

Your local voice



www.wccc.com.au
info@wccc.com.au

PO Box 3701
 Weston Creek ACT 2611
 Telephone (02) 6288 8975

Mr Andrew Barr,
 Chief Minister and Treasurer,
 ACT Legislative Assembly
 CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

budgetconsultation@act.gov.au

Submission on the 2016/17 Budget

Thank you for the opportunity for the Weston Creek Community Council to respond to the 2016/17 Budget consultation process for the ACT Government.

Our major concern is the needs of the Weston Creek Community. Some of the services they require have been requested numerous times over a number of years. It is frustrating to observe that they will be provided to the new Molonglo Community or the Woden community and once more the people of Weston Creek will miss out.

Again I will comment on matters requiring funding for this Community before going on to offer comments in line with that requested.

1. Upgrade of the Cotter Road

There is a need for funding for the duplication of the Cotter Road from the Tuggeranong Parkway to join the duplicated road past Yarralumla Creek. This is the missing link in this east-west road system. It will not only benefit the people of Weston Creek and Molonglo but also those people who travel from Tuggeranong, Belconnen and Gungahlin to access both this area and North Woden. It will also assist those in Woden and South Canberra to access Stromlo Forest Park and the facilities there.

During the morning peak the traffic pressures on Cotter Road are already significant, with huge queues of traffic caused by so many cars from different directions being funnelled onto a single lane of road from. Given the projected growth of Molonglo in coming years, the congestions is only going to worsen. Duplication needs to occur now, not later when traffic is at a total standstill. A number of Government-commissioned reports have already recommended duplication and preliminary design work has been done.

We understand that RoadsACT applied for funding in last year's Budget but this wasn't approved by Government. The National Capital Authority has approved the works. Funding to undertake duplication road works should be made available as a priority in 2016-17. Duplication will also benefit public transport as currently several Xpresso bus routes use Cotter Road and are held up in the morning congestion.

2. Movement on a second Petrol Station for Weston Creek/Molonglo.

While there has been movement on the proposal for a second service station for Weston Creek/Molonglo, Council would ask that this be fast tracked so that the growing demand at the Weston Petrol Station can be eased. This has increasing importance with the continuing population increase in Coombs and Wright and the start of the development of Denman Prospect.

3. Action on the Draft Master Plan for Weston Group Centre.

Council is pleased with the Government's announcement of funding for the upgrade of Brierley Street and Trenerry Place in the past years budget. Council would welcome this being expedited and ensuring that there are sufficient funds to do the work properly in the coming year.

4. Weston Creek needs a new Community Centre.

As I said last year and the year before and the year before that...The current one is aging and dated and does not cater well for the current population. A new Centre is long overdue and should be along the lines of the Centre being considered for Woden that includes Community Services [ours is Communities at Work], an area for Seniors to interact and utilise the centre with a new form of library essentials.

This has been included in the Weston Group Centre Master Plan and what we require is a decision to deliver this for the community.

Services in Weston Creek have been needed for years now. Council has documents going back over ten years asking and stating that a

new centre for the Community was needed. Even the fortnightly 2 hour mobile library service was dropped last year.

Council believes that there is an urgent need to fund a new Centre for this District.

5. Fetherston Gardens.

The gardens are open to the Public and much work has been accomplished between the Parks and Garden staff and the Friends of Fetherston Gardens. However, to make the Gardens fully functional there is a need for Public Toilets and a small building to house the equipment that the Friends of Fetherston Gardens use to maintain the Gardens. An area in this building for displays and to give talks to groups who visit the Gardens would complete this Canberra community asset.

6. Issues for the Changing Population.

There is a need to respond to an ageing but also young community in Weston Creek and Molonglo. At one end we have an increase in our younger population with regeneration. Our Primary Schools are almost full [the new George Weston Primary School with a capacity of 700 is to open in 2016 in Coombs]. However there is a lack of recreational facilities within the community for younger people moving into the area.

At the other end we have more people in the over 50's age group than we have ever had. This is why the need for a new community centre is so important.

There is also a need for Public Toilets to be placed at local shopping centres. Older people won't go if "they can't go".

The proposed aquatic centre at Stromlo Forest Park should be fast tracked to provide this amenity for the broader Weston Creek and Molonglo communities. It will benefit everyone [the young, the old and the middle] and should be brought forward – not left until the end of the decade to be opened.

