

Gungahlin Community Council

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# GUNSMOKE

Newsletter - Edition 139 September 2015

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Photograph by Ewan Brown



Gungahlin Community Council

GUNSMOKE

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of Gungahlin Community Council Inc will be held in the Gungahlin Library (Conference Room 2) commencing at 6:30pm on Wednesday 9 September 2015.

All committee positions will be declared vacant and nominations for all positions are required: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Officer and Committee Members (up to five) - as the Constitution allows for a maximum of 10 members of the committee.

### MEMBERSHIP

A person is eligible for membership of the Council if the person is at least 16 years of age and one of:

- (a) lives in the Gungahlin district;
- (b) owns property in the Gungahlin district;
- (c) works in the Gungahlin district;
- (d) conducts a business in the Gungahlin district; or
- (e) has been duly appointed to represent a social organisation or interest group servicing the Gungahlin district.

A person is not eligible to nominate to be an Office-Bearer of the Council if the person is;

- (a) an Executive Officer of a registered political party;
- (b) a person employed by a registered political party;
- (c) a registered candidate for a forthcoming election; or
- (d) an elected member of the ACT Legislative Assembly or any Parliament or a person who has been pre-selected or has nominated for a forthcoming election to any of the aforementioned bodies; or
- (e) an office bearer in a commercial or industrial lobby group registered with the Federal or ACT Government.

Nominations should be sent by email to the Secretary no later than 6.00 pm Thursday 3rd September 2015 ([secretary@gcc.asn.au](mailto:secretary@gcc.asn.au)). If nominating another person, please ensure that your nomination is acceptable to them. If you know someone who may be interested in the work of the Gungahlin Community Council, please pass this information on to them.

Following the AGM, there will be a normal public meeting.

### AGENDA

1. Opening and welcome.
2. Apologies.
3. Minutes of previous AGM held on 10 September 2014.
4. Presentation of President's Report for 2014-2015.
5. Presentation of Treasurer's Report (Financial Reports and Auditor's Statement).
6. Appointment of Public Officer.
7. Election of office bearers and general committee members for 2015-2016.
8. General Business.



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#### Disclaimer:

GunSmoke is published to allow residents to keep in touch with their local community. The views expressed in GunSmoke do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editor, or members of the Gungahlin Community Council Inc.

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**GCC Committee:** Susanne Antunes, Michael Norfor, Stuart Todd, Kevin Cox, Chris Barry, Prasad Tipirneni, Henley Samuel, Jayson Hinder, Jacob Vadakkedathu



# From the President

Ewan Brown

This is my final comment as President of GCC as I do not intend to continue after serving four years in the role. It has been a fascinating journey seeing Gungahlin develop significantly during that period with a number of much sought-after projects being completed. My main focus was on encouraging development as I believed a rapidly growing community required more services and amenities to meet their needs. We always seem to be in catch-up mode but at long last Gungahlin is starting to reach a state of development with many of the required services and amenities in place, under development or having been 'promised'.

The quiet urban village atmosphere in the Town Centre is about to change with significant developments underway or soon to commence at either end. If all the proposed major developments come to fruition in the next 3-4 years Gungahlin could see another 50-60 commercial outlets added in the Town Centre. Currently there are three major high-level residential developments in the pipeline thus promising additional critical mass of patrons for local businesses. We will have to wait to see what impact Light Rail will have on the Town Centre.

Good wins for the community have been the ACT Government office block (Winyu House), the Oval, the Leisure Centre, the Marketplace expansion and the Bunnings development. Most of Gungahlin can also be happy about being the almost fully connected region in the ACT with NBN FTTH services. Once we get Nicholls and Casey 1 connected the project will be complete! A major disappointment is the continued inactivity on the cinema site.

Road upgrades have been a top priority for the GCC over many years and it was very pleasing to see a number of improvements funded in the current ACT Budget. Yet these upgrades were well overdue and other main arteries such as Horse Park Drive deserve increasing prominence due to the rapidly increasing residential population in the newer north western suburbs. Gungahlin seemed to have reached a significant population level in early 2015 that placed extreme pressure on commuter roads. The delays became intensely

annoying! GCC still advocates the need for much more local employment opportunities as well as services and amenities so that the residents do not have to leave the district for their various needs (particularly jobs).

