



## Inner South Canberra Community Council

### Draft Record Public Forum

**Tuesday 26 February 7pm: Eastlake Football Club, 3 Oxley St, Griffith**

#### **ISCCC public forum: The coming ACT election: what does the Inner South community want?**

##### **1. Welcome: Colin Walters, ISCCC Chair**

The Chair welcomed attendees including Elizabeth Lee MLA and other prospective candidates for the coming election. He acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land on which the meeting was held and their elders past, present and emerging.

He noted the need for respect and decorum in interactions during the meeting. He noted that the ISCCC's underlying expectations (transparency, accountability, sustainability etc.) would guide the details of proposals developed from the meeting.

There were 51 attendees in person and three attending online.

The agenda had a focus on planning and transport as key issues. The third session was intended as one where people could raise any other matters, for example diversity, parks, health, education, safety, and finance.

##### **2. Planning, housing and preventing the urban heat island effect in the ACT.**

***Discussion leaders, Richard Johnston, David Denham, Beatrice Bodart-Bailey, ISCCC members.***

Richard Johnston raised the following key issues:

##### **A METROPOLITAN PLANNING**

The ACT government has a policy of confining 70% of new residential development to the existing 'urban footprint' of Canberra. This is intended to save costs of servicing new areas and make existing facilities and workplaces more accessible to more people. Richard asked whether people agreed with this policy, and whether it was likely to result in more 'affordable housing' – if not, what other policies were required?

## B DISTRICT PLANNING

The policy referred to above means that existing residential areas will need to accept some level of redevelopment in order to meet the government's housing targets. Apart from some identified 'urban intensification areas' (East Lake, remainder of Kingston Foreshore, etc.) the only specific policy change so far in the new Territory Plan is the one encouraging dual occupancy development on house blocks of more than 800 square metres, although the new Minister for Planning, Chris Steel, has also said he would like to see more residential development in and around shopping centres. Richard asked whether the audience agreed with this approach, or whether people preferred tighter controls on redevelopment to safeguard the character of established areas.

## C LOCAL PLANNING

The 'new planning system' no longer requires Precinct Plans, although provisions of previous Precinct Plans have been included in new 'District Policies'. Richard asked whether people considered that there needed to be more detailed planning of local shopping centres, engaging the local community, so that the likely outcome of redevelopment could be agreed and known in advance. Did people want the existing character of shopping centres to be retained? Would they be likely to support more redevelopment of established residential areas if the likely outcome could be agreed and known in advance?

David Denham spoke to his PowerPoint (on website [Record of Public Forum 26 February 2024 - Inner South Canberra Community Council - ISCCC](#))

Key issues raised by David were:

## D DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The 'new planning system' was intended to be 'outcomes-focused', with most existing planning 'rules' being taken out of the Territory Plan and placed in 'supporting documents'. The reason for this, according to the planning authority and the former Minister, is that the 'rules' inhibited the best possible development outcomes. David asked whether people agreed with this new policy approach, or did they think there should be mandatory rules for key aspects such as building bulk and scale, solar access and prevention of overshadowing, protection of site open space and tree cover?

## E DA DECISION-MAKING

The new planning system gives the planning authority more power to set the rules, make DA decisions (including overriding other government agency advice) and review its own decisions. David asked whether the development industry and the planning authority could be trusted to make the best decisions, of the most benefit to local communities. Would some form of independent, expert decision-making body would be preferable? (for example, NSW has 'local planning panels' operating in some areas). Should there be a system of periodic reviews of development decisions conducted by an independent body?

Beatrice Bodart-Bailey spoke to a presentation (on website [Record of Public Forum 26 February 2024 - Inner South Canberra Community Council - ISCCC](#)) on the cause and consequences of the Urban Heat Island effect.

She spoke to her PowerPoint slides, showing examples of how other cities are attempting to mitigate urban heat. These included Bosco Verticale (Vertical Forest), Milan; One Central Park, Sydney, with 38,000 shrub, the Airship project with rain time fog technology and irrigation, Vienna Esterhazy Park, redesigned in 2020 as a cooling park with mists, rooftop gardens, and eco villages. Beatrice encouraged the audience to comment on whether they considered any of these ideas suitable for Canberra. She also encouraged the audience to come forward with other ways of mitigating urban heat they may have experienced or heard of.

