



# **Towards a Vision for West Belconnen**

Outcomes Report on the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop and the Planning and Design Forum  
11 - 14 November 2013

**Client:**  
The Riverview Group and Land Development Agency

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# 1 Executive Summary

In June 2013, the ACT Government announced an agreement with the Riverview Group to facilitate the planning and development of some 4,500 new homes in West Belconnen adjacent to the existing suburb of Holt. Since the announcement consultation has found the concurrent rezoning the ACT land generally east of Parkwood Road and the adjoining NSW land is logical and timely.

A significant step in the rezoning process is the development of a master plan underpinned by a range of technical studies. A preliminary draft master plan was developed over a four day period in November 2013, commencing with a Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop followed by a three day Planning and Design Forum (PDF).

The Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop was held at the Holt Community Hub on 11 November 2013. This was an interactive session designed to enable interested community members and stakeholder groups to express their concerns, ideas, and visions for the West Belconnen project.

Over 90 attendees participated in the workshop, including community members and stakeholder groups, as well as members of the project's consultant team. The majority of community participants were residents of the existing West Belconnen community, particularly Holt and Macgregor.

The outcomes of the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop became an important input to the Planning and Design Forum that was held over the following three days.

The PDF, held at the Sustainability Hub, CIT Bruce on the 12, 13 and 14 November was an interactive series of workshops which combined the skills and experience of decision makers, technical experts and key community representative to jointly resolve project challenges and explore design options that reflect the West Belconnen sustainability vision and the emerging community vision.

The preliminary draft master plan that evolved from the PDF is aimed at ensuring that the West Belconnen development will create an inspiring, diverse and sustainable community. It is seeking to apply best contemporary planning and design practice to create a 21st century garden suburb, built on the legacy of Canberra's Garden City Heritage.

This outcomes report documents the processes and outcomes of the Community and Stakeholder Visions Workshop and the Planning and Design Forum.

## 2 Introduction

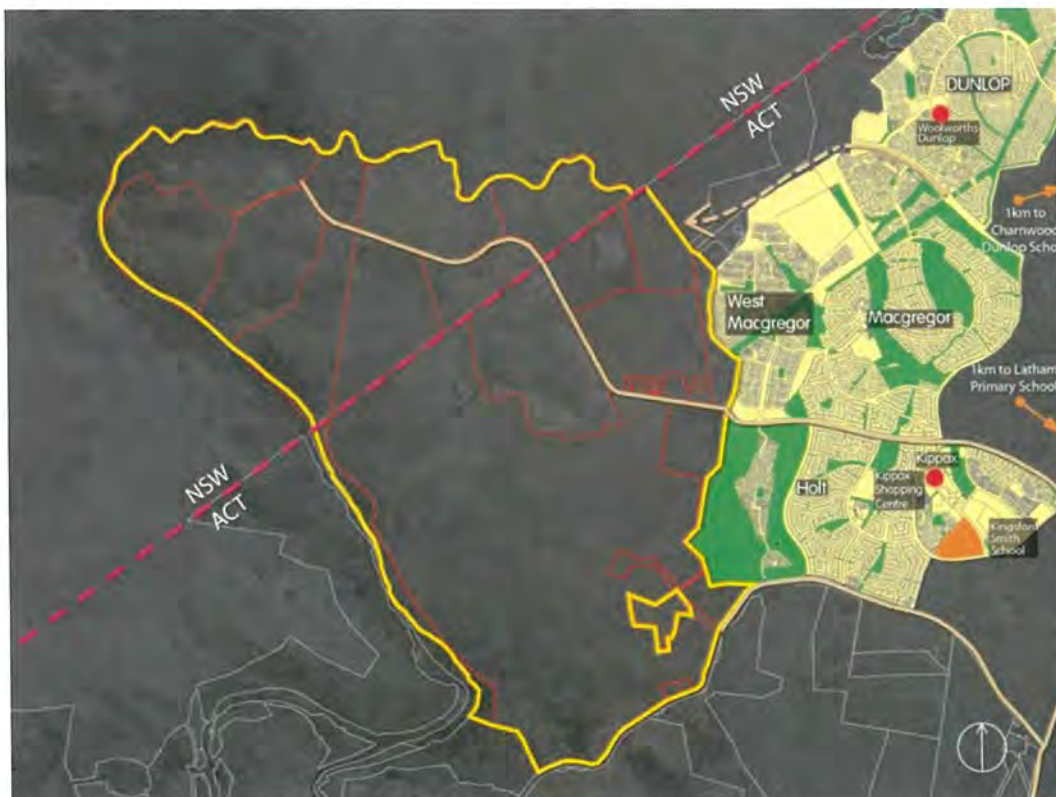
### 2.1 West Belconnen Project

In June 2013, the ACT Government announced an agreement with the Riverview Group, a locally owned land development company, to facilitate the planning and development of some 4,500 new homes in West Belconnen adjacent to the existing suburb of Holt in the ACT over the next 10 to 15 years.

Consultation undertaken since the announcement has found the concurrent rezoning of Parkwood land i.e. the ACT land generally east of Parkwood Road (including the Parkwood eggs site) and the adjoining NSW land is logical and timely. The adjoining NSW land is landlocked by the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek.

Preliminary planning work commenced on the 'investigation lands' in September 2013. The 'investigation lands' (Figure 1) includes the land north of Parkwood Road between the recently developed suburb of West Macgregor and the ACT border and the land south of Parkwood road between the Canberra sub-station and the Belconnen landfill site. It extends south around the Magpies golf club to Stockdill Drive and around the south side of the landfill site down to the Murrumbidgee river. It also includes land beyond the land fill site in NSW, on both sides of Parkwood road, contained on the north by Ginninderra Creek and on the south by the Murrumbidgee River.

**Figure 1** The 'investigation' lands (bordered in yellow)



The Riverview Group is the project manager for the planning of West Belconnen, acting on behalf of the ACT Government with respect to the ACT land, and on behalf of the developer for part of the NSW side.

The West Belconnen project will create an inspiring, diverse and sustainable community. It will seek to apply best contemporary planning and design practice to create a 21st century garden suburb, built on the legacy of Canberra's Garden City Heritage.

West Belconnen aims to be a world class sustainability project, and has registered as a PILOT project for the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star Communities rating tool.

The Riverview Group has assembled a multidisciplinary team of expert consultants (Appendix A) to work closely with the ACT and NSW Governments and Yass Valley Council in undertaking detailed planning investigations and technical studies for the proposed new community.

## 2.2 The Planning Process

The proposed rezoning of the West Belconnen site will involve changes to the planning controls that currently apply over the site, on both sides of the border. This means a change to the types of development permissible.

The West Belconnen project will be subjected to a thorough process of environmental assessment and planning review at Commonwealth, Territory, State and local government levels. Building on the substantial amount of work that has already been undertaken a "strategic assessment" under part 10 of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act will be prepared. This will be overseen by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment.

The Strategic Assessment will run in parallel with the three rezoning processes: The National Capital Plan, The Territory Plan, and Yass valley Shire Local Environment Plan will require amendment if the project is to proceed.

The EPBC assessment is concerned particularly with endangered and vulnerable species and ecological communities listed as such under the EPBC legislation. At west Belconnen these include the Pink Tailed Worm Lizard, Yellow Box Red Gum Grassy Woodland and the Golden Sun Moth. These are also listed under the ACT legislation.

The Strategic Assessment and subsequent EPBC approval (if granted) will satisfy both the requirements of the ACT legislation and the Commonwealth regarding threatened species and communities. This is a necessary pre-condition for the ACT rezoning. The environmental approvals will also be in place concurrently with the National Capital Plan amendment and the Yass Shire rezoning.

Other matters that are also important elements of the total environment such as social impacts, traffic, noise and odour, are required to be assessed under ACT and NSW legislation. These will be included in the planning report that will accompany the ACT rezoning proposal and the Local Environment Study documentation that will be prepared as part of the NSW rezoning process

Over the next few months, the project team will be working with all the relevant planning authorities to discuss the procedures associated with the rezoning of the site. These authorities are:

- » ACT Planning Authority
- » National Capital Authority
- » NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
- » Yass Valley Council

» Commonwealth Department of the Environment.

Should the outcome of the planning process be positive, amendments will be made to the National Capital Plan, the Territory Plan and the Yass Valley Planning Scheme to enable the project to proceed to the next stage. Each of these amendments is a separate formal process and will require community consultation.

Pending the outcome of the planning process, we could be ready to commence construction of the first stage in the ACT in late 2015, with the first residents moving in early 2016. A commencement date for the development of the NSW land is not yet determined.

## 2.3 Stakeholder Engagement

The West Belconnen project team, comprising the Land Development Agency (LDA) the Riverview Group (TRG) and their consultants, recognise the complexity and regional significance of this project. The team are committed to effective stakeholder and community engagement that is both meaningful and inclusive.

Stakeholder and community engagement will occur in both NSW and the ACT and will include a range of perspectives and interests that are both local and regional.

The approach to engagement on this project is guided by seven core values:

- Involve a broad range of stakeholders and the community by utilising a diverse range of engagement activities.
- Promote the West Belconnen project and its consultation process in a number of different ways to ensure those affected or interested in the project can get involved.
- Create engagement opportunities that are relevant and produce meaningful data that can feed directly into the planning process.
- Engage early in the process and provide opportunities for people to participate before plans have been approved and final decisions are made.
- Design an engagement process that works closely with the multidisciplinary consultant team to ensure engagement opportunities are wrapped around key project milestones by:
  - Working with the urban design team to make engagement an active part of the design process
  - Integration of engagement with the community and sustainability planning processes
  - Aligning engagement with Green Star – Communities PILOT rating tool requirements
  - Creating a 'cumulative' process where the key 'building blocks' of the planning strategy (vision, design principles, scenarios, preferred options, etc.) are developed with input from key stakeholders
- Provide feedback to stakeholders and the community to demonstrate how their input has been used.
- Assess and evaluate our engagement processes to ensure they are achieving the best possible outcome for the area.