It is pleasing to note the success of our representations to secure a local electorate in the next ACT Legislative Assembly elections (late 2016). The Yerrabi electorate should enable us to appoint genuine local representatives who have experience of local conditions and needs. This should address many of the concerns of local residents that the Gungahlin area, despite its rapid expansion and associated 'growing pains', was not well serviced – even after 20 years of existence.

Transport, roads and parking are likely to be the critical issues needing to be addressed by future community councils. Gungahlin relies on 'the car' because local services are still deficient – particularly employment. Huge improvements will be needed in public transport if the locals are to be tempted out of their cars as the primary mode of transport to continue to get out of Gungahlin. Somehow we missed out on the concept of being a fully self-sustaining satellite centre - paucity of employment being the key.

GCC will place immediate focus on an upgrade of the community health centre to provide emergency, casualty and after-hours services. Whereas the overall supply of educational facilities seems to match population requirements many residents are not happy about extensive diversions (away from local or nearby suburbs) to get their children into schools. A comprehensive survey conducted by the GCC in late 2014 revealed a dearth of suitable facilities for the region's youth. There was also a lack of low cost meeting facilities for community use.

It will be interesting to observe the development of priorities by the incoming committee, particularly during the period of a real first-time local election scenario. Gungahlin should continue to develop as a desirable place to live and work as more services and amenities are provided.



## FROM THE POLLIES

**Meegan Fitzharris MLA**

Each month I hold a street stall in the Gungahlin Town Centre on Hibberson Street, usually near the pedestrian crossing outside Coffee Guru. It's a great spot to catch up with people and find out what's going on with local businesses, shoppers, and those who work nearby.

There are always lots of people coming and going, shopping along the strip and wheeling trolleys full of groceries back to the car. It's also a busy road, with a steady stream of traffic travelling along Hibberson Street in both directions. Drivers usually do the right thing, slowing down as they pass through the area when it's busy and stopping for pedestrians. But many people I talk to would like to see the street closed to cars permanently.

What would a Hibberson Street 'mall' look like? Could it work? It's not a simple thing to close a street down for good, but it is something that people want to see, so I would like to start the conversation.

The Capital Metro draft Environmental Impact Statement came out on June and it outlined a possible pedestrian and tram only zone in the top part of Hibberson Street. This means the section from Hinder Street to Gungahlin Place West will likely be closed off to cars as Stage 1 of light rail is built.

But many people would like to see the rest of Hibberson Street – from Gozzard Street to Gungahlin Place East – closed off as well. Local businesses I've spoken to mostly think this is a good idea. So do locals who shop in the Town Centre on a regular basis.

Over coming months we will have the opportunity to see what Hibberson Street might look like if it was to be closed off to traffic. The Marketplace development will mean Hibberson Street between Gozzard Street and Gungahlin Place will be closed while the underground carpark is redeveloped. For a period of around eight weeks we will get to road-test the closure and see what impact it has on the amenity and feel of the Town Centre.

Closing Hibberson Street off to traffic might make it a more people-friendly area, but we also need to seriously consider the impact it would have on suppliers, access and movement. Would it make traffic in surrounding streets worse? Or would it create a better flow? And would it be safe walking through the Town Centre at night with no traffic? Could we have it closed during business hours with light traffic at night?

I'm very keen to hear what you think about the future of our Town Centre, and Hibberson Street in particular. To have your say, please visit my website [www.meeganfitzharris.com/TownCentre](http://www.meeganfitzharris.com/TownCentre) and fill in the survey.

This is a conversation and I believe the more people who have their voices heard, the better off our community will be.



## FROM THE POLLIES

**Shane Rattenbury MLA**

Greens Member for Molonglo  
Minister for TAMS and  
Minister Assisting the Chief  
Minister on Transport Reform

For many Canberrans who don't live in Gungahlin, our northern town centre is often hailed as a far off place where young families reside, and where everything is new and raw. You often hear people from further south say "I've got to go out to Gungahlin" – a phrase that conjures up images of taking a packed lunch and making sure that the car is full of petrol.

