

Gungahlin Community Council - President's Report 2017 - 2018

This report covers my third term as President of the Gungahlin Community Council (GCC).

Activities

The GCC has continued to focus on informing and representing Gungahlin residents.

Nine (9) public meetings were held throughout the 2018 calendar year (13th February, 14th March, 11th April, 9th May, 13th June, 11th July, 8th August, 12th September, and 10th October), with one further meetings scheduled in 2018 (12th December). Minutes are available on the GCC website. The meetings provide a forum for presentations to be made by various government Ministers and MLAs, ACT government representatives, property developers and other stakeholders in the Gungahlin community, and for feedback to be gathered and actioned by members of the GCC executive. Meetings are streamed live via video through FaceBook with the support of community business MyGungahlin; recordings of these meetings are also retained online. Notification of public meetings is provided through the GCC website, GCC mailing list and the GCC FaceBook page.

Two editions of the Gungahlin Smoke Signals (Gunsmoke) newsletter have been published to date in 2018 (#146 April, #147 June). This high quality newsletter is distributed electronically via the GCC web site, using notifications posted through the GCC mailing list and FaceBook page. In addition, several thousand copies of the newsletter are printed in hard copy form and distributed by the GCC executive through retail outlets and other venues in the Gungahlin region.

At the time of writing, there are 991 subscribers to the GCC email list, and more than 2,140 Facebook users that Like the GCC Facebook page.

Construction has been the dominant theme throughout 2018, with significant new and "catch up" investment being made in Gungahlin's infrastructure to support a community that has more than 71,000 residents (ABS Census 2016). The new bus interchange was completed, and construction of the Light Rail line is nearing completion, with services expected to start in early 2019. The refurbishment of the Gungahlin Place Park and the transformation of Hibberson Street into a shared pedestrian zone have also improved the amenity of the town centre. The delays associated with stage 1 of the Gundaroo Drive duplication, flagged on numerous occasions at GCC meetings and finally being completed this month, were so extended that the ACT government has engaged external auditors to review the project. Multiple stages of the duplication of Horse Park Drive were completed through 2018, and work has commenced on the "missing link" between the Federal Highway and Wells Station Road.

The GCC participated in numerous ACT government consultations throughout the year, including Housing Choices, Better Suburbs, the review of the Development Application (DA)

process, the Bus Network redesign and the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh, which the GCC initiated in late 2016. Although an update on the progress of the refresh was provided by ESPDD at the GCC April 2018 meeting, it is disappointing to report that the outcomes of the refresh have not been formally provided, an issue raised with the Minister for Planning.

Nevertheless, the GCC campaigned strongly throughout 2018 on many of the issues addressed in the refresh regarding the very large number of high-rise residential towers at the western edge of the town centre and the impact they would have on traffic, solar access, access to green space, pedestrian and cycle access. In particular, the “Air Towers” development was considered by the GCC to be particularly inappropriate, but despite strong advocacy from the GCC and other concerned stakeholders that development has also been approved.

More successful efforts to moderate the nature of some redevelopments were made by the GCC to block the sale of the Gold Creek Homestead site, and by the Community of Nicholls Residents Group (CNRG) to seek support to prevent any development of the Golf Creek Golf Club.

In May, the Federal government announced that Defence Housing Australia (DHA) would move its head office to the Gungahlin town centre. The GCC has campaigned for many years to increase employment within the town centre and the support of Senator Zed Seselja to facilitate this move is gratefully acknowledged.

Residents remain frustrated with the lack of progress on the town centre site identified for a cinema complex, and during 2018 the GCC learned that ongoing legal action is preventing any construction starting – until a ruling or decision is made the site will remain vacant.

Throughout the year, the President and Vice President has represented the GCC through a number of media outlets, including The Chronicle, The Canberra Times, All Homes, 2CC, 2XX, ABC Local Radio, WIN News and ABC TV.

The GCC is an active participant in the meetings of the Combined Community Council of the ACT.

Looking forward

We are in a sound financial condition. I recommend acceptance of my report.

Peter Elford
GCC President
November 12th, 2018