



## Inner South Canberra Community Council

### Draft Record Public Forum

Tuesday 11 April 2023 at 7pm

**Eastlake Football Club (Duffy Room) 3 Oxley Street, Griffith**

#### 1. Welcome: Marea Fatseas, ISCCC Chair

There were 78 attendees.

The Chair welcomed attendees. She acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land on which the meeting was held and their elders past, present and emerging. In particular, she acknowledged the lifetime contribution of Aunty Agnes Shea, the most senior Ngunnawal elder and founding member of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council, who passed away on 11 March. She also acknowledged the contribution of Barton resident Ian Morison, who passed away on 15 March. He had a significant role in the defence of what is now known as the Heritage listed Barton Housing Precinct and was a founding member of the Barton Residents Association and then the Kingston and Barton Residents Group and was engaged more recently in Heritage activities.

The Chair said it was because of the work of volunteers such as Ian and others that we have the amenity that we have today in the Inner South, as well as other parts of Canberra.

The passing of the former Federal Minister the Honorable John Kerin AO was also acknowledged.

On a happier note, mention was made of local MLA Elizabeth Lee Opposition leader having given birth to her second daughter Ava. The Chair wished them both all the very best.

The three parliamentarians, speaking on the Planning Review were welcomed and thanked for attending.

- a) Rachel Stephen-Smith, Kurrajong ACT Labor MLA, also Health Minister and Minister for various other portfolios
- b) Rebecca Vassarotti, Kurrajong ACT Greens MLA, Minister with many responsibilities including environment and heritage and building quality etc.
- c) Peter Cain, Ginninderra ACT Liberals MLA, Shadow Planning Minister

Speakers in the second segment on the East Lake Place Plan were also welcomed and thanked.

- a) Ben Riches, Senior Director, Implementation and Coordination, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
- b) Donna Fitzgerald-Verrent, resident of The Causeway
- c) Rob Evans, President, Fyshwick Business Association

#### 2. Planning Review: The ISCCC's "Key Asks"

The Chair set the scene by speaking to the ISCCC's circulated document on "Key Asks" that they would like elected representatives to respond to [See attached](#).

- At the ISCCC's last public forum in February, it focused on the proposed Territory Plan and inner south district strategy. The feedback and other analysis formed the basis of the ISCCC's submission to the government on 3 March.
- Elected representatives were invited to the Forum so that they could hear some of the ISCCC's key concerns before they debate the overarching legislation, the Planning Bill, in the assembly. The Chair expects that there will be a Government response to a report from an Assembly Committee out of session by the end of April and expressed interest in hearing a bit more about that.
- The Chair said the new Planning Bill will pave the way for a massive change in the way decisions are made about planning matters in the ACT from a rules-based to an outcomes-based planning system. This is expected to have major implications.
- The Chair summarized the "key asks" indicating that the three overarching issues relate to clarity and simplicity, good governance and genuine community consultation.
- The ISCCC thinks that what's now being proposed is neither clear nor simple.
- Many of the Assembly Committee of Inquiry's recommendations are about governance and genuine community engagement. The ISCCC considers that through the whole process the community has been managed to get a particular outcome rather than actually having been engaged to co-design the new planning system.
- The very first dot point of the Key Asks is focused on the need for something that is easy to understand and measure. The ISCCC believes that the proposed system is more complex than the current one.
- The Government had also told the ISCCC that governance was "off the table" in the Planning Review. However, in fact, there will be much more power given to the planning authority, which will be able to decide subjectively on what meets their proposed outcomes.
- The ISCCC thinks that this proposed excessive discretion needs to be wound back.
- The Chair suggested there was little evidence of learning from the outcomes of past initiatives, for example, the pilot program of the "Mr Fluffy" dual occupancy program. The Chair noted there has been no evaluation.
- The question was posed that if the government is either unwilling or unable to evaluate a small project, how can the community trust them to implement effectively an ACT-wide outcomes-based planning system?
- In terms of community engagement, the ISCCC looked at what is in New South Wales and South Australia. They have sections on community consultation and community participation in their planning Acts. In the Planning Bill, there is reference to "consultation", which treats the community as just a stakeholder on the same level as developers and other stakeholders. The sort of primacy of community that is in other jurisdictions is not in the Planning Bill.
- The current requirement for pre- DA community consultation has been removed. If there were problems, why not fix the problems and keep pre-DA community consultation?
- The ISCCC wants the community to be able to see the total revised package again, including the revised Planning Bill, and the revised Territory Plan, taking into account the submissions that were made by early March.
- The ISCCC Chair indicated that the Assembly Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services did a great job in their inquiry into the Planning Bill and they put their report to the ACT Government at the end of December. The ISCCC is waiting to hear the Government's response.
- The ISCCC believes that the Committee responded to a lot of the ISCCC's concerns and so hopes that the Government will accept the Committee's recommendations.
- Since the Standing Committee reported, the ISCCC has looked at the draft Territory Plan and the Inner South District strategy to see how the proposed outcomes-based planning system will work in practice. The ISCCC believes it is basically a dog's breakfast and thinks that it's going to create uncertainty about what requirements will be mandated for new developments, given that rules will give way to more subjective assessments by planners about whether developments meet vaguely worded outcomes.
- In conclusion, the ISCCC Chair said that the ISCCC believes that a government committed to an outcomes-based planning system would have shown by its actions,

