

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

Email: info@wccc.com.au

Website: www.wccc.com.au

Phone: (02) 6288 8975

ABN: 52 841 915 317

PO Box 3701 Weston Creek ACT 2611

Established 1991

(Weston Creek Citizens Council Inc. – Reg. No. A2637)

28 June 2005

Mr John Hargreaves MLA
Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services
Minister for Urban Services
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Limited Public Consultation Brierly Street, Weston

At the April 2005 Community Councils Forum, you invited each of the Councils to contact you if we became aware of any undesirable community consultation practices.

You would be aware 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) has further details about the WCCC.

As a result of your invitation, the WCCC is writing to you with regard to the public consultation processes used by Roads ACT and ACTION in connection with the relocation of the ACTION bus-stop and lay-by in Brierly Street, Weston.

The WCCC first became aware of the relocation when Mr Paul Ferrari of Roads ACT telephoned the WCCC at 1.45pm on 4th April, 2005 and requested a meeting with WCCC representatives near the Woolworths loading dock in Weston to commence at 2.00pm that afternoon (ie we had 15 minutes notice!). A member of the WCCC Committee (Mrs Barbara Brinton) was able to attend, despite the very short notice, and discussed the scope of the works with Mr Ferrari.

The scope of the works is as follows:

- Remove the bus stop from the western side of Brierly Street as the shop keepers have complained that exhaust fumes from idling buses fill their shops;
- Establish a bus stop and shelter on the Woolworths' side of the road. Buses will re route to use this;
- Cut into and extend each end of the kerb north of this new stop to make a bus lay-by (near the ACTION conveniences building located on the island adjacent the carpark opposite the service station). Plant 2 more trees;
- Remove the odd bit of kerb, including one mature gum tree, to enable trucks to back directly into the loading dock without taking up space in the carpark and blocking traffic; and
- Retain the current loading zone to enable trucks to park while they are waiting to unload and not block traffic as they wait and no need for them to pull out into carpark lane when they proceed to unload.

Mrs Brinton provided some initial comments on the works and expressed concerns about the narrowing of Brierly Street adjacent to the entry points for the service station - which could make the road more unsafe than it is now. Mrs Brinton also expressed concerns about the loss of clear line-of-sight for vehicles entering/exiting Mahony Court when a bus is stopped in the lay-by.

Mrs Brinton asked Mr Ferrari about the extent of community consultation that was planned and he advised that that meeting was the only consultation that had occurred, and would occur for this project. There was expected to be some discussion with some shopkeepers adjacent the bus-stop. The impression given by Mr Ferrari's answer was that the present discussion with Mrs Brinton was the extent of the planned community consultation.

The WCCC is concerned that Roads ACT have paid scant regard to the need for community consultation on this project which results in a major change to ACTION arrangements at Coleman Court. Indeed, our impression is that this has been a "tick-the-box" exercise!

I personally raised our concerns on this issue with Mr Tony Gill, Acting Director of Roads ACT, during a meeting that was held on 3rd May 2005. Mr Gill did not offer any explanation and no further consultation has occurred.

The WCCC Secretary, Mr Alan Henderson, also twice rang Ms Barb Barrett, Communication and Marketing Manager, ACTION, to discuss this issue, but as Ms Barrett was not available, Mr Henderson left a message and a contact telephone number. I also spoke to Ms Barrett about this matter, but as Ms Barrett was not aware of the details of the relocation of the bus stop, she gave an undertaking that another staff member of ACTION would ring the WCCC to discuss the issue. To date, the WCCC has not received any telephone calls from ACTION staff to discuss this matter.

Minister, our community has strong concerns that the changes being implemented to the northern end of Brierly Street will reduce safety to an undesirable level.

The WCCC is also concerned that Roads ACT and ACTION have effectively ignored any requirement for community consultation on these changes, even though they were aware of the existence of the new Community Engagement Manual and that it would be released in the near future.

Members of the Executive Committee of the WCCC are available to discuss these issues with you at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely

(signed)

Jeff Carl
Chairperson
Weston Creek Community Council