

Gungahlin Community Council - President's Report 2018 - 2019

This report covers my fourth 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 2019 calendar year (14 February, 13 March, 10 April, 8 May, 12 June, 14 August, 11 September, 9 October and 13 November), with one (1) further meeting scheduled in 2019 (11 December). 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 (www.gcc.asn.au), GCC mailing list, Twitter (@GungahlinCC) and the GCC Facebook page (www.facebook.com/gungahlin).

One edition of the Gungahlin Smoke Signals (Gunsmoke) newsletter has been published in 2019 (#148 December). This high-quality newsletter is distributed electronically via the GCC web site, using notifications posted through the GCC mailing list and Facebook page. Limited 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 958 subscribers to the GCC email list, and 2,404 Facebook users that Like the GCC Facebook page (2,605 Followers).

The GCC launched the Gungahlin Community Survey 2019 at the November public meeting to better inform the future priorities of the GCC. Promotion through multiple channels has seen over 700 Gungahlin residents complete the survey, and it is hoped that as many as 1,000 will have done so by February.

The GCC was proud to be able to support the establishment of a new Park Run in Gungahlin around Wagi bridge (between Moncrief and Amaroo), which is now averaging over 120 runners per week. The overwhelming success of the existing Park Run in Gungahlin demonstrates how important activities like this are to Gungahlin residents.

Financial support has also been extended to the Crace and Forde residents associations.

Public transport grabbed many of the Gungahlin headlines through 2019, with the Light Rail commencing operations on 20 April between the Gungahlin town centre and Civic. By June, patronage was at the level expected in 2021 and, as the year comes to close, significant congestion is being experienced at peak times and Transport Canberra are exploring options

to increase its capacity. Most Gungahlin residents have noticed a corresponding significant decrease in car traffic. Accompanying the introduction of Light Rail was a major revision of the ACT bus network which has caused problems for many Gungahlin commuters, and some issues for school students. As a result of an engagement initiated by the GCC, Transport Canberra have committed to address (in particular) the experience of travelling by bus between Gungahlin and Belconnen, park and ride services and services into new suburbs.

The completion of the duplication of Gundaroo Drive (Stage 1) and the addition of an extra lane along Mirrabei Drive across the Yerrabi Pond dam have also improved traffic flow, but congestion is an increasing concern around the town centre. The transformation of Hibberston Street into a one-way shared zone was completed in October, followed by a complete makeover of the Gungahlin Place Park in September improving the amenity of the town centre.

Neither of these developments generated the level of excitement associated with the August announcement that the Gungahlin cinema project was finally moving ahead with United Cinemas as the operator. A development application for the cinema complex was published in early December and, once approved, is expected to take at least 12 months to construct.

The commencement during the year of drone delivery services by Wing into the suburbs of Crace, Palmerston, Franklin and Harrison from a new base constructed in Mitchell generated significant community debate. The GCC played an active role in facilitating this debate and made submissions in response to both the ACT and Federal government inquiries regarding drone delivery services noting that these services had “emerged without the regulatory controls necessary to ensure that the beneficiaries and consumers of the service are balanced with the real and perceived concerns of the community”.

In late 2016, the GCC approached EPSDD with concerns regarding

- building height and character,
- upgrading and enhancing public spaces and
- walking, cycling and road transport;

in the Gungahlin town centre. In response, EPSDD initiated the Gungahlin Town Centre Planning Refresh which has progressed to Territory Draft Variation (DV) stage. The changes included in the revision to the Gungahlin Town Centre Precinct proposed by DV364 address some of the community’s concerns regarding building height, but the draft variation also proposes significant reduction in the amount of space reserved for commercial (office) space, allowing “mixed use” (ie. residential) throughout much of the town centre, changes to provisions for community facilities and the watering down of the role the town centre would play as a major hub and centre of employment. Specifically, DV364 **removes** the following paragraph from the town centre precinct code:

~~Gungahlin Town Centre is the major hub for employment, shopping, social activities and public transport particularly serving suburbs within the Gungahlin district.~~

And under “Desired planning outcomes” replaces:

~~Support a strong employment base in the district of Gungahlin~~

With:

Provide for a range of employment within the town centre.

The ACT government appears to be pursuing the development of Gungahlin as a dormitory district with a small employment base and limited services – this is not consistent with the views expressed by Gungahlin residents as articulated in the GCC response to the draft.

The GCC also participated in numerous other ACT government consultations throughout the year, including the Territory Plan Review engagement process, the Wellbeing Framework, and the Community Panel which developed a community precinct brief for the Gold Creek Homestead site. This panel was an excellent process and hopefully one that will be used by the ACT government more often.

Throughout the year, the President, Vice President and other members of the GCC executive have 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 has also participated in and contributed to Floriade in the Suburbs, ACT government launches (including the Home of Football), and Rotary’s Gungahlin Markets.

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

8 December 2019