7. Transport.

Council has made public its views on the bus service for Weston Creek and Molonglo. Clearly, while ever the bus service goes via Woden patronage will be low and this is more likely to be lower for Molonglo where not only will passengers travel via Woden but also via Weston Creek. Such routes are circuitous, inefficient and discourage public

transport usage at a time when increasing public transport use is supposed to be one of the Government's key priorities.

To encourage public transport uptake, both Weston Creek and Molonglo need bus routes which go directly down Cotter Road to the Parliamentary Triangle and the City. Such routes should run all day, not just during a brief peak period. Transport solutions need to be thought "outside the box" to create ways for people to utilise them.

This could include extra services direct to the city past the car park at Kirkpatrick Street. In turn this parking facility requires a sign as many people do not know that it is there

8. Upgrade of the Fisher Shops.

We have seen upgrades occur in recent years at the Waramanga and Chapman shopping centres and the promise of Rivett Shops being upgraded this year. These upgrades have been very well done and have given these shopping centres a real lift and have been very welcomed by the Community. Fisher shops, with Seniors located nearby, should to be included on the list of needed upgrades in this years Budget.

Broader Issues:

1. The underfunding of TAMS.

Council is pleased with the announcement of more funding for the upkeep of Canberra though the jury will be out to watch just how much this will improve the city. Council still considers that the TAMS Budget needs to be increased acknowledging that there are significant cost pressures facing Parks and City Services in its service delivery. One of the driving issues, we believe, is that the mix of "State" and Local Government functions become competitors for funding in the ACT. Council is still of the view that insufficient funding is passed to TAMS to undertake its functions.

2. Waste Disposal Pick-up.

Council believes that considerable savings could be made with a twice a year pick-up of unwanted goods as happens in many councils across Australia. The cost of providing Ranger Services for monitoring Charity Bins and other high risk dump areas for unwanted goods is expensive as is the cost to Charities for moving these unwanted goods to the tip. Reducing these costs by providing a twice a year pick-up would likely reduce the cost and the amount of unwanted waste. If

nothing else a trial for 12 months in a District would provide a good test of what may happen under this type of system.

3. Parking.

While ever 83% or so of the population use their car to travel to work, Government needs to consider placing high-rise car parks on the City boundaries to provide for these workers. This is more necessary now with the concentration of workers in the City.

In other cities around the world Park and Ride facilities, which operate all day, considerably reduce the percentage of traffic entering city centres.

4. Light Rail.

Council has great concerns over the proposed light rail between Gungahlin and the City. There are other forms of more flexible transport that could provide the same travel time, for Gungahlin residents, at far less cost. This Project will have a major effect on the ACT Budget and ratepayers will be paying for this for years to come.

5. Molonglo to be another Gungahlin?

Council has real concerns that Molonglo is facing the same issues that Gungahlin has faced over the past twenty years – that of a dormitory District. In the future, as no Government employment is planned here in Molonglo, it will become a similar dormitory District with people travelling out each day for work. Without adequate employment within the District, Molonglo will create unprecedented pressures on transport infrastructure, with huge congestion in a similar way to that facing Gungahlin residents today.

Perhaps this will be the only way that Light Rail will be provided to Weston Creek and Molonglo.

6. The Inner North Concentration.

It would seem to us on the south side of Canberra that there has been a very heavy concentration by Government on proposed projects in the City and Inner north. These include

- a. the City to the Lake project with all that this entails,
- b. the beautification of Constitution Avenue into the “Champs Elysees” of Canberra,
- c. a new Football Stadium in the City,
- d. Concentration of ACT Government Public Servants in the City,

- e. Redevelopment of Northbourne Avenue, and
- f. The light rail project

While the council appreciates that some of these will be utilised by people from all parts of the City it does raise the question of what will happen to the maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure in other parts of the city. Will any funding be available in this budget and future budgets to maintain the infrastructure in other areas of Canberra?

7. Loss of Green Space and Sporting facilities.

Council is concerned with the loss of green space within Canberra. Slowly like a sponge soaks things up, green space in the suburbs is being eaten up for development. We are also seeing sporting complexes being closed and sold for re-development. Examples are Bowling Clubs and Golf courses, local parks and closed down schools and their ovals. An example in Weston Creek is the loss of open space in Holder at the old Holder High School and now the same community is facing the possible loss of the only large open green space left in the centre of Holder. This area is currently used heavily by the local community.

Thank you for the opportunity to input into the process.

Tom Anderson
Chair
Weston Creek Community Council
13 October 2015