



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Chair), Mr Steve Doszpot MLA (Deputy Chair)
Ms Tara Cheyne MLA, Mr Mark Parton MLA

Inquiry into the Management of ACT Cemeteries

Submission to the inquiry

1 – Woden Valley Community Council

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Woden Valley Community Council Inc.

The Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601



Dear Committee

Woden Valley Community Council Submission to the Inquiry into the Management of ACT Cemeteries

The Woden Valley Community Council (WVCC) appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission to the Inquiry. Our submission primarily comments on 1c of the Terms of Reference (ToR) which is about land management/land use and maintenance relating to ACT cemeteries, including the identification of potential future sites.

The population of the Woden Valley is increasing and the Town Centre is experiencing densification. The draft variation to the Territory Plan provides for tall residential towers and at the same time reduces the open green spaces available to the growing population. In order to meet the needs of the community the WVCC seeks retention of the 3 hectares in Eddison Park and improved lighting and connectivity in the area to facilitate pedestrian and cyclist access to the town centre. To meet the burial needs of the community, the WVCC advocates for a funding commitment from the ACT Government to develop a new cemetery in the south of Canberra.

The Woden Cemetery is significant because our family and friends are buried there. It provides a contemplative atmosphere for visits and has strong historical links to our local history. In the early 1930s Canberra was in need of a public cemetery and the Woden Cemetery was proclaimed in April 1934, the first burial taking place in 1936. Today we are in a similar situation with the need for a funding commitment to a new cemetery.

Eddison Park is also important to the Woden community for the provision of the benefits of open green spaces, including social, recreational, physical and psychological well-being. The Eddisons

owned the property of Yamba, predating the development of Woden and two memorials recall the loss of the three Eddison sons in World War II.

Expansion of the Woden Cemetery, at the expense of Eddison Park, is a short term solution to a long term need for burial services. The loss of precious open green spaces, and space for community activity, cannot be reversed in an urban setting.

The 2017 draft variation to the Territory Plan, the Woden Town Centre Precinct Code, leads to a loss of open green space in Woden. The green courtyards in the Alexander and Albemarle buildings have been sold to the private sector, the green corridor along Athllon Drive has been rezoned to high density, much being RZ5, and the Town Park (Arabanoo Park) has been mostly rezoned for community facilities that have not been identified. No new open green spaces have been identified.

With the densification of the Woden Valley, the land use requirements for the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the community needs to be considered. The proposed site for the expansion of the cemetery, between the cemetery and Yamba Drive, introduces a new barrier to the east west connectivity from the surrounding suburbs to the town centre, and the north south connectivity from Eddison Park to the athletics track. Rather than driving short distances from the surrounding suburbs to the town centre we would like to encourage cycling and walking. Unfortunately the cemetery at night can be scary and its expansion creates more inactive areas.

At the time of consultation for the proposed new cemetery on Long Gully Road, around 2009-10, the Mugga Lane dump was approaching capacity and it was anticipated that it would be closed. This scenario did not eventuate, so with the ongoing use of the dump, it may be appropriate to reconsider the location of a new cemetery.

With respect to the funding model for developing a new cemetery, section 2 of the ToR, the WVCC suggests that the ACT Government commits to the capital costs of construction with an appropriate level of cost recovery for the ongoing operation of the cemetery.

The WVCC welcomes the opportunity to appear at the public hearings to advance our position that a new cemetery should be developed rather than the short term solution of expanding the Woden Cemetery into Eddison Park's open green spaces. I can be contacted at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Fiona Carrick
President
Woden Valley Community Council