



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT

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ACT Legislative Assembly
Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

By email: LCommitteeECI@parliament.act.gov.au

RE: Inquiry into skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT.

CROSS (Canberra Region Old School Skaters) is an informal group of older aged skateboarders who shared the passion of participating in the non-mainstream recreation and lifestyle of skateboarding.

Collectively the members of CROSS totals over 500 years of participation with skateboarding. Most of us have families with children and some of us have grandchildren who also skateboard. Many of us are long term Canberra residents as well as being well travelling and users of local Canberra, Interstate and International skateboard parks. A number of us have been involved in previous consultation with the ACT Government for skatepark design and funding.

CROSS has an information relationship with the [Canberra Skateboarding Association](#) (CSA), and acknowledges and endorses CSA as Canberra's peak body for skateboarding. CROSS has accessed and read [ASC's submission](#) to this inquiry, and supports the submission in full.

Rather than duplicating the content of CSA's submission, CROSS forwards this submission as an addition to the submission from the Canberra Skateboarding Association.

Thank you for considering our submission, and we look forward to the Committee's final report.

Regards

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Canberra Region Old School Skaters

Introduction

CROSS (Canberra Region Old School Skaters) was initiated with the growth of the digital age in the 2000's where individuals were easily able to easily connect virtually aligning connections with personal interests and geographic location. The number of people associated with CROSS ebbs and flows due to personal commitments and geographical changes but as stated previously collectively CROSS represents over 500 years of skateboarding experience, even more years being located in Canberra, with the only requirement to be associated with CROSS is to have an interest in skateboarding.

From being a conduit to organise regular local skateboarding sessions at the range of Canberra's skateboard parks and other areas, CROSS is also involved in:

- Running an annual skateboard racing event on the Canberra Day weekend, this includes hiring the Stromlo Forest Park criterion track for a dual slalom event,
- Helping other Canberra based skateboarders and the Canberra Skateboarding Association to keep the iconic Belco Bowl maintained and painted,
- Undertaking minor maintenance tasks at Canberra's other skateboard parks, aiding to keep them maintained and safe
- Fund raising to assist skateboarders who have experienced periods of hardship
- Acting as positive role models for younger skateboarders by;
 - Undertaking rubbish clean up and the beginning and end of each skateboard session
 - Encouraging the wearing of safety equipment
 - Encouraging skateboarders of all skill levels to push and extend themselves in a safe manner
 - Being welcoming to all users of skateboard park facilities, regardless of the equipment they are using, scooters, rollerblades, roller skates, BMX, bikes, skateboards etc. What skill level anyone has, what gender or race or association an individual has

The ACT has been a world leader for over 40 years in providing public skateboarding facilities, initially with iconic facilities like Charnwood Bowl, Kambah U-pipe, Erindale Banks and the original Belco Skatepark, Canberra is one of the few Australian cities that has had a commercial skateboard park (Woden skateboard Park in the 1970's), a number of members of CROSS utilized these facilities when they were 1st constructed and continue to use these facilities (if they still exist) today, as well as skating unplanned facilities like Ainsle and Spence drains, the DHC building and various Canberra carparks. Many Australian and international skateboarders and skateboarding companies include the ACT in their annual travel itinerary due to Canberra's reputation as a skate-friendly city, with unique terrain, and as such Canberra has been featured in many popular world accessed media channels associated with skateboarding.

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Canberra has been known in the past for being an innovative city in regard to skateboard related facilities and design, Erindale banks and the former Fadden Pines halfpipe are examples of this forward looking approach.

The members of CROSS have observed with delight that over the last 10 years ACT skateparks are always busy active spaces with families and people of all ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities, riding bikes, scooters, roller skates, and (of course) skateboards.

We have observed that skateboarders are made up of a community of creative forward thinking individuals who are open minded. Often skateboarders are ahead of the general community in relation to fashion, music, artistic and community attitudes. For example skateboarders have been welcoming to individuals of all gender identities for some time now, and the different attitude and comradery in particular that the female skateboarders displayed at the Tokyo Olympics presented a more inclusive attitude towards competition at the elite level, this is something that CROSS is proud to be associated with.

Given Canberra small population and dated skateboard park facilities, the ACT has produced some of Australia's most talented skateboarders; including Ethan Copeland (Currently sponsored by International companies and competing on the World skateboard circuit), Katie Pike (One of Australia's top female skateboarders who has also competed internationally) and Zac Vanzetti (one of Australia's top street skaters) and has grown an active and inclusive skateboarding scene. One can only imagine both the profile for Canberra with the increase in competitive skateboarders if modern facilities were provided

Modern facilities being built across Australia are eclipsing Canberras existing skateparks in design, offerings and quality, with large competition bowls ([Bar Beach](#), & [Bateau Bay](#), in NSW [Noble Park](#), in VIC and [Scarborough Beach](#) in WA), competition halfpipes ([Mona Vale](#), & [Sydney Olympic Park](#), in NSW [West Beach](#), SA and [Bayswater](#) in WA), pump tracks ([Terry Hills](#), [Baren Ridge](#) in NSW [Murray Bridge](#), SA [Rivergums](#), [Glenroy](#)) and modern street facilities ([Bunbury](#), [Eveleigh](#), [Sydenham](#), [Box Hill](#), [St Claire](#), [Onslow](#)), with some of the best all-inclusive skateboard parks being built in rural areas ([Albury](#), [Bateau Bay](#) in NSW and [Bayswater](#) in WA), one primary feature of all of these skateboard parks is that they are all unique in design and layout.