The reality is that Gungahlin is a diverse and interesting place that offers residents many great community facilities as well as modern and comfortable housing. Conveniently located between the major routes to Melbourne and Sydney, its urban design will serve it well into the future. Gungahlin's town centre design includes shops that face outwards, rather than turning their back on the natural light and the bustling street. The cafes and pedestrian zones on Hibberson Street, with easily accessible buses, ensure that it is a busy precinct. That brings vibrancy to the town centre which will only increase in years to come.

Gungahlin is also set in a landscape that is scenic and very, very Canberran; the bush on the boundary of the suburbs as well the intertwining nature reserves and hill views means that the people who live here have a great awareness and appreciation of our natural capital that people in other cities can miss out on. Residents can experience this visiting nature reserves or just by walking around their suburbs. There are also some great outdoor facilities, like Yerrabi Pond, where people can enjoy the natural environment.

In an area growing as quickly as Gungahlin, it's easy to see that it still has a long way to go, and to imagine a bright future. The arrival of light rail through the centre of Gungahlin and up to the town centre is an important part of what this future will look like, bringing a new focus to the town centre as a transport hub for commuters and focussing development along the corridor. In a place where transport bottlenecks provide daily frustration for commuters, light rail will provide a speedy and comfortable alternative to sitting in traffic queues. While light rail naysayers have argued that Gungahlin residents will still have to get transport to the town centre to catch light rail, the town centre is well located for connecting buses from outer suburbs, and those in Franklin, Harrison and soon



# FROM THE POLLIES

**Jeremy Hanson MLA**  
Leader of the Opposition

## Rates on the increase in Gungahlin as Barr government goes down the wrong track

What is certain in Gungahlin is that rates are on their way to tripling. This is not a normal phenomenon. It's happening because the Barr government has its finances so out of order that it will squeeze every Canberran for as much as it can to pay for a light rail line that will service only a tiny fraction of the ACT population.

This year's ACT Budget has rates increasing right across Gungahlin an average of \$126 or 9.3%.

In 2015-16, rates in Amaroo are up \$120, in Bonner \$108, in Casey \$131, in Crace \$140, in Forde \$137, in Franklin \$126, in Gungahlin \$114, in Gungahlin itself \$114, in Hall \$264, in Harrison \$122, in Jacka \$109, in Ngunnawal \$134, in Nicholls \$129 and Palmerston \$122.

\* (Rates data courtesy of the Canberra Times)

Increases in rates mean increases in rents as well. I speak to many Gungahlin residents who are being squeezed every day through their living expenses, and housing associated costs are major factors which keep going up.

On top of this the government promised some years ago to phase out stamp duty to compensate for rates increases. This has not happened. Over an eight year period until the end of the ACT Budget's current forecasts, the revenue take for stamp duty will nearly triple itself, going up 2.8 times!

The only thing you can be sure of is that the government will keep slugging residents for more

of their money. It's not just rates, the 2015 Budget had vehicle rego up 6%, drivers' licences up 5% and parking fees up 11%.

The Canberra Liberals will stop light rail and give Canberra the fresh start it needs without Andrew Barr.



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# Snapshot of Gungahlin

## James Milligan

Gungahlin Community Council

### **Our Key Priority: to keep Gungahlin residents aware of developments in their region.**

GCC wants regular information updates to advise residents of the status of ongoing developments (roadworks, new constructions, the 'promised' cinema and any other projects of interest to community members) in the area. There has been a lot of "Light Rail" associated activity in the area lately without much information.

With substantial growth of Gungahlin over coming years (Moncrieff, Throsby, Jacka and Kenny) there is a need for significant planning consultation on the provision and timely development of facilities for the area to accommodate the requirements of a population likely to exceed 90,000 residents. Transport issues will be of critical importance and the community demands satisfactory solutions.

