

CHAIR'S REPORT – INNER SOUTH CANBERRA COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Annual General Meeting 13 November 2018

1. Introduction

The ISCCC has been operating for eight years, since our establishment in 2010. As the peak body for suburban residents associations and groups in the Inner South, the Council focuses on matters with implications for Inner South Canberra as a whole, and especially on planning and development issues. The ISCCC complements and assists, rather than duplicates, the role of these residents groups.

2. What were the main ISCCC activities and achievements during the past year?

Priority 1: Advocating for compliance with, and enforcement of, planning rules

Many developments and redevelopments are not complying with the Government's planning rules, leading to poor quality outcomes, including building defects and adverse impacts on amenity. This is a key focus for ISCCC advocacy. The scale of the challenge is evident from a recent *Canberra Times* article, which reported that more than two thirds of building reforms promised in mid-2016 were yet to be completed¹:

- In September 2017, we held a public forum on building and planning issues, where there was a spirited discussion about dodgy buildings, the practice of 'dumbing down' building design and quality, and shortcomings in enforcing planning rules.
- This year we have lodged a submission in response to the Legislative Assembly's Inquiry into Development Application Processes (3 Aug 2018) and given evidence at public hearings of the Committee of Inquiry.
- We have also lodged a submission to the Inquiry into Building Quality in the ACT (30 September), and await the opportunity to give evidence at public hearings.
- We have advocated for greater transparency and accountability in relation to deconcessionalisation of concessional leases, both by providing case studies to the ACT Auditor-General for their performance audit of Crown Lease variations, and also through joint action with residents' groups in writing to MLAs and speaking to the media, for example in relation to the Canberra Services Club.

Priority 2: Advocating for better urban planning in inner south and across Canberra

We have often heard from residents groups and the broader community that they find it frustrating that planning is not being done in a holistic way. Often we see developments going ahead without consideration of their cumulative impact on the community.

- The ISCCC advocates a strategic approach to planning. We have participated in good faith in consultations for the ACT Government's current "Refresh" of the ACT Planning Strategy, which will guide Canberra's development over coming decades.
 - However, we understand that the ACT Government does not plan to issue the draft Planning Strategy "Refresh" for community comment before finalising it. We are raising this with senior officials and our elected representatives.
- The ISCCC has participated actively in the ACT Government's community engagement on Housing Strategy and on Housing Choices. Planning Minister Mick Gentleman addressed an ISCCC public forum on this issue in February 2018:
 - While the Government announced its new Housing Strategy recently, we look forward to seeing more details, and implications for the inner south.
- The ISCCC participated actively also in ACT Government Zero Net Emissions community engagement processes, including through stakeholder meetings, workshops, and our public forum in February 2018, attended by Climate Change and Sustainability Minister Shane Rattenbury MLA. Good urban planning is essential in driving down greenhouse gas emissions and in adapting to the impacts of climate change.

¹ Burdon, Daniel, "ACT fails to act on most building reforms, two years after pledge", *The Canberra Times*, 7 November 2018.

- The ISCCC lodged a submission in June 2018 in response to the Legislative Assembly's Inquiry into the role of nature in our urban areas. There is significant biodiversity in the inner south that needs to be taken into account in planning and development.
- While the ISCCC and others lodged submissions in early 2016 in response to the ACT Government's draft Five Year ACT Heritage Strategy 2016-21, we await the release of the final strategy.

Priority 3: Advocate for better transport, traffic and parking solutions

In the past year, light rail stage 2 and the new bus network have been key issues:

- These were the subject of our July 2018 public forum, and also the focus of ISCCC submissions in June (for light rail) and August (for new bus network). The ISCCC, Kingston and Barton Residents Group and the Deakin Residents Association representatives also gave evidence at Parliament House at the end of June 2018 to the federal Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories.
- We consider that our advocacy and that of others has been successful in the National Capital Authority deciding it was not appropriate to plan for removal of one lane in each direction on Commonwealth Avenue. The ISCCC had highlighted that the NCA documents had underestimated significantly the daily vehicle movements on Commonwealth Avenue, the busiest transport corridor between south and north Canberra.
- We also made a submission in response to plans for a Canberra Brickworks Precinct Access Road and Dudley Street Upgrade.

Priority 4: Advocate for community engagement in local area planning and development (understand what people value and what they want)

For years, the ISCCC and member groups have been advocating for precinct and suburb level planning to ensure, as said earlier, that there is a holistic approach to planning:

- An important ongoing issue is the need for a strategic and cohesive masterplanning process for the Manuka Oval precinct. The ISCCC and member groups have continued to advocate for the ACT Government to adhere to its pre-election commitment in 2016 to establish a community panel on Manuka Oval Precinct.
- The ISCCC lodged a submission in relation to Draft Amendment 89 to the National Capital Plan on the Deakin/Forrest Residential Precinct. The final amendment provides for a specific proportion of plantable area on development sites, which is one of the things we advocated for.
- We are developing an online survey to seek views of inner south residents on what they value in their suburbs, what they would like to see happen in the future, and what they would like the ISCCC to focus on.

Priority 5: Advocate for waste management strategies that minimize health and other risks to inner south residents

The ISCCC participated actively in recent years in ACT Government consultations about waste management, and then in the past year we had to deal directly with a proposal for a waste to energy facility in Fyshwick.