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CROSS's Observations and Suggestions

1) Implement a comprehensive ACT skate strategy to address current and future infrastructure, maintenance needs and diverse weather conditions

As noted, the ACT lacks an adequate approach to skate infrastructure planning and maintenance. For these reasons, CSA recommends that the ACT Government implement a comprehensive **ACT Skate Strategy** to address current and future infrastructure and maintenance needs. CROSS believes that this should include consideration of:

a) A process of constructing facilities that are progressive in-line with the development of skateboarding trends,

- i) This would be obtained from comprehensive and wide stakeholder consultation

b) Consideration of the range of skateboarding disciplines;

- i) Bowl,
- ii) Street,
- iii) Flow (including pump-tracks)
- iv) Slalom
- v) Downhill

c) Ensuring that the aesthetics of the wider park design is considerate to functional use;

- i) Trees used in the landscaping (and pre existing trees) will not drop obstacles onto the skateboard park,
- ii) Shade structures fulfil a purpose rather than being a visual addition;
 - (1) Provide cover from rain
 - (2) Provide shade from sun
 - (3) Prevent extreme sun glare on for users using facilities (e.g. low setting sun being blocked by appropriate shade structures)
 - (4) Tanbark and grass used in landscaping is not going to create skatepark hazards or get worn out soon after installation (possibly synthetic grass and softfall rubber may be a better installation solution)

d) The underpinning construction is fit for purpose;

- i) A number of Canberra's (and other cities) latest skateboard parks have suffered from poor concrete pours (rough surfaces e.g., [Woden skatepark](#) prior to its latest re-surfacing job) and continual water leaks ([Belconnen](#), [Woden](#), [Googong](#), [Torquay](#), [Oran Park](#) skateboard parks as examples)

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- e) **Utilise appropriate graffiti cleaning processes on skateboard park surfaces;** modern skateboard parks are finished off with a specific sealant that if tagged with graffiti should be able to be washed off with a solvent based cleaner that will not be worn out with the basic high pressure water cleaning processes. If the solvent is utilized then skateboard parks will retain their proper smooth surface for longer.
- f) **All weather facilities;** Canberra experiences the extremes of weather throughout the year from freezing cold frosty winters, to dry hot summers. Consideration of some facilities that are able to be utilised in all weather conditions would be a benefit to the wider Canberra Community given the diverse utilization of skateboard parks and it would enable the Canberra Skateboarding Association to facilitate their free learn to skate lessons in all weather conditions.

2) Construct a new, world-class skateparks in Canberra to modernise the current offerings and cater to the growing population in the area, accounting for both the Olympic Games and the diversity of disciplines across skateboarding

With the Australian Institute of Sport having a central identify in Canberra and Stomlo Forest Park being centrally located in Canberra and already containing some high-class sporting facilities (including; cycling, swimming). There is an opportunity for **Stromlo Forest Park** to be developed into Australia's Extreme Sports centre and Canberra's multi user sport centre.

With Canberra's diversity of weather conditions (cold and wet winters and dry hot summers) an all-weather climate Skateboard park (multi-user) facility would be well utilised. If there was a long term plan to include facilities that a wide range of extreme sports were able to use including:

- 1) Foam pit,
- 2) Water landing and jump ramp
- 3) Mega ramp
- 4) Uphill asphalt road (without car use)
- 5) Downhill asphalt road (without car use)
- 6) Pump track

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Stromlo Forest Park would become a destination location of athletes of all levels to come to train between competitions as well as Stromlo Forest Park being an ideal location for families to come to and allow all members of the family to undertake their respective recreational pursuits! Examples of this sort of facility are:

- 1) The [International Woodward Camp](#) concept
- 2) The [Shed skatepark park](#) is located within the [City of Casey recreational centre](#)
 - a) This includes indoor sport facilities,
 - b) Library,
 - c) Community radio station,
 - d) Bowling alley,
 - e) Performing Art centre,
 - f) and more
 - g) So it is essential a one stop area for a families personal interests

3) Extend current ACT skateparks to replace the ageing infrastructure, and install lighting to increase usage of and safety at the skatepark

As stated earlier Canberra's current skateboard parks are starting to age, become worn out and loose currency with contemporary skateboarding trends. Many of these skateboard parks are located with large public spaces with a lot of room.

CROSS suggests that the existing parks be retained with updated facilities added to the existing infrastructure. As the existing amenities are still suitable for beginners and other users (Bikes and scooters), with the additions being more suited to intermediate and advanced users and provided contemporary facilities for everyone as well as catering for the population increases in the respective suburban areas.

With the inclusion of Skateboarding in the Olympics (which is understood to evolve the types of facilities being used with successive Olympics), users both current and new will have an expectation for a regions facilities to be reflective of the facilities used in the Olympics.

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4) Construct more skateable architecture and integrate skate elements into play spaces

A comprehensive **ACT Skate Strategy** would also assist in ensuring that the needs of the ACT skateboarding community are considered in new planning projects, such as Master Plans. As new play spaces are planned, constructed and upgraded, the ACT Government should integrate more skateable architecture (including public art) and other skate elements to cater for a broader and more diverse user group than currently provided in traditional playgrounds. Public spaces in the ACT should be designed to safely accommodate skateboarding.

5) Partnerships to achieve cost-effective value-added facilities:

CROSS would like to suggest a collaborative initiative including; ACT Government, suitable construction companies, repeatable user groups (Canberra Skateboarding Association, BMX groups, Scooter groups). If suitable land was made available by the ACT Government and Construction companies were invited to dump clean fill on these sites, with the agreement that when enough fill is left at the site/s with consultation of the user groups the construction companies then shaped the fill to the specification of the user groups. Facilities like pump tracks could be provide to the public and a more affordable cost and the construction companies and user groups have undertaken a tangible public service. It is understood that the [Sutherland Shire Barden Ridge Pump Track](#) was realized in this way.