



ACT
Government

Business Case for Project Development Funding

Project name:	Canberra Aquatic Centre
Brief description:	This business case seeks project development funding to deliver a Tier 1 Business Case for the delivery of the new Canberra Aquatic Centre. The business case will review options to replace the ageing Civic Pool and to meet demand for recreational facilities within the inner-city catchment, including a proposed site at Commonwealth Park.
Funding requested (\$'000):	10,574
Total FTE impact (no.):	5.1
Sponsoring Agency:	Infrastructure Canberra
Sponsoring Minister and Ministerial Portfolio:	Chief Minister, Economic Development
Contact officer:	Faheem Khan

Sign-off

Sponsoring Agency:

Gillian Geraghty

Print Name

Signature

Canberra Aquatic Centre

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1. Executive summary

Key messages

- The construction of a new aquatic centre will address longstanding concerns with the ageing infrastructure at the current Canberra Olympic Pool.
- A new aquatic centre in the city will unlock additional possibilities for the use of land and future development, namely the Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct.
- Seed funding is required to complete Concept Design and Business Case development to understand the preferred way to deliver the project and at what cost.
- The ACT Government's preferred location for a new aquatic centre is in Commonwealth Park, subject to the outcomes of due diligence and concept planning.
- The Commonwealth Government has demonstrated that they wish to work with the ACT Government on the project; this includes the provision of land in Commonwealth Park and the injection of capital funding to deliver the project.
- The preferred site in Commonwealth Park is under the jurisdiction of the National Capital Authority. Given the iconic location, exemplary standards in built form and landscape design should be expected and will require extensive engagement and consultation.
- A total of \$10.574 million is sought to undertake Concept Planning and Business Case Development to advance the project to be investment ready. This process will allow for different concept designs to be tested, to facilitate an investment decision as part of the 2026-27 Budget process.

The Canberra Olympic Pool (COP) is an important community asset and a highly valued location for sport, recreation, and social activities. The existing COP was built in 1955 during the post war period and consists of a covered Olympic size pool, a toddler and dive pool (including platform), a gym, beach volleyball courts, kiosk, picnic grasslands and other community amenities. Approximately 145,000 people from both Canberra and interstate use the facility each year; however, with the population in Canberra growing, locals and visitors to the city are looking for unique experiences.

The existing facility has now reached the end of its useful life, with activation and usage compromised because of its inability to provide year-round access to some aquatic facilities and associated facilities/amenities not being comparable to contemporary aquatic facilities around Australia.

A new contemporary aquatic facility located in an iconic location will support a range of sport, recreational, health and social activities, and be another attraction for the many visitors to the city. The construction of a new pool to service people living in the city centre is a priority to ensure that we continue to meet demand for aquatic facilities as housing density increases in the city.

The provision of a new aquatic facility aligns strongly with the vision described for Commonwealth Park - as for a place of recreation for all residents, having strong integration with the natural

Canberra Aquatic Centre

surrounds and adjoining public recreation amenity; and the ACT Government's broader commitment to strengthen and develop sport and recreation in the ACT. Noted in CBR Next Move – the ACT Government's Sport and Recreation Strategy - is a key importance to provide facilities, infrastructure, and open space to enable sport and recreation participation. Establishing environmental sustainability best practice for sport and active recreation places and spaces is a strategic priority.

On April 6 the ACT Government and the current Federal Government committed \$200 million to deliver a new Convention Centre and Entertainment Precinct and Canberra Aquatic Centre.

"The new Canberra Aquatic Centre in Commonwealth Park, located next to the new light rail stops under construction on Commonwealth Avenue, will provide a modern aquatic facility for the Territory and bring more people to Commonwealth Park.

The investment in the new Canberra Aquatic Centre unlocks the land needed to deliver the new Convention and Entertainment Precinct, with a new larger capacity Convention Centre and integrated 8000 seat Entertainment Centre for live music, entertainment, and indoor sporting events."

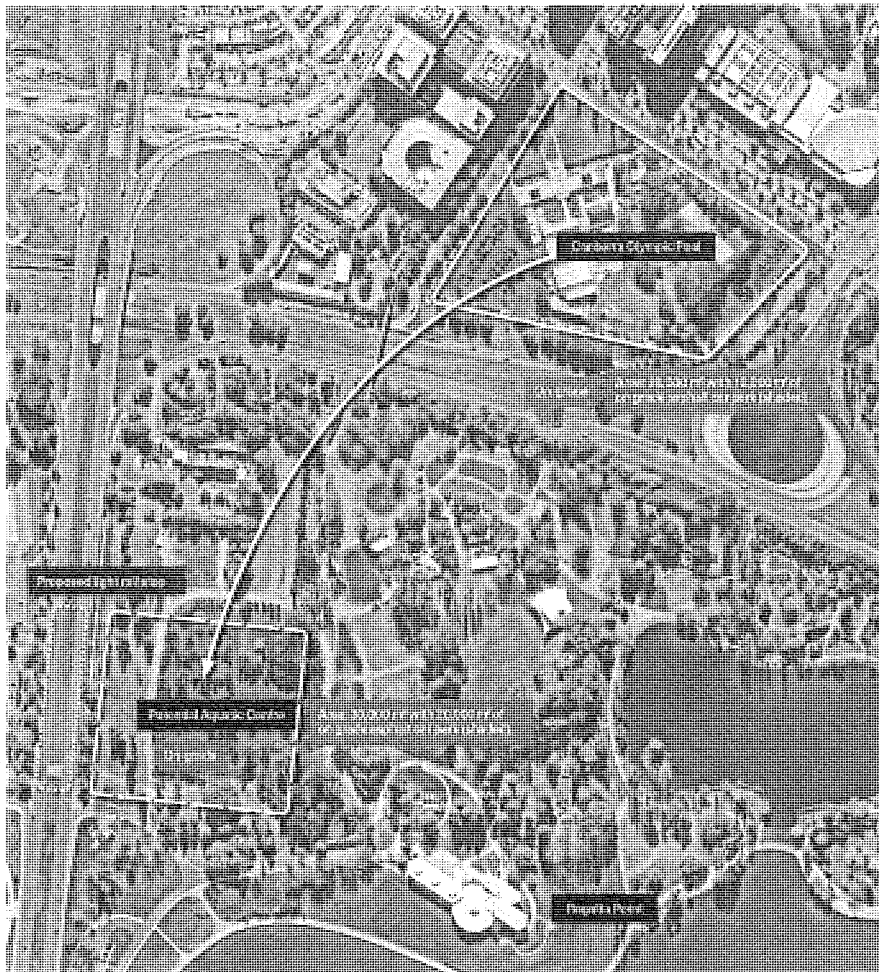
ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA

"This \$200 million investment in a new Convention Centre and Entertainment precinct, along with a brand-new Aquatic Centre in Commonwealth Park, is a game changer for our city. It will support our city's growth, attract new visitors and investment, and reflect Canberra's role as a capital for all Australians"

Federal Member for Canberra, Alicia Payne MP

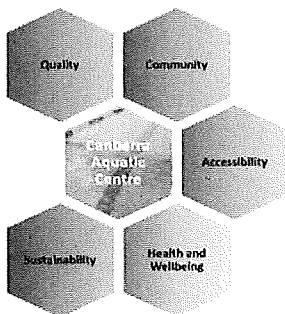
The preferred location for the Canberra Aquatic Centre is on designated land in Commonwealth Park (**Attachment A**) and will require the full approval of the National Capital Authority (NCA). Subject to preliminary investigations, planning for a new aquatic facility will consider inclusion of commensurate amenity and functionality currently provided at the existing COP.

Figure 1: Preferred location at Commonwealth Park



Source: Commonwealth Park Vision Concept 2025 (NCA)

The ACT Government is working in collaboration with the NCA on the project, including finalising a site within the park. It is the ACT Government's intent to complete detailed design for the facility in the first half of this term of Government, with construction procurement to commence shortly afterwards. The Project aims to:



- Deliver high-**quality** aquatic facilities that cater for sport and recreational activities in the city area.
- Provide facilities that cater for **community** activities, functions, and social engagement.
- Provide facilities within the centre of the ACT that is an **accessible** destination of choice.
- Provide facilities that encourage physical activity and social engagement improving **health and wellbeing** outcomes.

- Deliver facilities that are **environmentally** sustainable and are responsive to local site characteristics and infrastructure network capacity.

This Project Development business case is seeking funding to undertake concept planning and to complete a Tier 1 business case for capital funding, consistent with the Capital Framework.

The next phase of work will build on related studies and due diligence completed to date. The work will also seek to further develop the Early Project Presentation and Investment Logic Workshop/Map undertaken by CMTEDD in late 2024. Elements will include an optioneering process to rationalise the long list, a concept design process (to explore the viability of up to 3 project cases within the preferred Commonwealth Park site) and a full economic appraisal to understand the costs and benefits of the project. The current program anticipates the Tier 1 business case is ready for Government consideration in the 2026-27 Budget process.

Costs to develop concept plans and prepare the Tier 1 business case are detailed below: - note further advice on page 31 regarding establishing a construction provision and possible Commonwealth contribution. The independent cost estimate provided to develop an investment ready business case [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] inclusive of FTE as iCBR intend to value manage the business case development to this amount over the 2025-26 financial year.

It is assumed infrastructure enabling iCBR costs will be covered centrally consistent with the separately submitted a Budget Business Case in relation to iCBR's financial sustainability seeking funding for its non-appropriated corporate costs. If that Budget Business Case is not approved the funding requested through this Business Case will need to increase by 3% to cover a non-appropriated corporate contribution to cover Infrastructure Canberra's non-appropriated corporate costs.

Table 1: Financial impacts summary (\$'000, nominal)

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	Total
Capital impacts						
Capital injection	10,574	-	-	-	-	10,574
Capital inflows	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital offset – existing provision	-520	-	-	-	-	-520
Expense impacts						
Expenses						
Expenses – offsets	-	-	-	-	-	-
Expenses – offsets – existing provision	-	-	-	-	-	-

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	Total
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue/Commonwealth contribution/savings impacts						
Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commonwealth contribution	-	-	-	-	-	-
Savings	-	-	-	-	-	-
Staffing impact						
Total additional FTEs (no.)	5.1					5.1

2. Project context

Key messages

- In terms of revenue COP is losing three times as much per annum as compared with other aquatic facilities in the Territory.
- The construction of a new aquatic centre will address longstanding concerns with the aging infrastructure at the current civic pool and is an ACT Government election commitment.
- A new aquatic centre in the city will unlock additional possibilities for the use of land and future development.
- With the closure of COP, demand for various forms of sporting and recreational aquatic facilities will need to be tested.
- Work will build on the Investment Logic Map prepared in 2024 by CMTEDD.
- This project is closely aligned with other ACT and Commonwealth Government infrastructure investments including the Convention Centre and Entertainment Precinct, the Acton Waterfront and Light Rail Stage 2A.

2.1 Project characteristics

Needs analysis for the project

The COP is an important community asset and a highly valued location for sport, recreation, and social activities. Approximately 145,000 people from both Canberra and interstate, use the facility each year. Activation and usage of the existing facility is compromised as it doesn't provide all year access to some of the aquatic facilities (e.g. dive pool, toddlers pool) and the associated facilities/amenities are not comparable to that provided at contemporary aquatic facilities around Australia.