### Discussion

Key issues raised:

- Need to protect and replace trees, including at development sites such as the proposed new crematorium and Kingstin Foreshore/Eastlake.
- Concern that developers consider maintaining green space as too expensive.
- Enforcement of no parking on verges.
- In the case of dual occupancy, it could be mandated than one dwelling should be accessible for older people and/or those with disability.
- Not enough lips on footpaths for wheelchairs, mobility scooters etc.
- Standard of footpath maintenance-trip hazards
- Need for improved street lighting.
- For knock Down rebuilds, there is a need for professional engineering assessment of excavations.
- Housing affordability
- Do we need a joint regional planning authority with NSW to cope with cross border growth?

### **3. Transport, including tram, buses, roads and parking. *Discussion leader John Bell, ISCCC member***

John Bell spoke to his PowerPoint slides. These are on the website together with the text of his talk at [Record of Public Forum 26 February 2024 - Inner South Canberra Community Council - ISCCC](#)).

The Chair observed that, while the current focus was on light rail and its alternatives, contributions on other transport issues were welcome.

### Discussion

Key issues raised:

- Why doesn't the ACT have flashing lights in 40kmh school zones like other jurisdictions?
- Improved public transport is needed alongside improved footpaths, noting that 40% of Australians do not drive.
- Proper docking should be provided for E-scooters so they did not obstruct footpaths.

- More monitoring and policing of E-scooter use.
- Oaks Estate needs better transport links to Canberra, particularly in order to access medical services etc.
- There is a need for improved rail services from Canberra to Sydney and Improved radial roads into NSW.

**4. Supporting diverse groups in the community, other issues including gardens and parks, finance and rates. *Discussion Leaders Colin Walters, ISCCC Chair, Cordelia Gee ISCCC member***

The Chair suggested some areas that participants might want to raise. These included:

- Parks and Gardens Trees – with reference to the audit report questioning the Government’s ability to meet planting targets.
- Health – including the proposed new centre at Griffith shops
- Education – with plans for some schools to expand.
- Crime –there had been a couple of recent incidents at Griffith shops. The Committee had not been made aware of significant other problems in the locality.

Colin drew attention to serious concerns in the area of the Government’s financial management: a series of adverse audit reports; loss of the Territory’s AAA-star rating; high and rising debt levels, and a series of major infrastructure projects with no clear costings or cost- benefit analysis.

He suggested the need for a comprehensive financial reform package, arguing that the cost of all new policies needs to be fully offset, and accompanied by comprehensive cost benefit and risk management. Moreover, rate rises over the past few years had been excessive and needed to be confined to CPI. Further, it was arguable that there would be benefit from separating the roles of Chief Minister and Treasurer?

Cordelia spoke about the need for more focus on diversity policies, asking where more inclusion could be achieved. What more could the ISCCC do to help disadvantaged groups achieve their objectives and how to achieve greater involvement by younger people.

The Chair noted that the Committee hoped to arrange a policy forum for people with disabilities and their carers.in the near future.

**Discussion**

Key issues raised:

- Transport congestion around schools, with parents picking up and dropping off their children.
- Consideration should be given to building a new school in the Inner South, given the projected population growth.
- Affordability of living in Canberra. The impact of rising rate. Land tax makes Canberra unattractive to investors, exacerbating the shortage of rentals.

- The string of negative audit reports.
- Do we get value for money for rates and taxes paid in the ACT?
- Need for a replacement swimming pool in the Inner South as the population grows
- Poor maintenance of grassed areas around Canberra.
- The need for more rubbish bins in public places.
- Canberra becoming scruffy.

## **5. Concluding remarks**

***Anne Forest, Deputy Chair, ISCCC***

The Deputy Chair remarked on some of the main issues which had particularly caught her attention during the meeting.

- Public Housing and affordability—we need to hear more from politicians and candidates about what they propose to improve the situation.
- There was a lot of emphasis on trees.
- There is tension from knockdown rebuilds and exempt developments.
- Education pressures with the growing population.
- Light Rail or electric buses —the question ‘2B or not 2B’? The ISCCC takes a neutral position on light rail but has an obligation to ask difficult questions on behalf of the community.
- Footpaths and street lighting maintenance
- Issues around Callum Brae nature reserve.

Closing the meeting, the Chair thanked all speakers and attendees for their contributions. The ISCCC would draw on the points made during the meeting in finalising its election platform, which would be distributed to parties and candidates.

The meeting closed with a presentation to outgoing Chair, Marea Fatseas. The Chair and past President paid tribute to the large part she had played in the development of the association during her terms as Chair and Deputy Chair.

The meeting concluded at 9.00pm.