### **THE GCC WANTS TO SEE THE DUPLICATION OF ALL MAJOR ROADS AFFECTING GUNG AHLIN WITHIN THE NEXT 3 YEARS (BY THE END OF 2018).**

GCC wants a new Master Plan for the Town Centre to reflect the needs of the rapidly growing population in the area. Focus needs to be placed on significant diverse commercial development to provide employment, entertainment and shopping opportunities for local residents

### **ROADS and TRANSPORT**

Gungahlin residents rely heavily on road access in and out of the region because there are still too few employment opportunities, services, entertainment and leisure facilities in the area.

Effective traffic by-pass routes around the Gungahlin Town Centre are needed to divert the increasing traffic flow from Flemington Road (East – West) and from Bonner and Casey (West – East). This means significant focus on improving proposed routes – the Valley Way and Anthony Rolfe Avenue.

Majura Parkway is an important north-south transport link, providing a direct connection between the Federal and Monaro Highways and enabling Gungahlin residents to by-pass Civic. Massive traffic pressure is being placed on Horse Park Drive and the situation will only worsen with settlement of new developments. The preparations for the new suburb of Throsby will contribute to additional traffic disruptions on this road. Even now it is blatantly obvious that Horse Park Drive needs to be duplicated between Well Station Drive and the Federal Highway to cope with current traffic volumes.

### **IMPROVED COMMUNITY, ENTERTAINMENT and RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

- entertainment facilities, including a cinema complex, for Gungahlin.

- facilities to cater for the region's youth, particularly after business hours.
- more affordable meeting room or classroom type facilities in the region to cater for after-hours teaching/instruction programs.
- Improved access to lake shores (Yerrabi Pond, Gungahlin Pond etc.) for recreational purposes.
- parking near lakeshore/waterbody access throughout district needs to be increased.
- expanded parking at Phyllis Ashton Circuit and Strayleaf Crescent Gungahlin for patrons of commercial facilities.

### **NBN Roll-out.**

Homes in most Gungahlin suburbs are passed by NBN fibre or are connected. Roll-out plans to connect more homes are 'in train' in Nicholls operations. Part of Casey remains affected. GCC wants all of Gungahlin to be serviced by Fibre to the Home (FTTH).

The GCC wants to see more advantage being taken of the NBN roll-out in Gungahlin to encourage the establishment of a number of support services and businesses. It is a travesty that no initiatives have been introduced in the region to exploit high-speed broadband, particularly to foster business development.

### **Local Health Needs**

GCC wants the Gungahlin Health Centre facility to be upgraded to "enhanced" status and boosted by a Nurse Walk-in Clinic to better serve the needs of the Gungahlin community. The district needs better after-hours services and local casualty and emergency facilities to avoid long travel (and waiting times) to other districts. After hours facilities are increasing required to cater for a growing population participating in sporting and leisure activities.

### **Substantial Employment Opportunities in Gungahlin**

GCC emphasises the urgent need to create many more employment opportunities in the Gungahlin Town Centre – preferably by locating more than one Government Department in or close to the Town Centre. This will provide opportunities for Gungahlin residents for local employment, reduce outwards traffic flows and increase inwards traffic flows which in turn benefit workers and residents travelling out of Gungahlin as it balances out waiting times at roundabouts and traffic lights where the situation currently favours inwards traffic on the Barton and Federal Highways.

Local businesses will also benefit from an increased clientele and more small businesses are likely to be drawn to the area.

# Light rail will make Gungahlin even better

Continued from page 4

Shane Rattenbury MLA

Kenny, will be able to catch light rail as it journeys into Civic. No one is pretending that catching light rail will suit everyone; but a key benefit of any public transport is that it takes many car commuters off the road and eases the traffic pressure for others who don't have that option.

Canberra is growing fast, and if car ownership and usage rises in sync, the impact on traffic will be substantial. There are currently 13,400 Canberrans living on the City-Gungahlin light rail route, and 70% of people who leave Gungahlin in the morning are headed to the city. By 2031, this car journey during peak hour will be about an hour; taking the tram will be around 25 minutes. Over the long term, a "fixed spine" transport route will help keep cars off the road, link to other more flexible services like buses, and prevent further congestion from new road users as our city grows.