The existing facility consists of a covered Olympic size pool, a toddler and dive pool (including platform), a gym, beach volleyball courts, kiosk, picnic grasslands and other community amenities.

Now almost seventy years old, the centre has exceeded by some margin, its original design life. The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia report (the Report,) released by Royal Life Saving Australia in 2022, notes that 40% (approx. 500) public pools (including Canberra Olympic Pool) will reach the end of their lifespans this decade.

An intensive maintenance regime has allowed COP to continue operating however, the facility is in serious decline and the effectiveness of the maintenance program continues to diminish.

Of note are the existence of leaks that result in significant ongoing water loss. Repairs have been undertaken however, given the age and inaccessibility of site infrastructure, it has not been possible to identify or remediate all potential leaks. To do so would require major excavation and

remediation works that would incur significant cost without a guarantee the intervention would resolve the problem. With rising operation and maintenance costs, sustaining the facility is no longer viable.

In 2021 Lockbridge and WT Partnership completed a feasibility assessment of the COP for the ACT Property Group (iCBR). The study found that the pool is running at [REDACTED]; well in excess of other similar Territory owned/operated facilities:

Figure 2 – Comparative Analysis of Aquatic Centres

Centre	Average Annual Profit/Loss	Average Annual Total Expenditure (Centre Operator ACTPG)	Average Monthly Visitation (based on months operated per year)	Average Annual Attendance (Swim and school swim visits)	Average Annual Memberships	ACTPG Quality Satisfaction
	\$	\$	No.	No.	No.	%
COP	[REDACTED]		10,123	992	4,186	93
Gungahlin			29,112	27,783	20,253	88
Lakeside			23,939	12,032	10,912	92
Dickson			19,805	7,093	N/A	100
Manuka			6,342	779	N/A	99

Table 1 – Centre Comparative Analysis

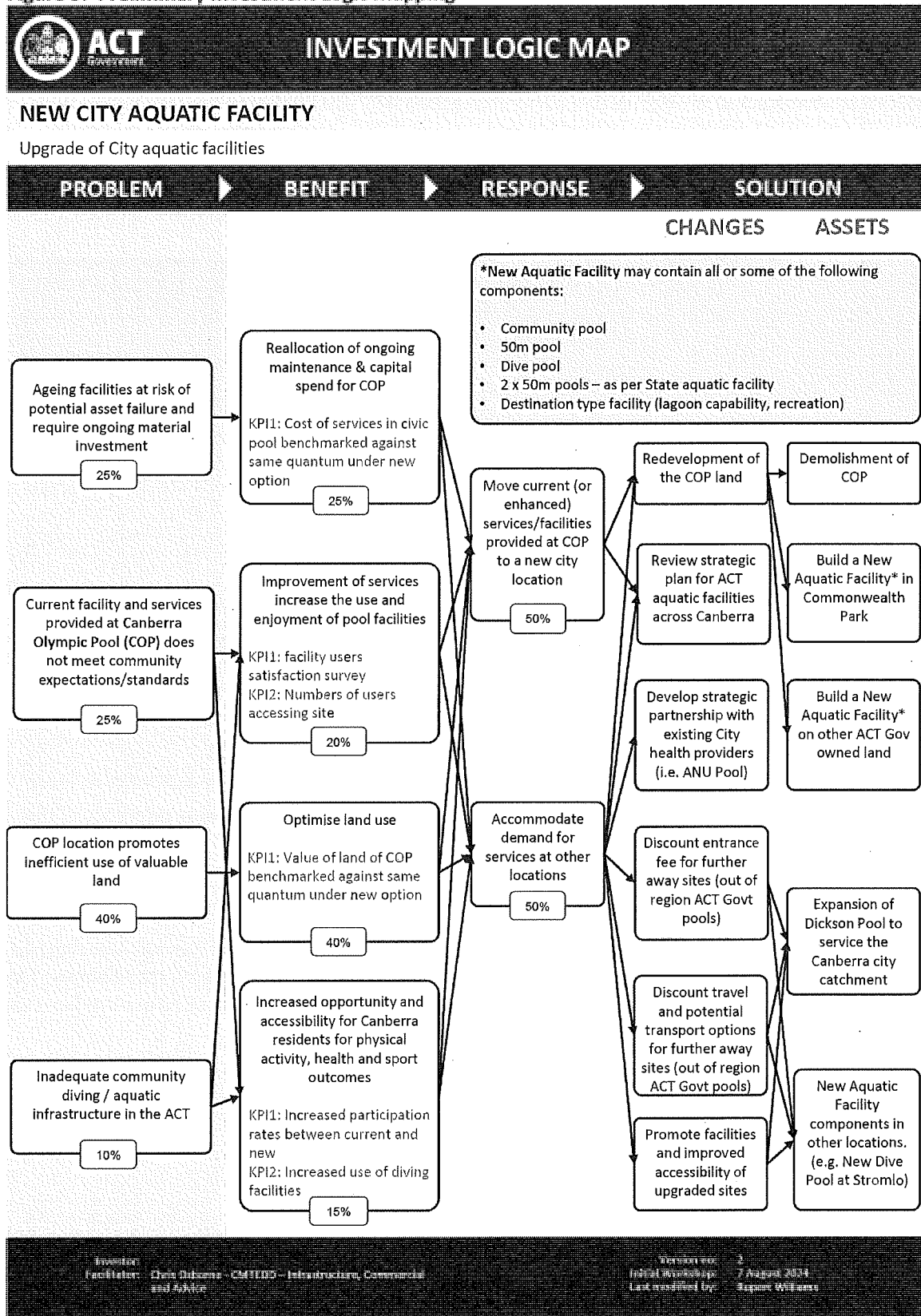
In mid-2024, the ACT Government released its updated infrastructure plans. The ACT Infrastructure Plan – Entertainment, Arts and Sport identifies the issue and includes the following reference(s) that support the decommissioning and construction of the new aquatic facility.

ACT Infrastructure Plan Update – Entertainment, Arts and Sport:

“A new pool to service the people in the Civic centre is a priority project. The Civic Pool has now reached end of life and a new pool is needed to replace the ageing Civic Pool and ensure that demand for aquatic facilities continues to be met into the future. The Government will continue to explore feasible locations for a new pool facility in the short term.”

Finally, an alternative site for a new pool in the City precinct, would enable the Government the opportunity to release the current site for new infrastructure needs within the City precinct – namely a new Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct.

Figure 3: Preliminary Investment Logic Mapping



Indicative capital value, risk assessment and Tier

The business case will identify the most cost-effective solution and investigate opportunities to subsidise or offset costs through more innovative value capture and risk transfer measures, including potential PPPs with private operators/delivery partners, revenue raising opportunities through leases with co-located tenants. These measures would be designed as part of the business case to effectively manage risk, reduce the cost to the Territory and supplement the recreational services provided throughout the Territory.

Consistent with the *Capital Framework*, a Tier assessment has identified the Canberra Aquatic Centre as a Tier 1 project in accordance with the value/risk matrix shown in the diagram below. Initial analysis suggests that the proposed business case is expected to bring forward a solution that is valued over \$100 million and is likely to include higher and lower cost options:

Figure 4: Tier Assessment Matrix

Value >>	< \$25m	\$25m - \$100m	> \$100m
High Risk	Tier 2	Tier 1	Tier 1
Medium Risk	Tier 3	Tier 2	Tier 1
Low Risk	Tier 3	Tier 2	Tier 1

Potential delivery models

The *Capital Framework* identifies 14 delivery models to consider during the delivery model assessment for the business case (see Table 4 below).

Table 2: Delivery Models

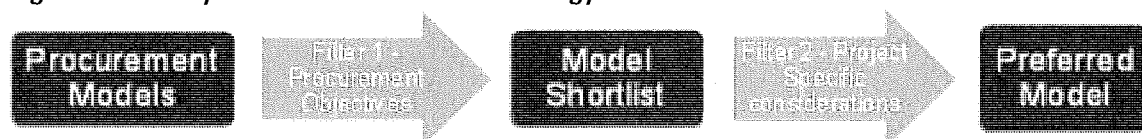
Traditional	Integrated	Flexible
Models that allocate price risk to the contractor and have low to medium levels of integration	Models that are suitable for complex projects and involve a bundling of services and a greater degree of private sector involvement	Models that are suitable for projects where the private sector cannot bear full price risk. Relevant where scope is unknown or has the potential for variation
- Design then Construct (Construct Only) - Document and Construct - Design and Construct - Design Construct Maintain (short term)	- Design Construct Maintain (long term) - Design Construct Maintain Operate - Availability PPP (DCFO/M) - User Charge PPP	- Project Management Agreement - Managing Contractor - Alliance - Early Contractor Involvement - Construction Management - Delivery Partner

At this stage of the project it is not appropriate to confirm a preferred delivery model. However, the project's characteristics suggest that [REDACTED] may be suitable and/or [REDACTED] the Territory's objectives for the project. Some of these project characteristics are summarised below:

- The project is likely to be designed to [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Noting that the final scope for the project is yet to be settled, the capital value is likely to be [REDACTED], with the maintenance and operations period of [REDACTED] years or more.
- There is scope for innovation in design and operations to maximise project benefits
- The construction of the project is likely to be [REDACTED] due to its [REDACTED], however [REDACTED] during operations are less certain [REDACTED].

A formal assessment of appropriate procurement and delivery models for the project will be conducted as part of the business case process. In addition to the guidance provided in the *Capital Framework*, the assessment methodology will also consider Infrastructure Australia's Procurement Options Analysis guidelines and will follow the approach summarised in Figure 2 below.

Figure 5: Delivery model assessment methodology



Indicative project timeline

Table 3: Indicative project timeline for investment ready business case development

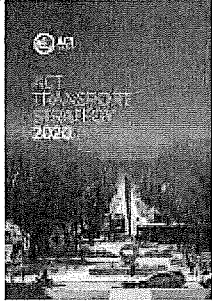
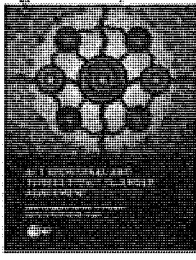
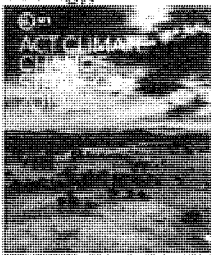
Milestones	Date to be completed
1. Technical Due Diligence	Q2 2025
2. Functional Design Brief/Optioneering	Q3 2025
3. Concept design	Q4 2025
4. Business case finalisation / Government investment decision	Q1 2026
Final completion date	End Q1 2026

2.2 Strategic and policy alignment

Alignment with Government commitments and policies

Table 4: Related Government policies and commitments

Supporting Studies and Policies	Focus and Key Findings
2025-26 Commonwealth Budget	The current Federal Government has committed \$68.9m in the 2025-26 Budget and gifting of land at Commonwealth Park to deliver a new aquatic centre by FY 2028-29 <i>"This \$200 million investment in a new Convention Centre and Entertainment precinct, along with a brand-new Aquatic Centre in Commonwealth Park, is a game changer for our city. It will support our city's growth, attract new visitors and investment, and reflect Canberra's role as a capital for all Australians"</i> Federal Member for Canberra, Alicia Payne MP
ACT Labor's ambition for Canberra	The ACT Government announced the delivery of the Canberra Aquatic Centre in Commonwealth Park as an election commitment. <u>Labor's ambition for Canberra - growing our CBD</u> The ACT Government has agreed to match Commonwealth funding (50/50).
ACT Infrastructure Plan Update 	The Plan Update directly refers to and supports the project. <i>"The Canberra Olympic Pool was built in 1955 as a seasonal aquatic facility comprising of an outdoor 50 -metre pool, dive pool and toddlers' pool. Since then, various modifications have been undertaken in the facility to transform it into a year - round leisure facility that our community has enjoyed for over 60 years. The Civic Pool has now reached end of life and will need to be decommissioned. The construction of a new pool to service people living in the Civic centre will remain a priority to replace the ageing Civic Pool and ensure that we will continue to meet demand for aquatic facilities as housing density increases in the city. The Government will explore feasible locations for a new pool facility in the short term."</i>
Commonwealth Park Concept Vision 2025 	The NCA is in the process of updating the masterplan for Commonwealth Park. The draft concept vision currently identifies an indicative site for the proposed aquatic facility. Stakeholder engagement on the vision will extend from 10 April 2025 – 20 June 2025
ACT Transport Strategy 2020	ACT Transport Strategy 2020 outlines the ACT Government's approach to achieving the vision of a world-class transport system that supports a compact, sustainable, and vibrant city. It provides the framework for how investments in transport would be planned and delivered over the next 20 years.

