

WESTON CREEK (WESTON) PRIMARY SITE

LOCAL CONSULTATION – 1ST SESSION

(24 OCTOBER 2007)

INITIAL SUMMARY

1. Introduction

A community information display and series of workshop sessions were held from 4.30pm – 7.30pm on Wednesday 24 October 2007 at the Weston Creek Community Centre, Whitney Pl, Weston (Cooleman Court) 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 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 Plan

4. Attendance

Approximately 21 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 Weston Creek Community Council, Migration & Carers Association, Save Our Schools, Ginninderra Catchment Group and Landcare Association, Water watch, Living Centre and Education, Warehouse Circus, Samaritans.



5. Key issues

The key issues that were raised at the consultation included:

5.1 Social focus of Weston Creek

- Coleman Court provided the main social focus.
- Younger people are moving into area since the fires and the area is now becoming more of a mixed community, not just an aging area.
- Missing a library – they use Woden - not too bad.
- Need independent living houses for aged. Area has appeal for ILUs as facilities exist such as medical etc. A 'golden opportunity' for putting older people next to Cooleman court.
- Need for Independent Living Units (ILU's) for disabled people.
- Successful involvement of Mirinjani residents with preschool eg garden project.
- Negative views about skate park, examples of vandalism at school.
- The Environment/sustainability groups currently at the school are all under one umbrella / one group.
- No really large meeting venue in Weston Creek.
- No theatre in Weston Creek so the area doesn't attract performing arts like Erindale and Belconnen can.
- Need for Environment Education Centre – Environment Living centre for whole of ACT. Can work with a variety of others – they can utilise the school grounds as well as the building.
- Apartments would be the worst outcome. Low density, small scale residential could be supported.
- Old school should be pulled down, maintenance issues, vandalism etc.
- Keep school and grounds until educational needs and provisions in Molonglo are resolved
- Additional respite accommodation is needed

5.2 General discussion

- General acknowledgement that area well served by schools – Montessori, Orana, Catholic, public schools
- Playgrounds are still being used by local kids – they are shaded, very good and needed.
- Why not leave primary school open whilst Molonglo is being established? No schools available day 1!
- Urban design issues with existing building – its served its purpose – not beautiful – but keep trees and the great playground,
- General opinion that building has no architectural appeal, has been "let go".
- Some support for community housing
- "Don't just leave school so a few a few feathers are not ruffled" Not for profit tenants are a hidden cost
- There is a need for something for the elderly "to do" eg gardening (ie think wider than accommodation)



- Revenue generated by selling assets should stay in the area – should house not-for-profit groups in better facilities not unsuitable offices
- Services that Not-for-profit groups provide save the Gov money – make sure the wider cost benefits are looked at.
- Demands for next 10-15 years from Molonglo will put the pressure on Weston Creek
- Who maintains the buildings and grounds? Head tenant or Gov? Management issues
- Pearce model rates highly
- Discussion about what a full blown aged care development could encompass (eg 4 storey nursing home?).
- Residents opposite school wouldn't mind aged housing but max 2 storey, don't want to see a higher building (as may be possible with Community Facility Land Use Policy) – want something quiet – not weekend/night activity. Aged care would be reasonable and goes well with preschool , also environmental groups would be ok.

5.3 Discussion on Options

- Leave the trees and playgrounds in any option
- Large area (400m²+) needed for support services for the disabled, the lonely etc.
- No real hall or performance space in Weston Creek.
- Concern about a new multi purpose building taking years to get built so best to reuse what's there.
- Building to be "sustainable" with any retrofit scheme.
- Take the wider view – looking at what's happening across Weston Creek – need to look at all vacant government sites not just schools.
- Oval should become a district park.
- A need for a school in the future. Also Molonglo will need school whilst establishing – there is regrowth happening not just everyone getting older,
- Current decline of school building – something positive should happen with site, it needs to be maximised to potential for the community and make a positive contribution to the street.
- Existing Community Centre in Cooleman outdated and too small. Need a new building with parking ideally on land south of Parkinson Street
- Need for a precinct planning framework approach before final decisions made.

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 then included into the final report to government.

7 November 2007

