



Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy (CAPAD) www.canberra-alliance.org.au

Media Release

CAPaD hosting a public discussion about community engagement in the Planning of Canberra.

Sunday 30 April 2–5 pm: Folk Dance Canberra Hall. 114 Maitland Street , Hackett

There is growing public unease about planning decisions in the ACT.

Redevelopments at the Yarralumla Brickworks, Manuka Oval, West Basin, the tram, the Currong Flats and resident relocation to public housing in Weston Creek have all received recent adverse community comment.

There is a widespread feeling among individuals, resident groups and community councils that community consultation receives lip service but has little impact on decisions that have already been reached by politicians in close association with professional developers.

To be clear: the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy (CAPaD) supports business and good urban development. We want a world class city.

However, CAPaD wants decisions about development in this city made with meaningful citizen engagement in the planning process. We believe this will result in respectful wise decisions where everyone's wellbeing is met. We need planning to meet the needs of not just 'the economy' but people, businesses and the environment. Further, wise planning links to issues such as ACT's zero emissions goals.

To open up action to remedy this, CAPaD is holding a meeting on 30 April (at the Folk Dance Hall, Hackett). Resident groups, community councils and concerned individuals are invited to come and consider a range of possibilities for strengthening people power in our city's development planning.

Prior to the last ACT election, 14 of the 25 successful candidates agreed to the CAPaD charter of participatory democracy which in item 4 states "I will promote and support participatory and deliberative methods for policy, planning and legislative decisions." Also, the Parliamentary Agreement between the ALP and The Greens commits both to extending participatory practices.

CAPaD considers what is happening in the planning field in Canberra to be symptomatic of a growing deficit of democracy everywhere, where decision-making is unduly influenced by corporate interests.

The ACT government has consultation principles. CAPaD would like to see these used. That way everyone will be able to have confidence in the development process.

At the meeting on 30 April, participants will have an opportunity to plan action to address their concerns about citizen engagement in the planning process in Canberra and to explore ways in which citizens can meaningfully contribute to Canberra's future. Childcare is available at the meeting.

As a community we now need to hold our representatives to their commitments.

Contact Trevor Powell Tel 0422 089 532

Bob Douglas Tel 0409 233 138