	Central to this strategy is the creation of well-connected, reliable, and flexible transport networks that will facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods. The strategy places emphasis on providing a wider range of transport choices for users and promoting more sustainable modes of travel such as public transport, cycling, and walking. However, patients and hospital visitors only take up a portion of medical facilities' transport activities.
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement, 2019-2028 	The Agreement recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first people. First people have the right to self-determination which is an ongoing process of choice to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are able to meet their social, cultural and economic needs. One of the significant areas of focus is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have equity in health and wellbeing outcomes as any other members of the community.
ACT Climate Change Strategy, 2019-25 	The ACT Climate Change Strategy sets out a vision for the future: By 2045 the ACT will be a leading net zero emissions territory that demonstrates that a healthier, smarter future is possible. Consistent with the policy, the delivery of the project will seek to reduced emissions and optimise the use of sustainable materials where appropriate.

Alignment with other projects, Programs and Precincts

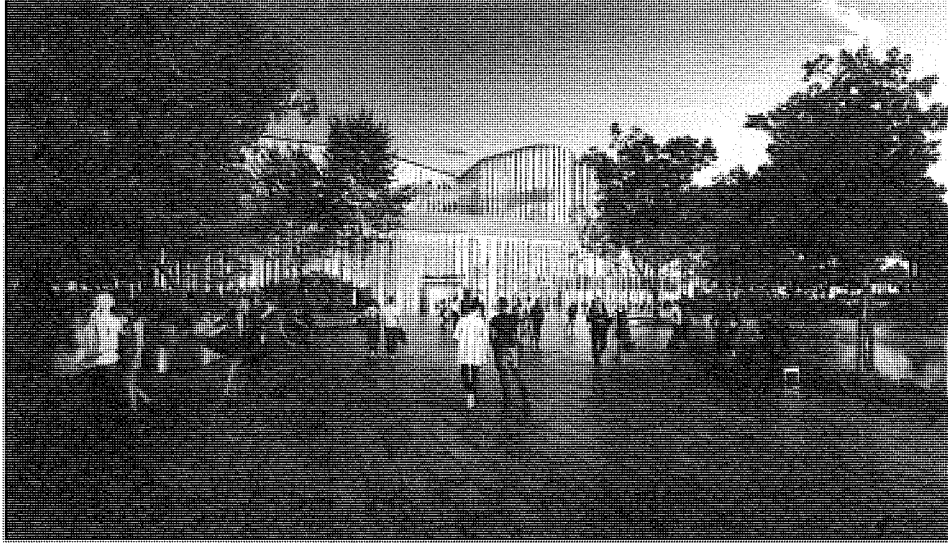
Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct:

The site of the existing COP has been identified as the site of the new Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct.

The use of a pool at the current site does not present strong alignment with the NCA's 2012 Constitution Avenue Design Handbook when compared to other potential uses for the site, nor the proposed surrounding uses of the site. For example, Design Objective 1 of the Handbook states that *"Constitution Avenue should be developed as a destination with extended hours of use and a strong sense of place. New developments should enhance the quality of public space through designs that generate activity and promote social interaction and economic vitality."*

A Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct, with its high activation potential, extended hours of use and compatibility with other night-time economy amenities in the nearby Civic and Culture

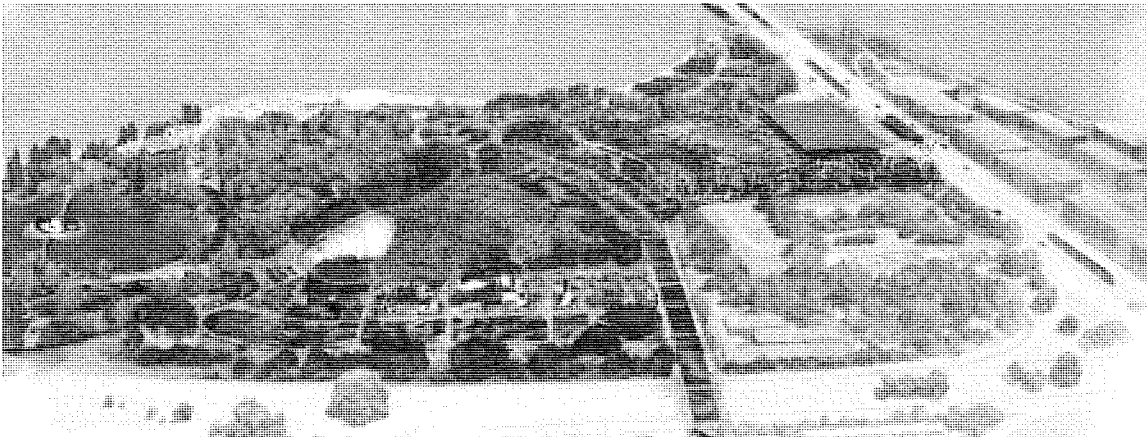
District, presents a stronger alignment with this design objective and further aligns with the ACT Government's 2023 City Plan and District Strategies.



A public aquatic centre may however be considered more in keeping with the vision described for Commonwealth Park - as for a place of recreation for all residents, which strong integration with the natural surrounds and adjoining public recreation amenity. As outlined below, this alignment is further demonstrated through recent planning investigations by the NCA.

Commonwealth Park Concept Vision 2025:

In February 2023 the NCA commenced a review of the Commonwealth Park Masterplan. In early 2024 ACT Government officers from CMTEDD and the CRA met with the NCA to discuss the masterplan. The NCA provided some background material relating to the potential inclusion of an aquatic facility within the park adjacent to Commonwealth Avenue near the future Light Rail stop.



Since this time the NCA has advised the ACT Government that, subject to further negotiations, they would consider allocating a parcel of land to support the delivery of the aquatic facility. It was also acknowledged that the ACT Government would be responsible for designing, delivering and operating the new facility.

On 10 May 2025 the NCA announced the Commonwealth Park Concept Vision 2025 (**Attachment B**) and commenced stakeholder engagement:

“The National Capital Authority (NCA) is inviting the Australian community to shape the future of Commonwealth Park after releasing a new concept vision for its revitalisation.

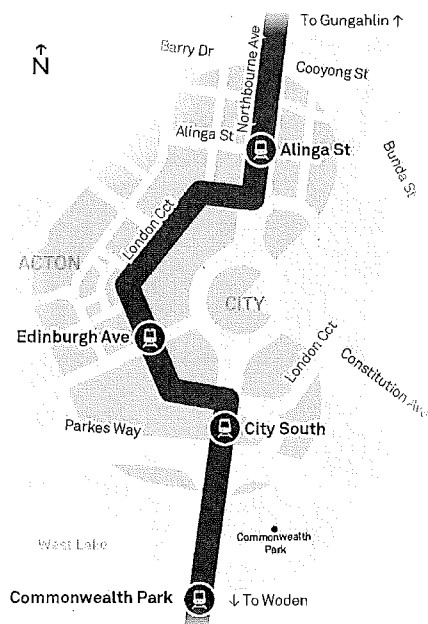
Commonwealth Park Concept Vision 2025 sets out the NCA’s early thinking on options and opportunities for the renewal of Commonwealth Park over the coming decades.

The concept vision seeks to preserve the integrity and current uses of Commonwealth Park, while looking at ways it can evolve over time to meet the future needs of the community.”

NCA has also detailed their expectations regarding the scope of the project. This will require further consideration via the upcoming Tier 1 business case. Discussions with the NCA are ongoing.

Light Rail Stage 2A:

Light Rail Stage 2A will extend the light rail system from Alinga Street to Commonwealth Park, adjacent to the preferred site. The 1.7km extension will follow along London Circuit West. It will feature three new stops at Edinburgh Avenue, City South, and Commonwealth Park. The stops will help people access the ANU, their homes, and businesses in City West and New Acton.



Light Rail Stage 2A will provide greater connection between the city and the lake. It will support access to facilities within Commonwealth Park and provide additional active travel in the city by including new cycling and walking infrastructure.

Acton Waterfront:

The ACT Government through the City Renewal Authority (CRA) is building a more connected and lively lakefront at Acton. This will create a new lakeside destination for the Canberra community and tourists to use and enjoy. It will showcase Lake Burley Griffin as the centrepiece that makes Canberra a beautiful place to visit and live.



The completion of the new boardwalk in 2022 marked both the new lake edge and commencement of the next phase of the project, a new public park called Ngamawari.

An interim park is currently under construction and will open to the public in 2025. The delivery of new aquatic facilities on the opposite side of Commonwealth Avenue providing a connected waterfront along Lake Burley Griffin.

Plans for the Acton Waterfront also envisage the establishment of a large mixed use community between the foreshore and the Parkes Avenue. This new contemporary community will benefit from the delivery of high-quality recreational facilities such as new aquatic facilities.

Alignment to Wellbeing Framework domains and indicators

To be completed

3. Project development options

Key messages

- The business case will consider a scenario that includes the potential injection of capital from the Commonwealth Government and the gifting of land by the National Capital Authority.
- Given the complexity of the Government's preferred site at Commonwealth Park and the need to explore a wider range of commercial options, it is recommended that delivery of the business case is supported by a range of external commercial and design related advisors managed by an iCBR Project Team.
- This process will involve a robust options development and assessment process taking into consideration a wider range of demand and design related activities.
- In line with the *Capital Framework* the scope of the project will build on the (1) Develop activities undertaken by CMTEDD and deliver (2) Prove in a single Tier 1 business case.

