

# Media Alert

## Monday 3 April 2017

From: Weston Creek Community Council

A group of concerned residents met late last night to discuss the outcome from last week's Weston Creek Community Council Meeting, which had to be postponed due to an overwhelming attendance. About 250 people attempted to attend the meeting at the Weston Club, which in turn compromised Fire Safety regulations and forced the meeting to be abandoned.

Consequently the Community Council has arranged an Emergency Meeting for this THURSDAY to provide the residents of Weston Creek and Molonglo with an opportunity to be heard.

"We will address at the meeting the common concerns across the 3 sites which are the lack of consultation, concentration, design and size of the developments, and lack of resources available to new residents (and existing residents!)" said WCCC acting chair Pat McGinn.

"Last week's meeting showed a lot of community interest and a lack of prior consultation which has caused some opposition to the current Plans for Public Housing. There was a fair bit of angst, but more just frustration at not being heard."

"We will be inviting all Murrumbidgee MLAs to the rescheduled meeting on Thursday and welcome the Housing Taskforce to attend."

Liberal MLA's and Greens MLA Caroline Le Couteur attended the previous meeting and conversed openly with community members. Other MLA's did not attend.

Representatives from Chapman, Holder, Rivett and Wright have discussed community concerns specifically around the lack of early consultation and the perceived inappropriateness of sites selected by the ACT Government.

There are also some site specific concerns that would be fleshed out at the meeting, as well as discussing ways forward for the community.

Chapman resident and Social Scientist Dr Chris Braddick says:

"After extensively canvassing the local area for the past ten days, I can report that 98 per cent of local residents are 'opposed' or 'strongly opposed' to the proposed development on 'Darwinia Community Park' in Chapman. Following the 2003 disaster, their strongest concern relates to the intensified bush fire threat that would inevitably result. This and the other development proposals are not even consistent with the ACT Government's own policies concerning public housing. The so-called 'salt and pepper policy', especially this kind of 'silo development', has been entirely discredited by experts in the field based on decades of Australian and international experience. It's a short sighted reaction to a crisis of the Government's own making that will do irreversible damage not only to our community, but to the lives of existing public housing tenants."

Dr Jodie Beitzel, a leader of the Holder Community Action Group, says

"We welcome public housing tenants. However we consider that the Holder site proposed would not integrate public housing tenants into the community in a considered way supported by evidence, and also has serious traffic safety and access issues. We're also concerned about the lack

of nearby government services, employment opportunities needed by our most vulnerable citizens. The development would destroy Holder’s greenspace, important for the health and well-being of the Holder community, including any incoming public housing tenants.”

Kristine Riethmiller, spokesperson for the Wright Residents Action Group and semi-retired businesswoman said:

“The common concern in the Wright community is the potential loss of the only block of land planned for community facility use, every other block of land is filled with, or about to be developed for, housing. Many residents feel a sense of betrayal by the government who promised that the dense housing development in the new suburb would be supported with a central community facility. There will be no church, community centre, child care or indoor recreation space; just houses and apartments.”

Rivett Resident Simone Hunter says:

“Last week’s meeting, I think, shows the frustration of the wider local community. There isn’t much NIMBY style arguing here; most in the community accept that all people should have access to safe, affordable housing and accommodation. The key frustration is **the lack of public consultation** by the ACT Government and its refusal to discuss concerns with existing residents to try and find a way forward.

**The rescheduled meeting will be held at Chapman Primary School at 7.30pm on THURSDAY 6 APRIL.**

All welcome to attend to discuss the proposals and we ask that you attend with an

**Open heart and mind.**

For more information, please contact:

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