



Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

RE: Proposed Development and Construction of Housing for Defence – Weston Creek, ACT

We live directly across the road from the proposed DHA site. While we consider the development of housing for Defence personnel important, we have a few issues with the proposal. These may already have been taken into account by DHA, but they do not appear to be covered in the proposal documentation. Further, this proposal should be considered in the context of the larger Molonglo development, including the suburbs North Weston, Wright and Coombs currently under construction, which is already beginning to place pressure on existing social and transport infrastructure. While we understand that the ACT Government is expected to address some of these issues in the future, we are concerned that residents will experience disrupted and/or declining services for a prolonged period.

1. Overlooking and overshadowing existing residents:

The proposed multi-unit site AI is directly across the road and slightly up the hill from our house. It is zoned by the ACT for a maximum of two-storey dwellings, but, while there is some minor foliage, any properties would look directly into our backyard and our two main bedroom windows. We understand that this area will be set aside for developers and that the ACT planning rules do consider overlooking and overshadowing, but could DHA provide some assurance that developers will be asked to address overlooking/shadowing? For example requirements for sufficiently high fences, consideration to placement of windows and balconies, and placement of dwellings further back on the blocks from Heysen Street.

2. Increased traffic

The proposal includes reference to a traffic impact statement stating that although “the development of the Weston Creek site would generate additional traffic on the surrounding network, the overall peak hour increases would be relatively low.” Heysen Street is already increasingly becoming a ‘rat run’ for residents of neighbouring suburbs accessing Woden and some of the construction traffic traveling between Molonglo and Hindmarsh Drive. During the morning peak hour, traffic is routinely backed up from the traffic lights at the intersection of Launceston Street and Melrose Drive in Lyons to the IGA supermarket and beyond. We therefore expect that once North Weston, Coombs and Wright are established this level of traffic will increase and be further exacerbated by the DHA Heysen Street development.

3. Restricted access to services

We are concerned about access to services in Weston Creek following the development of the Molonglo area and the DHA proposal, particularly public primary and high schools and childcare.

For example, over the last 5 years public primary schools have been closed in Weston and nearby Lyons. This has meant that students from Weston Primary

have been diverted to Duffy Primary School. With the Molonglo development, this primary school will now be expected to service an expanded catchment including the new suburbs of North Weston, Wright and Coombs. Duffy Primary is not equipped to service this many students and according to the Weston Creek Community Council this overflow will be addressed through the purchase of demountable buildings. The development of housing under the DHA proposal will be a further drain on these resources. Are there longer-term solutions being developed and how long will makeshift solutions like demountables be needed?

In addition to issues around school access there are also issues regarding access to shopping. There are currently two supermarkets (Woolworths and Aldi) at Cooleman Court. We understand that there are no plans to establish a major town centre in Molonglo beyond an IGA-sized supermarket, which means that most of the shopping traffic will be diverted to Weston. This will likely double the number of people shopping at this area which already experiences long supermarket queues and a lack of parking at peak times. The addition of more housing through the DHA proposal will exacerbate this problem.

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