Business Case context and drivers

The proposed CAC Tier 1 business case will:

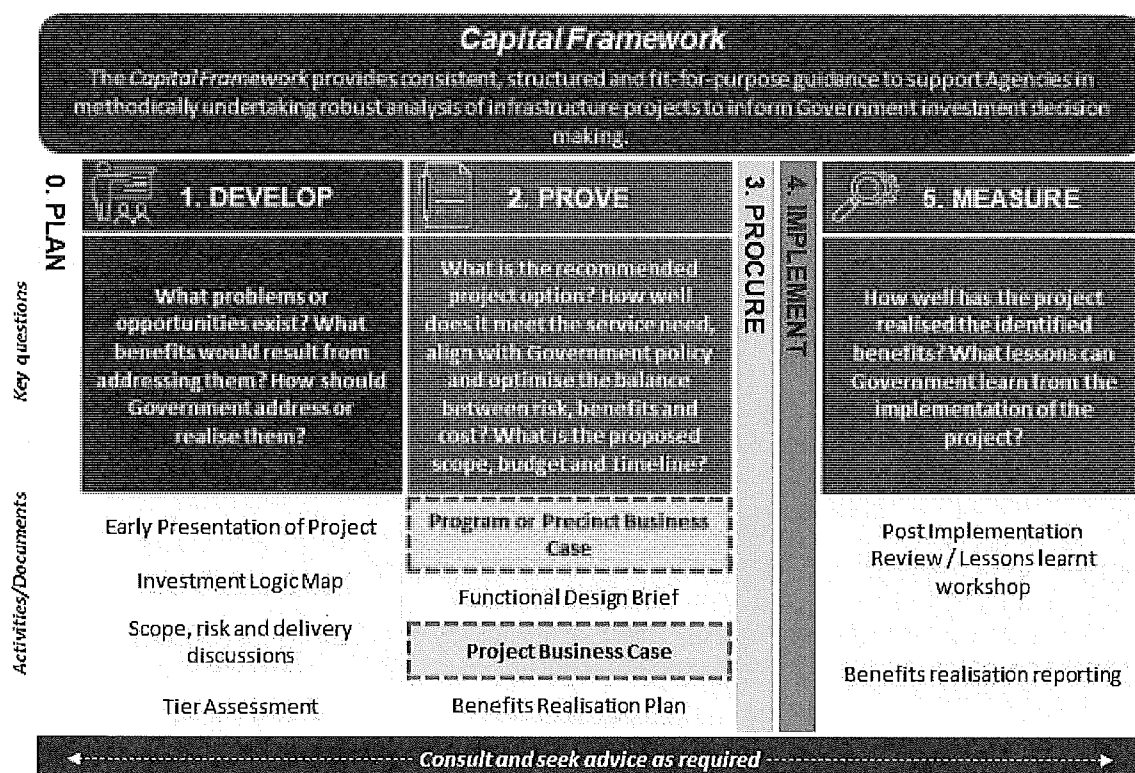
- Review and rationalise the development work done to date.
- Incorporate due diligence activities that are currently underway.
- Rationalise options generated to date through a multi-criteria analysis.
- Include a quantitative risk analysis using stochastic techniques to develop P90 cost estimates.
- Prepare a detailed Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Advisor Engagement Plan
- Develop governance arrangement and if appropriate include Commonwealth Government interfaces.
- Develop a Functional Design Brief to guide the development of up to three (3) project cases in addition to the base case.
- Complete two (2) concept designs.
- Develop Delivery Program.
- Consider the injection of capital and land by the Commonwealth Government.
- Complete an Economic/Financial Appraisal and Delivery Model analysis for the preferred option.
- Understand the future service provision profile and the impact this will have on both demand and value capture opportunities.
- Consider commercial and value capture opportunities.
- Consider the impacts that delivery of Canberra Light Rail 2A will have on mode share, travel patterns and therefore parking demand.
- Consider placemaking and precinct integration opportunities at the site as part of a broader Commonwealth Park Masterplan development.

Proposed scope of Business Case

In line with the *Capital Framework* the proposed scope of the proposed business case will consolidate activities undertaken in stage: (1) Develop, as well as those to be undertaken in stage (2) Prove to be documented in single Tier 1 business case. It is anticipated that the output will comprise both strategic and detailed business case in the single piece.

A summary of the proposed scope is outlined below.

Figure 6: Proposed Business Case Scope



Funding and delivery options

Delivery

Given the complexity of the proposed business case and the need to explore a wider range of design options, it is recommended that delivery of this business case is supported by a range of external advisors managed by an internal iCBR Project Team. This approach aligns with the guidance for complex and/or higher risk Tier 1 Business Case outlined in the *Capital Framework*.

The full range of advisers that iCBR may require to support the development of the proposed Business Case are summarised in the Table below.

Table 5: Potential External Advisors

Adviser type	Role and input
<i>Architecture, landscape architecture and concept planning</i>	The preferred site in Commonwealth Park is highly visible and within an iconic part of Canberra. Works approvals will also be required from the NCA. Delivery of exemplar landscape and built form design quality should be expected for this project.
<i>Technical design and engineering</i>	Building on previous work, a range of technical inputs to develop the revised project options, recommended solution and functional and conceptual designs. These include: • Geotechnical (e.g. site investigations, surveying) • Engineering (structural, civil, hydraulic, electrical, mechanical, fire) • Network services planning and alignment • Transport and traffic
<i>Financial, commercial and procurement</i>	Specialist financial, commercial and/or procurement advice to provide: • Potential market sounding to test the viability and appetite for potential commercial options/uses as part of the project options development • Financial analysis and assessment of project options under a variety of potential commercial uses and models • Analysis and assessment of financial implications of delivery options
<i>Environment and sustainability</i>	Specialist advice an input on potential sustainability and net-zero initiatives across the full life-cycle of the project.

To the extent possible and relevant, analysis and inputs already developed will be incorporated, noting that the business case may seek a different outcome to the previous. This may include previous technical site studies.

Funding

CMTEDD have advised that there is \$750k funding allocated in 24/25 FY for staffing, consultants and advisors to progress this initiative and the funding not spent in 2024-25 (estimated at \$230k) will be rolled over into 2025-26 and used as an offset for this project funding request. Further detail is provided at *Section 6 Funding Request*.

4. Planned stakeholder engagement and consultation

Key messages

- Community consultation will be an important component of Concept Design development.
- The preferred site in Commonwealth Park has been selected due to its iconic location on the foreshore to Lake Burley Griffin. Designing this facility within such a prominent location will attract interest from a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Delivery of a new facility at Commonwealth Park would involve the ACT Government working in partnership with the Commonwealth Government throughout the design development, regulatory approval and delivery processes. This partnership will be critical to the success of the project.
- Preparation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (consistent with the [Stakeholder Engagement Plan Guidelines](#)) will be an important first step for the project.

4.1 Key stakeholders

Table 6: Stakeholders

Question	Description
Who is the Sponsoring Minister for this project?	Chief Minister Andrew Barr MLA
What is Government's involvement and interest in this project? Which Agencies are directly involved in or affected by this project? Have they been consulted to date?	This project would deliver an election commitment made by the ACT Government Infrastructure Canberra City Renewal Authority Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
What is the community's involvement and interest in this project?	High – given the location, high visibility and ongoing access and usage of the site. Community related stakeholders include: <i>Friends of Canberra Olympic Pool</i> , <i>ACT Aquatic Alliance</i> and <i>National Trust</i> .
Are there any other key stakeholders or third parties that should be consulted during the development of this project?	Yes, a detailed Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be drafted at the commencement of the project.
What is the plan for future stakeholder engagement and consultation during the project's development?	Appropriate forums will be established to ensure both internal and external stakeholder engagement is established via a detailed Stakeholder Engagement

	Plan. Establishing cross-agency governance will also contribute to managing stakeholder input.
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4.2 Stakeholder engagement and consultations planned

For the proposed business case, multiple communication and engagement methods will be utilised to effectively engage with the wide variety of stakeholders including, but not limited to:

- Market soundings with industry
- Information sessions and community forums
- Face-to-face meetings
- One-on-one consultations
- Websites (e.g. YourSay)
- Surveys
- Email
- Letter drops

Table 7 indicates the proposed communication channels and frequency of engagement and consultation with each key identified stakeholder.

Table 7: Stakeholder consultation approach

Stakeholder	Involvement and Interest	Level of Influence	Level of Interest	Communication Channel	Frequency
iCBR (internal)	Responsible for delivery of the Business Case, procurement and capital infrastructure works. Also responsible for Light Rail Stage 2.	High	High	Face to face meetings, One-on-one consultation, Email, Meetings.	Regularly
National Capital Authority	Landowners and administrators of the National Capital Plan	High	High	Face to face meetings, One-on-one consultation, Email, Meetings.	Regularly
City Renewal Authority	Responsible for planning for the delivery of the Acton Waterfront.	High	High	Face to face meetings, One-on-one consultation, Email, Meetings.	Regularly
CMTEDD – Strategic Infrastructure Coordination	Planning for the delivery of the related Convention Centre Precinct	High	High	Face to face meetings, One-on-one consultation, Email, Meetings.	Regularly
CMTEDD - Treasury	Responsible for advice to Government on funding decisions and managing and appropriated funding	High	High	Face to face meetings, One-on-one consultation, Email, Meetings.	Monthly
TCCS	Responsible for managing road, footpaths and cycle paths, will be interested due to impact on traffic from new carpark and wider impact on transport networks	High	High	Face to face meetings, One-on-one consultation, Email, Meetings.	Monthly
Community (COP users) – visitors and residents	Responsible for providing insights and feedback on requirements and design for consideration	Medium	High	Website, Survey, Information sessions, Community forums	Targeted Engagement
Community (Commonwealth Park users) – visitors and residents	Responsible for providing insights and feedback on requirements and design for consideration	Medium	High	Website, Survey, Information sessions, Community forums	Targeted Engagement
Community (neighbouring residents and businesses within 500m)	Responsible for providing insights and feedback Neighbouring land users to provide feedback on design	Medium	Medium	Website, Survey, Information sessions, Community forums	Quarterly
Potential precinct operators including current operator Belgravia	Partner in operating the commercial facilities within the precinct to inform precinct design and	Low	High	Market sounding, targeted	Once or twice through the program

Stakeholder	Involvement and Interest	Level of Influence	Level of Interest	Communication Channel	Frequency
	development of value capture and commercial opportunities for the project.			One-on-one consultation	
ACT Digital Data and Technology Solutions Group	Responsible for provision of technical, tactical and transactional support for whole of ACT	Medium	Low	Face to face meetings, One-on-one consultation, Email, Meetings.	As needed
Other ACT Government Directorates	Involved on an as-needed basis	Medium	Medium	Face to face meetings, One-on-one consultation, Email	As needed

5. Approach

Key messages

- iCBR holds responsibility for the project under the Administrative Arrangements. The project will be managed under the established project governance structure applicable to Tier 1 infrastructure projects.
- Given the complexity of the project from a design perspective, it is recommended that delivery of the business case is supported by a range of external advisors managed by an internal iCBR Project Team.
- The planning will test up to three (3) different options to meet scope and budget considerations.
- A Project Team established within iCBR will be responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the Project. The Project Team will manage relationships with external advisors, and other project stakeholders including the CRA and CMTEDD.
- Governance processes will be commensurate with other Tier 1 projects.

The methodology for the proposed business case is consistent with similar Tier 1 business cases undertaken recently within the Territory under the *Capital Framework*. This approach will ensure robust technical, financial and investment related advice, in addition to industry feedback, is provided for Government consideration in advance of a potential future funding mandate.