by reviewing past initiatives such as the Fluffy dual occupancy program, that it is genuinely committed to an outcomes-based system. Without that evidence, it is suggested that the Government has zero credibility as to whether it is genuinely committed to a proper evidence-based outcomes-based system.

### **3. Elected representatives address the ISCCC's "Key Asks"**

#### **a) Rachel Stephen-Smith, Kurrajong Labor MLA**

Rachel Stephen-Smith, MLA:

- acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land that we meet on, land that always was and always will be aboriginal land, and also acknowledged the recent passing of Aunty Agnes Shea.
- She thanked the ISCCC for the invitation and for its active engagement and the active engagement of member community groups in the planning reform process which has been going on for quite some considerable time.
- She emphasised that the fundamental aim of this reform process is to deliver better planning and urban outcomes.
- It was suggested that we could all agree as a starting point that the current system is not delivering the desired outcomes.
- Under our rules-based system, people get approval for developments that meet the tick box requirements, but don't deliver good outcomes for people who live in these developments.
- People who want to do innovative things that would deliver a better social and environmental outcome are stymied because they can't meet the rules that govern the system.
- Very convoluted processes are then needed to deliver what are better outcomes.
- Developments go ahead that neither the community nor the Planning Authority is particularly happy with, but which need to be approved under the statutory framework because they tick all of the boxes.
- Community views are not being genuinely heard because the consultation process is not working as intended.
- When pre-DA consultation was implemented, everyone thought it was going to be a way for developers to engage with the local community to come to agreement about the kind of urban outcomes that were wanted. That it would be reflected in their submission of their Development Application, and then that will be checked through the further community consultation process, through the DA process itself, the formal statutory process. That is not what has happened and the pre-DA consultation is not meeting its objectives.
- The feedback that some form of two stage community consultation, some way of checking that community views expressed early on, actually feed through into the final product, is acknowledged and accepted. It is something being worked on. Advice may be sought from Minister Gentleman.
- Part of the problem with the pre-DA consultation process at the moment is that it sits outside the statutory system. People in the community often assume it's being run by government, but it's not being run by government. Government is not able, in a statutory sense, to hold developers to account.
- It was acknowledged that the proposed system is complex and it is different and that there is a lot of information. However, it was argued that's not to say it's more complex than the current system and it's not to say that it's not structured in a way that will make sense when it actually is applied to a development.
- It was acknowledged that it is very hard to imagine how the process is going to work until it's actually implemented.
- The Planning Authority or the EPSDD has spent a lot of time working on the process. The Minister believes it makes sense from a logical perspective.

- It was recognized that many may be skeptical and have a mistrust of the planning authorities. It was suggested that this was a result of failures of the current planning system.
- Since the planning review process started in 2020, there has been a lot of talking and a lot of consultation. People have expressed a range of views and also a range of experiences during this time.
- It is important that none of us engage in this discussion on the basis that our view is the only right view. When it comes to housing and the development of our urban realm this is important.
- In terms of evaluation such as the Mr Fluffy process, it is important to balance that formal evaluation process with the fact that we have had a lot of community feedback about people's experiences of planning and development through this process.
- People have already told us what they thought of the outcomes of the Mr Fluffy developments.
- Draft Variation 369 around the need for green space is part of a response to the feedback that the Government has already received from the community about not enough space for deep rooted plants and not enough green space on blocks. The ACT Government is already responding to some of the feedback received.
- It is believed that the objectives, the principles, what the Government thinks of as good planning outcomes are almost universally agreed on.
- In conclusion, the aim of the package, and the Planning Bill, in particular, is to make it easier to do good things and harder to do bad things.

