Shop fears rally suburb

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By STACEY LUCAS

HACKETT residents turned out in force at a recent meeting to establish their own community association which will monitor local issues.

Organisers were expecting a modest attendance, so the 150-strong crowd came as something of a surprise, according to resident Terry de Luca.

Mr de Luca attributed the large numbers to fears about the future of the Hackett shopping centre, which has had several vacant premises.

Greens MLA Kerrie Tucker, who attended the meeting, agreed that a lot of those present had been worried about the shops.

"Like other communities around Canberra, they see them as important for community cohesion as much for convenience shopping," Mrs Tucker said.

Traffic problems, planning and infrastructure woes were also on the agenda.

To address these concerns, people were asked to join working groups for the shops, a Friends of Mt Majura group, an Airport Noise group, and the community association itself.

The impending closure of the Majura Local Area Planning Advisory Committee (LAPAC) and the formation of Neighbourhood Planning Groups had hastened the need for the community to come together and share its views, Mr de Luca said.

"We wanted to pre-empt it — so we could be ready for the neighbourhood planning groups.

"We really didn't feel we could approach people (like the Minister) without knowing we were representative of the suburb. But with the number of people that turned up, we know we have that now. It's about the whole notion of community and neighbourhood identity."

The Hackett Community Association will meet every three months. Anyone interested in joining, or seeking further information, can write to the association at PO Box 644, Dickson, ACT, 2602.