

Your local voice



www.westoncreek.org.au
info@westoncreek.org.au

PO Box 3701
Weston Creek ACT 2611
Telephone (02) 6288 8975

Mr Andrew Barr,
Chief Minister and Treasurer,
ACT Legislative Assembly
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

budgetconsultation@act.gov.au

Submission on the 2018/19 Budget

Thank you for the opportunity for the Weston Creek Community Council to respond to the 2018/19 Budget consultation process for the ACT Government. My apologies for the lateness of this reply.

2018 is the 50th Anniversary of the start of the development of Weston Creek with the Gazettal of the Suburbs of Fisher and Waramanga on June 6 1968. Consequently, Council and the Community would see this as an opportunity to announce a significant development in Weston Creek. It is also the 40th Anniversary of the Opening of the Community Centre at the Weston Group Centre as well as Coleman Court.

Again, our major concern is the needs of the Weston Creek Community as well as those now living in the suburbs of Coombs, Wright and Denman Prospect in Molonglo. A new centre would have the ability to build social cohesion and inclusion in our ever changing community.

I will comment on matters for these Communities before going on to offer comments in line with that requested.

1. Weston Creek needs a new Community Centre.

The current Community Centre is aged and dated and is now 40 years old and does not cater well for the current population. A new Centre is long overdue and should be along the lines of the Centre being considered for Woden that includes Community Services [ours is Communities at Work], an area for Seniors to interact and utilise the centre with a new form of library essentials.

This has been included in the Weston Group Centre Master Plan and what we require is a decision to deliver this for the community in our 50th Anniversary Year.

Services in Weston Creek have been needed for years now. Council has documents going back over ten years asking and stating that a new centre for the Community was needed. Even the fortnightly 2 hour mobile library service is no longer.

Council believes that there is an urgent need to fund a new Centre for this District.

2. Action on the Draft Master Plan for Weston Group Centre.

Council is pleased with the Government's funding for the 1st Stage of the upgrade of Brierley Street and Trenerry Place. Council would welcome that further work was expedited and that Stage 2 and beyond could be announced and funded in this budget.

3. Fetherston Gardens.

The gardens are open to the Public and much work has been accomplished between the City Services Parks and Garden staff and the Friends of Fetherston Gardens. However, to make the Gardens fully functional there is a need for Public Toilets and a small building to house the equipment that the Friends of Fetherston Gardens use to maintain the Gardens. An area in this building for displays and to give talks to groups who visit the Gardens would complete this splendid Canberra community asset.

4. A New Playground for Waramanga

The changing demograph of Weston Creek is shown by the community of Waramanga raising the issue of the need for a playground at the Waramanga shops. A Petition has been Tabled in the Assembly and the local Community is behind this proposal. With the recent upgrade to these shops it is time to add this playground here now that the Arawang School playground is behind the new fences at the school.

5. Upgrade of Weston Ponds

It seems that this asset is not being utilised by the community as it could be and there is a need for some seating and shade structures to enable the full benefit of the ponds to occur. It is tragic that an asset such as this has been left unfinished now for a number of years.

This is a real opportunity to encourage healthy exercise around a lovely venue for the people of Weston Creek and Molonglo.

6. Proposed new Health Centre for the Weston Creek Region

Council would see a new health centre would be well placed in the Weston Group Centre as this provides access for everyone living in Weston Creek and the Molonglo Valley. As well, it is close to the Woden Valley and will provide easy access for people living here.

It is a central location and on all the bus routes from Woden to Weston Creek and Molonglo to make it that much easier for all in the community to access, particularly with the proposed 15 minute rapid bus service to begin in 2018.

7. Upgrade of the Duffy Shops.

We have seen upgrades occur in recent years at the Waramanga and Chapman shopping centres. These upgrades have been very well done and have given these shopping centres a real lift and have been very welcomed by the Community.

We have also seen the proposals for the upgrade of the Duffy shops. These have the opportunity to invigorate this small local centre. It is particularly so given the increase in numbers at Duffy Primary School and the opportunity for social interaction.

8. Transport.

Council has made public its views on the bus service for Weston Creek and Molonglo. The direct service to the City seems to be working well. We welcome the announcement of the Rapid 15 minute service to commence in 2018.

In looking at the growth of people living in Molonglo it is time to provide a dedicated bus to Molonglo suburbs. This should run just to the Molonglo suburbs and link it to Coleman Court and Woden. It is also time to reinstate the 4th service in Weston Creek to Holder and Duffy that was subsumed into Molonglo as well as its route has made it harder for locals in Duffy and Holder to catch the bus.

