

Woden Valley Community Council
Record of Meeting, Southern Cross Club, Woden
Wednesday 1 March 2017

- 1 President, **Fiona Carrick**, welcomed attendees. There was an apology from **Eric Glass**.
- 2 Minutes of the last meeting, held on 1 February 2017, were approved.
- 3 Chair, **Fiona Carrick**, presented her report, in which she outlined her activities and meetings with various people involved in, or contributing to, the issue of main concern: enhancing the vibrancy and general ambience, of Woden Town Square.
- 4 **Lynette Marsh**, from the Asbestos Response Taskforce, provided an update on their work which, she said, had entered a “new phase”. Of some 1023 properties, owners of 1007 had elected to participate in the buyback program. 596 houses had been demolished and 972 relocation grants paid. The number of “clusters” (affected properties in close proximity to each other) was given as 192, involving 484 properties; this influenced the scheduling and processing of the properties. Administrative arrangements are complex and ongoing: for example, some 30,160 letters have been sent to affected homeowners and their neighbours. Of some 244 properties in the Woden Valley, 143 (58.6%) had been demolished.

Questions included: Do properties sold at auction require further remediation? (No. Generally, all properties are cleared, though some structures may remain if sound and unaffected, such as garages or pergolas. Also, new 99-year leases are issued.) Demolition arrangements? (Most within the program, some privately demolished.) Zoning codes of the rebuilds? (Unchanged.) Unit titling? (Multi, where two or more new dwellings are built.) Special treatment for streets with multiple Mr Fluffy properties? (Yes: community meetings, in the streets themselves or at local shops have been organised – sometimes including bbqs – where issues are dealt with.) Public notices about and test for different types of insulation? (Yes. Some houses had rock wool, some asbestos; only licensed assessors are allowed to check. Homeowners should not touch it.) Did NCDC know about asbestos in 1966? (Not known, though there was a claim that the issue was raised in 1968.) Some tradesmen potentially ignoring the issue? (In the ACT, there is mandatory training for tradesmen in the handling of asbestos.)

- 5 Update on ACT Government Budget Measures since 2011-2012. Results, described as “mixed”, were detailed. These included the Woden Community Centre, the Bus Interchange, the CIT, the Light Rail Project, the cycling and pedestrian network, the Phillip Oval upgrade and the Healthy Walkways project. It was noted that WVCC needed to **follow up** on issues concerning the exit into

Launceston Street from the Phillip Pool. Also, that the WVCC needed to be seen to be pro-development (in the right places) and to avoid a reputation for negativity. Borrowdale House and the Medibank Building came in for some discussion, as were the derelict Albemarle and Alexander Buildings, for which recent publicity in the *Canberra Times* was noted with approval. The Lovett Tower was 75% empty.

Higher Education in the ACT, which included some 16 thousand jobs, was concentrated on the north side of Canberra. We need “to demand from Government educational facilities in and around Woden..” It was also observed that of the five swimming pools in the ACT funded directly or indirectly by Government, not one was located in Woden. Moreover, the ANU is apparently planning to build a 25-metre pool – possibly even 50 metres if Government recommendations are accepted. It was recalled, with regret, that land was to be taken from Eddison Park and given over to expansion of the cemetery.

Wide-ranging discussion followed on how additional “vibrancy” could be added to the Woden Town Square, and what public facilities might be required. The tendency of large shopping malls to “bleed” custom away from stand-alone businesses was also discussed. As **follow up**, the Chair suggested the use of flyers distributed among businesses in Woden as a means of raising awareness of these and other issues.

- 6 **Chris Steele**, MLA, outlined developments of interest for Woden, including the Light Rail, the move of public service jobs back into the Woden area and the upgrade to sporting facilities. He was, he said, “more optimistic about the future for Woden.” **Caroline le Couteur**, MLA, noted a recent win for community concern at the Curtin Shops. She pointed out that Woden is now part of a complete electorate and observed that, since the ACT Government had “locked in” low pricing on energy buy-in costs, it could now sell electricity at a good profit. In addition: the Government is now subsidising batteries for solar panels.

The meeting finished 9:37 pm. The next meeting of the WVCC will be on Wednesday 5 April, 2017 in the Canberra Southern Cross Club.

Timoshenko Aslanides,
Minutes Secretary
10 March 2017