It's interesting to me that younger people in our community are more in favour of the light rail being built. Perhaps that is because they can appreciate the benefits of planning ahead to reduce the risk of Canberra becoming a car-congested, polluted city, like other cities that have followed the path of "bigger and better roads". All too readily politicians commit to building new roads, duplicating roads and building overpasses; the Canberra Liberals have made these exact kinds of promises for Gungahlin as they prepare for an election in 2016. But the problem is, soon after new roads are built, the congestion increases again as more people are attracted to taking their cars. This is a well-known problem called "induced demand" (sometimes expressed as "if you build it, they will come") and one which Canberrans have some real world experience in relation to the GDE. Public transport that doesn't share the road with private vehicles has to be part of the solution, and it should be constructed before increased traffic congestion makes it more difficult.

In seeking to undermine the Gungahlin light rail project, the Canberra Liberals have also been running out the line that road upgrades are for everyone, while the light rail is only for a few. The irony of this is astounding, as it goes against all the principles of transport funding - a fair society invests in public transport which is for everyone to use, and doesn't just build roads for those who can afford private car ownership. A sustainable and fair city looks after all its residents, not just the well-off ones. If we were to step back and review the amount of money that this city has invested into

roads versus public transport, we would see that the ledger is heavily weighted towards private car drivers. If there is an ideology at play in this debate, it is probably one of private versus public. The ACT Greens are proud to say that we value and believe in services that are for everyone, including the disadvantaged in our community.

Of course, the Liberals are also persistently blaming every other Government cost increase in the ACT on the Government's investment into light rail, and every project that is unfunded is now also the fault of light rail. But let's be clear - the ACT Government is not seeking to raise money for light rail through rates, charges and registration! Nor are they taking money from health or education as has been implied. Indeed, the money for light rail doesn't come out of the ACT budget until after the project is completed in 2019.

Light rail in isolation won't deliver everything to Gungahlin. But it has the potential to be game-changer in terms of driving development and encouraging business along its corridor. It will therefore limit urban sprawl and reduce the isolation of those living in outer suburbs. Light rail across Canberra, which is the Greens' vision of our public transport future, will set our city up to respond to the challenges of increasing population, climate change and pollution. The reality is that Canberra is growing, and growing fast: current projections show the ACT population is projected to hit 500,000 by 2033. That's only 18 years away. And unless something changes, our population in 50 years will be almost double what it is now.

The ACT Greens believe in investing for the future and in preparing our community for future challenges well ahead of time. We know that in terms of infrastructure investment, delaying action inevitably costs more. We aren't afraid of big challenges or big projects, and we can see a bright future for this city, both in Gungahlin and further south. By building the first leg of a light rail system to Gungahlin Town Centre, we are on the cusp of a wonderful opportunity to shape this city's future. I'm sure that there are many in the Canberra community who appreciate this, and who hope, like I do, that we don't throw this opportunity away. Ironically, those who vote against light rail in 2016 will not be voting to stop the Civic-Gungahlin project, but rather turning their backs on a whole new transport network for the rest of Canberra. Who knows when we will next get a chance to start such a project again?





# Investing in Canberra

Kevin Cox

**Residents of Canberra cannot invest directly in Canberra infrastructure.**

**This privilege is given to merchant bankers and overseas investors. It doesn't have to be this way. The ACT government could provide ways for residents to invest in infrastructure. For example in many countries locally issued bonds are used to finance capital works.**

Bonds and other forms of money debt are a method of providing credit through the creation of money and then selling the newly created money. People who purchase bonds are purchasing new money that has been created as debt rather than investing directly. This is a relatively expensive method of providing credit because creating new money is risky and its value varies with changing interest rates.

There are other ways that we can issue credit without creating new money. The most common one is where we pre-purchase goods or services for later delivery. This is used widely in everyday business. People typically get a return on their money through discounts. Discounts do not require the creation of any new money and hence are less expensive.

An increasingly popular method of pre-purchasing goods or services is called CrowdFunding. Here investors give a business or person money and in return they get goods and services at some later time.

