this as well as to the fact that the site was previously a pine forest which everybody appreciated. Any lease sale proposal for this site should be sensitive especially in regard to outside advertising. The buildings to be erected are likely to be multi-storied and may adversely affect existing developments including the Orana School. The traffic problems are likely to be severe given the number of people forecast to use the site and will increase traffic and parking problems for other users including the Police.
33. The decision on the possible direct sale of the lease needs to wait until after the Broadacre Estate Plan (Weston) consultancy work is completed. We believe no decision on the request for a direct sale should be made prior to the public release of the Broadacre Estate Plan (Weston).

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