#### **b) Rebecca Vassarotti, Kurrajong Greens MLA**

Ms Vassarotti spoke to her slides. **See attached.**

- Thanked the ISCCC for the invitation.
- Acknowledged that we are meeting on the lands of the Ngunnawal people.
- It is important that we acknowledge the contribution that indigenous people have made to this city and the country that we call home.
- In the lead up to the 2020 election, planning was something that the Greens talked about a lot.
- The planning reform process has been underway already for a few years.
- Jo Clay MLA, is the Green's spokesperson for planning and she's also the chair of the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services.
- Planning touches Ms Vassarotti's portfolio responsibilities as a Minister in areas such as environment, heritage, sustainable building and construction, and some responsibilities around living infrastructure.
- Shane Rattenbury MLA, in his leadership role, but also in issues of climate resilience and carbon emissions reduction, has a key role to play.
- In terms of the Planning Bill, the Greens think it is important that planning decisions reflect our communities' aspirations around climate, environment, inclusion and connection. There was universal agreement that currently that wasn't the case.
- It is important that strong environmental protection and an emphasis on climate resilience is captured.
- There needs to be stronger protection of the environment and climate in the objects and the definitions.
- Throughout the consultation phase on the Planning Bill, community groups and environmental advocates were consulted.
- We advocated for enhanced consultation through the engagement process.
- When the Bill came into cabinet, we held major concerns that the Bill that was presented to parliament didn't adequately reflect community engagement.
- We decided we could not support the Bill. It did not adequately respond to the community consultation.
- Since that time, we have had very positive engagement with the ALP in terms of responding to some of the key issues.
- We want to see the embedding of community consultation and engagement more strongly in the legislation.

- We want safeguards in place regarding what might be defined as a Territory Priority Project. We think there needs to be a clear line to elected representatives and we think that there needs to be a pathway to deal with the governance concerns that have been raised that may not be within the Bill itself, but we want a clear pathway about how we have those conversations.
- Rules and criteria drive mediocre development. And are there ways that we can improve processes such as pre-DA consultation?
- The real problem is that we have a proponent led rules-based system that has driven this mediocre development.
- There are concerns that the proposed response leads to more discretion and may create even poorer outcomes.
- The proposed solution is a cascading model. It is something that we have been working on in the building portfolio.
- We're currently going through submissions and we're keen to see the government analysis of submissions. There have been some emerging conversations. The zoning conversation is one that was touched on in the consultation, but there has been a real push. We had a discussion in the last sitting about whether an inquiry should be set up. The other parties did not agree.

Comment (ISCCC Chair): asked for clarification of whether there will be an interim Territory Plan if the Bill passes.

Answer (Rebecca Vassarotti MLA): An interim Territory Plan would need to be different to the one that has been out for consultation. She acknowledged that there is still a lot of work to be done.

**c) Peter Cain, Ginninderra Liberals MLA**

- The Chair ISCCC has addressed much of what he was going to say.
- He addressed what the previous two speakers had said.
- He had heard from a Community Council Chair that no one has really explained what is wrong with the current rules-based system. Mr Cain asserted that it's the government that controls the outcomes. He claimed a rules-based system has a massive advantage over a discretionary system and that is, it provides a level of certainty of outcome for everyone, not just leaving it in the hands of decision makers.
- He queried if there are bad outcomes from the current rules-based system, what they are, where they are and consider if the rules can be changed to avoid getting terrible outcomes.
- He is unconvinced about the need for this massive reform and he is very suspicious of what the driver is to create a planning environment to allow infill of our city and to destroy the character of this bush capital and the garden character of the suburbs.
- Mr Cain agrees with simplicity and values certainty. Certainty is not just there for the government to know what they want to do and produce a certain outcome that they prefer. He thinks certainty is primarily there for the community. It is how our rule of law system works.
- He agrees with keeping our rules-based system and tweaking it if there are terrible outcomes, however, terrible outcomes have not been pointed out to him.
- The discretion that is proposed under the new Act means that we will not be sure what the outcome will be. There will be someone who decides it's an acceptable outcome and we're just going to have to put up with it.
- Unfortunately, this is leading to greater power, greater governance responsibility to unelected bureaucrats who are not accountable to the community in the same way that a minister would be.
- In the case of planning, removal of pre-DA consultation is regrettable. If the consultation is producing terrible outcomes, then the cause should be investigated and it should be fixed within the current system, but the principle of pre-DA consultation should not be removed.
- The Living Infrastructure Variation 369 is still to be tested.