## 2.4 This outcomes report

This outcomes report documents the processes and outcomes of the Community and Stakeholder Vision workshop held on 11 November 2013 and the Planning and Design Forum that took place on 12, 13 and 14 November 2013.

The report has been prepared by Elton Consulting on behalf of the Riverview Group and the Land Development Agency. It will be publicly available on the West Belconnen project website at [www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au](http://www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au)



## 3 Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop

The Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop, held at the Holt Community Hub on 11 November 2013, was an interactive session designed to enable interested community members and stakeholder groups to find out more about the proposed development at West Belconnen. It also provided an opportunity for participants to express their concerns, ideas, and visions for the West Belconnen project.

### 3.1 Participants

The event was designed to involve both known stakeholders and the general public to allow for an exchange of ideas and opinions on the project.

Invitations by email and phone call were issued to 'known project stakeholders' in the lead up to the event. "Known project stakeholders" included individuals and groups who had previously been engaged in some capacity in the lead up to the Government's announcement (including neighbours of the site) or peak groups.

The stakeholder groups in attendance included:

- ACT Shelter
- Belconnen Magpies Sports Club
- Friends of the Grasslands
- Ginninderra Catchment Group
- Ginninderra Falls Association
- Greening Australia
- Kippax Uniting Church
- Living Streets
- Master Builders Association (ACT)
- Parkwood Horse Paddock
- Strathnairn Arts Association
- Student Planners Society
- United Firefighters Union
- Uniting Care Kippax
- University of Canberra
- West Belconnen Health Co-op
- Zero Waste

A broad range of channels were utilised to inform the local and wider community of the event and seek their involvement. These included:

- A 'West Belconnen Community News' newsletter distributed to all houses in Holt, Higgins and Macgregor.
- Newspaper advertisements in the Canberra Times, the Chronicle, and the Yass Tribune (Appendix B).
- The West Belconnen social media sites on Facebook and Twitter.
- Online event advertisements on the ACT Government's Time to Talk website, eventbrite, ActewAGL/Mix 106.3 Community Switch, and the Belconnen Community Council Calendar.
- Community emails distributed via the West Belconnen Health Co-op.
- Flyers distributed through Kippax Uniting Church (Appendix C).
- Posters and flyers displayed at Kippax, Holt, and Higgins shopping centres, and Kippax and Belconnen libraries (Appendix D).

Over 90 attendees participated in the workshop, including community members and stakeholder groups, as well as members of the project's consultant team. The majority of community participants were residents of the existing West Belconnen community, particularly Holt and Macgregor.



## 3.2 Program and process

The session was divided roughly into three sessions. The first session provided background information on the project. This was followed by a short question and answer session and the third session allowed communities members and stakeholders to provide feedback to the project team.

Session 1 began with an introduction to the event from Brian Elton of Elton Consulting. This was followed by David Maxwell from the Riverview Group who gave an overview of the West Belconnen vision and proposal. Rodney Moss from Cox Architects and Stephen Moore from RobertsDay then provided an insight into the existing vision for a '21<sup>st</sup> Century Garden Suburb', and Martine White from RobertsDay explained the Planning and Design Forum (PDF) process.

Session 3 was an interactive workshop that enabled participants to express their concerns, ideas and visions. This was achieved through the use of table discussions and feedback, centred on the questions:

- In thinking about West Belconnen, what are the most important things we need to keep in mind as we plan and design this new community?
- We want to make West Belconnen the best place it can be. What are your ideas for helping this to happen?

Participants were also invited to write their ideas on cards provided, which were then placed on an 'ideas wall' displayed during the Community and Stakeholder Vision session and throughout the entire Planning and Design Forum.



## 3.3 Outcomes

The issues and ideas raised throughout this community workshop, outlined below, were used to inform the technical sessions at the PDF that were held over the following three days. This was achieved through a feedback session on Day 1, facilitated by Brian Elton of Elton Consulting, which explored these issues and ideas, and provided an opportunity for the technical team and key stakeholders to reflect on the outcomes of the community session. Moreover, the “ideas wall” remained on display throughout the entire PDF, and as such it provided a point of reference for the design team to continuously reflect on the issues and ideas raised by the community.

### 3.3.1 Issues

Throughout the workshop and particularly in response to the question “in thinking about West Belconnen, what are the most important things we need to keep in mind as we plan and design this new community?” participants raised a number of key issues for the project team to take into consideration throughout the planning and design process. These issues are outlined in the table below along with a response from the project team.

**Table 1 Issues raised at the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop**

Issue	Response
The ability of existing roads – particularly Southern Cross Drive and Drake Brockman Drive – to cope with increased traffic, both during the construction phase and thereafter.	Work is being undertaken by road experts on the planning of roads in and out of the new development. It is anticipated that some roads may need to be upgraded.
The area’s natural assets including the river corridor and Ginninderra Falls should be maintained.	The iconic Murrumbidgee River corridor will be protected and enhanced, with key ecological features conserved and the landscape managed under unique stewardship arrangements. The corridor itself will connect with an integrated open space network that weaves through the developed land.
Ginninderra Falls and the Murrumbidgee River should be accessible to the public.	<p>The Ginninderra Falls Association are advocating for the creation of a Murrumbidgee-Ginninderra Gorges National Park. The Riverview Group hope to be active participants in this discussion.</p> <p>There will be public access to the river corridor. However some areas will not be accessible for conservation reasons.</p>
Concerns expressed regarding suburban sprawl and “sterile,” “lego-town” suburbs.	These concerns were taken into consideration throughout the PDF process, and diversity in housing design has been highlighted as a key opportunity in the design of the master plan.
The need to provision of infrastructure for sustainable transport options was raised as an issue.	Part of the vision for West Belconnen is to feature a series of sustainable transport initiatives. Public transport is at the core of this, and the layout of the local precincts, roads and path networks are being developed so that

Issue	Response
	<p>efficient and attractive public transport services can be provided.</p> <p>Riverview is working with the ACT Government to formulate a bus servicing strategy that will ensure quality public transport is available at all stages during the growth of West Belconnen. This will include the expansion of bus services for the new residents moving in, and continual improvements to the local bus network as the population increases.</p>
<p>Concerns expressed regarding the integration of a new development with the existing West Belconnen community.</p>	<p>This project aims to create an integrated community between the new residential development and the established surrounding suburbs. This means sharing existing services and additional ones that will be provided in the later stages of the development.</p>
<p>The provision of local employment opportunities was highlighted as an issue.</p>	<p>The project will create growth in the area and provide a stimulus for employment in the housing and related industries. A growing community will provide flow-on benefits for local industries such as retail, health and education. The existing recycling and semi-rural activities focused along Parkwood Road, which currently employ about 200 people will remain and grow.</p> <p>A employment study is being undertaken as part of the technical work being undertaken for the rezoning.</p>
<p>Concerns were expressed that the current Kippax centre will be unable to cope with an increase in population.</p>	<p>Kippax will continue as the principal centre for the West Belconnen area. A planning review of the Kippax centre is being undertaken in consultation with the community in parallel with the master planning process for West Belconnen.</p>
<p>Concerns expressed that existing schools will be unable to cope with projected population increases, and the provision of new schools was highlighted as a key issue (including preschools).</p>	<p>In the initial stages of the development, students will be able to attend schools in the surrounding suburbs. As the development grows, it is anticipated that there will be educational facilities available inside the development.</p> <p>Planning for educational services will be undertaken as part of a comprehensive Community Plan. .</p>
<p>Concerns expressed that the challenges of developing in a bushfire corridor need to be considered, and the need for fire protection</p>	<p>The Riverview Group and LDA are very conscious of the importance of bushfire protection, and have enlisted the assistance of</p>

Issue	Response
was raised as a key issue.	a bushfire expert in planning and designing for the related challenges. Bushfire experts from the ACT and NSW have also participated in the planning and design forum.

### 3.3.2 Ideas

As well as highlighting issues of concern, the workshop also provided an opportunity for community members and stakeholder groups to express their ideas and vision for this new community. The community's ideas are outlined below, and are then presented in figure 2.

#### River Corridor and Ginninderra Falls

The river corridor and Ginninderra Falls emerged as a key theme in community and stakeholder ideas. These ideas particularly centred on having Ginninderra Falls re-opened for public access, the creation of a national park, and the provision of recreation areas within the river corridor. Other ideas related to the river corridor included the provision of water quality control ponds along drainage lines to protect the Murrumbidgee River, and to ensure that the river corridor is resistant to erosion.

#### Housing

A number of ideas also emerged related to housing, and particularly the provision of a mix of affordable housing, catering for a diverse range of people and families. Community members also expressed concern regarding suburban sprawl, and emphasised that housing design should be diverse, creative, and attractive. It was also suggested that housing design should ensure strong connectivity between the built environment and the natural environment.

#### Sustainable Transport

Another key theme to emerge was the provision of infrastructure for sustainable transport, and that public transport should be considered throughout the planning and design process. Numerous ideas with an emphasis on reducing reliance on cars were raised, such as the provision of bus stops with bike lockers, and an extensive cycling and foot path network. It was also suggested that the current design process should consider the potential future development of express bus routes and a light rail corridor.

#### Community Building and Place Making

The concept of community building and place making was raised as a key idea, including the provision of spaces for shopping, education, leisure, food production, eating, and work. It was suggested that these social spaces should be intergenerational, as well as enabling people with a disability to participate in all aspects of community life. It was suggested that the design should provide for churches and other spaces for worship and spirituality, and should also take indigenous culture and history into consideration.

#### Sport and Recreation

The provision of community spaces for sport and recreation was also highlighted as an important idea. A number of participants commented that the design should provide sporting and recreation facilities, including walking trails, cycling trails, horse riding trails, dog parks, a public pool, and an extreme sports hub. Other ideas included the provision of open recreational spaces along the river

corridor, and wide suburban streets safe for recreational use. A comment was also made that the design needs to engage with the existing golf course.

### **Resilience, Energy and Water**

A significant idea to emerge was the resilience of the development, particularly to the potential challenges of climate change. It was commented that the design should maximise alternative energy generation opportunities, including solar and wind. Suggestions were made that the landfill site and power line easements provide opportunities for solar energy generation, and that housing designs could incorporate compulsory solar panels.