The ACT government could CrowdFund infrastructure and could start with Light Rail. Residents of Canberra could be invited to prepay their future rates and taxes by purchasing vouchers. These vouchers are to buy land from the ACT government, or pay their rates and taxes, or pay for rides on

the Light Rail. As with other prepayments the ACT government could give a discount depending on how long the voucher has been held. The ACT government could also adjust the value of the voucher to account for inflation.

The vouchers could be made transferrable so that if a person purchased more vouchers than they needed they could sell them to someone else. Vouchers issued at 8% discount per annum with the voucher face value being adjusted each year for inflation would be a very attractive investment for Canberra residents - particularly self managed super funds. 8% was chosen because it costs the same in interest forgone as 4% interest compounded over 33 years. Interest payments are taxable. Discounts are not taxable. The value of vouchers will remain stable and fixed. They will not be subject to the whims of the financial markets.

Because they are an attractive investment the ACT government could issue every man woman and child in the ACT with a transferrable right to purchase vouchers. The value of vouchers issued would be enough to pay for the Capital Cost of Light Rail. This means that everyone in Canberra will benefit from the construction of Light Rail. If a resident did not want to purchase the vouchers they could sell their rights. If they sold their rights they would pay tax on the increase in value from the time of purchase.

Vouchers are a low risk strategy for the ACT government because it would not have to find money each year to pay off loans and pay interest. Instead the vouchers will be used to pay for goods and services. If the ACT government does not supply enough goods and services then it will need to find more goods and services to sell, or increase taxes. The ACT government will know precisely how much of the credit issued for Light Rail has been repaid and this will make for responsible fiscal management.



## Get to know your light rail place manager

By Dean, Winyu House.

Are you looking for more information about Capital Metro stage one? Are you keen to have a chat to someone about

the project and have your questions answered? If you answered yes, then you need to drop in and have a chat to Dean, your dedicated place manager for Capital Metro.

Dean is conveniently located at Winyu House in Gungahlin from 11 am to 1 pm and 3 pm to 5 pm every Wednesday and Thursday. You can visit Dean between these times or schedule a meeting at a time that is more

suitable to you. When Dean isn't at Winyu House he is out and about in Gungahlin meeting with local businesses and community groups. Over the coming months Dean will also be visiting residents located on the light rail corridor.

The Place Manager Program, which commenced on 8 July 2015, has also seen the placement of Capital Metro place managers in Dickson and Civic. These place managers are also available on Wednesdays and Thursdays at the same times as listed above. For more information about the Place Manager Program visit [www.capitalmetro.act.gov.au](http://www.capitalmetro.act.gov.au)



# Praise for Common ground housing in Canberra

**Nicole Lawder**

Canberra Liberals

**On 3 July this year, the Common Ground Gungahlin facility had its official opening. This was a celebratory event for many reasons. But as with most great ideas, it was many years in the making, and involved hundreds, maybe thousands of people contributing to the project to make it happen.**

Common Ground housing solutions started largely in the US, in New York City. A woman called Rosanne Haggerty created the organisation in 1990 to build and operate a range of housing options for people who were experiencing or at risk of homelessness. A major focus of this approach is housing people who have been long-term homeless. People experiencing homelessness have poorer health, fewer social connections and fewer opportunities for education or employment. This in turn generates considerable cost to government, through its provision of direct support services, demand on health services and lost economic participation.

Rosanne Haggerty went on to be Thinker in Residence in South Australia in 2005-06 and following her report to then Premier Mike Rann, the Premier along with Social Inclusion Commissioner David Cappo agreed with Haggerty's recommendation to establish a Common Ground facility in Adelaide. Other Australian states and territories have since followed suit.

The basic tenet of Common Ground is to build and operate a range of housing options for homeless and low-income individuals – housing that is attractive, affordable, well managed, and linked to the services and support people need to rebuild their lives.

It gives people a high quality, safe and secure home to call their own, and then works with them to address the multiple and complex issues that have led to their long-term homelessness. They do this by providing on site access to essential support services to help tenants address the psychosocial, mental, and physical health problems that may contribute to the obstacles that make independent living a challenge.