5.1 Key deliverables and timetable

Table 8: Milestones

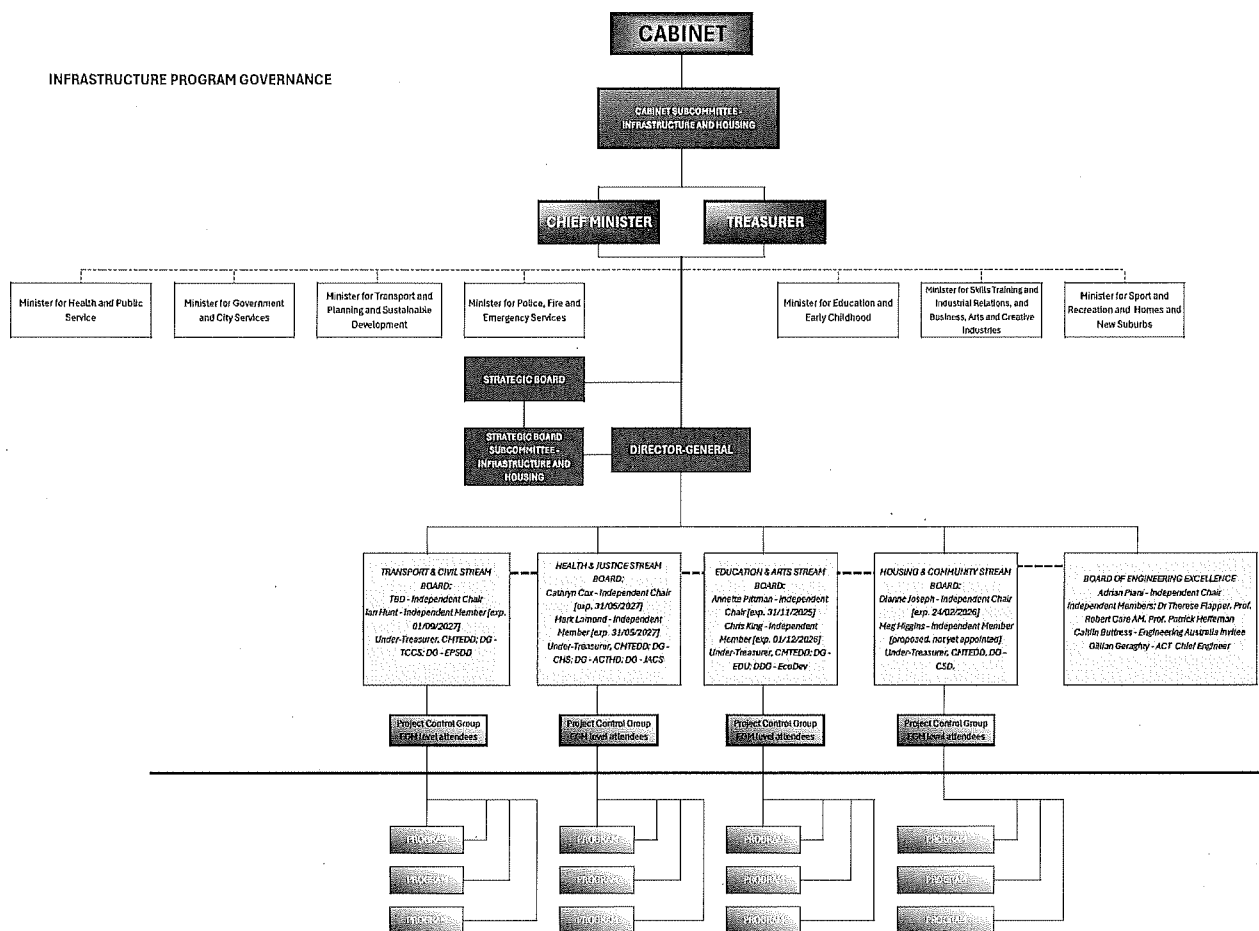
Milestones	Date to be completed
5. Technical Due Diligence	Q2 2025
6. Functional Design Brief/Optioneering	Q3 2025
7. Concept design	Q4 2025
8. Business case finalisation / Government investment decision	Q1 2026
Final completion date	End Q1 2026

5.2 Governance

CBR holds responsibility for the project under the Administrative Arrangements. The project will be managed under the established project governance structure applicable to Tier 1 infrastructure

projects. The proposed governance structure for delivering the business case is illustrated at Figure 7.

Figure 7: Proposed Project Governance Structure



The structure is appropriate for a Tier 1 project and delineates between project governance and stakeholder management by ensuring information and feedback from stakeholders flows through the structure. The governance structure has been designed to ensure that the harmonisation of 'best for project' outcomes are prioritised by all parties, support efficient decision-making and facilitate critical and cross-government engagement and consultation.

The governance structure is recommended to remain consistent throughout the Prove, Procure, Implement and Measure stages of the Infrastructure Investment Lifecycle. This is to ensure that all stakeholder requirements, and key interests in the project are clear and consistent from throughout project planning through to project delivery.

The current approach to having independent Project Boards is planned to change in favour of the Program Board structure detailed above as of July 1, 2025(CAB25/233 refers).

5.3 Project Team resources

An integrated Project Team established within iCBR will be responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the project including monitoring and reporting on status. Related NCA and ACT Government will need to be actively engaged in the development of the proposed business case, helping to define planning, built form and landscape requirements.

The Project Team will manage relationships with external advisors, and other project stakeholders including community engagement. A preliminary assessment of iCBR resourcing to scope, procure, project manage and deliver the business case over the 10 months program is outlined in the table below.

Table 9: Proposed additional resources (12 months)

Level	FTE (annual)	Indicative cost '000 (annual)	Description
Executive Level 1.4	0.1	31,905	Time for executive oversight of the Business Case and representation on governance committees.
Infrastructure Manager 3	1	269,584	Resourcing for a senior infrastructure specialist engaged in the development, management and delivery of capital project business cases. Has a strong understanding of the key commercial, financial, legal, technical, social and environmental drivers.
Infrastructure Manager 1	2	479,214	Two experts in legislative frameworks, regulations and standards, government decision-making and Directorate guidelines and policies to manage the delivery of the Business Case.
Senior Officer Grade B	2	416,269	Junior officer to support administrative tasks associated delivery of the Business Case.
Total	5.1	\$1,196,971	

6. Funding request

Key messages

- This business case is seeking funding to deliver the full scope of concept planning and business case development, independent of any Federal Government contribution. This is estimated at [REDACTED].
- Project development activities include Concept Design (inclusive of up to three (3) options/scope scenarios), Stakeholder Engagement and Business Case Development for capital delivery.
- On 06 April 2025 the current Federal Government committed to delivering a new aquatic centre in Commonwealth Park including \$68.9 million across the forwards to 2028 -29 FY – with this funding included in the 2025-26 Budget released on 25 March 2025.
- Establish a [REDACTED] from the Commonwealth Government.
- After the federal election, we will commence discussions on agreeing milestones for concept planning and business case development to offset forecast costs.
- Given the governance requirements typically associated with delivery of a Tier 1 project, an ACT Government team of 5.1 FTE's is recommended.
- The costs proposed are consistent with estimates proposed for similar projects within the iCBR portfolio.

6.1 Funding requested

iCBR engaged WTP Australia Pty Ltd ("WTP") in the capacity of Quantity Surveyor to provide an indicative estimation of consultant costs for the development of a Tier 1 business case for a new aquatic facility at Commonwealth Park to help inform budget requests to the ACT Government.

WTP brings extensive experience providing expert cost management advice for some of the most complex infrastructure projects both in Australia and around the globe. WTP have an inherent appreciation of government requirements and processes, significant benchmarking data and an understanding of all aspects of the construction industry and of the current market environment. A high-level summary of the consultant cost estimates is outlined below and further itemised at **Appendix C**, noting that this is a cost estimate to complete a Tier 1 business case.

Table 10: Indicative Consultant Cost Estimate for Detailed Business Case

	Key Deliverable	Cost Estimate (\$'000)
1	Functional Design Brief (for 3 project options)	
2	Concept Design Development / Report (for 2 project options)	
	Cost Estimate (for 2 project options)	
3	Detailed Business Case	
	ICBR Fees	
	TOTAL – EXC GST	

Source: WT Partnership (2025)

Business cases are typically completed in two stages - (1) a Strategic business case, and (2) a Detailed business case. In developing the costings iCBR have sought to build on the Early Project Presentation and Investment Logic Mapping process already completed by Treasury and include costs to advance to a full Detailed Business Case (Table 9 above).

The independent cost estimate provided to develop an investment ready business case [REDACTED] inclusive of FTE as we intend to value manage the business case development to this amount over the 2025-26 financial year.

It is assumed infrastructure enabling iCBR costs will be covered centrally consistent with the separately submitted a Budget Business Case in relation to iCBR's financial sustainability seeking funding for its non-appropriated corporate costs. If that Budget Business Case is not approved the funding requested through this Business Case will need to increase by 3% to cover a non-appropriated corporate contribution to cover Infrastructure Canberra's non-appropriated corporate costs.

Other Costing Assumptions:

- All figures exclude Goods & Services Tax (GST).
- All figures are rounded to the nearest thousands.
- Due to the high-level nature of current available information / potential design creep and scope clarification, contingency has been allowed for at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
- The proposed Project Team staff costs are included in the financial summary below.
- Consultant costs associated with Development Application, final design, tender & procurement services and any services during the construction phase have been excluded.
- Estimated costs are based on January 2025 prices with no provision for escalation.

Table 11: Financial impacts summary (Concept Design and Business Case) (\$'000, nominal)

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	Total
Capital impacts						
Capital injection	10,574					10,574
Capital inflows						
Capital offset – existing provision	-520					-520
Expense impacts						
Expenses						
Expenses – offsets						
Expenses – offsets – existing provision						
Depreciation						
Revenue/Commonwealth contribution/savings impacts						
Revenue						
Commonwealth contribution						
Savings						
Staffing impact						
Total additional FTEs (no.)	5.1					5.1

6.2 Capital Works Provision

On April 6 the ACT Government and the Current Federal Government committed \$200 million to deliver a new Convention Centre and Entertainment Precinct and Canberra Aquatic Centre.

“The new Canberra Aquatic Centre in Commonwealth Park, located next to the new light rail stops under construction on Commonwealth Avenue, will provide a modern aquatic facility for the Territory and bring more people to Commonwealth Park.

The investment in the new Canberra Aquatic Centre unlocks the land needed to deliver the new Convention and Entertainment Precinct, with a new larger capacity Convention Centre and integrated 8000 seat Entertainment Centre for live music, entertainment, and indoor sporting events.”

ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA

Canberra Aquatic Centre

"This \$200 million investment in a new Convention Centre and Entertainment precinct, along with a brand-new Aquatic Centre in Commonwealth Park, is a game changer for our city. It will support our city's growth, attract new visitors and investment, and reflect Canberra's role as a capital for all Australians"

Federal Member for Canberra, Alicia Payne MP

Federal Labor makes \$100m Canberra convention centre funding pledge for planning, new aquatic centre

Noting that the final scope and capital/recurring costs will be confirmed through upcoming design and business case development, it is assumed that the capital cost of the project will be over \$120 million, without considering maintenance and operational costs. Establishing a construction provision will assist in budget forecasting and driving value management activities as the scope is further defined. Establishing a provision of \$127.8 million (on basis of 50:50 matching to the Commonwealth funding profile) is consistent with the above commitment.