Water reuse was another key idea, with some stakeholders suggesting that the design should consider the reuse of stormwater and recycled effluent for irrigation, and the use of recycled water in homes. Green waste collection and reuse was also suggested.

### **Urban Agriculture**

The provision of facilities for community agriculture, community gardens, and urban food production on a commercial scale was a key idea. It was also commented that the landfill site and power line easements provide opportunities for food production.

### **Name**

Lastly, the idea of a new name for the development was raised as an important idea. Community members requested an inspirational and attractive name. It was also commented that the name should be distinctive, and reflect the grandeur of the site.

## West Belconnen The BIG IDEA



## 4 Planning and Design Forum

### 4.1 About the Planning and Design Forum

The Planning and Design Forum (PDF) was an interactive series of workshops which combined the expertise of decision makers, experts and the community to jointly resolve project challenges and explore design options that reflect the West Belconnen Sustainability Vision.

The Forum provided an alternative to the conventional sequential planning process where decision makers have limited involvement in the upfront design outcomes and resolution of issues. Instead, the Forum brought community, government, decision makers, land owners and technical experts together in an inclusive and transparent manner early in the planning process to develop the best outcomes for the site, the community and landowners.

The Forum was a highly productive event where all stakeholders worked together to identify issues and reach consensus on a range of solutions to identified project challenges. Bringing together all the main stakeholders in one place at one time allowed for open and constructive discussion, culminating in a shared project understanding and sense of ownership.

### 4.2 Participants

The PDF was an invitation only event which strove for broad representation of technical experts including Government and community representatives. Throughout the Forum the project team worked with in excess of 100 stakeholders including representatives from the Commonwealth, ACT and NSW Governments, Yass Council, community representatives and landowners to explore development opportunities and progress the planning and design of West Belconnen. A full list of participating agencies and organisations is at Appendix E.

### 4.3 The program of events

The Forum was held over the three days, 12, 13 and 14 November 2013 at the Sustainability Hub, Canberra Institute of Technology in Bruce. This venue was selected due to the close proximity to the West Belconnen site, enabling participants to immerse themselves in the physical setting, gaining a deeper understanding of the unique attributes of the site and its context.

The program was designed to maximise opportunities for interaction between stakeholders and the design team. In summary:

- Day 1 provided an opportunity for context setting and included a familiarisation site visit.
- Day 2 was split into three concurrent sessions, allowing for detailed discussion on specific issues, culminating in a plenary discussion on Governance and Stewardship. A pin-up session was held at the conclusion of the day at which the public could view preliminary designs of the draft master plan and share their views with the design team.
- Day 3 was a closed session at which the core design team continued to develop the initial draft master plan, incorporating the ideas generated throughout the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop and the Planning and Design Forum. The day concluded

with a 'community open house', to which the public was invited to hear about outcomes from the Forum and to view the draft master plan.

## 4.4 Day 1: Tuesday 12 November

### 4.4.1 Site Visit and Context setting

The Forum commenced with a series of welcome presentations. The Riverview Group and LDA shared their aspirations for the site and provided an overview of the project including the process so far, project timing, rezoning and the Green Star Communities pilot.

Participants were then taken on a tour of the site to ensure a shared understanding and to establish common reference points for discussion during the Forum.



### 4.4.2 Afternoon Sessions

After lunch a series of plenary interactive sessions were held, which aimed to further explore innovative and sustainable opportunities with the stakeholders and to share work already undertaken by the West Belconnen project team.

Rodney Moss from Cox Architects presented *The History of Canberra as a Garden City* and Stephen Moore from RobertsDay presented *West Belconnen: The 21st Garden Suburb*. Participants then discussed and explored the possibilities for creating an innovative, diverse and sustainable community of international significance.

Stephen Moore of RobertsDay then facilitated a session titled *Issues/Opportunities/Innovation* at which participants discussed and explored the current issues, opportunities and innovative responses to inform the master plan design.

The next session, *Towards a vision for the community*, provided an opportunity for participants to discuss emerging 'Big Ideas' from the consultant team and the community. Steven Burgess, MRCagney presented the 'Lost Art of Making Streets for People', setting the scene for discussion on building healthy communities through innovative design.

The final session for the day was a feedback session facilitated by Brian Elton of Elton Consulting. Participants were invited to reflect on the outcomes from day 1 and the community/stakeholder session from the previous evening and share their insights.

## **Day 1 Outcomes**

Some issues and 'Big Ideas' that emerged from Day 1 included:

### **Sustainable Transport**

One theme to emerge was sustainable transport. There was a call for public transport to be considered up front in the planning process. Participants strongly expressed that, for behavioural change to occur, accessible public transport should be provided from the outset. Ensuring dedicated corridors and integrating public transport planning with schools and shops was also considered to be a priority. It was emphasised that West Belconnen should be a 'car optional' development.

Accessibility for large vehicles, including emergency vehicles and buses was flagged as an issue, with West Magregor cited as a poor practice example. To counter this, some participants expressed that liveability was more important and that streets should be designed for "people not garbage trucks".

One specific suggestion was to open the development area up more broadly to NSW, with bridges and a cable car.

### **Economic/Employment**

A further theme to emerge was centred on employment. Several participants expressed the importance of maximising employment for the new and existing community. This was seen to be essential for ensuring economic sustainability. Mixing commercial uses with the environment and conservation was also seen as an opportunity, with the proposition of a city farm that could include compost/commercial prospects.

### **Housing**

Themes to emerge around housing include flexible and innovative housing models to cater for diverse housing requirements. One example offered was that of shared housing. Participants further expressed that housing (and other buildings and infrastructure) should be designed to accommodate generational changes and that design should account for adaptive change.

## **Water and Energy**

The provision of water quality control was considered to be of primary importance. Maximising the use of our own catchment was viewed as key to achieving this. Water recycling also emerged as a key priority, as did the use of renewable energy options such as solar and wind.

## **Education**

Linking education to the environment was a continually emerging theme. This was seen as an opportunity to provide exemplary environmental management and creative conservation that could include an educational element. One idea that was discussed was that of a living River Education Centre. An associated issue was the need to determine what level of access people should have to the river. Another suggestion was made that education and marketing should be utilised to encourage sustainable lifestyles.

## **Make 'something special' of limitations**

The perceived limitations of the site were noted including the landfill and transmission lines but participants recognised the opportunities that could be available. Suggestions for the landfill site include extreme sports, such as BMX riding and a city farm, farmer's market and community gardens. Ideas for the transmission lines included bike, pedestrian, horse trails linking the river corridor with the landfill site and potential for easements to create both physical and visual barriers between residential areas.

## **Culture and Place**

The importance of creating public spaces to foster a sense of community was noted, with an emphasis on liveability and wellbeing. Participants highlighted the importance of multifunctional spaces in facilitating a shared sense of community. This is particularly important given the objective of creating a mixed and diverse community, emphasising the need for intergenerational spaces. It was also noted that culture and place should extend across both the new community and the existing West Belconnen community, pointing toward the idea of wider West Belconnen community wellbeing. The importance of establishing community places early was noted, and Googong was pointed to as a successful example.

## **The River Corridor**

The opening of the river corridor and Ginninderra Falls to the public was commented on favourably, with participants noting the need to define what level of access the public should have to the corridor. It was also noted that both existing and new community members should have access to the river corridor, enabling the integration of the development with the existing West Belconnen community. A suggestion was made to connect Ginninderra Creek traffic to the falls and the Murrumbidgee River. It was commented that the development boundary along the river corridor needs certainty, and needs to enable the access and egress of emergency vehicles in the case of bushfire. A call was made for the establishment of a large National Park, extending to the North and West. A suggestion was also made that urban quality control ponds should be included in the design, to protect the river and provide amenity.

## **Bushfire Management**

The potential vulnerability of the site to bushfire was emphasised, and it was suggested that the development footprint needs to be balanced with bushfire management considerations. It was highlighted that fire mitigation needs to be a consideration throughout the design process.

## 4.5 Day 2: Wednesday 13 November

Day Two comprised three streams of concurrent technical sessions aimed at translating ideas and expertise from Forum participants into an initial draft master plan. Leaders of each session presented a short power point and shared preliminary ideas for the development of the site as a prelude to a more detailed consideration around key issues.

A range of Government representatives participated in each session to provide input and guidance from a Government perspective. An understanding of current Government policy and practice, and the willingness of Government representatives to work with Forum participants to deliver best practice outcomes was essential to the success of the Forum.

While the technical sessions were taking place, the design team developed the draft master plan, responding in real time to issues and solutions arising from the technical sessions. At the close of day 2, the public was invited to attend a pin up session to view the design team's progress on the draft master plan. The process and outcomes for each session are detailed below.

### Stream A

#### 4.5.1 Session A1: Movement Network + Municipal Services

##### Session Leader

Rhys Davies, AECOM

##### Aims

The aims of this session were to:

- Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project, and the innovative approaches to the movement network that we will be exploring in order to achieve these with reference to the Green Star sustainability initiatives.
- Identify the streets and roads that we would like to see at West Belconnen and discuss what a "good" street/road might look like and the cost implications in comparison to a "standard" street/road.
- Review the existing ACT controls and ACT and interstate best practice to ascertain whether any improvements or amendments are desirable to enable delivery of best practice movement network and infrastructure elements in accordance with the objectives of the West Belconnen Sustainability Vision.

##### Outcomes

Participants discussed and agreed the key issues and opportunities for consideration:

##### Issues and Opportunities

*Engineering services master planning for the entire development including ACT and NSW land.*

- Engineering Services master planning for entire development in ACT and NSW to confirm servicing feasibility/constraints for the proposed development.
- Master planning of services in ACT to fully service NSW.
- Currently preparing services master plans based on ACT Standards as servicing will come from the ACT. Actual design standards for the development to be considered and made consistent for ACT and NSW.