- Canberrans desire a bit of green space around their home without butting eaves, and density without creating urban heat banks. That is really implicit in what Canberrans expressed as their housing preferences.
- Believes the time frame for passing the Bill is ridiculous. He argued there is a need to have all the key materials, reports, government responses, the listening reports together for the community to decide on the future of planning in Canberra. The community needs to be engaged.
- Hopefully, the government will reconsider its attempt to lock the Bill into law before the community has a full opportunity to look at the whole package.

#### 4. Discussion and Q&A on Planning review

Key issues raised in discussion and Q&A are provided below:

Comment (ISCCC Chair): The ISCCC's 2019/20 survey of inner south residents found that 85% of respondents wanted to have a say about what's built next to them or nearby. The proposed planning processes don't provide residents with a say about "exempt" developments such as knockdown rebuilds.

The ISCCC considers that there must be some mandatory rules about things residents have told us they care about such as the protection of their access to sunlight and privacy, building height, and amount of green space on the block next door as part of retaining character and avoiding heat islands. The technical specifications seem to be a moving feast, because developers seem to have flexibility about whether they have to adhere to them.

Answer (Rachel Stephen Smith MLA): The management of building codes is a good analogy of a code and then a whole lot of technical specifications. People are required to meet the principles of good planning. If people abide by the design guide and abide by the technical specifications, they will then be able to be deemed to have met these principles. But if they want to do something different, they need to be able to demonstrate that they're actually delivering the outcomes that the Territory says it wants delivered in development.

People are seeing "knock down rebuilds" without green space, without permeable land. This needs to be changed and has been reflected in the principles as they are written and spelled out in four pages of the Bill and would be a requirement for approval.

The design guide and the technical specifications give people a way of doing that. Most architects, most designers, most builders, are going to follow the design guide and the technical specifications because that means they are going to be more easily approved. Not doing that will make it harder to get approved.

Answer (Rebecca Vassarotti MLA): Agreed with Ms Stephen-Smith's answer. Outcomes are important in managing living infrastructure and addressing the impact of heat islands.

The design guides and the technical specifications provide a range of ways to achieve development outcomes. There might be a different way to achieve them. Part of the problem with the rules-based system is that people build to the rules, achieving the lowest common denominator. People don't think about doing things differently and the results are mediocre.

The objective of the new system is to be clear about the outcomes being sought. These are to be very clearly linked with government policies around climate resilience, around environment protection, and about biodiversity. The objects will be clear within the Bill as well as the Territory Plan. The design guides and technical specifications give more guidance than the current system.

The idea of an Interim Territory Plan is to test if it is achieving those outcomes. There may be unintended consequences. The parliamentary process will be important. It is an iterative process.

Comment (Peter Cain MLA): The iterative process and possible unintended consequences support the notion that the Bill should not be passed at this stage. Locking it into law creates more work if further changes are expected.

Comment (Dr David Denham ISCCC): See slides. Dr Denham said he can't understand the outcomes focus of the Bill. He thinks the object of the 2007 Act is very clear, very precise, and easy to understand.

He questioned what is wrong with the current rules-based system? He questioned the new system where things are going to be addressed without specifying in detail how they're going to be achieved. He suggested that by developers having minimum rules they get the most money. If developers go beyond the minimum, then they get less money, less profit.

Mr Fluffy outcomes could have been changed by mandating a certain percentage of green space for the development of Mr Fluffy sites. This would have stopped all the bad outcomes that have emerged on those sites. Dr Denham concluded that rules provide trust because they are the same for everybody and they provide transparency. Rules can easily be changed if necessary. He suggested that the new system will be operated with certifiers behind closed doors. He said this is not a good system.

Other key issues raised from the floor included

Comment (Owners Corporation Network and point raised by other residents): Under the current system the problem is that the existing rules are not being managed for compliance.