9. Road needs – Bike lanes

Council is concerned that one of the ONLY 3 access roads from Weston Creek to Woden, Heysen Street, is very narrow and unsafe for cyclists with no shoulder. There is a need for this road to be upgraded with either shoulders for the road or preferably a separated cycle/walking path joining Weston Creek with Woden.

In a similar way the road that runs to the top of Mt Stromlo has no shoulder and cyclists use this as a training ground for climbing and downhill riding. There have been many near misses on this road and it would be timely for this to be built as well.

10. Upgrade of the Fisher Shops.

The Fisher shops, with Seniors located nearby, should to be included on the list of needed upgrades in this years Budget.

11. High School in Molonglo

Council has concerns that the planning for a High School in Molonglo is just that. We would see a need to bring forward the plans for years 7 to 10 in the K to 10 School planned for Denman Prospect and complete the building so that teenagers can attend a High School in their District.

12. Molonglo Group Centre

Council would like to see initial planning for the Group Centre to be funded in next years budget so that it may be open when the population reaches the number needed to make it viable rather than wait until it reaches that figure for planning to start.

13. Molonglo Sports Fields

Council would like to see the commencement of the development of the sports fields proposed for the eastern edge of the Stromlo Forest Park. At present, there is only the oval at the Charles Weston School available for the 3 suburbs in Molonglo and apparently no parking near for those who need to travel by car from other parts of Molonglo to use the only oval in the District.

14. Bridge over the Molonglo

Council understands that the proposed road bridge over the Molonglo River is not proposed to be commenced for some 3 to 4 years while the East West Arterial road bridge over the Molonglo joining the Tuggeranong Parkway is some 20 years away.

Given the growth in Molonglo, and the need for a north south road to join the new Suburb of Whitlam with the southern suburbs of Molonglo, Council is of the view that this bridge build should be brought forward.

This would alleviate pressure on the actual Coppins Crossing and provide a second exit from the Molonglo suburbs all year and not to have to have concerns about any flooding closing this road. It would also alleviate the pressure that is already climbing on the Cotter Road.

Council also has concerns over the coming missing link in John Gorton Drive with traffic from a duplicated road in both directions reducing to a single lane river crossing and the likely increase in traffic accidents.

Broader Issues:

1. Concerns over reductions in Services

There are concerns in the community that there is a draining of funds going to the light rail project and the result is a reduction in services and increases in rates and other charges to fund this project. Council wanted to bring this view from the community to your attention.

2. The underfunding of City Services.

Council still considers that the City Services Budget needs to be increased acknowledging that there are significant cost pressures facing Parks and City Services in its service delivery. One of the driving issues, we believe, is that the mix of "State" and Local Government functions become competitors for funding in the ACT. Council is still of the view that insufficient funding is passed to City Services to undertake its functions.

3. Parking.

While ever 83% or so of the population use their car to travel to work, Government needs to consider placing high-rise car parks on the City

boundaries to provide for these workers. This is more necessary now with the concentration of workers in the City.

In other cities around the world Park and Ride facilities, which operate all day, considerably reduce the percentage of traffic entering city centres.

4. Issues for the Changing Population.

There is a need to respond to an ageing but also young community in Weston Creek and particularly in Molonglo. At one end we have an increase in our younger population with regeneration. Our Primary Schools are almost full [the new Charles Weston Primary School with a capacity of 700 is now open in Coombs]. However, there is a lack of recreational facilities within the community for younger people moving into the area.

At the other end we have more people in the over 50's age group than we have ever had. This is why the need for a new community centre is so important.

There is also a need for Public Toilets to be placed at local shopping centres. Older people won't go if "they can't go".

5. Molonglo to be another Gungahlin?

Council has real concerns that Molonglo is facing the same issues that Gungahlin has faced over the past twenty years – that of a dormitory District. In the future, as no Government employment is planned here in Molonglo, it will become a similar dormitory District with people travelling out each day for work. Without adequate employment within the District, Molonglo will create unprecedented pressures on transport infrastructure, with huge congestion in a similar way to that facing Gungahlin residents today.

Thank you for the opportunity to input into the process.

Tom Anderson
Chair
Weston Creek Community Council
1 November 2017

CC Chris Steel MLA, Caroline Le Couteur MLA, Bec Cody MLA, Jeremy Hanson MLA, Giulia Jones MLA