It is understood that \$68.9 million is committed to the Canberra Aquatic Centre project. In the circumstance that the Current Federal Government win the Federal Election, iCBR will renegotiate milestones to offset 50% of the cost for the business case as follows:

Table 12: Financial impacts summary (Joint Funding Scenario) (\$'000, nominal)

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	Total
Capital impacts						
Capital injection	5,000					5,000
						63,900
Capital inflows						
Capital offset – existing provision						
Expense impacts						
Expenses						
Expenses – offsets						
Expenses – offsets – existing provision						
Depreciation						
Revenue/Commonwealth contribution/savings impacts						
Revenue						
Commonwealth contribution						68,900

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	Total
Savings						
Staffing impact						
Total additional FTEs (no.)	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1		5.1

7. Risks and sensitivities

Key messages

- The Current Federal Government has committed \$68.9 million to delivering the project if successful in the 2025 Federal Election. The commitment is made on a 50/50 basis and sees the project delivered by FY 2028-29.
- The Current Federal Government commitment suggests an overall capital budget of \$137.8 million.
- Project scope is yet to be settled and the procurement methodology should give certainty that the preferred option is deliverable within the set budget window.
- The NCA are in the process of updating the Commonwealth Park Masterplan. One of the key amendments to the masterplan is to notionally identify the new aquatic centre.
- The NCA has provided drawings to illustrate their vision for the facility. Whether this outcome is achievable within the set budget window will need to be further tested but aspects like multi-level basement car parking may prove unviable from a budget and infrastructure capacity perspective.
- The above will need to be considered in the context of NCA being the landowner as well as being the planning and approvals regulator for the site.
- The site is highly visible and the design process is likely to attract attention from a broad range of stakeholders. Consultation processes will need to be tailored for the project and the audience.

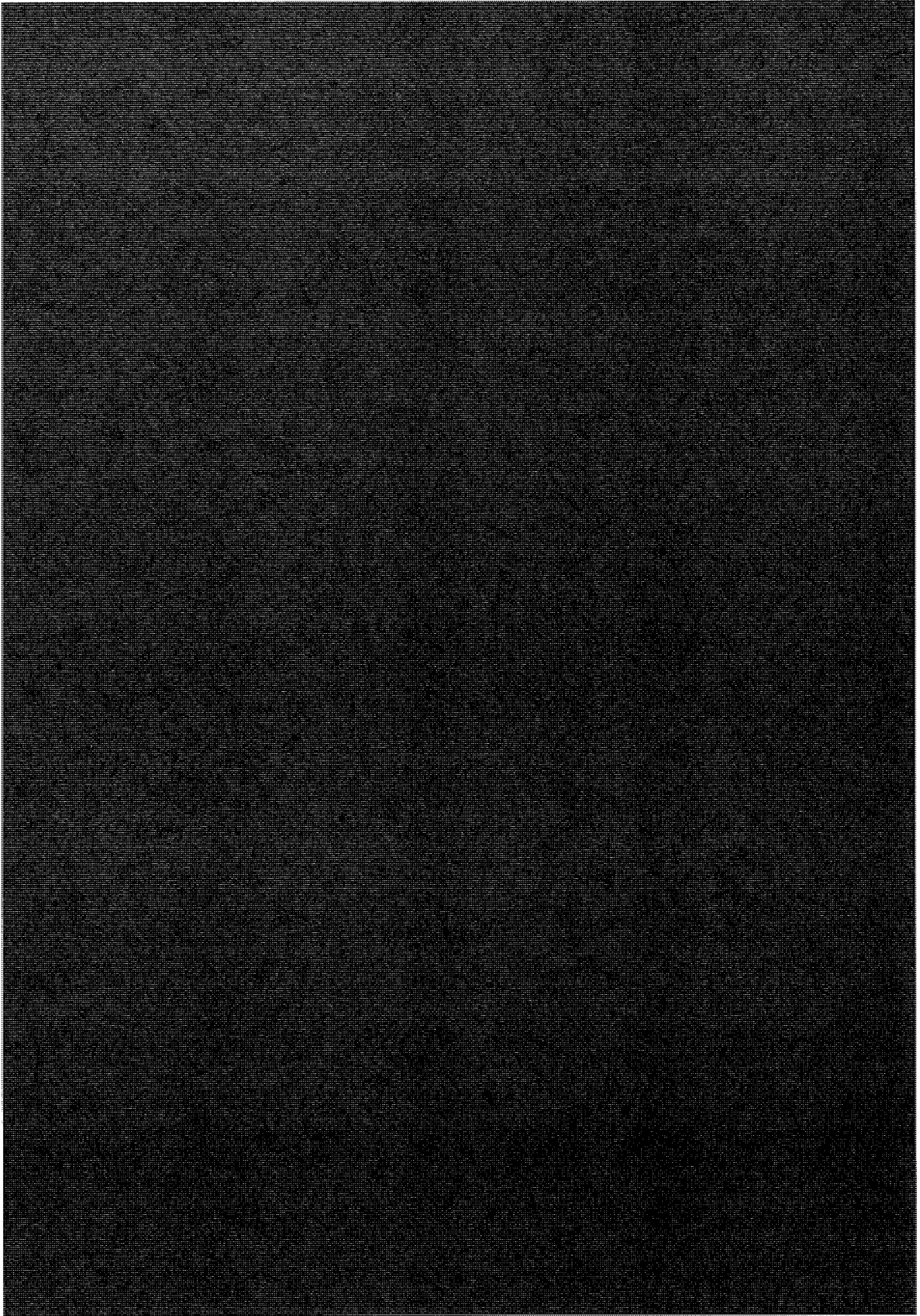
7.1 Key risks and sensitivities

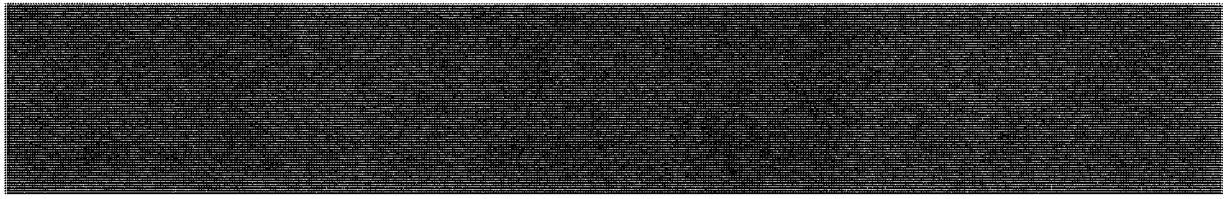
The project will adopt the ACT Insurance Authority (ACTIA) risk management framework to inform the risk management strategy to be applied to the Project. The risk management strategy applied to the Project is to proactively prevent risk events from occurring. This approach forms the basis for any risk mitigation consideration or decision as part of a continuous improvement process. A project Risk Register for the delivery of the project will be developed. It will be a live document and will be continually monitored, assessed and updated in line with the ACTIA risk management framework.

The key risks and sensitivities for the development of the business case are detailed at Table 13.

Table 13: Project Risks and Mitigations

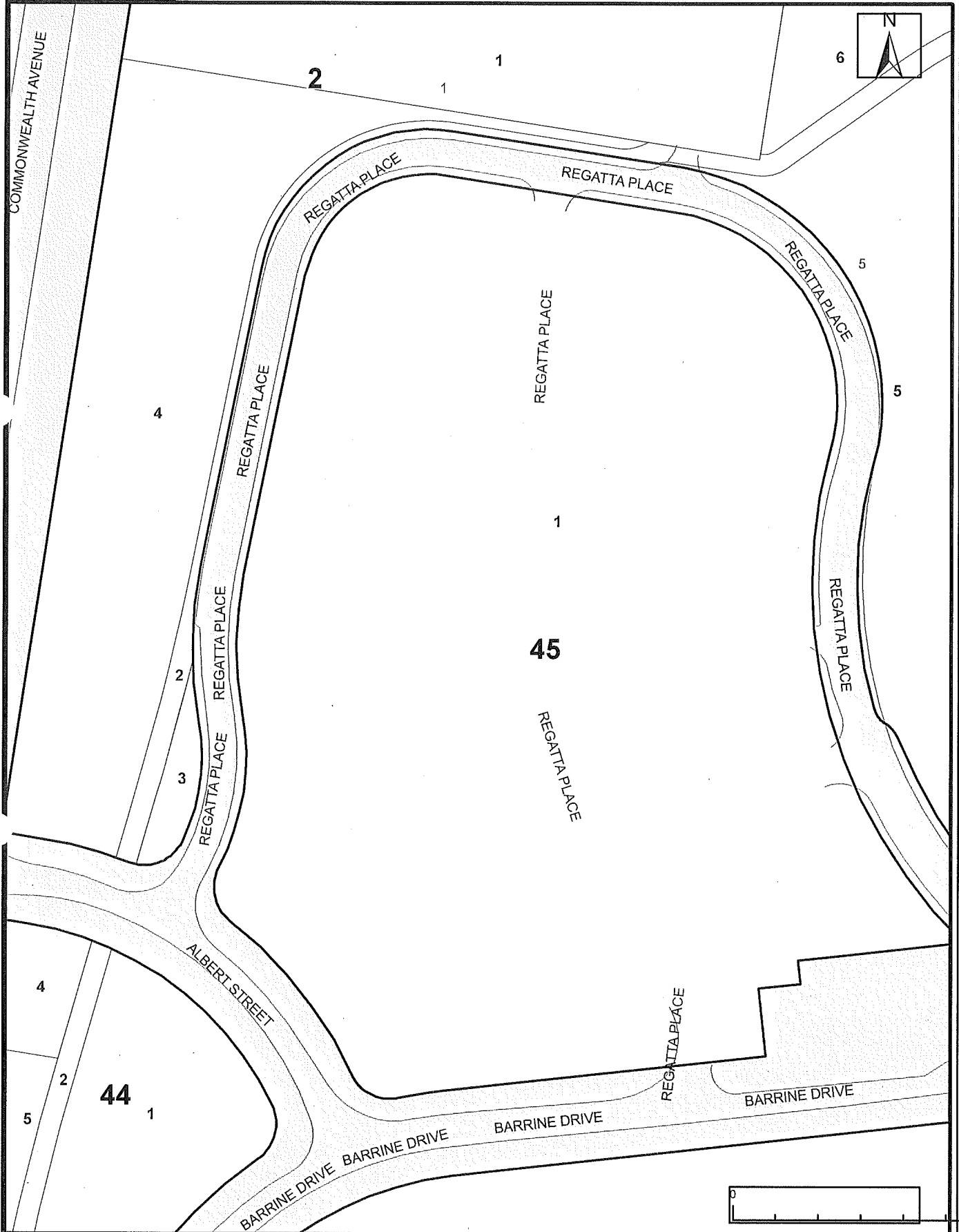
Project risk	Mitigation strategy	Status of mitigation strategy implementation (Red / Amber / Green)	Risk Allocation