- Cross border agreements between relevant ACT/NSW Government Agencies and Service Authorities to provide certainty to long term servicing of the entire development and design of these services as development progresses.
- Review Authority potable water demand and sewerage generation rate in light of proposed WSUD water cycle strategy.
- Design to minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

*Develop best practice design standards for services reticulation within the streetscape for this development applicable to both ACT and NSW to support the proposed street typologies.*

- Consider the overall development as a whole to support the proposed street cross-section typologies and corresponding services locations in the streetscape.
- The servicing in verges need to be considered in the context of the overall development concept and design planning outcomes.
- Review TAMS typical offsets of above ground verge infrastructure including trees and street light to path and kerb, and paths to tree and property boundary.
- Consider alternative locations of services in verges including under footpath, in road pavement and in front yard of residential properties.
- Consider maintenance implications of alternative streetscapes including servicing options.
- Consider whole of life cost of alternative streetscape, verge and servicing options.
- Consider allocation of space within the verge for a future service such as piped rubbish vacuum system or District wide heating/cooling system.

#### *Constructability*

- Timing of construction of services, ties, paths, driveways and trees to be reviewed. This is a driver to the location of some services, in particular shared trench.
- Specification for construction of services in the road pavement to prevent damage during construction and settlement of road pavement.

#### *Services Materials*

- Pipe materials for sustainability. In particular plastic stormwater pipe in lieu of concrete pipe.

#### *Governance*

- Potentially different management system to improve constructed quality on West Belconnen.
- Additional inspections of key infrastructure during construction to provide Authorities with more assurance of quality of construction practices, particularly for new servicing arrangements such as services in roads and blocks, path and driveway levels. This could be by a Riverview Group inspector.
- Additional inspections of on block service connections to reduce risk of cross-connections and damage by builders and support the adoption of a third pipe and reduced water and sewerage flow rates. This could be by a Riverview Group inspector.
- Partnership with Authorities to get the streetscape and corresponding servicing right from the start of the project.
- Risk sharing between developer and TAMS of construction of alternative services designs where developer may take on risk of defect rectification for first 5 years.

## MOVEMENT NETWORK



West **Belconnen** | A 21st century garden suburb.

## MAJOR ACCESS



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MAJOR ROADS  
NEW

ACT  
Economic Development

ACT  
Economic Development

## 4.5.2 Session A2: Sustainable Transport

### Session Leader

Barry Watkins, MRCagney

### Aims

The aims of this session were to:

- Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project, and the sustainable transport initiatives that we will be exploring in order to achieve these with reference to the Green Star sustainability initiatives.
- Review the existing ACT controls and ACT and interstate best practice to ascertain whether any improvements or amendments are desirable to enable delivery of best practice public transport, pedestrian and cycling networks and green travel in accordance with the objectives of the West Belconnen Sustainability Vision.

### Outcomes

Participants discussed and agreed the following issues and opportunities:

#### Issues

- Important to consider learnings from the Kingston Foreshore experience.
- Changing the perception of convenience is critical to changing behavior. There is no shortcut, rather a matter of convenience. Need to start at the street level.
- Diversity of land use plays an important role.
- Also needs to be a change in the culture of transport.
- Need to balance all factors including waste collection, emergency access, bikes, and footpaths and then proceed with engineering.
- Sheltered bike racks are the preferred arrangement for cyclists. Successful implementation will be dependent on changing behavior and change of culture to using bike and ride.
- Need to consider competing aspects such as cyclists and bus lanes. It is important to consider the priority on infrastructure investment and how to utilise it properly.
- It would be useful to consider the *City to Town Centre Discussion Paper* when released.
- Need to consider the implications of the Ageing population.

#### Opportunities

- Develop an integrated transport plan.
- Early provision of public transport.
- Consider streets as places for exchange.
- Develop streets that support land uses.
- Consider whole of life costs of services and infrastructure.
- Develop an integrated and inclusive movement network.
- Marketing suggestions:
  - Provide a free bicycle to every household, those with one car or houses with one car shelter, on the condition that it will be put to good use.
- Promote mountain biking activities at Ginninderra Falls Recreation Park will potentially increase cycling interest and attract relevant business to the area.

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT



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PUBLIC TRANSPORT

2011



ACT  
Government  
Economic Development



### 4.5.3 Session A3: Water, Sewerage and Electricity

#### Stream Leader

Peter Lewis, Brown Consulting

#### Aims

The aims of this session were to:

- Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project and the innovative approaches to the provision of infrastructure that we will be exploring in order to achieve these with reference to the Green Star sustainability initiatives.
- Review the existing ACT controls and ACT and interstate best practice to ascertain whether any improvements or amendments are desirable to enable delivery of best practice infrastructure in accordance with the objectives of the West Belconnen Sustainability Vision.

#### Outcomes

Participants discussed and agreed the following issues and opportunities:

#### Issues

- Challenge of the project will be to adopt best practice for sewer, water, roads and infrastructure.
- In thinking about change, it is important to consider the whole system as a package. It is not about changing the roads and the sewer system; it is about changing the whole thinking and aiming to achieve something different.
- We have to look at the way we design, sticking to the basic principle as to what we are providing.
- Risk is an important aspect from the ACT Government point of view.
- There are known issues in relation to quality assurance (QA) in some developments in the ACT.
- There may be a chance in this development process to look at a different management system and how we can improve the QA system to achieve better outcomes.
- Streets are not just about services, they also impact on land take. The pavement width is a big ticket item in terms of plain construction cost and also incurs a massive greenhouse cost, and then maintenance cost.
- Trees are also an important element from a sustainability point of view, meaning it will be able to reduce 4 degrees of the total temperature in the whole estate.
- There is an emerging issue where big trees are not allowed, but the pavement width is wide enough to accommodate them.
- Passive watering of trees is very crucial to strengthen the soil. It is important to allow massive clays if there are going to be trees. In this dry climate, bassel clays in Melbourne and similarities in Adelaide, trees especially eucalyptus trees will extend their root to look for water.
- Concept of district heating/cooling and Hydraulic Heating - very good reduction in greenhouse emission.

#### Opportunities

- It would be good practice to produce a table to show the cost and risk, compare the maintenance costs for the chosen suburbs in the 20 years, compare the social costs of the

different designs, and then show that what we are planning to do will be better than previous examples, rather than comparing shortfalls between designs.

- Another factor to consider in the design of the street is that the street is also a water collector. A possibility to resolve leaking pipes solution could be to reduce the size of the pipe and have less leaking pipes.
- West Belconnen is a very different model. This is the first opportunity where we are all in partnership. Usually we inherit a project that has already gone through a structured plan and ready to build, but for West Belconnen, we can actually start from design to what we are delivering and get the right implementation.

## Stream B

### 4.5.4 Session B1: Public Open Space Framework

#### Session Leader

Adrian McGregor, McGregor Coxall

#### Aims

The aims of this session were to:

- Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project and the potential innovative approaches to the provision of open space that we will be exploring in order to achieve these, with reference to the Green star sustainability initiatives.
- Review the existing ACT housing controls and ACT and interstate best practice to ascertain whether any improvements or amendments are desirable to enable delivery of open space in accordance with the objectives of the West Belconnen Sustainability Vision.
- In relation to the River Corridor, explore:
  - Opportunities for the future use and management of the River Corridor.
  - Discuss its role in the context of the National Capital Open Space System (as per National Capital Plan) and the connectivity with the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee River Corridors, and the connection via Ginninderra Creek to Mulligans Flat at Gungahlin.
- Discuss and explore other matters including:
  - Potential uses including walking, cycling, picnicking, bird watching, grazing etc.
  - Pink Tailed Worm Lizard habitat (nationally endangered species).
  - Yellow Box Red Gum Grassy Woodland (nationally endangered ecological community).
  - Implications of retaining grazing throughout the River Corridor as a management measure.
  - Bushfire management.
  - Environmental Management Trust (as a prelude to the Governance and Stewardship Session).
  - Relationship between River Corridor and the balance of the site including linkage opportunities presented by power line easements, connectivity with the landfill site, Belconnen Farm Heritage Precinct and Strathnairn.

- Past and future use of Ginninderra Falls.
- Relationship between the River Corridor and future residential development, including connectivity and edge management.

## Outcomes

Participants identified the following as key issues and opportunities to be considered:

## Issues

- There is a need for parks and open spaces to connect with existing open space networks in surrounding suburbs.
  - An audit of existing sports grounds in Belconnen is needed to determine usage and capacity.
- The aerodynamics of the study site should be taken into consideration to ensure that parks and gardens are able to minimise wind effects.
- There is a need to consider how open spaces will be managed
  - A not for profit environmental organisation, which could be registered as such and allow tax deduction of levy and contribution to trust.
- The potential commercial use of the river corridor needs to be integrated with conservation goals.
- Stormwater is not part of Murray Darling Water Cap, while discharge from LMTP is part of the water cap. Therefore reuse of effluent from LMTP negatively impacts on ACT Cap. ACAC have demanded the availability of ACTEW water more efficient than the reuse and recycling of stormwater. In essence stormwater reuse is subsidised by residents.
- Issues surrounding small, single-use parks were identified.
  - Maintenance is an issue with smaller parks and spaces. If they are not maintained to a high standard they become unattractive for users.
  - Large multi-use spaces can be more attractive. John Knight Memorial Park was identified as a good example, incorporating basketball courts, gym equipment, nature, playgrounds, open spaces, and BBQs.
  - The importance of intergenerational, multi-use spaces was noted.
- There is a need to look at recreational facilities in the river corridor, as part of the EDP process for residential development.
- Other issues noted included costing, safety, maintenance, and social acceptance.

## Opportunities

- The design of parks and open spaces was highlighted as an opportunity for something outstanding, not standard playground equipment but something more adventurous. The national arboretum play space was noted as a good example.
- Opportunities for the incorporation of urban agriculture into open spaces.
  - 'Urban Agriculture' becomes a new statutory category of land use (ESDD starting to think along those lines).
  - Likely to need three or four community gardens across the entire area.
- Suggested uses for the river corridor included walking, biking, equestrian, and BMX trails, water sports, and education.

