

THARWA PRIMARY SITE
LOCAL CONSULTATION – 1ST SESSION
(25 OCTOBER 2007)
INITIAL SUMMARY

1. Introduction

A community information display and workshop was held on Thursday 25 October 2007 at Tharwa to discuss possible future uses for the former Tharwa primary school site.

These notes summarise the key outcomes from the consultation, but it should be noted that participation was premised on the qualification that 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 6.00pm followed by a workshop.

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

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 Plan

4. Attendance

Approximately 25 people attended the display and workshop. A list of apologies was also tabled. Participants included local residents and an MLA.



5. Key issues

The key issues that were raised at the consultation included:

- Preference expressed for reopening the former school, establishing another educational facility or for Community facilities run by community (Option 1A) in that order.
- Workshop NOT necessarily representing the community? Not all residents present
- Community to run facility, with some TAMS help (Rubbish removal; prepare building for use; white ant control)
- Potential uses – Play space; Mothers Group meeting room; Yoga; craft/patch-working; Bushwalkers Resource Centre; Heritage/Environ workshops
- Site Problems - Lack of water; Poor water quality; Poor sewerage system; Distance to toilets; Guttering
- Development of site could disrupt centre of village
- Consider making site living heritage
- Potential for pre-school to require whole site
- Consultation process - Community forced into “consensus decisions” in the past; Often the government decision maker NOT aware of outcomes of consultations; Negative experiences with consultation in the past
- School and Village have Heritage value
- Sewerage and water are constraints to development
- Sale of proposed site for development would be counter to policy adopted by Government of retention of other vacant sites in the village
- Lack of coordination between TAMS service provisions and other agencies
- Government has no positive regard for community
- Tharwa assessed by Minister’s advisor that ‘school would be OK’
- Community doesn’t want anything special, and would appreciate the opportunity to help themselves
- Maintain building and ground for community use
- Teenagers and kids use school, flat land needed for kids to play on
- Paved area for kids, skateboard area on existing court
- School is central to Village, provides a village green for kids
- Houses overlooking school, and ensures a safe place
- School closure has created uncertainty about retention of pre school
- Bridge closure – loss of enrolments
- No policing presence, no interest in policing speeding
- Able to use school for fair, no works needed to occupy space
- Tharwa needs to retain the school or create a Community centre as a local focus for the village
- Playgroup 8 – 10 women x 2 hrs
- Patchwork and bonding, once/week x 3 hrs x 2 sessions; TCPS & CG; Yoga – 2 instructors



- Safety issue – preschool vs outside uses, Community centre is a shared site
- Concern regarding ongoing cost of maintaining community building; need to secure grants for running community centres
- Use of school with permanent offices
- Heritage and further education programs
- Site could be used as a “Mini–Birrigai”, but don’t want bus loads of kids: may turn Tharwa into theme park
- Temporary use first, but consider long term needs especially for young children and adult education. Don’t be too quick to turn over to another group

These notes reflect key issues and ideas raised during discussions with the consultant team during the course of the Information Display and Workshop 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.

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