Answer Rebecca Vassarotti MLA: Acknowledged that while the issue sits slightly outside the Bill and the technical standards, etc., ensuring compliance is a key issue including that the planning authority and the compliance regime are appropriately resourced.

Question: How do you ensure compliance if the decisions are at the discretion of the Planning Authority?

Answer Rebecca Vassarotti MLA: They will have a DA approved that they can be assessed against.

Comment (Local Resident): The North Sydney Council is a good example of planning. Their model includes mandatory rules and an expert design panel. Developers know that the council is going to listen and the developer does change their mind and plans. Also where does living infrastructure fit under the proposed model? Expressed concern about conversations going on behind closed doors.

Answer Rebecca Vassarotti MLA: There are Design Review Panels. They don't look at every development but a significant number of developments.

Variation 369 sits within the technical specifications. It is understood that that does not mean that people can ignore it, it means that they must respond to it or show a different pathway of how they are responding to it.

Rejects the suggestion that discussions are happening behind closed doors. There are conversations happening within government and across parties, but there has been a parliamentary committee that provided 49 recommendations after significant submissions. There is a significant level of transparency in terms of the discussions that are happening.

Comment (Building Design Professional): Fully supports Variation 369. However, it is difficult to work with as a practitioner. It is wordy, it's complex, it is very hard to understand. It requires a lot of work to prepare the documentation. It has been poorly executed. If the Planning Authority can't execute rules well, and in the spirit of those rules, then it's rather pointless.

Following considerable discussion, the ISCCC Chair concluded that this highlighted the need for clarity and simplicity.

## 5. Briefing on Draft East Lake Place Plan

### a) Ben Riches, Senior Director, Implementation and Coordination, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

- Ben Riches spoke to his presentation. See attached.
- He made an acknowledgment of country, the traditional custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people, acknowledging and respecting their continuing culture and contribution that they make to this city and this region.
- The boundary of East Lake along the southern edge is Canberra Avenue, Wentworth Avenue, and then it's bound by the Jerrabomberra Wetlands to the north and the east. It includes the areas of the Causeway, the former landfill site, the railway, and the Mildura Street Precinct within Fyshwick.
- In 2022 they received about 500 contributions from a broad section of the community through a consultation exercise. Consultation included door to door knocks with the business and traders within the precinct, consulting more than 240 businesses in the Mildura Street precinct, Kingston Foreshore and other areas.
- Regular updates have been provided for the Causeway residents with letterbox drops, not just during the consultation phase, but throughout 2022. Some letterbox drops were done in February, July, August, November, and more updates have just been delivered to residents in the Causeway last week and included a summary document of the Draft Place Plan.
- In addition to holding six pop up stalls, an extra session was held for the Causeway residents within The Causeway itself in September 22. About six and a half thousand postcards to residents within the area will be made available.
- Nine key themes emerged from the outcomes of community engagement.
- The nine key themes were based around East Lake being connected to country, sustainability, celebration of the historic aspects within the precincts of the Causeway Hall, (there are railway remnants and quite a few other historical elements within the precinct). People were keen to see that development would protect the wetlands, that a high-quality public realm is developed, and it supports small industry.
- People wanted to see it deliver diverse housing and prioritise active travel. The Place Vision is trying to set the vision for what people wanted to see East Lake to be.
- The nine key themes are being translated directly into the planning principles that then help guide everything from there within the Draft Place Plan.
- One of the other elements within the Draft Place Plan that might be of interest is the four sub-precincts within the East Lake area including The Causeway, the former Landfill, the Railway precinct and the Mildura Street precinct.
- The Draft Place Plan helps describe what is expected to occur within those areas.
- It can identify opportunities to integrate in and between each of the precincts. Integration could mean design of future streets, design of active travel routes, open spaces etc.
- Guidance is provided on open space, the street networks, water sensitive urban design, and public transport. The main public rapid public transport route is picked up along Wentworth Avenue and Canberra Avenue. Provision is made for the opportunity for a rapid route to go through the external precinct as well and link up with interstate rail and also link up with the active travel routes.
- The Draft Place Plan is picking up on the different hubs such as community hubs through the precinct. This includes the need for schools, childcare, places of heritage, the Causeway, Cargill's cottage. There is also the limestone outcrop. The community hub is one of the key elements. This provides opportunities for community gardens, opportunity for community use, and also identification of a visitor centre.