# NATURAL HABITAT



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City of Belconnen



- Albury Wodonga Parklands was highlighted as a good example of open space management.
- Opportunities for the creation of a local loop for the Bicentennial National Trail and links to Belconnen Pony Club.
- Opportunity for the incorporation of Ginninderra Falls into the public open space network. Suggestions included a café and picnic area to establish this as a social and natural attraction.
- Potential for the creation of a smaller area district sporting complex, providing that playing surfaces can accommodate higher usage.
- Sullivan's Creek ponds in O'Connor wetlands were also highlighted as a good example, incorporating habitat, water cleansing, play equipment, and as a visual asset in medium density housing.
- The use of native grasses was identified as an opportunity to reduce maintenance and other costs.
- The recreational spaces at Yerrabi ponds, Gunghalin, were identified as a good example.
- Dual use of public open space, pocket park, links to bus/public transport, community garden, Community Irrigated Recreation Park within suburbs
- The importance of paths in open spaces was highlighted, accounting for potential uses such as bikes, rollerblades, jogging, walking, BMX, skating, and boot camps.

## 4.5.5 Session B2: Waste Water Recycling

### Session Leader

Julien Lepetit, AECOM

### Aims

The aims of this session were to:

- Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project, and the innovative approaches to waste water recycling that we will be exploring in order to achieve these, with reference to the Green Star sustainability initiatives.
- Review the existing ACT controls and ACT and interstate best practice to ascertain whether any improvements or amendments are desirable to enable delivery of the best practice water recycling consistent with the West Belconnen Sustainability Vision.

### Outcomes

Participants discussed and agreed the following as key issues and opportunities for consideration:

### Issues and Opportunities

#### *Rainwater for hot water supply*

- Address concerns from ACT Health regarding water quality and public health safety (pathogens, temperature requirements for sterilisation, health impact).
- Investigate increased energy consumption associated with higher temperature hot water supply.

- Prepare information package re: available systems, commercial products that would allow the proposed supply of hot water with rainwater.

*Confirm the household budget corresponding to the energy and water consumption under the BAU (ACT WSUD Code) and the recommended approach (with rainwater to hot water supply).*

- Estimate a Business and Usual (BAU) household budget for water and energy consumption.
- Estimate a budget under the proposed strategy with rainwater to hot water supply.

*Maintenance and operability of the proposed rainwater to hot water systems in the long term.*

- Explore building regulation; and
- Third party utility entity etc. to maintain the long term performance and safety of the rainwater to hot water supply.

*Third pipe network across the project to distribute harvested and treated stormwater for all non-potable demands in the household (toilet flushing, laundry, outdoor irrigation, aircon)*

- Investigate the ACT Plumbing Codes and check the feasibility of third pipe connection to households.
- Investigate the ACT Estate Development and services codes to check the feasibility requirements for a third pipe network among other services.
- Explore ACT Health requirements for treatment of the harvested stormwater for reticulation to households for non-potable demands.

*Firefighting water demand supplied using the treated harvested stormwater. Need for water to be of sufficient quality to use as aerosol. Fire services require approval from ACT Health and meeting NSW guidelines for approval to be considered.*

- Confirm the preparedness of Fire Services to use harvested stormwater providing it meets the ACT and NSW Health requirements.
- Verify ACT Health and NSW water quality requirements for safe aerosol application.

*Investigate the potential infrastructure savings associated with connection of firefighting demand to the third pipe network as opposed to mains potable water.*

- Evaluate potential cost savings to be achieved by removing firefighting demand from the design requirements of the potable water network.
- Evaluate the potential costing implications of supplying firefighting demands from the third pipe network mains.

*100% roof collection and charged downpipes.*

- Confirm who the relevant authority is to mandate 100% roof capture in the ACT (ESDD?) and NSW.
- Confirm with relevant authority what the best instrument would be to mandate the 100% roof capture
- 100% roof capture will likely require charged downpipes. Need to check the building code for guidelines on downpipes.

*Recycled water reuse for food production/irrigation - license conditions and health risk assessment.*

- Discuss conditions of access to water from LMWQQC (licensing, costs).

- Undertake risk assessment for food production using treated recycled water and potential for any further treatment of the water to achieve increase water quality.
- Prepare a discussion paper/body of evidence of use of recycled water for food production.

*Centralised stormwater harvesting scheme/infrastructure requires testing and preliminary sizing for the water transfer infrastructure, O&M costs.*

- Prepare catchment breakdown of stormwater measures.
- Model reliability/sizing of each measure.
- Model inter-balancing of flows and reliability.
- Size and design water transfer infrastructure including header tank location.

*Conditions of granting a third party license for the operation of the third pipe network by the ICRC (Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission) in the ACT and IPART (Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal) in NSW.*

- Hold meetings with both organisations to outline the objectives and reasons behind the third pipe network.
- Discuss and agree the requirements to be met for a license to be granted in the future.

*The ACT Government TAMS services may not be supportive of the "green infrastructure" proposal on the basis of the increased cost associated with the maintenance of higher quality urban open space and associated WSUD measures.*

- Benchmark the ACT open space maintenance budget with other capital cities in Australia to evaluate the current funding levels for open space maintenance in the Territory.
- Develop estimate of maintenance cost for the Green Infrastructure at West Belconnen.
- Explore and monetarise the environmental services and potential economic returns generated by the Green Infrastructure.

*Rainwater tanks - Cost Benefit Analysis*

- Establish the no rainwater tank (RWT) cost and benefit baseline
- Establish the RWT for non- potable internal demand (as per WSUD Code)
- Establish the RWT for hot water supply (as per recommended strategy)

*Green Infrastructure and recommended strategy benefits towards micro-climate management and reduced temperature.*

- Model the potential contribution to lower temperature micro-climate in a typical West Belconnen street.
- Estimate the potential energy, carbon and cost saving associated with the recommended strategy and BAU WSUD.

*Ginninderra Creek Riparian Corridor requires confirmation for width, paths, access and amenity provisions and access to the falls.*

- Confirm minimum corridor width, 100 year ARI flood extent and uses of the corridor and agree principles of design/planning.

*Detention basins sizing for peak flow attenuation – yet to be undertaken.*

- Undertake XP-RAFTS modelling for peak flow attenuation.
- Confirm basin location and dimensions.

## 4.5.6 Session B3: Opportunities + Constraints + Big Ideas

### Session Leader

Adrian McGregor, McGregor Coxall

### Aims

The aims of this session were to:

- Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project, and innovative approaches to the use of land located within buffers, or adjacent to, existing infrastructure with reference to the Green Star sustainability initiatives.
- Explore opportunities to create a holistic open space framework and how land affected by existing infrastructure can contribute to this open space network.

### Outcomes

The following were identified as key issues and opportunities surrounding the use of the landfill site and transmission line easements, as well as other big ideas that emerged throughout the session:

#### Landfill Site

##### *Issues*

- There is a need to consider demographics of potential users.
- It was suggested that there is a need for professional management and leadership to co-ordinate any project on the landfill site.
- It is important the landfill site is linked with other open spaces through bike and foot paths.
- It was noted that any project established on the site will need to have community ownership and support.

##### *Opportunities*

- It was noted that the landfill site provides opportunities for recreation, education, urban agriculture, and solar energy generation.
- Other suggestions for the site included a Community Irrigated Recreation Park (CRIP), a district park, and a horse riding school.
- CERES was offered as a successful model of a city farm and community gardens, and was commented on favourably.
  - It was also noted that community gardens should not be confined only to the landfill site, and that gardens should be co-located with playgrounds and access to toilets.

#### Transmission Line Easements

##### *Issues*

- Easements have the potential for weed spread and as such will require careful and regular inspection and control.
- The need for maintenance access to transmission lines was noted as an issue.
  - Require pad for crane and vehicle access to each pylon.
- It was noted that metallic materials under transmission lines cause concern.
- Some small structures are acceptable under transmission lines.
- Concerns were raised that the transmission lines may separate communities, so there is a need to ensure open spaces and community facilities transition smoothly.
- Concerns were also raised that easements may provide a 'highway' for pests and weeds to move from urban areas into the river corridor.

#### *Opportunities*

- Transmission line easements were identified as an opportunity for linking foot, bike, and horse trails to the river corridor.
- A pedestrian and cycle corridor was also suggested, that could incorporate fitness stations as well as artworks and sculptures.
- Cropping within the easements was suggested as an option, as was using the site as a hatchery for a native fish restocking program.
- Utilising native shrub landscaping would enhance wildlife movement across the site.
- Grazing was suggested as a potential use throughout the development phase, however was not considered a viable long-term option for a residential area.

#### **Big Ideas**

##### *Parkwood Poultry Farm*

- It was suggested that there is a need to investigate the relocation of Parkwood poultry farm as the development progresses, as this was not considered compatible with residential development.

##### *Healthy and Active Living*

- Opportunities for the establishment of extreme sports sites, which could be managed by private enterprise.
- Suggestion for public streets that can become active spaces.
- The importance of walkability, accessibility, and cycle connections for public parks and sports facilities was noted.

##### *Urban Heat Island Effect*

- Lighter coloured houses reduce heat island effect.
- Effects can also be reduced through strategic planting to shade hardscapes.
- Green roofs on commercial and community buildings were also suggested as a solution.

##### *Potable Water Consumption*

- Reuse of stormwater and treated sewerage.
- Potable backup for high value landscapes.



## Stream C

### 4.5.7 Session C1: West Belconnen "A 21st Century Garden Suburb"

#### Session Leader

Angela Koepp, RobertsDay

#### Aims

The aims of this session were to:

- Discuss the sustainability goals that have been established for the project and the innovative approaches to housing we will be exploring in order to achieve these.
- Review the existing ACT housing controls and ACT and interstate best practice to ascertain whether any improvements or amendments are desirable to enable delivery of the housing in accordance with the West Belconnen Sustainability Vision.

#### Outcomes

Participants discussed and agreed the following as key objectives and opportunities for consideration:

#### Key objectives

*To deliver the project vision and meet market demand.*

- To realise the West Belconnen Vision through the Guiding Principles.
- To meet the sustainability goals that have been established for the project including the range of green star community measures that will be applied to achieve the six star rating, and the innovative approaches to subdivision and housing.
- To define housing affordability, sustainability and innovation for West Belconnen.
- To deliver a diverse range of housing and lifestyle choice at the scale of the house, street and neighbourhood.
- To respond to changing trends in Canberra that may inform housing and lifestyle at West Belconnen.
- To identify the West Belconnen future market.
- To identify the aspirations and lifestyle choice of the future market.
- To understand how to capture a broader market through marketing and housing delivery.