Reasons given for homelessness include financial difficulties, accommodation issues, domestic violence or relationship issues, health/mental health reasons, disability, transition from care or custody, and discrimination. The “supportive housing” part of the package helps to identify and address these issues.

A key theme of the Common Ground model is its linkages to the local and extended community and a focus on social interaction for its residents. The Common Ground facilities are usually located to take advantage of nearby education, training and employment opportunities for residents and the proximity to Gungahlin Town Centre will hopefully do this.

Another innovative aspect of the Common Ground approach is the blend of stakeholders involved: a mix of federal and state/territory governments, corporate, philanthropic and community partners. For the ACT's first Common Ground at Gungahlin, money was first allocated by the Federal Government under the National Partnership on Homelessness, along with funding from the ACT Government to a combined total for the capital funds of \$14 million. Supporters have

included IKEA, Domayne, Canberra Quilters, Harris Scarfe, the Snow Foundation and many others.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Gungahlin Community Council, who have engaged in the consultative process in an open and receptive manner and helped inform the broader Gungahlin community, and provided welcoming response.

Common Ground Gungahlin includes 20 one-bedroom units for people experiencing homelessness in the community and a further 20 units available as affordable rental properties. The affordable rental properties will assist those individuals who are “at risk” of homelessness, those people who are constantly teetering on the brink of losing their housing.

A ground floor shared area includes a large kitchen and living areas, computers, entertainment and administration facilities. An outside barbecue area and eating space is complemented by a community garden and other facilities. Each unit includes larger than average living areas, 6-star rating construction features and appliances.

At Common Ground Gungahlin, the tenancy and building management services will be provided by Argyle Community Housing and residents will benefit from support services provided by Northside Community Service.

I worked in the homelessness sector prior to being elected to the ACT Legislative Assembly, and I remember attending a meeting to organise Canberra's first “Homeless Connect” event in 2012, at the Early Morning Centre. One of the attendees at that meeting was Liz Dawson, who had heard about the Common Ground concept, and was putting together a steering committee to look at getting a Common Ground in Canberra. Common Ground Gungahlin will always in my mind be associated with the strong will and indomitable spirit of Liz Dawson, who sadly passed away late in 2014. Members of her family attended the official opening earlier this month, and it was heartwarming although saddening, to see a plaque dedicated to Liz Dawson mounted in the Common Ground shared area in recognition of her fierce determination, sense of social justice and strong advocacy for this facility to get off the ground, and come to fruition.

The 2011 Census (the most recent data we have) indicated that there are 1,758 people experiencing homelessness in the ACT. Expressed as a rate per 10,000 of the population, this means that the ACT has the second worst rate in Australia, with only the Northern Territory showing worse rates. We also score worse than the national average rate on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness.

I always say that homelessness is just a couple of pay packets away for many of us. Homelessness is everyone's business, and projects such as Common Ground show just what can be achieved when a group of disparate people and organisations come together with a common goal.



# Tough night for judges in public speaking competition

## Lions Club of Gungahlin

Year 5 and 6 students from Gungahlin schools recently competed in a public speaking competition with such excellent results that the judges had a hard time determining the winners. Mother Teresa School, Amaroo Primary and Palmerston Primary had keen representatives who spoke on varied and interesting subjects such as 'Light', 'Innovation', and 'What did they do in the olden days before television?'

The competition is held by the Gungahlin Lions Club each year in June to show off the surprising talent and enthusiasm in primary school age youngsters. The winners and runners up for each grade, pictured below, were presented with a trophy and medallion respectively. The winners' school was presented with perpetual trophies – which will be on show at the school for a year - until the next competition.

Mick Brice, President of the Gungahlin Lions Club, said that it was a great pleasure to see young people speak so confidently while at the same time being interesting and entertaining. The Lions Club holds a

similar competition for high school-college age students later in the year and this too includes an opportunity for Gungahlin students to demonstrate their public speaking skills.

The Lions club of Gungahlin can be contacted at [secgungahlinlions@gmail.com](mailto:secgungahlinlions@gmail.com)



### Year 5 and Under Section

Left to Right, Kien Le - Runner up, Lachlan Gibb, Mick Brice President Lions Club of Gungahlin, Dom Pelle - Mother Teresa Winner, Jake Rawlins - Mother Teresa, Bridie Gilliland.