- Hundreds of people attended ISCCC public forums called to discuss this issue in August 2017 and May 2018. The ISCCC and member groups engaged with both residents and local businesses likely to be affected by the proposal. Over 400 submissions were lodged subsequently expressing major concerns about the Environmental Impact Statement for this project.
- It is very important that inner south residents have a say on the Waste to Energy policy that the ACT Government is currently developing.
- Similarly, it's very important that residents, especially those in multi-unit developments, have a say by 26 November on the proposed code for waste management on multi-unit development sites.

Priority 6: Strengthen ISCCC and member group capacity

- It remains a challenge for the ISCCC and member groups to bring on board volunteers, including to increase diversity. It is important to continue working to ensure we build our capacity and diversity to reflect the communities that we represent.
- We continue to engage with a broad cross section of organisations in the inner south and across Canberra to build cooperation on issues of common interest and concern, and hence build critical mass in advocating on such issues.

3. ISCCC or co-sponsored public forums

Note: The numbers listed below of guests attending our public forums is likely to understate actual numbers as many attendees chose not to sign the attendance registers.

| Date | Location | Number committee attending | Number guests attending | Total number attending | Key focus of forum |
|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 11 Jul 2017 | Eastlake Football Club | 8 | 25 | 33 | Zero net emissions, the inner south urban forest, and healthy waterways. |
| 23 Aug 2017 | Harmonie German Club | 8 | 168 | 176 | Proposed Fyshwick Waste Incinerator. |
| 12 Sep 2017 | Eastlake Football Club | 8 | 59 | 67 | Planning and Building Rules. |
| 14 Nov 2017 | Eastlake Football Club | 12 | 11 | 23 | Annual General Meeting |
| 13 Feb 2018 | Eastlake Football Club | 12 | 65 | 77 | Housing Choices, and Towards a Net Zero Emissions Territory. |
| 10 Apr 2018 | Eastlake Football Club | 7 | 25 | 32 | Powering our City. |
| 31 May 2018 | Harmonie German Club | 7 | 85 | 92 | Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the proposed Fyshwick waste facility. |
| 10 July 2018 | Eastlake Football Club | 9 | 69 | 78 | Light Rail Stage 2 and the new bus network |
| 10 September 2018 | Albert Hall | | | About 450 | The Institute of Governance & Policy Analysis organized this forum. ISCCC was a co-sponsor: "Impact of Planning Decisions on Canberra's Heritage Values and Urban Form". |
| 9 October 2018 | Eastlake Football Club | 11 | 36 | 47 | Dairy Road Development, proposed Crematorium and Memorial Park in Symonston |

The ISCCC also held Committee meetings through the year that were open to the public, and ISCCC Member Residents Groups have held suburban meetings as and when required. The ISCCC provides funding, sourced from its government grant, to assist them with these and other communication-related activities. The ISCCC has also participated actively in:

- ACT Combined Community Councils forums (CCC);
- EPSDD Environment and Planning Forum;
- Better Suburbs Program and associated Citizens' Forum;
- ACT Government's Grassy Woodlands Stakeholder Group;
- Community panel concerning a proposed development on Federal Golf Club grounds;
- Advocacy in relation to heritage implications of the proposed West Basin development.

4. What the ISCCC has done to encourage the community to participate in our activities?

- Participated in the Connect and Participate (CAP) Expo on 24 March 2018.
- Continued to upgrade the ISCCC website isccc.org.au.
- Used ISCCC e-newsletters to promote ISCCC events and activities through our contacts database and through member residents' groups email lists.
- Continued to build up our Facebook presence, nearly doubling from 116 followers at the time of our last AGM to 200 now, and increased the reach of our Twitter Account from 723 to 789 followers. We still have a long way to go to extend our reach.
- Supported and contributed to member resident groups' newsletters and events.
- Promoted better public awareness of ISCCC activities, public attendance at ISCCC events, and other participation, through interviews for print, radio and television.

5. What major issues will occupy the ISCCC in the coming year?

Key issues that we anticipate will occupy the ISCCC in the coming year include:

- Planning for Canberra, including through the Planning Strategy "Refresh" and the Territory Plan Review.
- Housing issues, including follow-up from the Housing Choices and Housing Strategy consultations in the past year.
- Light rail stage 2 and urban infill implications for adjoining suburbs.
- Responses to the ACT Government's waste management and waste to energy policies, and to the proposed Fyshwick waste facility.

We will continue strengthening our social media and other communication and community engagement strategies, and building our organisational capacity.

6. Changes in committee membership

Our former Deputy Chair, John Edquist, stepped down earlier in the year due to illness. I relied significantly on John's great knowledge, skills and experience, thank him for his very valuable contribution and wish him a speedy recovery. I was very pleased that Gary Kent, our former Chair, agreed to take up the Deputy Chair role pending this AGM. Our Secretary, Andrew Schloeffel, has gone overseas on posting - we valued his contribution over the past year. Our Assistant Secretary, Gary Green, has advised he will not nominate for the position at this AGM due to other commitments, but we will continue to seek his good counsel on key issues such as building quality.

Thanks to my fellow ISCCC committee members for their contribution and support over the past year, and to member residents' groups. Their active and ongoing participation is critical to the success of the ISCCC. I can't thank them enough, including most recently David Harvey for taking on a mammoth job in organizing insurance to cover both the ISCCC and all member groups.

Thanks finally to Eastlake Football Club for providing the ISCCC with free access to their meeting rooms for our committee meetings and public forums.

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Chair ISCCC