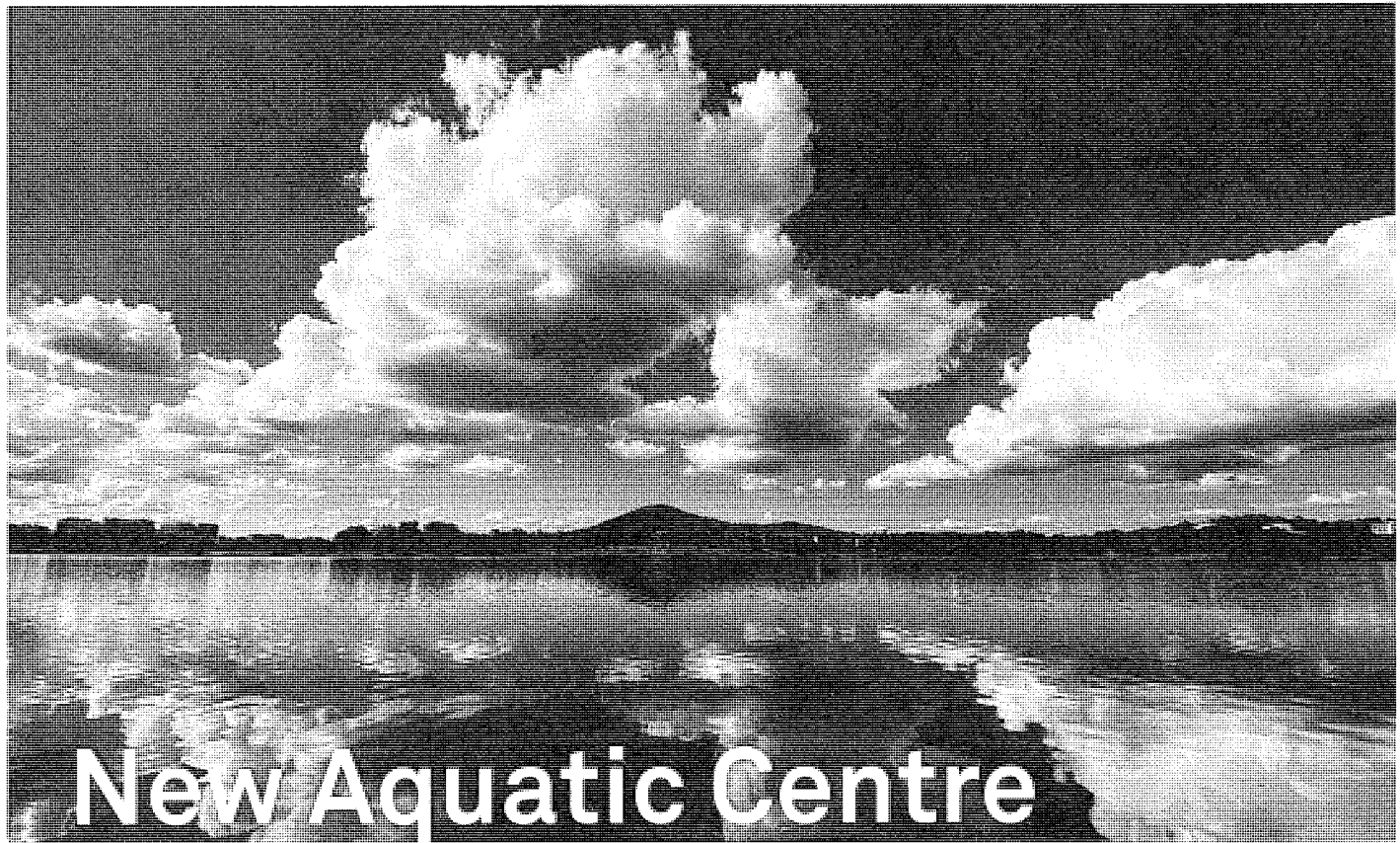
Appendices

- A. Commonwealth Park Investigation Site
- B. Commonwealth Park Vision 2025
- C. Consultant Cost Estimates
- D. Wellbeing Impact Assessment



DISCLAIMER: The map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current or otherwise reliable.

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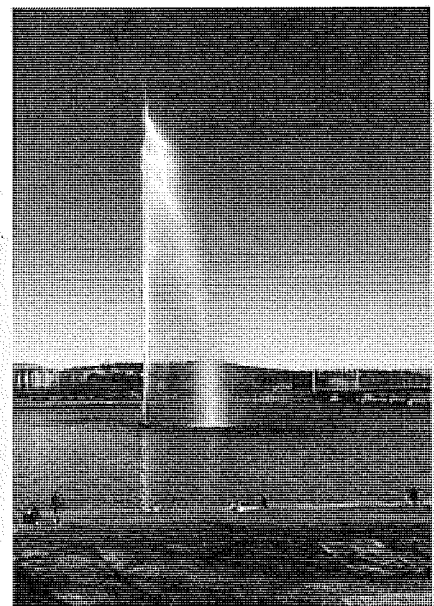
New Aquatic Centre

Civic pool first opened in 1955 at the height of a wave of national interest in competitive swimming and public recreation prior to the Olympic Games in Melbourne. It is now nearing 70 years in age and does not meet contemporary standards.

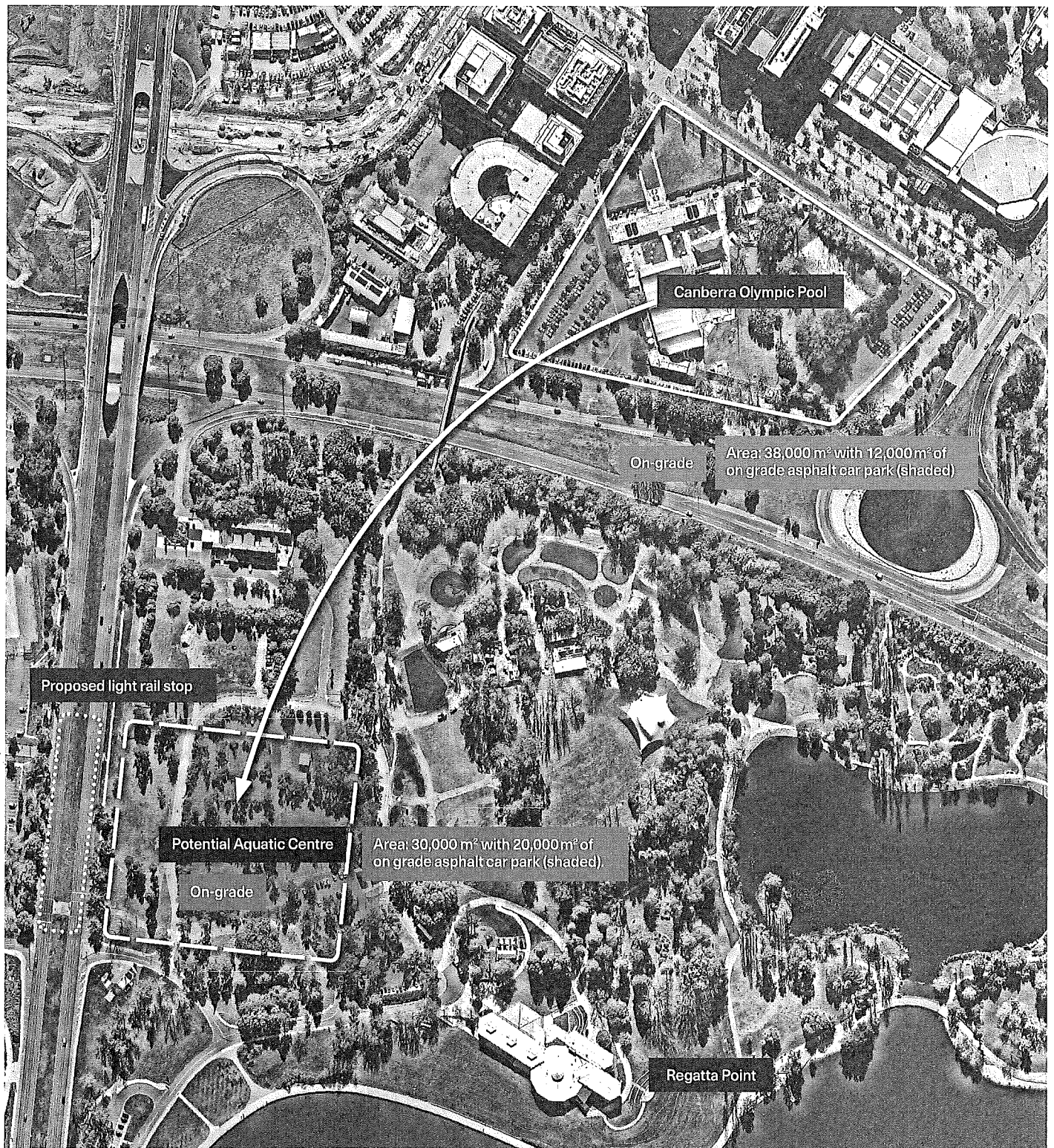
The existing pool is located in an expanding residential, education and commercial precinct in the CBD that provides opportunity to reshape the current pool site.

The site area of the existing pool is around 38,000m² including 12,000m² of outdoor asphalt paved car parking. A suitable site of similar size is located within Commonwealth Park adjacent to a future light rail stop on Commonwealth Avenue. The proposed site would better utilise the existing large 20,000m² area of asphalt paved public car parking located adjacent to Regatta Point. The original masterplan for the park did not include on-site parking, and its construction was criticised by park designer Sylvia Crowe at the time of its addition in the 1970s for encroaching on the park setting.

The potential for a new aquatic centre within Commonwealth Park could allow for a reshaping and replanting of the site, with a contemporary architectural and landscape response. The appropriate design solution could deliver a high-quality, landmark facility. Commonwealth Park has a strong connection to water and landscape and plays an important recreation role for Canberrans and visitors. A new pool would strengthen these associations and boost visitation and activation of the park throughout the year with light rail supporting improved access.



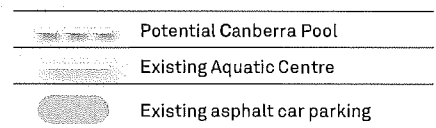
Canberra Olympic Pools and iconic diving tower (1960s)



Potential relocation of pool to Commonwealth Park

Initial investigations show that the scale of the existing Canberra Pool could be accommodated in the western precinct of Commonwealth Park, on the site of the asphalt paved car park. The addition of an Aquatic Centre is complementary to the recreational and landscape principles of the park. Car parking could be accommodated below ground, allowing for improved

amenity and intensification of use. The future light rail stop adjacent to the park will reduce demand for parking and increase accessibility to the park, major events and the pools.



Vision

1. Water and place

Swimming pools and water reinforce the Commonwealth Park's location on the lake and the associated pools, ponds and wetland environments that were part of the original park design.

2. Part of the landscape, and part of the city

The proposed pools would address Commonwealth Avenue to the west, and be deeply embedded within the topography of Commonwealth Park, using endemic plants and gardens to define the outdoor areas, complementing the lakeside location and existing constructed water elements of the park.

3. Year-round swimming

The new Canberra Pool could provide an outdoor swimming environment located in gardens and landscape, coupled with an indoor pool complex for year round fitness, training, lessons and competition swimming.

