

# **WESTON CREEK COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

*- Your Local Voice -*

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## **Information Session**

### **Stromlo Forest Review**

The Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) delivered on another request from Weston Creek residents when an information night was held to discuss the Stromlo Forest Review on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2003. The Auditorium at Royals Rugby Club was almost filled to capacity with well over 230 people in attendance. Residents who attended the WCCC's regular meeting in March 2003 requested the meeting on Stromlo Forest.

The keynote speaker was Dorte Ekelund, Director of Territory Planning, from Planning & Land Management (PALM) who spoke about The Canberra Spatial Plan and development scenarios impacting on the Stromlo Forest. The issues canvassed included Canberra's projected population growth and the timeframes for the Canberra Spatial Plan review. The presentation involved maps, overheads and display material.

The availability of residential land within the ACT and the scenarios for accommodating population growth both within the ACT and in nearby NSW were important if not subjective issues discussed. Some PALM survey results on the Stromlo Forest area were also released, including preferred options for the area's restoration and its recreational uses. There were 2,000 survey forms completed and returned to PALM. PALM have indicated that they will make the survey results available to the public.

Ted Schultheis, a Senior Planner with the National Capital Authority (NCA), also addressed the meeting on the role of the NCA in administering the National Capital Plan and how that Plan relates to planning and land management within the ACT. An issue of importance to many at the meeting is that under the National Capital Plan the Stromlo Forest is not gazetted for residential uses. The National Capital Plan would need to be amended before any such speculative development could proceed.

A robust question and answer session followed with some residents expressing cynicism about the value of the information since it appeared from media reports and various reviews that the Government had already decided to proceed with residential development of the forest area.

Residents also commented on the future of rural leases in the area, the ability to supply water and water pollution of the Molonglo River. The dangers present in the burnt-out forest and the importance of the forest area for recreational uses were raised. In

addition the apparently flawed concept of putting more houses of the western edge of Canberra, which would increase the western urban fringe, rather than protect it with a wide well-managed green space was raised.

The most pressing issue to arise from the meeting was that residents whose houses were destroyed need the future of the Stromlo Forest to be determined quickly since this will impact on whether they will decide to rebuild or move elsewhere.

Residents were encouraged to submit their concerns to the Stromlo Forest Review at [yourcanberra@act.gov.au](mailto:yourcanberra@act.gov.au)

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