



Inner South Canberra Community Council

Record Public Forum

Tuesday, 8 August 2023 at 7pm

Online (Zoom)

THEME: Better urban planning to enhance liveability and resilience to climate change

1. Welcome: Marea Fatseas, ISCCC Chair

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. She mentioned that the ISCCC had been asked to let people know about an event on 26 August in Curtin about The Voice Referendum (more information at <https://wodenvalleycommunitycouncil.org/>)

There were 78 attendees. Apologies were received from Rebecca Vassarotti MLA, and Elizabeth Lee MLA.

2. Summary of Forum

Barbara Norman, Emeritus Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Canberra and Chair of the new federal Urban Policy Forum, highlighted that urban planning for climate change requires more than guidelines. It requires stronger regulation on low carbon development, the location of development in suitable locations and investment in forward planning. She stressed the importance of transparency, accountability and enforcement to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved.

Cia Flannery, the President of the ACT Chapter of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, highlighted the multiple benefits of the treescape, and the importance of a landscape plan for Canberra informing urban planning and infill. She said there should be an ACT Landscape Architect to complement the ACT Chief Architect, and multidisciplinary teams working together from an early stage of planning on new precincts to achieve better results.

Professor Beatrice Bodart-Bailey noted that the inadequate provision of green space in redevelopment projects has major implications for both liveability and resilience to climate change as it leads to the creation of heat islands with summer temperatures up to 10 degrees above the average of other areas.

Retired planner and architect, Richard Johnston, talked about lessons from the redevelopment of 'old' Kingston and early developments in the Kingston Foreshore which

achieved medium dwelling densities in predominantly 3-4 storey building forms, with some diversity of housing type and substantial communal open space including large tree planting. Unfortunately, more recent redevelopment has involved higher density on much smaller sites with minimal space for trees. He drew attention to a recent book by Professors Newton and Newman et al – ‘Greening the Greyfields – New Models for Regenerating the Middle Suburbs of Low-Density Cities’. This deals with the benefits of deciding on the location of urban regeneration precincts through collaboration between government, industry and the community (the ‘where’ and ‘how’ factors) and creating innovative medium density projects that deliver significantly increased housing supply but in a more environmentally responsible way (the ‘how’ of urban regeneration) than single-block redevelopment.

Wade Bartlett, Senior Development Manager of Molonglo Group, provided a case study of a new residential precinct at 1 Dairy Road in Fyshwick that will address liveability and climate change resilience. It features mainly 4-storey buildings with good solar access, very generous communal open space, and rammed earth instead of concrete external walls.

There were also presentations by the Chair, Ms Marea Fatseas, and community representatives, Dr David Denham and Professor Beatrice Bodart-Bailey about the lessons learnt from the Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos program which allowed dual occupancies to be built on residential blocks of over 700 square metres. A key lesson was that very little additional supply of housing was provided in the single dwelling residential zone (RZ1) in the inner south, with most blocks replaced with single dwellings instead of dual occupancies. Greater additional dwelling supply was achieved only in the RZ2 zones near local centres. Unfortunately there was a significant loss of green space whether the replacement housing was a single dwelling or multiple dwellings, with the greatest loss of green space on RZ2 Mr Fluffy blocks turned into multi-unit developments.

Marea Fatseas reported that “upzoning” in other jurisdictions such as Brisbane in Queensland and Auckland in New Zealand, where multiple dwellings are allowed on former single dwelling blocks, had also shown a significant loss of green space. In Auckland, upzoning to allow up to 3-storey dwellings on residential blocks has led to more dwelling supply, and there have been benefits in terms of increasing diversity of types of dwelling and lower rental increases than in other areas. However, it does not appear to have led to more affordable dwellings for those wishing to buy, and there has been an enormous increase in the waiting list for public housing due to housing stress. There has also been an increase in the lack of satisfaction by Aucklanders with their local environment, highlighting the importance of meeting the dual objectives of providing more affordable housing while ensuring it will be liveable and resilient to climate change.

There was lively discussion at the forum and general concern about rising temperatures and Canberra’s response to it through planning laws, urban open space protection, trees and shade, water and other responses.

The presentations made at the public forum are at:

<https://www.isccc.org.au/record-of-public-forum-8-august-2023>

3. Chat line report

- a. The chat line was open for the duration of the forum, including while the presentations were underway

- b. There were 256 contributions.
- c. 5 contributors accounted for 169 contributions and everyone else less than 5.
- d. 98 of these 169 contributions (58%) were reactions (with emojis) to other contributions.

The comments garnering more than 3 reactions were:

- “gentle densification” (Barbara Norman’s talk)
 - Picture of large single residential development in RZ2 (Richard Johnston’s talk)
 - RZ2 upzoning to RZ3 for consolidated blocks
 - Access to Dairy Road by public transport (Wade Bartlett’s talk)
 - Solve problems by building up not out
 - Active travel
 - Heat map 2019 (and inner suburbs) (Beatrice Bodart-Bailey)
 - Parking (including Fyshwick)
 - Street trees not enough to prevent overheating (Cia Flannery’s talk)
 - Reducing heat by 40% by lighter roofs, street trees, shadowing from taller buildings and reducing road asphalt
 - Enforcement – city rangers’ budget
 - Urban Forest Plan
- e. Chat activity was greatest over the issue of cars, street parking and alternatives.

Issues raised

- How “gentle densification” would be done
- Regional planning
- The inappropriateness of building new McMansion single dwellings in RZ2 zones.
- Access to public transport from the Dairy Road development
- Rammed earth buildings
- Parking – street parking, family needs, Fyshwick, driveway impermeable surfaces etc
- Impact of light rail on car dependence
- Green roofs
- Enforcement – verges, street trees

Meeting closed 9.00pm