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ACT Greens – Working for Gungahlin & Mitchell September 2004

Highlights of ACT Greens priorities for Gungahlin & Mitchell

- enhanced employment opportunities for Gungahlin and Mitchell
- higher standards in planning and design for new developments, especially improvements in energy and water efficiency
- development of high quality public housing and co-housing facilities
- establishments of local community health centres
- upgrading of public transport and road infrastructure
- accelerated roll-out of broadband internet services
- well-funded community services
- promoting Mitchell as a centre for environmental technology enterprises

Overview

Since 1995, when Greens were first elected to the ACT Assembly, the ACT community has benefited from a strong Green voice in government. The ACT Greens have a consistent record of putting people and the environment before short-term gain, whether the government is Labour or Liberal.

Greens policies are based on principles of social equity, sustainability and community participation. We deal with each issue on its merits, and believe that the many complex problems we are faced with need a combination of a long-term vision and practical evidence-based solutions.

The ACT Greens are on the record for having consistently argued for a better deal for Gungahlin – and in the Assembly we have called on the government to ensure the provision in Gungahlin of the same levels of services, facilities and employment opportunities that are available in other parts of Canberra. If elected to the Assembly, the ACT Greens will continue to work and listen hard to support better outcomes for Gungahlin residents.

Below is a summary of some of the ACT Greens achievements in a range of policy areas related to Gungahlin, as well as some of our fourth term priorities if we are elected.

Employment

The Greens support the enhancement of employment options in Gungahlin, and the vitalisation of local area and town centre infrastructure and services. In the Assembly the Greens have asked questions about the relocation of the ACTTAB to Gungahlin, and support exploring the possibility of relocating an ACT or Federal government department to Gungahlin. We have opposed the expansion of office space at the Canberra Airport and in Civic and have called instead for emphasis to be placed on expanding employment options in the other town centres, particularly Gungahlin. We support home base employment options with appropriate safeguards for residential amenity and quality telecommunication services, including affordable broadband internet access, for Gungahlin residents. We recognise that the lack of action from government and major telecommunication companies to supply equitable information technology (IT) infrastructure and access is perpetuating the well known local IT digital divide issues.

Planning & Development

The Greens support development which focuses on delivering beneficial social and environmental outcomes including proximity to local shopping facilities, schools and public open spaces; design and siting for bushfire protection, access to solar energy and rainwater collection and streetscapes with room for footpaths and trees. We released in early August 2004 a Green blueprint for Sustainable Planning and Design which requires new buildings to incorporate energy and water efficient design principles and to be sited to take advantage of passive solar energy (attached). Greens representatives in the Assembly have also been active on behalf of individual residents of Gungahlin in pushing the Government to find solutions to problems from inadequate planning for rubbish collection to provision of post boxes.

Community Consultation

The Greens are strong advocates for local community consultation and ongoing input into planning and development processes. In the Assembly we helped to halt development on the Gungahlin Town Centre until further consultation with residents on the pedestrian precinct and town square took place. We have worked to support the youth centre and its work in Gold Creek high school. More recently the Greens have worked with local communities at Amaroo Whitehaven Estate to try to resolve the difficulties of pedestrian access. We have supported Gungahlin residents' work to protect Gold Creek Homestead as a community facility.

Transport

For many years the Greens have been working to enhance the transport options for Gungahlin residents. The measures we have proposed or supported in the Assembly have included an upgrade of Majura Road, Gundaroo Drive and William Slim Drive, extension of Horse Park Drive, as well as the construction of a light rail system. We have called for the government to make the public transport needs of Gungahlin a priority and to trial innovative practices eg autonomous dial-a-ride transit-ADART-systems, bus-only lanes between Civic and Gungahlin; park and ride facilities for Gungahlin commuters and bike carriers on buses. The ACT Greens believe that Canberra can and should be a model of 'best practice' in terms of sustainable and innovative transport options – which incorporates an efficient, accessible and user-friendly public transport system, an appropriate and safe road network which minimises congestion and vehicle emissions, and which promotes alternative and sustainable transport options.

Housing

The Greens have consistently supported measures which increase the stock of affordable and public housing in the ACT, and which promotes high quality design and water and energy efficiency in new developments. In June 2004 Kerrie Tucker presented to the Assembly a Bill to require builders or developers of large unit developments to make provision within those developments for affordable housing. In response to the Report of the Affordable Housing Taskforce the Greens called upon the government to ensure there is adequate public housing in the Territory and adequate social support for tenants suffering hardship. The ACT Greens are also very supportive of the development of a co-housing initiative in Gungahlin, and believe that has the potential to contribute to sound community development, as well as design innovation. We also support assistance for first home buyers.

Health

Greens policies highlight the importance of health and social services being available where people live and responsive to local need. The Greens in the Assembly have called upon the Stanhope Government to develop measures that improve access to GPs, including after hours access and bulk billing. Kerrie Tucker as chair of the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Health led an inquiry into the Health of school- age children which delivered 48 recommendations to the Assembly in 2003 about actions which might be taken to improve health outcomes for school age children. Although the ACT Greens do not currently support

the construction of a new hospital-like medical facility in Gungahlin (preferring to ensure that Canberra's existing public hospitals are adequately resourced), we are strongly advocating for the establishment of local community health centres with salaried doctors and allied health professionals. We believe that this is one of the best ways to meet the health needs of all Canberrans in an equitable way.

Education

The ACT Greens believe that a well-funded and quality public education system, accessible to all, is one of the most important prerequisites for an equitable, engaged and learning community. The ACT Greens have a proven track record of advocating for adequate funding for education, improved school design, smaller class sizes, up-to-date IT facilities and improved support for students with a disability. Given the size and growth of Gungahlin, the ACT Greens would support funding to immediately start planning and consultation processes for the development of a college (years 11&12) in Gungahlin.

Other Community Services

The ACT Greens have consistently advocated for adequately funded community services for all people in the ACT, including Gungahlin. This includes child care, aged care, youth services, disability services and mental health services. The ACT Greens support increased and secure government funding for Gungahlin Regional Community Services (GRCS).

Other facilities and services

The ACT Greens would advocate for the following services to be provided to Gungahlin, based on a demonstrated need;

- ACT Government shopfront
- Improved 'Town Centre public space'
- Incorporation of Gungahlin district in Yellow Pages map
- funding for appropriate local community facilities

Mitchell

The ACT Greens recognise that despite its strategic location, Mitchell has been neglected by successive governments. The ACT Greens believe there is tremendous potential to re-energise Mitchell, particularly as a growth centre for innovative environmental technology including solar power, greywater recycling systems and environmentally efficient housing design and appliances. The ACT Greens believe that this kind of industry will be a growth area, with enormous potential to generate employment and a thriving business community – but it needs support and incentives from government. The ACT Greens would make this a priority if elected.

This paper provides a brief overview of some of the key policies of the ACT Greens as they relate to Gungahlin. Please do not hesitate to contact the ACT Greens office or any of the candidates for further information. The candidates can be contacted by calling Andrea Simmons at the ACT Greens office (6247 6305) or emailing actcc@act.greens.org.au

Molonglo

*Deb Foskey
Charlie Pahlman
Amanda Bresnan*

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*Meredith Hunter
Ben O'Callaghan*

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*Graham Jensen
Kathryn Kelly*