

**VILLAGE CREEK (KAMBAH)**  
**PRIMARY AND PRESCHOOL SITE**  
**LOCAL CONSULTATION – 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION**  
**(22 OCTOBER 2007)**  
**INITIAL SUMMARY**

## **1. Introduction**

A community information display supported by a series of workshop sessions, was held on Monday 22 October 2007 from 4.30pm – 8.30pm at the Baptist Church in Kambah to discuss possible future uses for the former preschool and primary school site.

These notes summarise the key outcomes from discussions held throughout the consultation. 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**

A series of plans and information relating to the Village 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 Plan

## **4. Attendance**

Approximately 12 people attended the workshops and an additional 8 people called in to view the display, without attending a workshop.

Workshop participants included local residents and representatives from different organisations including Canberra Quilters, U3A, and SOS.



## 5. Key issues

The key issues that were raised at the consultation included:

- There was a strong desire to reopen the school, followed by reuse of the school for another educational purpose, and retaining the school buildings and grounds in public ownership and to use the site for community and micro-business uses.
- Reuse of existing space for small offices/workshops that want to relocate to a less busy area – “something like Stirling College”.
- Not high density housing. Keep school and refit, no demolition.
- Sites in Tuggeranong being sold off so keep this one!
- Still too emotive at this time. Review in 10 years.
- Keep school for the community’s use; no green space should be lost.
- Immediate sale of the site would jeopardize future uses in a decade or more that may arise in the local area. Need to look further down the track than just a quick financial return to the Government.
- Planning for future use of the site should consider the likelihood of at least two former school sites being “sold” in North Tuggeranong, and that Village Creek provided a “home base” for the consolidation of community uses.
- Planning for future uses for Village Creek should also consider longer term plans for Kambah High School. The approach should not be to treat each school site in isolation.
- Revenue from sale of some Tuggeranong school sites should be recycled into upkeep of the Village Creek community/incubator centre.
- The Government has set precedents for developer conditions on sale of land. If Mt Neighbour site is sold for development then some funding or benefits should flow through to Village Creek.
- The school grounds were used by local residents especially at weekends, and for at other times, for open space activities that utilised the level paying area of the grounds.
- Some kids fly kites in the oval area because of no power lines.
- The school had provided an important social focus and the loss of the facility was still causing concern and inconvenience. Reuse of the school as a community facility will help re-focus the local area.
- The pre-school network helped many new residents get established in the area and create new social bonds that have been long lasting.
- Many residents stayed in the area because of the local school.
- Part of the grounds (along Summerland Street had been the subject of a Landcare project in earlier days to create an “urban forest” for use by the local community as an educational tool for children.
- The school buildings were designed as flexible spaces with some internal courtyards, and could easily be refurbished to accommodate the needs of different groups.
- North Tuggeranong includes many long term residents who know each other, re-use of school will provide a focus and also provide some support to local shops – things like the Bendigo Bank at Wanniasa and the service station and Woolworths would also get some benefit as users drive past.



- U3A indicated that their needs were mainly for daytime activity, which meant the space could be used for other activities in the evenings.
- Urambi School was cited as a good example of how an operating school could have multiple use of the facility. Part of its premises are used at least 4 times per week for rent paying activities in the community. "A self subsidising pro-active school".
- The chosen venue for the Village Creek display/workshop highlighted the lack of local community meeting space in East Kambah.
- The local area was well off for open space and other activities and was relatively well located in relation to other activities in Tuggeranong.
- Several people commented that the site was centrally located between Woden and Tuggeranong Town Centres and that it was on a major bus route. This made the site accessible for community activities.
- Possible types of uses suggested for inclusion in the school included:
  - Men's shed
  - Micro-business incubator
  - HQ for associations like Family Business Australia
  - Business Mums' Expo
  - Play groups
  - U3A
  - Quilters rooms/hall
  - Meeting hall for community events
  - Gym
  - Green products showroom for housing renovation
  - Community garden plot
  - Arts and craft space
  - Not-for-profit groups generally
- Future use should be a school first, then a facility for not for profit community groups – Landcare are interested in buildings and grounds. Area needed for seedlings. Also need wet areas. Also space used for arts, crafts, green groups, community activities.
- There was some concern about the prospect of not-for-profit groups having to pay rent for space occupied in the school building, and anecdotal reference to other former school sites where rents were "very high".
- Men's Shed possibility – such facilities proving valuable with mental illness etc.
- Community is time poor and therefore doubt about the value of processes such as this one – why doesn't the government lead? – why doesn't the Government "build up" communities?
- Concern that the TAMS list of organisations looking for space is not publicly available. Request by resident groups to get access to the TAMS waiting list to assist identifying the range of possible user groups for the school site Concerned about being "sidelined". Issue for a long time about not knowing who is on this list and therefore they are unable to find partners etc.
- There was general opposition to use of the site for "high density" housing, although one resident would have accepted some housing on the site provide it was single story development.
- Government is caretaker of asset for the community - Village creek should be multi use community facility for community/micro business groups
- Height or density should not be different to residential opposite – A definite 'NO' to 4 storey community facility or apartments/units - some concession that townhouses with reasonable yards or standard residential on small blocks may be OK.



- Residential for aged with community hall for wider community use may be an option.
- Integrate old and young at Mt Neighbour, also Kambah High, by sharing things like a Hydro pool.
- Next round should be a community meeting not individual walk around plans on wall – need to get community talking together.
- Provide “flexible use space” or “simple space” that is “not tailor made/purpose built”.
- U3A has 3,500 members and is spread over various venues - they want to consolidate.
- Canberra Quilters want a place to call home – have been on TAMS list for 3 years - 3 classrooms and access to a hall would suit. Happy to share with others. The group agreed that the groups they represent could share with each other and other like groups
- Children can't get to Wanniasa (Erindale College) by bus – timing and bus routes unsuitable.
- In 15 years children may be back in suburb and site for school needed – if building and grounds not kept then possible future school option closed.
- A teenager at the workshop indicated that sports facilities in the area are adequate, “good really”.
- Community focus was definitely the preschool, radiated out from there, preschool provided connections and helped settlement.
- The Urban forest project conducted on school site widened the community involvement - not just parents and children.
- Site should be for public and in public ownership, not sold off.
- Greening Aust demonstration/display is a possibility for the site.
- Site is accessible by bus – midway between south Tuggeranong and Woden.
- No residential of any type acceptable. No to any sell off. No compromise – “not one cm sell off”. Wants to keep whole of buildings and grounds.
- Asphalt used for kids to learn to ride bikes.
- Cant use open space to the south because it is a wooded area.
- Recycle existing buildings. Building has courtyards, open plan design, sunken pits, dividing screens, can open up into very large space or divide into smaller areas. Very flexible design.
- Women working from home selling Tupperware etc - maybe they could use this site? Family Business Australia. Small business activity.

**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 into the final report to Government.**

**7 November 2007**