- In the plan there is a concept urban design plan that brings together the inputs from community, the expert advice from the consultant team.
- Current consultation is underway. Over 7000 postcards are being sent out to residents in Kingston, Griffith and Narrabundah. They are also being dropped off in public places such as libraries and cafes.
- There will be pop up sessions in early May.
- There are a few different opportunities to provide input. A survey will be brought to the pop ups. There is also an online survey. A written submission can be provided by email. There will also be opportunities through the Access Canberra phone line.

**b) Donna Fitzgerald-Verrent, resident of The Causeway for 68 years**

- Donna's family helped build old Parliament House and the Causeway Hall back in 1925.
- The Causeway residents feel really let down because nobody from the government wants to talk to them.
- Fifteen years ago, they were told this development was going to happen. Anybody that wants to stay in the area, were guaranteed places to live in the new buildings. Now they believe that there is nothing available for them.
- There was a meeting with residents 2 years ago and before then 5 years ago.
- They have not had any luck getting communication from ACT Housing.
- The Plan is impacting 41 families including children.
- Existing properties are not being maintained. Donna's property has black mould that is not being attended to.
- Causeway residents are worried about their future housing and have not received any answers from multiple queries including to Minister Gentleman. There are thousands of people on the public housing waiting list. There are no houses for them.

**c) Rob Evans, President, Fyshwick Business Association**

- Rob Evans briefly spoke to his slide presentation. **See attached.**
- More can be found out about the plan for the "Eastwick Greenline Concept". [https://fyshwickbusiness.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/221117%20-%20Stewart%20Architecture%20Media%20Presentation\\_compressed.pdf](https://fyshwickbusiness.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/221117%20-%20Stewart%20Architecture%20Media%20Presentation_compressed.pdf)
- The Place Plan document is 150 pages long and it is taking time to work through it.
- The initial impressions are that it's cut off the previously identified strategic investigation corridor. This was in the Inner South Draft District Strategy brought out at the end of 2022.
- The Greenline urban renewal concept which potentially converts an embarrassing eyesore of the train station that is Canberra Railway Station into an area delivering on the priorities that the government has identified of urban infill, climate change sustainability, urban infrastructure and active travel.
- The draft East Lake Place Plan fails to understand or integrate with the wider business strategies and the aspirations to unlock the potential of Fyshwick.
- In the draft Inner South District Plan the corridor ran all the way through the middle of Fyshwick, which would unlock the entire area and open the entire area for everyone in South Canberra.
- The Eastwick Green line concept for the future unlocks huge potential.
- East Lake should be considered holistically and not just as an island between Kingston and Fyshwick
- The Fyshwick Business Association remains open to constructive dialogue with the ACT Government.

## 6. Q & A on Draft East Lake Place Plan

Question (ISCCC Chair) to Ms Stephen-Smith: Are you able to provide greater clarity on the situation faced by The Causeway residents?

Comment (Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA): Apologised to Ms Fitzgerald-Verrent if no one had contacted and spoken to her, particularly in relation to housing.

As local members, every time there has been a conversation, there has been an expectation that Causeway residents would be the first people consulted.

ACT Housing was leading conversations last time. Ms Stephen-Smith offered to talk to Ms Fitzgerald-Verrent after the meeting with a staff member.

Comment (Rebecca Vassarotti MLA): Ms Vassarotti also acknowledged the importance of ensuring that Causeway residents are consulted. She said they want to work to ensure the needs of residents are met and they could stay in the community that they are in.

Comment (Donna Fitzgerald-Verrent): In the past Causeway residents have been told that they have five years left in their current housing. At 18 months they will get notice and then a month before the government will need the houses back. Causeway residents have dealt with this for the last 20 years. Causeway residents were told a couple of weeks ago by another area manager that they are going to be told to leave in September because that is when the building will start. There is growing fear among residents that they will need to leave earlier than initially expected in the context of the staging of the development.

Both Ms Stephen-Smith and Ms Vassarotti offered to take up the issues with Ms Fitzgerald-Verrent offline. There is a need to clarify the staging of the development.

Comment (former elected representative): Recalls meetings in the 80s that he attended when the Causeway residents were promised they wouldn't be forced to move.

The community of Canberra may not realize the actual significance of the Causeway and its people to the development of this city. Back in the 20s, they lived in tents and the people that built Canberra mainly continue to live there.