### Year 6 Section

Left to Right, Sophie Butler - Runner Up, Amelia Sheridan - Mother Teresa Winner, Alexis Montaos - Mother Teresa

## Beyond the Fence

### News, events and opportunities at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary

Woodlands and Wetlands Trust

Mail address:

PO Box 58

Fyshwick, ACT 2609

The biggest news over winter has been the support we have received from the ACT and Australian Governments to expand the Sanctuary. Within the next 12 months, we will begin to build the fence to extend the Sanctuary – making more habitat suitable for bettongs, curlews and other long-lost species we can bring back to Gungahlin's woodlands. The final extent of the Sanctuary will depend on community support – and if you want to help grow the Sanctuary hop over to Bettong Bungalow to make a donation.

As spring unfolds, our woodland plants will burst into colour, with Early Nancy the first to herald warmer weather. On Sunday the 25th of October you can join our spring wildflower walk (commencing 10am) through the Sanctuary and discover nature's very own Floriade.

Also in spring we will be releasing another batch of Bush Stone-curlews (ten new birds). With three birds remaining from last year's release, we are hopeful that they will stay put in the fox-free environment, but we do expect some will wander into the wilds of Gungahlin. If you do see any, please do not approach the birds, but do contact us straight away. Following last year's release a couple of birds were found by residents in the suburb of Forde.

Our Twilight Tours have been running through winter, and we will be running them every Friday through spring and summer. You can book at [bettongs.org](http://bettongs.org) and join the ever-growing band of intrepid Canberrans experiencing their woodlands at night. For people with limited ability to walk the normal tours (3 km across 2 hours), we can arrange a special tour on our bettong buggy (tours are limited to 4 visitors).

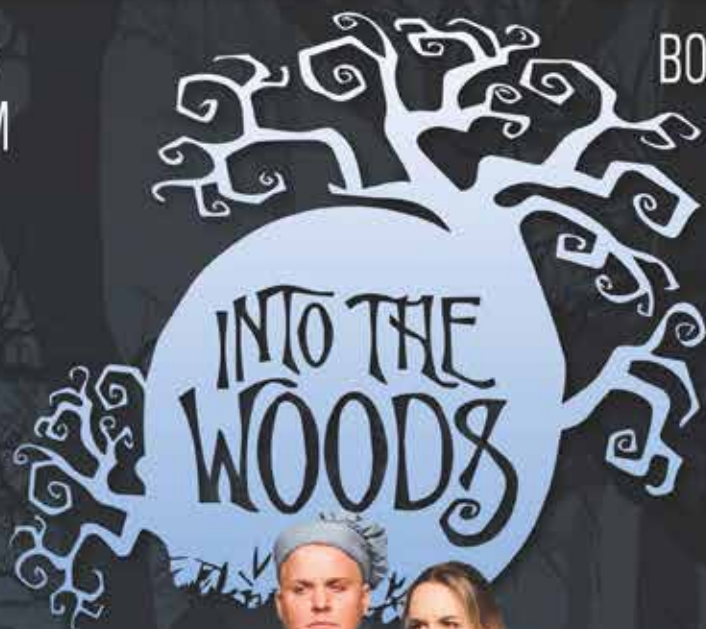
If you would like to combine your love of exercise with some nature-based volunteering we have the opportunity for you. At the Zealandia Sanctuary in Wellington, New Zealand, a team of 500 volunteers supports the Sanctuary, including walking the fenceline every day. As our Sanctuary expands we are seeking to build a volunteering program to monitor the Sanctuary fence – for damage, for wayward animals and general condition. So – if you ride or walk in the area, and want to help us out regularly, contact us to volunteer for our Wildlife Guardians volunteer program.

You may also join the Friends of Mulligans Flat, which assists rangers with environmental works in the reserve and with species reintroductions, and has a program of recreational activities for members to enjoy including guided walks and talks. See the website for details of activities and walks: [bettongs.org](http://bettongs.org)

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