*To be Affordable*

- To deliver housing that fills gaps in the existing market.
- To deliver housing to meet the needs and aspirations of the 21% of potential buyers that are open to West Belconnen that fall into the typical first home buyer market.
- To facilitate entry into the market and to ultimately accumulate equity for upsizing.

*To be Sustainable*

- To deliver housing that has regard for cultural variations in lifestyle.
- To provide opportunities at West Belconnen for the 45% of buyers who are interested in

food production.

- To redefine sustainability in terms of longevity and flexibility, ie. 'Design for 200 years and build for 100 years.'
- To facilitate aging in place and lifelong communities.

#### *To be Innovative*

- To review the existing ACT housing controls and ACT and interstate best practice to ascertain whether any improvements or amendments are desirable to enable delivery of the housing in accordance with the West Belconnen Sustainability Vision.
- To review NSW standards and Yass City Council DCPs and identify any variations to the Codes that will be required to deliver the West Belconnen housing suite over the life of the project.
- To recalibrate conventional, quantitative housing standards to meet lifestyle needs, market demand and to accommodate future trends.
- To establish rural, suburban and urban character areas at West Belconnen.
- To ensure that 'detached' housing controls are not applied to 'attached' housing.
- To innovate with respect to local context and expectations.

### **Opportunities**

#### *Demographics*

- Establish a housing mix that responds to the expected fall in detached housing in the ACT (currently at 70%) by understanding the reasons behind the shift.
- Understand the age and income characteristics of the 1 to 2 person households that now comprise more than half of ACT dwellings.
- Ensure that ACT dwelling codes enable dwelling types to be delivered at West Belconnen that can alleviate housing stress; acknowledging that the average ACT homeowner contributes 28% of their income to mortgage repayments (30% is considered housing stress).

#### *Market Research*

- Translate the meaning of potential buyers seeking 'smaller lots and dwellings' to a dwelling product at West Belconnen that balances downsizing as a key trend with lifestyle-tailored amenity packages for buyers.
- Define affordability from the perspective of future West Belconnen residents and understand the trade-offs that the 38% of potential purchasers influenced by affordability are willing to make.
- Reinforce the proximity of West Belconnen to Belconnen Town Centre as an emerging centre.

#### *Housing and Code Inclusions*

- Identify key price points to ensure adequate product at West Belconnen exceeds the affordability expectation associated with an acceptable budget of \$508,000 by providing quality housing well below \$500,000.
- Ensure sustainability is marketed and delivered with affordability targets retained.

- West Belconnen could be the powerhouse for Canberra (housing feeding back to the grid).
- Redefine sustainability controls in terms of adaptability, personal flexibility, mix of people and affordability.
- Ensure private and public domain controls are complimentary to deliver rural, suburban and urban streetscapes.
- Ensure that solar access does not drive the built form outcomes at West Belconnen but is considered as one component of sustainable housing delivery.
- Seek flexibility in parking standards to meet changing lifestyle needs and affordability and allow the market to dictate over quantitative standards.
- Ensure that variation of standards, particularly as it may impact on visitor parking and the public/ private domain interface, do not compromise reasonable levels of convenience and accessibility.
- Codes should link higher densities with higher amenity such as proximity to quality open space and public transport.
- Enable a tailored solution to the size, configuration and location of private open space on smaller lots to facilitate best practice built form outcomes and affordability targets.
- Integrated housing should not be the default avenue for achieving innovation and/ or variation at West Belconnen due to the potential for additional costs associated with the process to be passed on to the home-buyer compromising the affordability offering.
  - Tailor codes to acknowledge the unique site conditions at West Belconnen including but not limited to: 20% of the Developable Area being south facing (approx. 160 ha).
  - 28% of the Developable Area is greater than 10% slope (approx. 234 ha).
- Learn from and apply the timeless principles used in Canberra's legacy of housing innovation- look back to move forward.
- Understand that there is the potential for 70- 80% of lots delivered at West Belconnen to be consistent with conventional Canberra sizes and to provide innovation in this lot range whilst also giving consideration to relationships between a variety of housing and lot sizes and types.
- Consider the role that NSW and the Yass LGA has had to date in providing larger lots.
- Further understand the rationale behind Yass City Council's homogeneous housing and subdivision codes including a 6m front setback across the board.



## 4.6 Session C2 and C3: Community Building, Employment and Place making

### Session Leader

Steve Rossiter, Elton Consulting

### Aims

The aims of this session were to:

- Focus on what social sustainability means and how it can be realised in West Belconnen.
- Examine demand for community facilities (schools, health facilities, libraries, community centres, etc.) and retail/commercial space.
- Explore alternative models for the provision and location of retail and community uses, community hubs, town/village centres, etc.), and opportunities to utilise existing features such as cultural and heritage assets.
- Discuss how all these elements can be integrated in West Belconnen to create vibrant and active centres.

### Outcomes

Participants discussed and agreed the following as key issues and opportunities for consideration:

### Issues

#### *Social Infrastructure*

- Planning social infrastructure is not just about buildings, but also about meeting the needs of the people who live in the community.
- Social infrastructure should help people to **belong, be valued, and participate**; as such it is important to consider underpinning community attitudes.
- Social infrastructure must be considered upfront in the planning process. Proximity to transport is critical for ensuring accessibility.
- Flexible/adaptable common spaces – need to be considered upfront.
- Cross border arrangements and community ownership are critical success factors to support social sustainability in this setting.
- Must cater for **diversity**
  - Connectivity
  - Adaptability
  - Flexibility
- Need for innovative new models. Potential models include:
  - Public/private partnerships
  - Adaptable facilities
  - Innovative and alternative models in early stages
- Revitalisation of existing social infrastructure.
  - Social services neighbourhood hubs

- It is important to ensure strong linkages to the existing West Belconnen community.
- Consider multifunctional social services centres early
  - Schools in houses
  - Explore opportunities for informal/loose connections
- Temporary spaces → pop up hubs
  - Food/coffee vans etc.
- It would be useful to have an attractor to the area that capitalises on the existing strengths of the site.
  - i.e. Ginninderra Falls
- Community development is critical for ensuring community buy in.
- Governance/stewardship
  - Governance structure must be flexible
  - By community
  - Whole of government approach

#### *Retail and Employment*

- There are currently too many underutilised land uses in ACT- it would be useful to consolidate these into one to achieve *special meaning in the hearts of the community*.
- Staging is critical to achieve/ balance early amenity and a sustainable catchment for viability.
- Single centre delivered early at West Belconnen to become a heart and a focal point.
- Retail centre needs to meet a mix of community needs to become an active and vibrant town centre.
- Allow for future evolution and growth.
- Social/Economic Success Drivers: co- location for activation and viability, maximise major road access and flexibility.

#### **Opportunities**

- Employ at least one community development officer to promote community activities like picnics, building relationships, opportunities for engagement in social/community life (e.g.: employment) for more vulnerable people – with an integrated, and whole of government focus.
- Employment incubator; micro businesses; using existing community organisations and groups to host and involve existing communities in the growth of West Belconnen.
- Build in spaces and opportunities for multiple cultural opportunities and different beliefs etc.
- Build spaces that support diversity:
  - Temporary shops
  - Common areas/hubs/nooks
  - Meeting places
  - Local centres.

- Ensure access to technology i.e. Wi-Fi early. Set up digital hubs.
- Set up residents associations early in the process.
- Link to and build on infrastructure and community groups in the existing West Belconnen area.
- Create appropriately positioned community facilities/gathering places
  - For large scale events
  - Market
  - Community gardens
  - Urban food
  - Education
  - Employment
- Provide varied housing stock to cater for diverse community needs.
- Co-locate services to support integration.
- Integration with regional centres.
- Creating active spaces.
- Adopt the lifespan approach to accommodate change.



## 4.6.1 Stream D: Governance and Stewardship

### Session Leader

Brian Elton, Elton Consulting

### Aims

This was a plenary session that aimed to:

- Draw together outcomes from the previous sessions that may have implications for the community governance.
- Focus on the possibility of establishing a Not for Profit (NFP) mechanism to deliver environmental management and a range of social enterprises.
- Discuss possible models that could be applied at West Belconnen, including models nationally and internationally.
- Examine the opportunities that could be funding through the NFP mechanism.

### Outcomes

Approximately 100 government, community and project team representatives attended this session.

Brian Elton presented on early thinking around a 'Trust' for West Belconnen, and the importance of good governance and flagged possible opportunities. Highlights included

- Genesis of the Trust concept was that the development could generate enough funds to take care of River corridor.
- An ongoing Trust, probably Not for Profit (NFP), could work with government to ensure that over time we have financially sustainable model to care for and manage the river corridor. The 'Trust' could also extend into other environmental values onsite.
- The Landfill site could provide opportunities for a NFP governance structure.
- There are several examples of emerging structures around Australia where community or NFP organisations own and generate revenue from assets and infrastructure.

