

Community-building in the wake of Floriade cancellation through a front yard 'CBR Scarecrow' competition

Dr Marisa Paterson MLA, together with members of the Weston Creek Community Council, are calling on Canberrans to build a scarecrow in their front yard in time to celebrate Father's Day.

The idea was sparked by the organiser of the Weston Creek Community Council's Chapman Floriade Community Patch, Ms Simone Hunter, who raised with Dr Paterson her disappointment that the Chapman Patch would not be able to host the Father's Day Floriade Scarecrow Workshop this year. The workshop was a popular and welcome contribution during last year's 'Floriade in the Community' pop-up at that site.

Ms Hunter pivoted quickly when Canberra's lockdown was announced this month, to think creatively about how the community could continue to be engaged with the Scarecrow initiative, and how Father's Day might be able to be celebrated a bit differently this year.

The interim Chair of Weston Creek Community Council, Mr Bill Gemmell said: "This is a great distraction for kids. It's a really good opportunity to connect people in what is otherwise a pretty average time just now. It's a really simple activity for anyone in our community; it's fun and light-hearted – just what we all need. Participants may wish to incorporate this year's Floriade theme - 'The Future of Flowers' - and include futuristic, or robotic elements"!

Dr Paterson said: "Last year during lockdown we saw things like the bear-hunt popping up in local suburbs. This year, we're starting to see some Where's Wally cut-outs, and why not also build a scarecrow!? Even if you can't build your own, you can still take part as part of the community judging which will commence online, immediately after Father's Day, on Monday September 6th at 10:00am. Community judging will be open online until 8:00pm Sunday 12 September.

"Small and colourful acts like this are a proven way to keep up morale and build a sense of community cohesion and connectedness, especially during challenging times. I've never built a Scarecrow before, but I'm looking forward to giving it a go in my own front yard with my kids next weekend!"

Dr Paterson is careful to remind people that they must not leave their local area to view Scarecrows, and that current restrictions allow one hour of exercise per day. Dr Paterson also said: "I encourage everyone to look around their own homes and yards, and to reuse, renew and upcycle materials for their Scarecrows; don't go out to buy new things".

Images of Scarecrows can be either:

- emailed to Paterson@parliament.act.gov.au; or
- posted to the Scarecrow owner's Facebook page or Instagram account
 - with the hashtag #CBRScarecrow and
 - tagging @MarisaPatersonMLA on Facebook or @marisapaterson_mla on Instagram.

All images will be uploaded to the CBRScarecrow page on Dr Paterson's website – www.marisapaterson.com.au/news/campaigns/cbr-scarecrows/ This is also where the community will be able to judge and vote for their favourite Scarecrow.

The three winners, as voted by the community, will be announced on Tuesday 14 September through the campaign webpage and via Dr Paterson's Facebook and Instagram pages.

Statement ends

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