Comment (Gordon Lowe, Molonglo Group): who had cooperated in his former ACT Government role with The Causeway residents for years during the development of the Kingston Foreshore, attested glowingly to the role of Ms Fitzgerald-Verrent on behalf of The Causeway residents and to the cohesion of The Causeway community and the need to ensure their needs are taken into account in planning for East Lake.

Question: How many homes are empty at the Causeway?

Answer: Nil. As people vacate, the houses are primarily being used for other short-term housing needs such as to house people affected by Domestic Violence and half-way houses.

Question: Are the public housing homes in the Causeway being knocked down?

Answer (Ben Riches): Yes. The exact timing and staging have not yet been decided. At this stage they are consulting on the whole concept.

Question: Is it a conscious decision by government that the railway station is staying where it is?

Answer: The plan does include some transit-oriented development around that the station. The plan doesn't include just leaving the train station the way it is.

Question: Will a lot of freight trucks be coming into the heart of Kingston?

Answer (Ben Riches): It is not about creating a transport freight hub within the precinct. It is more about passenger rail in the precinct. It is to connect interstate passengers with the rapid transport network within the ACT.

Question: Where will the freight hub be located?

Answer (Ben Riches): It isn't included in the Draft East Lake Plan

Question: Can we hear a bit more about the next steps for the Draft East Lake Plan Process?

Answer (Ben Riches): At the moment, the consultation process is under way on the draft place plan. After that the draft place plan will be finalised. One of the next key steps in the project is looking at what changes may be needed to the Territory Plan such as zone changes, involving more consultation. Beyond that, there are sites that are identified on the Indicative Land release program for 2025/26.

Question: What steps are being taken to mitigate the impact of the development on Jerrabomberra Wetlands?

Answer (Ben Riches): The planning process will consider the environmental impacts. They are working with the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust to manage the wetlands. There are mitigation measures that will be considered. Once the background work starts to progress there will be a need to look at making sure there is separation between development and the wetlands.

Comment (Gordon Lowe, Molonglo Group, Dairy Road):

The Jerrabomberra wetlands will be extended into the Dairy Road precinct rather than the development butt up against the wetlands itself.

The ISCCC Chair summarized that one of the clear outcomes is the need for a cohesive approach to how we work with The Causeway residents to make sure that there is a good outcome with the East Lake development. The ISCCC will keep in touch with Ms Fitzgerald-Verrent going forward and also with the Kingston and Barton Residents group and our elected representatives. There is a need to avoid what has happened in Stuart Flats, Gowrie Court in Narrabundah and Red Hill where all the public housing was taken out and there was no public housing in any of those developments. Former Public Housing has become expensive apartments. We should aim to do things better with the East Lake development.

The ISCCC will also keep in touch with Rob Evans about the Fyshwick Business Association proposals and gain a better understanding of the plans.

## **7. Agreed actions and next steps**

The ISCCC Chair asked meeting participants to indicate whether, after hearing the presentations, they were supportive of the shift to an outcomes-based planning system. Only a handful put up their hands. The vast majority put up their hands to support either a rules-based or a hybrid rules and outcomes-based planning system.

Once the Planning Bill is passed, there will be an Interim Territory Plan, possibly operating at the same time as an Inquiry into the Territory Plan. There was much concern at the meeting about that approach, and it was not clear why the passage of the Planning Bill could not be delayed until issues with the Territory Plan are resolved.

There were also strong views expressed at the meeting about the need for certainty and for effective compliance.

In summary:

- The ISCCC supports the recommendations of the Assembly PTCS Committee Inquiry into the Planning Bill and looks forward to the Government supporting them in its response this month.
- The lack of support at the meeting for the shift to an outcomes-based planning system, and similar concerns expressed in submissions, strengthen the case for the ISCCC's key asks of including important mandatory rules in the Territory Plan and for the community to see the whole package of the revised Planning Bill, Territory Plan and District Strategies before the Planning Bill is passed.
- There was strong meeting support, and commitment by MLAs, for engagement with The Causeway residents to ensure that their housing needs are met as a priority. There is a need for clarification of the staging for development of different areas in the East Lake precinct.
- There was a commitment by the ISCCC to keep in touch with the Fyshwick Business Association in relation to their proposed plan for the Foreshore to Fyshwick corridor.