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**Submission from the Weston Creek Community Council (WCCC) to the Better Suburbs Citizen’s Forum**

**Proposal for a Community Playspace at the Waramanga Shops**

The Weston Creek Community Council would like to offer the following comments to the Better Suburbs Citizen’s Forum in relation to a proposed playspace at the Waramanga Shops.

1. *The value of play spaces for your organisation, your programs or the communities you work with.*

The Waramanga Community and the Waramanga Playspace Reference Group have been working very hard for the past two to three years to build support for their proposal in the Community. The Weston Creek Community Council is very supportive of their proposal and has been working closely with Waramanga community members in providing guidance and support.

Council considers that a playground at the Waramanga shops will bring more people to the area and will be well used by all the young families that go to the numerous schools in the area. A playground and updated facilities will add value to the shops and it will be a good location for young families to use the playground and seating area.

Because of the new gates around the playgrounds at nearby schools, there is a real need for the ACT Government to invest in families and the Waramanga community. Everyone should have access to a local playground to support the development of their children.

This proposal is a community led initiative that has broad community support, which is highlighted by the hundreds of people that signed the petition. In addition, the Waramanga Block Party and the pop-up playground the community put together as a result was a huge success and underscores the need for new playground infrastructure at the shops.

Indeed, the Group have proposed a great new design for a playground that would be welcomed in the community such is their zeal to gain this facility for their community.

1. *Any other comments or recommendations you would like to communicate to the Forum.*

**Council supported the playground proposal by including this in our Submission put forward to the Chief Minister in the Councils 2018-2019 budget submission:**

1. To build a playground and community space, including exercise equipment to promote all ages use, on the lawns behind the Waramanga Medical Centre. Costings provided by TCCS estimate that construction costs for a central community playspace would total approximately $208,180.
2. To build a community space with tables and chairs for picnics, barbecues and shade sails to complement the playground and support community development.
3. To build toilet facilities to be used by the community and customers of the Waramanga shopping precint. There are currently no ablution facilities

Other comments:

Weston Creek is the only District in Canberra that doesn’t have a District playground. There are up to five District playgrounds in some Districts. This data has only recently come to light and again highlights the dearth of services provided in general to those residents of Weston Creek. Again the residents of Weston Creek are severely disadvantaged when it comes to nice places for families to play compared to other Districts.

Waramanga was originally established as a Suburb in June 1968 and family structures are different now to how they were 50 years ago. There are fewer stay at home mothers to use local playgrounds and instead busy families now require centrally located playspaces at local shops to build social connections. A new central community playspace will ensure services keep pace with the evolving needs of the Waramanga community, whilst stimulating local businesses and building a more vibrant community.

In 2018, Weston Creek, with Waramanga at the fore as one of two suburbs of the District is celebrating its 50-year anniversary.

New community infrastructure at the shops would be a wonderful way to celebrate this important milestone and could be incorporated into 50-year celebrations at the shops.

Council would be happy to elaborate on this if the Forum so desired.

Tom Anderson

Chair

Weston Creek Community Council