

WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

- Your Local Voice -

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Weston Creek Community Council

Chairperson's Report 02/03

The 2002/2003 Financial Year has been very much a year of two parts for the Weston Creek Community Council. The first half of the financial year was "business as usual" with the Council heavily involved in an intensive program of public consultations associated with the ACT Government's ongoing reforms to the Canberra Plan and various other planning and public transport issues. The second half of the financial year was extremely hectic as the Government's ongoing consultation program was overlaid by a considerable effort in assisting our community recover from the firestorms of 18th January 2003.

The after-effects of the firestorms have been very well documented and will require a continuing involvement by the Council for quite some time yet. There has been a substantial increase in attendance numbers at each of this calendar year's regular Council meetings and this demonstrates the relevance that the local community places on the issues which are raised by the Council. The fact that the Council has managed to maintain such a high profile in the recovery effort, whilst also maintaining its regular lobbying activities since January 2003 reflects well on the competence and character of the Committee. The last six months of the financial year has required our Committee to put into practice all of the lessons that the Council has learned in the first 11 years of its existence. We have consistently shown that we are able to approach the right people in the right place, and hence we have usually achieved a positive outcome for our residents and our district.

For the first time in many years, the Council called an additional Special Meeting in May 2003 so that representatives from Planning and Land Management (now the ACT Planning and Land Authority) and the National Capital Authority could address our community on concepts relating to residential development outlined in the Stromlo Forest Review. This additional meeting was attended by more than 220 people and was the largest meeting of the reporting period. Several regular monthly meetings during 2003 have attracted around 100 people each.

As a representative of the Council I was appointed to the Community and Expert Reference Group that was formed in late January to assist the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce.

Since this time I have participated in the following Bushfire Recovery related activities:

- Attended about twenty Reference Group meetings and several Taskforce meetings;

- Attended many public meetings of groups unaffected by the fires to speak about the recovery effort;
- Attended various formal and informal gatherings of fire-affected residents, usually accompanied other Council Committee members, to learn about the issues being faced by these people.

As mentioned earlier, the Council has also been very active in matters not related to the firestorms. Some of these activities are as follows:

- Gave evidence at public hearings of two Legislative Assembly Committees investigating DV 200 and land taxes respectively;
- Prepared several detailed discussion papers on public transport options;
- Prepared a submission on the number of MLAs in The Legislative Assembly;
- Invited Minister Wood to be our guest speaker at our regular November meeting;
- Attended various forums and focus groups on public transport issues;
- Prepared a submission on the funding of community organisations;
- Attended several forums and focus groups associated with the Canberra Spatial Plan and other planning initiatives with our Deputy Chair;
- Prepared a submission on the redistribution of electoral boundaries for the ACT Legislative Assembly;
- Attended three Community Council Forums hosted by the Chief Minister's Dept;
- Prepared various submissions on DV 200 and other planning issues such as the Montessori School, the use of community facilities, options for development of the former ACT Forests' block in Weston, several residential development applications, and redevelopment of the Weston Campus of *The Canberra College*;
- Prepared a detailed and extensive submission for the 2003-2004 ACT Budget; and
- Supported the efforts of the Weston Creek Cricket Club and the Weston Creek Little Athletics Club to have upgraded facilities at Chapman oval.

Our very successful *Taking-it-to-the-Streets* program was continued in February and March of this year with another round of visits to each of Weston Creek's shopping centres on different Saturday mornings. The Executive was able to speak to many people who could not attend our regular meetings. Also we increased our public profile around the community since many hundreds of residents saw our banners and sandwich board.

Members of the Council's Executive have also met with various ACT Government Ministers and MLAs to discuss a number of issues of concern to Weston Creek residents including public transport and DV 200 (the Garden City Variation to the Territory Plan). I thank the MLA's for making themselves available to discuss these issues.

The Council has continued with its regular fortnightly column in *The Chronicle* local newspaper during the year and we have also continued circulation of our regular electronic newsletter. The newsletter is very well received and we have broadened our coverage of Weston Creek residents to include some of those who don't receive our flyers or the local newspapers. A flyer was prepared and delivered to most residences in Weston Creek last November to advertise our activities.

Activities relating to the bushfire recovery have been widely advertised on various Canberra radio stations and also in the Community Update newsletter. They have also

received extensive advertising space in the Canberra Times and our local newspapers - all at no cost to the Council. Monies saved from this free advertising have been expended in purchasing fridge magnets and upgrading communication capabilities.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to extend a special thank you to the management and staff of Royals Rugby Club who have gone out of their way (as usual) to accommodate our widely different meetings in what has been a very busy period for the Club.

I would also like to extend my deep appreciation to our Secretary, Alan Henderson, for his extraordinary efforts in assisting me to cope with the greatly increased workload that has arisen since the firestorms.

Lastly, I would like to thank our Deputy Chair, Pat McGinn, Public Officer, Committee members and other members of the WCCC who have assisted the Executive throughout the past year.

Jeff Carl 27/8/03

Motion:

That the Chairperson's Report be accepted

Moved: J Carl, Chairperson

Seconded: Laurie Gillard