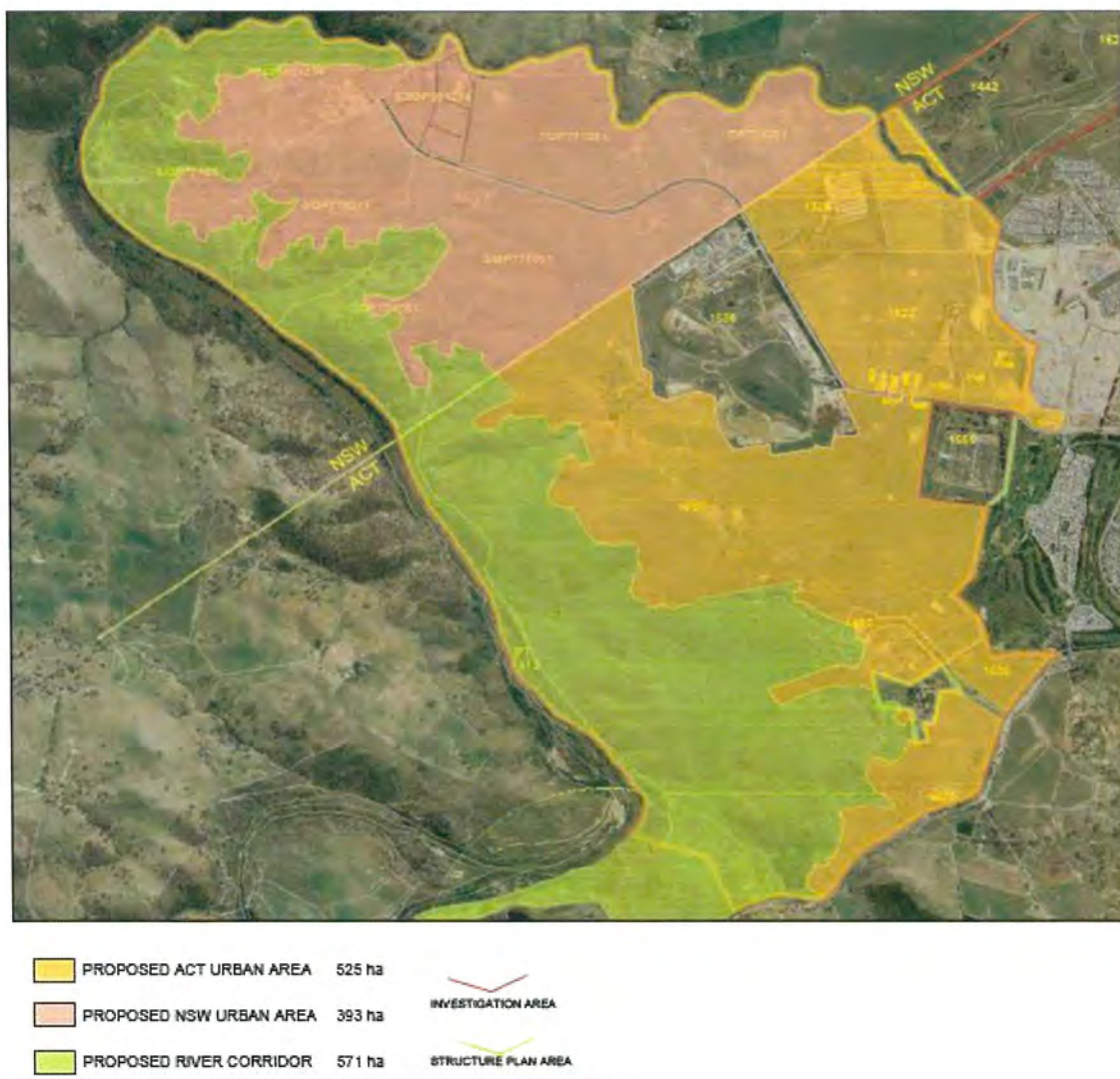
Michael Pilbrow presented the Health Co-op model as an example of an effective model of community governance that has produced immense benefits for the existing West Belconnen community.

Discussion ensued which explored the following issues:

- A robust economic model would need to be developed to determine how assets would be maintained.
- Due to the relatively small area for membership of a trust, revenue would need to come from sources other than the sale of properties.
- Based on learnings from other sites, ie Mulligan's Flat, it is important to start small and focused and keep the structure simple. Incorporate the River Corridor and woodland management first, and then look at other opportunities.
- The transmission corridors could create further opportunities, which could add an additional 100 hectares. This would lead to three very large footprints of management, possibly managed separately.
- Cross border issues will need to be considered in developing a model.
- "Bendigo Bank" model is another good example which puts money back into the community and encourages participation.

- Education for potential residents is important to ensure they are aware of what they are buying into.
- The benefits of community ownership. Community needs to “own” the concept.
- Community Gardens - CERES (Victoria) is a good model that has grown and evolved with the community and is worthy of consideration.
- Additional opportunities for social enterprise could include:
  - Integrated Water management, Green Infrastructure, WSUD – recognition that things we are trying to do are difficult under current models
  - Organic matter for composting etc.
  - River corridor – Ginninderra falls included in River Corridor – a people magnet, retail opportunities, potential revenue from cafes restaurants etc.
  - Community nursery.

**Figure 2 The River Corridor at West Belconnen**



## 4.7 Day 3 – Thursday 14 November

The core design team continued to develop the draft master plan at a full day closed session on day 3. The designers worked to ensure that the draft master plan was informed by the discussions held throughout the Forum. These discussions were focused not only on the physical design of the West Belconnen Master plan but importantly on how we can create a framework that will support and nurture a cohesive, strong and resilient community.

Using “Big Ideas” collected from the Community and Stakeholder Vision Workshop forum and PDF workshops, the designers explored the opportunities to integrate the “undevelopable” portions of the site into a broader open space framework that has potential to create long term community assets with a focus on employment, education, recycling initiatives, recreation and food production.

In light of stakeholder feedback, the design team considered:

- social infrastructure and how well located community facilities can act as a catalyst for social interaction and connection
- providing a diversity of housing to ensure a diverse community that can accommodate a range of residents with different ages, incomes and household size
- creating streets that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and become safe places for interaction and play, encouraging social exchange between neighbours and reducing social isolation
- designing neighbourhoods that are connected and pedestrian friendly prompting residents to choose to walk rather than drive, resulting in healthier and connected communities; and
- local food production and the role community gardens could play in building resilient and healthy communities.

The draft master plan was presented at a final closing session and open house at the conclusion of the day. All participants were invited to return to this session for this final presentation to reflect on the process and share outcomes.

Approximately 75 people attended the closing session. There were two presentations and then an opportunity for questions and answers. The first presentation by Martine White of RobertsDay provided an overview of the Planning and Design Forum including the key ideas that were generated in each of the sessions on day 2 and the Community and Stakeholder Visions Workshop.

This was followed by a presentation of the preliminary draft master plan by Stephen Moore also from RobertsDay. The presentation demonstrated how key aspects of the master plan had developed to respond to opportunities and constraints on the site. Highlighted aspects were the scale of the site, the extensive open space network, the concept of villages that respond to key focal points, how roads were to be developed to facilitate use of public transport and be pedestrian/people friendly, location of schools and retail, and housing mix.

A brief question and answer session followed this presentation. Feedback on the preliminary master plan was positive. A number of participants sought additional information on public transport and road linkages and the proposal by members of the community to create a national park around Ginninderra George.

A highlight of the closing session and the planning and design forum was a large scale model of the site. This allowed people to orientate themselves and provided a visual representation of the opportunities and constraints provided by the site.

## 5 Draft Master Plan

The preliminary draft master plan is shown at figure X. The key features are described below.

The River Corridor which protects the land around the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek is a defining feature of the draft master plan.

The proposed design creates a framework to celebrate this significant community asset by integrating it into the broader open space framework and providing physical and visual linkages enabling access by the West Belconnen and broader Canberra population. Discussions continue on the opportunity to re-open Ginninderra Falls.

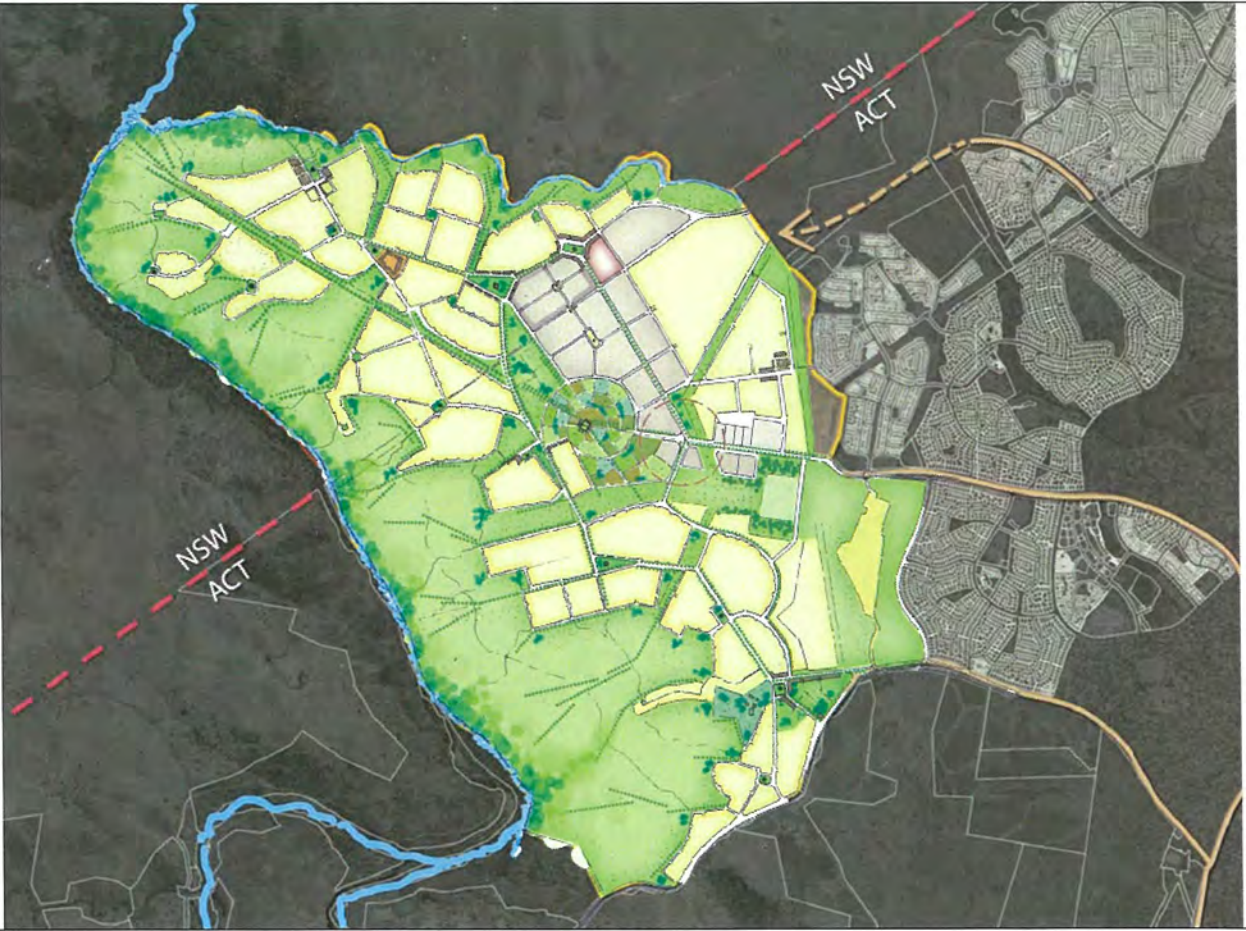
A series of connected neighbourhoods link three community nodes which celebrate Strathnairn, the heritage farm buildings and Ginninderra Falls. The community nodes offer the opportunity to provide a range of community facilities and ultimately some limited form of destination retail.

