

INNER SOUTH CANBERRA COMMUNITY COUNCIL.

Public Forum 11 July 2017
7.00 pm Eastlake Football Club

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome and Introduction: Marea Fatseas, Chair ISCCC

The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted apologies from Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA and Elizabeth Lee MLA.

2. Blueprint for a Zero Emissions Territory.

Peta Olesen and Catherine Keirnan, Climate Change Senior Policy Officers, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

There are two aspects to government on Climate Change: mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation is covered by the Action Plan, AP2. By 2020 the ACT will have 100% renewable energy and a 40% emissions reduction from 1990 levels. The ACT is aiming for net zero emissions by 2050. AP2 has the primary target of transitioning Canberra to a clean economy.

Adaptation to climate change involves dealing with what is going to happen. i.e. warming, drying and more extreme events, such as a greater risk of fires. The strategy was released in August 2016 after community engagement from 2014 to 2016. The fires in 2003 caused massive disruption but we are now better prepared, less vulnerable and more resilient. The Paris convention is for less than 2 degrees global warming, but this warming will have a particularly high impact on hot days.

The ACT Smart programme gives strategies we can apply in our own homes. See <http://www.actsmart.act.gov.au>. We all adapt e.g. using mobile phones. Al Gore said if we put our minds to it, we can do it.

The next step in reducing emissions is in transport and gas with the ACT Government's discussion paper due to be released in September. Interested people can sign up for notification. We have held round table discussions in February and May and are asking the community how they would like to be involved. The government is working across directorates to avoid silos. <https://yoursay.act.gov.au/>

<http://www.environment.act.gov.au/cc/what-does-climate-change-mean-for-the-act>

<http://www.environment.act.gov.au/cc/what-government-is-doing/climate-change-adaptation-and-resilience>

3. The Inner South Urban Forest.

Stephen Alegria, Acting Director City Presentation, Transport Canberra and City Services.

Urban Forest is an important part of a sustainable city and vital to our economy. The 2020 Vision addresses the challenge of how to increase canopy cover with increasing urbanisation.

Trees on private land are covered by the Tree Protection Act. Public trees are subject to inspection and assessment. Fix My Street data for the 2015-6 financial year shows that the trees and shrubs category had the most incidents reported.

Modern tools such as CSIRO heat maps allow an evidence based approach. Holistic views are obtained through collaboration.

We have the canopy that other cities aspire to and plan to maintain and increase it as Canberra becomes a more compact, higher density city. Sustaining the urban forest in Inner South Canberra requires replacing more than are removed. A study in California calculated a 6 fold return on each \$ spent.

Community feedback is important to a bigger picture approach. Vital that improving the treed landscape is driven from the community. Risk management involves putting public safety first, e.g. the big storm in January. Projects in the inner south include: Blaxland Park, Telopea Park, Oaks Estate and the Black Springs Creek proposal. Examples of collaboration and involvement are the Canberra Tree Network Group and Treenet.

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4. H2OK Keeping our Waterways Healthy – Stormwater

Kathryn Rook, Project Officer, Catchment Management and Water Policy, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development.

H2OK is a joint project with ACT and NSW region targeting audiences in Canberra, Queanbeyan, Yass and Cooma. The campaign launched in February 2017 finishing in June 2019.

For urban areas, the message is that only stormwater should go down the drain. Reuse fallen leaves e.g. compost or mulch – don't blow them into the gutter. Ensure rubbish bins are closed.

There are training and industry workshops and community workshops on water efficient gardens. Schools and community artists can do Drain Art – there is a school Drain Art competition.

Panel Discussion

The three speakers plus Chris Glennon, Manager Catchment Management answered and discussed questions from the audience.

Q: Does the government have a policy to reduce loss of trees on private land?

A: The Tree Protection Act is strong legislation and provides a reasonable framework, including for regulated trees.

Audience member claimed it doesn't work, citing a block in Yarralumla where a DA has been approved to remove three regulated trees.

Q: Medium and high density housing is increasing but without regulations to mitigate climate change e.g. no requirement to provide bicycle storage, renewable electricity generation etc.

A: The government is looking at innovation and fit for purpose buildings. The developer lobby wants to reduce regulations, so it helps the government if it can say the community wants such regulations.

Q: When are we getting green bins as in Sydney and Melbourne?

A: There is a trial of 1000 bins with cameras in the bin in a limited area. The results will be assessed.

Q: My rain water tank is not connected to outside taps. The Certifier says it is not his job to inspect it and a complaint to Access Canberra has not resulted in an inspection.

A: There is a water sensitive urban design code and I'll follow up on the inspection requirements.

Q: Some trees are badly pruned e.g. lopsided – have all the arborists gone to the Arboretum? Trees are dying in Collins Park. What can be done about littering – in Singapore there is a \$500 fine?

A: We do have arborists to assess pruning. There may be a reason for the lopsided pruning – will follow up. Staff are passionate about trees. Collins Park is not irrigated. ACT legislation requires that the litterer be identified – hoping to change the legislation.

Q: Parking on verges impacts the roots of street trees but tickets are only issued if the occupant of the adjacent property complains.

A: Nature strips are shared and parking there is fraught. Trees won't be damaged if the vehicle is parked outside the dripline.

Q: There is a lot of suspended mud in the lake due to carp. What plans are there to remove the carp?

A: There is a carp taskforce which drained Isabella Weir in Tuggeranong to get an idea of numbers. A programme to use carp herpes virus is getting approval at present. The programme will clean up dead fish.

Q: Currently new suburbs are required to have gas available but it is not good as an interim measure and we should have a policy to stop the expansion of gas.

A: We are looking at changing the legislation to remove the requirement for gas. Developments in established suburbs make their own decisions and there is a strong policy to encourage electricity.

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Q: Gas appliances are cheaper so there is a big push towards gas.

A: There is an educational campaign on this. Refer to Action 26 in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

Q: Does the government collect data on solar collection and storage in private buildings? The design of apartment buildings which are mainly 4 storeys with part 6 storeys allows little roof space for solar panels.

A: There are grants to encourage body corporates to install solar panels but it is not mandatory. There is a pilot trial of battery storage.

Q: What about public buildings?

A: Some schools have solar panels. Progress to carbon neutral government by 2020 involves putting schools onto renewable energy.

Discussion about leaf fall, street sweepers and green waste bins.

One participant said that green waste bins send the message that leaves are waste whereas they are valuable mulch and should be spread on the garden. The community is not being told about soil carbon, temperature or erosion and there is increased raking of leaves into the gutter. Other participants wanted street sweepers to come early and often as 5 tonnes of biomass goes from Telopea Park into the lake.

A: There is a cross agency working group on better ground cover. A community survey on valuing waterways showed lots of people think that there's something that removes leaves. Action 15 in the Adaptation Strategy is about living infrastructure. The street sweeping programme in the inner south is mainly in January, June, July and August. There is a project looking at mulching.

5. Wrap-up Marea Fatseas, Chair ISCCC

Our September forum is on planning which overlaps with many points raised today. Thank you all for coming and we hope to see you then.