

**MELROSE (CHIFLEY) PRIMARY SITE**  
**LOCAL CONSULTATION – 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION**  
**(30 OCTOBER 2007)**  
**INITIAL SUMMARY**

## **1. Introduction**

A community information display, supported by a series of workshop sessions, was held on Tuesday 30 October 2007 at the Woden Senior Citizens Hall in Woden Town Centre to discuss possible future uses for the former primary school site.

These notes summarise the key outcomes from discussions held at the consultation. It should be noted that participation was premised on the qualification that it did not signify support for school closure.

## **2. Background**

In 2006 the ACT Government announced that 23 primary schools and preschools would be closed as part of its Schools Revitalisation Policy.

ACT Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) have appointed a consultant team to undertake detailed site specific technical studies and local community consultation in order to identify optimal future uses for each site.

The consultation process is staged and provides opportunity for residents and other interested members of the community to attend local information displays and workshop sessions to provide feedback and discuss issues relevant to each of the former school sites. Technical findings together with feedback received through the consultations will be used by the consultant team to assess and make recommendations to TAMS about future uses for the former school sites.

## **3. Approach**

The consultation session included a community information display held from 4.30pm to 7.30pm together with four focussed workshop sessions held on the hour every hour.

A series of plans and information relating to the Weston Creek site formed the display. These plans were available as 'table packs' for the participants of the workshops.

The information included:

- Metropolitan Context Plan
- Project Timetable Flowchart
- Project Objectives
- Options Workshops (District) Outcomes
- Building Condition Summary
- Population Characteristics
- Social Infrastructure Plan
- Territory Plan Extract (Community Facility)
- Territory Plan Extract Map
- Planning Processes Flowchart
- Typical Development Types'
- Site Air Photo
- Suburb Air Photo
- Site Analysis Plan
- Site Photos
- Development Option Plans



#### 4. Attendance

Approximately 25 people attended the workshops and additional people called in to view the display, without attending a workshop.

Workshop participants included local residents and representatives from different organisations including WVCC Carers ACT Woden Callisthenic club RSL Vietnam Vets Sthn ACT Catchments group Canberra Quilters ANU language forum Heraldry Genealogy Society YMCA Samaritans Purse SUBUD spiritual organisation Mol Catch Group DRU yoga.

#### 5. Key issues

The key issues that were raised at the consultation included:

- Concern that ACT Government is ignoring demographics of the suburb and district
- Medical practice & shops “booming”, “rejuvenated”, thriving & viable
- Why not sell off the green space instead of the school?
- South Australian models should be looked at – schools built to convert to small workshop factory uses then reopen as a school again at later date. It has happened! Reopened school benefited from assets left by workshops.
- Also Victoria – where the Government sold off land and now there are schools with no playgrounds.
- YMCA is still tenant of the building – had a partnership with the school
- Government has obligation to provide the community with spaces
- Concern about groups lobbying for space when they don’t know what the plan of the school is and how it suits their needs - - government has not given access/site visits.
- Concern about management of TAMs list – who decides on compatibility and sharing and who gets what? Gov should facilitate and get some groups together – how else does anyone know who else is on list? How can sensible partnerships be formed? Concern about TAMs process – will those near top of list after 3 yrs waiting get pushed aside by others? Queue jumping concerns.
- Support for the building to remain as it was built by a local quality builder of some note “and he never meant anything he built to come down” –it is extremely well built and in excellent condition.
- agreement from locals and tenants -. Very well built, great hall, great courtyards, very versatile design. Want to see structure stay. Good canteen – could work well with courtyards and lots of groups for coffee etc
- Playground between shops and school about to be upgraded – area is well served by small playgrounds.
- Demographics – there is an emerging younger generation so building should be retained for viable reuse as school
- Option 4a is a waste of an asset
- General preference for Option 1a – if grounds are used by someone like catchment group a little bit of hope for adjacent grounds also revitalised. Used to be a lovely cricket space.
- Some preference for Option 2 – enough green space around, need compatible use next door, children and aged work well – can integrate – maybe prefer it to be residential Land Use plan so max 2 storey (but still aged?)



- Parking area is very small – not much for community activity.
- Concern about lack of community facility space, no cultural arts centre, need for permanent meeting rooms - concern about loss of CF and entertainment space in WTC due to Variation to Territory Plan (pool site) Childcare space north Curtin not guaranteed space.
- Proximity to WTC may provide a home/solution for some displaced Woden Town Centre community facilities
- Lot of people on TAMs list can't pay for space – holistic approach required – establish principles and do needs assessment, co-location, Sports House in Hackett good example of like orgs sharing.
- Chifley has a very large A10 area.
- Some support for keeping a ghost school mothballed - if future demand from Molonglo or demographics change happens.
- Chifley median house price \$400,000 so affordable housing needed – not whole site dedicated to affordable or public – just a %
- Should undertake a neighbourhood (precinct) plan before any decision to remove the school buildings - look at parking problems at shops, pressure of A10 etc – whole of neighbourhood assessment
- Functionality of building important in any assessment

## 6. Specific Feedback from Groups Seeking Space

- YMCA - current tenants, just opened new gym for children, run holiday programs, been at Melrose 5 yrs and want to stay, continue and expand – visualise a 'health and wellness precinct' in partnership with allied health professionals, for children and adults – could take whole building and sub let to achieve this, would work well with local doctors (at shops) and with aged care housing on the rest of site. Currently paying TAMs \$114m<sup>2</sup>. Currently occupy 50% of bldg. Can use the lot and integrate with development on rest of site.
- Canberra Quilters want to consolidate into one place & have a home – have been on TAMs list for 3 years - 3 classrooms and access to a hall would suit. Happy to share with others.
- Callisthenic club - wants to consolidate all offices onto one site - happy to share - Nth Curtin first priority, Melrose 2<sup>nd</sup>, Weston Creek maybe OK.
- Catchment Group wants to consolidate all offices onto one site, willing to share, Melrose No 1 priority – central – can use grounds. Can share Hall. Need space to operate library + offices
- SUBUD spiritual group like their own space rather than sharing, also want HQ, national archives, could share, want 100 – 150 m<sup>2</sup> plus offices
- Yoga – want 200m<sup>2</sup> of space and a national HQ presence in Canberra
- ANU forum looking at possibility of an "ACT school of languages" – existing Bilingual group has to move from Hughes, various other language groups around - Not necessarily focused on Melrose – Cook may be better (NB conceptual idea at this stage)
- Heraldry & Genealogy Society wanting 500m<sup>2</sup> space, currently at Hughes - new prices quoted by Education Dept \$118pm<sup>2</sup>



- Samaritans Purse – looking for space, currently at Spence, need warehouse space and small offices, provide services for disabled.
- Southern Area Catchment group – based at Urambi –want to consolidate, Woden Weston Ck location a priority – sharing an option – can involve children and elderly in their projects.

**These notes reflect key issues and ideas raised during discussions with the consultant team during the course of the Workshops and Information Display and are not intended to reflect all of the comments made, nor does it include any of the comments written on 'Feedback Sheets' provided to persons who attended the session/workshops.**

**Information from feedback sheets and other submissions will be analysed and incorporated into the site evaluation process by the consultant team and included in the final report to Government.**

**7 November 2007**