To meet the daily and weekly needs of the future community, a retail based centre will be provided with two alternative locations currently being investigated. This centre is likely to provide a broad range of retail and associated uses.

Two primary schools and a combined primary and high school will also be required. Whilst the locations of these educational facilities is yet to be determined, it is likely that they will be co-located with other community or retail facilities enabling shared use of social infrastructure and laying the foundations for social interaction and community building. Options for private schools are also being considered.

Future detailed design of the neighbourhoods will incorporate a diverse range of block sizes and building types ensuring a diverse population base. The open space framework will provide a range of open space, ranging from pocket parks through to sporting ovals. In addition, land located within transmission line buffers will be incorporated within the broader open space framework providing strong pedestrian connections through the site to the River Corridor.

Land impacted by transmission lines, the landfill site and Parkwood Eggs has been identified as having the potential to accommodate a range of employment uses, food production, recycling initiatives, educational enterprises and recreational opportunities including equine trails.



West Belconnen PDF Structure Plan



DISCLAIMER: ISSUED FOR DESIGN INTENT ONLY. ALL AREAS AND DIMENSIONS ARE SUBJECT TO DETAIL DESIGN AND SURVEY.

## 6 Next Steps

The preliminary draft master plan will continue to be refined over the coming months reflecting ongoing community and Government feedback and will ultimately be lodged with our request to rezone the West Belconnen site in mid-2014.

### 6.1 Continuing community engagement

Community members and stakeholder groups are encouraged to remain involved throughout the development of the project, through a variety of channels outlined below.

#### West Belconnen project website

The project website [www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au](http://www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au) provides up-to-date and accurate information about the project. The website also provides links to past newsletters, story boards and Frequently Asked Questions.

#### People and Place Group

The People and Place Group is a forum that brings together a representative group of the community to keep them informed of the proposed West Belconnen development. The group is comprised of representatives from local businesses, non-government organisations and the community.

The group will:

- a) receive information about the West Belconnen project
- b) generate ideas for achieving positive outcomes for the project and the broader West Belconnen community
- c) provide an opportunity for the Riverview Group, the Land Development Agency and the Yass Valley Shire Council to understand and consider stakeholder views, issues and comments as made by members of the Group through the structure planning process.

The inaugural meeting of the PPG was on 5 December 2013. The Group will continue to meet throughout the master plan stage of the project, with meetings in future stages of the project to be determined.

#### Community Newsletters

Newsletters will be prepared and distributed at different points of the project to inform stakeholders and community members on the latest developments, for example the commencement of the planning process, rezoning of the site and the community planning process. Newsletters also provide an opportunity to inform people about other engagement activities such as community information sessions and social media. Newsletters will be delivered to the suburbs surrounding the development site and will be available at the Kippax library and government shopfronts. Electronic copies are available at [www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au](http://www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au)

## **Social Media**

The West Belconnen social media sites on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram provide a valuable platform for community engagement throughout the course of the project.

## **Community Information and Feedback Session**

Following additional refinement the draft master plan will be available for the community at a number of Community Information and Feedback Sessions (CIFS) in February 2014. Each session would be a 'drop in', 'open house' style session where members of the community would be able to view information about the draft master plan on display panels, meet members of the project team and give their feedback about the project face to face or via a feedback form.

The display material will also be available on line so people can review it and provide feedback during February and early March 2014.

# 7

## Appendices

A	The Consultant Team
B	Newspaper Advertisement
C	Flyer
D	Poster
E	Participating Agencies and Organisations

## A The Consultant Team

Consultant	Responsibility	Consultant	Responsibility
The Riverview Group	Project Manager	TBA	Poultry Buffer Consultant
Tony Carey Consulting	Strategy	Edge Land Planning	Agricultural Consultant
AT Adams Consulting	Urban Planning	Davis Langdon Australia	Quantity Surveyor
Roberts Day	Master Planning	Knight Frank	Estate Master
Knight Frank	Cadastral Mapping	Pilbrow Global	Local Community Liaison
Elton Consulting	Community Consultation, Social Planning and Sustainability	Content Group	Media
University of Canberra	Demographic Studies	Deloitte	Risk Assessment
Urbis	Retail and Employments Studies	Eric Martin and Associates	European Heritage
MR Cagney	Active and Public Transport	Cox	High Level Master Planning
Land DATA	Site Survey	Douglas and Partners	Urban Capability
Kevin Mills & Associates	Environmental	BES (AUST) Pty Ltd	Transmission Lines/Transgrid
Eco Logical Pty Ltd	Bushfire Strategy	Potent Marketing	Marketing
Biosis Pty Ltd	Indigenous Studies	Dr David Shorthouse	Flora & Fauna-Peer Review
Browns	Civil Engineering	Chris Haley	Infrastructure – Peer Review
AECOM	Contamination, Traffic, Transport, WSUD	Colin Henson	Traffic & transport peer review
McGregor Coxall	Landscape Architecture	Lindsay Taylor Lawyers	Legal and regulatory Issues
DSB Landscapes	Arborist	Peter Haynes	Curatorial Advisor
		Kate Delaney, Dr Peter Ellyard	Futurists

## B Newspaper Advertisement

# Tell us what you think



An innovative, sustainable community is being proposed for land in West Belconnen, ACT and Parkwood Road NSW.

Have your say on the design of what could be the regions 21st century garden suburb.

<b>Planning and Design Forum Launch – Community Session</b> <i>A workshop about community interests and values</i>	<b>Date:</b> 11 November 2013 <b>Time:</b> 6.30pm – 8.30pm <b>Location:</b> Holt Community Hub, Beaurepaire Cres, Holt
<b>Pin-up Session</b> <i>Check out what our designers are doing as the work progresses</i>	<b>Date:</b> 13 November 2013 <b>Time:</b> 6.00 – 7.00pm <b>Location:</b> Ground Floor H Block, Vowels Cres, CIT, Bruce
<b>Community Open House</b> <i>View the draft concepts and provide your feedback</i>	<b>Date:</b> 14 November 2013 <b>Time:</b> 5.30 – 6.30pm <b>Location:</b> Ground Floor H Block, Vowels Cres, CIT, Bruce

If you have ideas about what you would like to see in this new suburb, we're all ears.

RSVP [westbelconnen@elton.com.au](mailto:westbelconnen@elton.com.au) or (02) 6274 3300 by 12pm, 10 November 2013.



## C Flyer

# Tell us what you think

*An innovative, sustainable community is being proposed for land in West Belconnen, ACT and Parkwood Road NSW.*

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In June 2013 the ACT Government announced that it had entered into an agreement with locally owned land development company The Riverview Group, to commence a rezoning and structure planning process to facilitate the development of some 4,500 new homes adjacent to Holt and West Macgregor, accommodating about 10,000 people over the next decade.

Consultation undertaken since the announcement has found the concurrent rezoning of Parkwood land i.e. the ACT land generally east of Parkwood Road (including the Parkwood eggs site) and the adjoining NSW land is logical and timely. The adjoining NSW land is landlocked by the Murrumbidgee River and Ginninderra Creek.

The project team assembled to prepare the structure plan and undertake associated studies are keen to hear:

- what the community thinks are important things to take account of when planning the new suburb(s)
- any big ideas you have that would make West Belconnen a great place to live, work, play.

There are many opportunities for you to get involved and shape the vision of West Belconnen early in the planning stages. To have your say and find out information about the project:

- Come to one of our community events
- Visit our website for regular updates [www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au](http://www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au)
- Look out for our newsletter
- Email [westbelconnen@elton.com.au](mailto:westbelconnen@elton.com.au)
- Like our Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/WestBelconnen](https://www.facebook.com/WestBelconnen)
- Follow us on Twitter @westbelconnen
- Mail us a question or comment at: Unit 10, George Turner House, 11 McKay Gardens Turner ACT 2612

## D Poster

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**Date:** 11 November 2013

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*Check out what our designers are doing as the work progresses*

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### Community Open House

*View the draft concepts and provide your feedback*

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RSVP [westbelconnen@elton.com.au](mailto:westbelconnen@elton.com.au) or  
(02) 6274 3300 by 10am, 7 November 2013.



[www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au](http://www.talkwestbelconnen.com.au)  
will be launched in early November

## E Participating Agencies and Organisations

- ACT Economic Development Directorate
- ACT Education and Training Directorate
- ACT Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate
- ACT Environment Protection Authority
- ACT Equestrian Association
- ACT Fire and Rescue
- ACT Health
- ACT Parks and Conservation
- ACT Rural Fire Service
- ACT Shelter
- ACT Territory and Municipal Services
- ACTEW
- ACTION Buses
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Belconnen Community Council
- Best Friends Pet Centre
- Canberra Organic Growers' Society
- CONVIC
- Ginninderra Catchment Group
- Ginninderra Falls Association
- Greening Australia
- Kippax Uniting Church
- Land Development Agency
- LAROS technologies
- Magpies Sports Club
- Murrumbidgee National Park
- National Capital Authority
- No Carbon Pty Ltd
- NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW State Emergency Service
- Solari Energy
- Transgrid
- Uniting Care Kippax
- Yass Valley Council
- Zero Waste



[www.elton.com.au](http://www.elton.com.au)