4. Design excellence

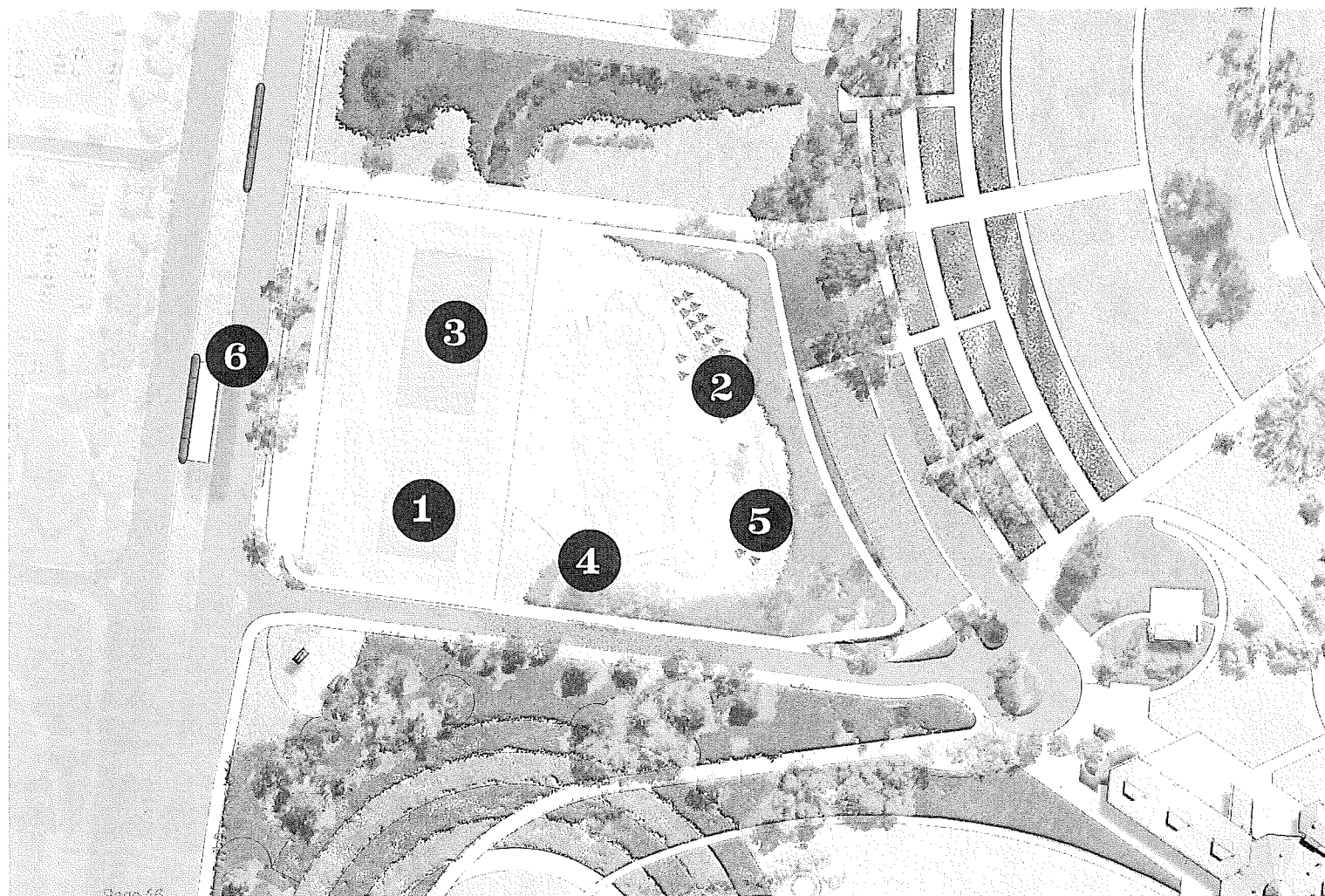
Replacing the existing pool with a new high quality and contemporary aquatic facility befitting the city, site and landscape context is critical.

5. A pool garden

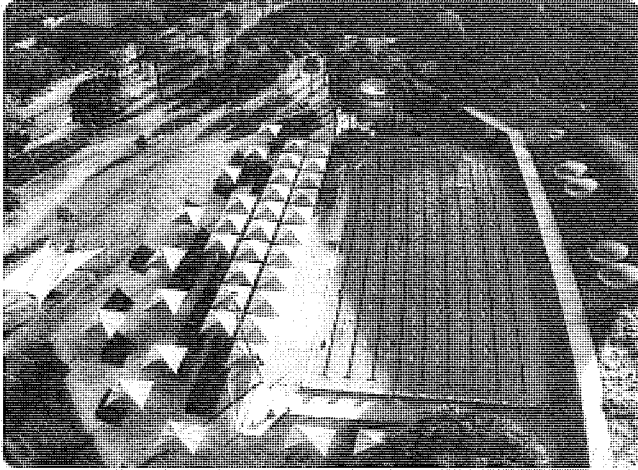
The pool could feel like a pavilion and waterscape set comfortably within the park setting, using topography, planting and gardens to provide a high amenity setting complementary to the original principles of the park design.

6. Active edges

The new pool would be located at the proposed light rail station on Commonwealth Avenue, providing a new active edge to the road environment, easy access by public transport, walking and cycling. New entrance paths to the park are located along the northern and southern edges of the pool site.



Pools in parks



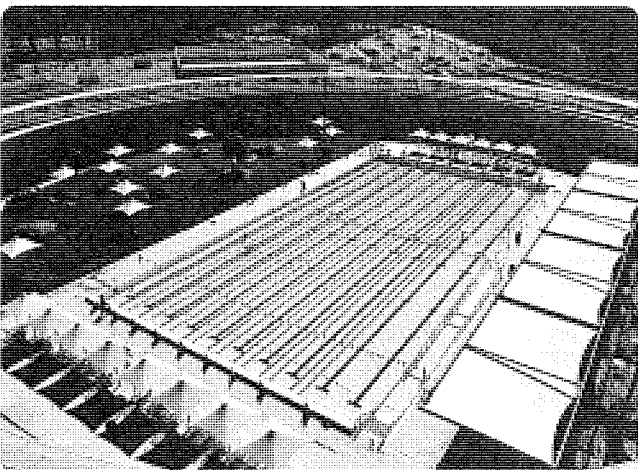
Prince Alfred Park Pool Sydney, built 2010

The award winning pool by Neeson Murcutt Architects for the City of Sydney successfully embedded change rooms, toilets, cafe and utilities beneath a green roof. The form of the pool and the earth mounds have successfully nestled the built form in the landscape with soft edges between the park and the swimming areas. The upgrade of the park has also increased active use across a range of age groups for fitness, sport, play and relaxation with playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts.



Gunyama Pool Green Square, Sydney, built 2020

Built in the growing Green Square precinct, Gunyama provides both indoor and outdoor swimming facilities, adjacent to a year round sports field facility. The centre provides a range of recreational services including yoga, gym, aquarobics and child care.



Parramatta Aquatic Centre, Sydney, built 2023

An architecture competition winning scheme by Andrew Burges Architects set down the main outdoor pool within a circular ring built form that includes interior pools, change rooms, fitness spaces and amenities. The new pool replaces the 1950s civic pool within a former public golf course a short walk from Parramatta city centre.

Wellbeing Impact Assessment – Canberra Aquatic Centre

Resources and support

The [Wellbeing Toolkit](#) provides a range of resources to support you to complete a WIA, including the [WIA Drafting Guide](#) and details of the [Wellbeing Domains](#). The Drafting Guide includes definitions, prompting questions, examples and other advice related to each section of the WIA.

Support is available from [Wellbeing Champions](#) in each directorate. The Wellbeing Team can review and provide advice on draft WIAs where capacity allows – contact the team at WellbeingFeedback@act.gov.au.

Canberra Aquatic Centre

ICBR

Purpose of proposal

This business case seeks project development funding to deliver a Tier 1 Business Case for the delivery of the new Canberra Aquatic Centre. The business case will review options to replace the ageing Civic Pool and to meet demand for recreational facilities within the inner-city catchment, including a proposed site at Commonwealth Park.

Wellbeing domains and impact description

Access and connectivity	Economy	Education and life-long learning	Environment and climate	Governance and institutions	Health
Housing and home	Identity and belonging	Living standards	Safety	Social connection	Time

Primary domain	Impact description
Health	- New aquatic recreation and sporting facilities will have direct and indirect health benefits for our community and visitors alike through the: - delivery of high-quality aquatic facilities that cater for sport and recreational activities in the city area. - provision of facilities that cater for community activities, functions, and social engagement. - provision of facilities within the centre of the ACT that is an accessible destination of choice. - provision of facilities+ that encourage physical activity and social engagement improving health and wellbeing outcomes. - delivery of facilities that are environmentally sustainable and are responsive to local site characteristics and infrastructure network capacity.
Other domains	- Delivery of new aquatic recreation and sporting facilities will have direct improvements to the living standards and quality of life for our community and visitors alike. - Access to recreational facilities is a key indicator for livings standards. On average benchmarks for aquatic facility provisioning is 1 facility per 12,826 people. - People living in many regional/metropolitan areas often lack easy access to aquatic facilities for lessons, leisure and fitness. This gap in access contributes to social inequities. Planning frameworks and project planning should account for geographic distribution and population growth projections. - Provision of new aquatic facilities that are accessible to many catchments throughout the city via equitable, modern and varied transport solutions is also a key indicator to living standards. - Delivery of modern and accessible recreational and sporting facilities will also benefit key ACT Government projects such as the Acton Waterfront redevelopment
Living standards	
Social connection	- The Canberra Olympic Pool has been a key meeting and recreation space for Canberrans for over 70 years. - Public swimming pools and public baths have featured within town and city centres since ancient times. - Public pools: - promote physical fitness - provide safe and accessible recreation - foster social connections - support local economies and boost property values.

Commented [KF1]: Can you call wellbeing team and test this - I think living standards should be primary and health and social connection should be the two others

Commented [PAZRT]: I've followed up ICBR's wellbeing champion and confirm health as no.1

Evidence base and data

Provide evidence that your proposal will have the wellbeing impacts described above. Note that it is not enough to only provide evidence that the issue exists.

Evidence

- The *State of Australian Aquatic Facilities 2025* report provides a data-driven analysis of the current profile, state, challenges, and opportunities facing aquatic facility planners, owners and operators and governments. The report found that:
 - "The social value of aquatic facilities has increased to \$12.84 billion per year, up from \$9.1 billion in 2021, and is inclusive of health, social, and economic benefits
 - Each visit to an aquatic facility generates \$30.50 in economic benefits, reflecting improved health outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, and community engagement.
 - Drowning remains a major public health concern, with 323 fatalities in 2023/24. Community access to public pools has been a key to the Australian approach to water safety and drowning prevention for generations.
 - In 2024, for every dollar spent on maintaining and operating aquatic facilities, there is (on inflation-adjusted) \$5.46 social return on investment 25 in the form of healthier, safer, and more connected communities"
- In 2021 the ACT Property Group (ICBR) completed a feasibility assessment of the COP. The study found that the pool is running at an annual loss of \$742,558 per annum; well in excess of other similar Territory owned/operated facilities.
- Entertainment, Arts and Sport update notes "A new pool to service the people in the Civic centre is a priority project. The Civic Pool has now reached end of life and a new pool is needed to replace the ageing Civic Pool and ensure that demand for aquatic facilities continues to be met into the future. The Government will continue to explore feasible locations for a new pool facility in the short term."
- Swimming pools have been an important component of cities since 2,500BC by providing space to meet and recreate.

Source

- Royal Life Saving Australia State of Australian Aquatic Facilities (2025)
- Lockbridge and WT Partnersip (2021)
- ACT Infrastructure Plan Update (2024)
- Britannica Swimming sport and recreation (2025)

Type of evidence

ACT government data or research

What don't we know?

- The Tier 1 business case will analyse the full range of benefits and costs associated with the delivery of new infrastructure. It is expected that this work will identify new wellbeing related considerations, both positive and negative.

Measuring wellbeing outcomes

How will the Government know this proposal has achieved the anticipated wellbeing impacts?

Your thinking on this does not need to be finalised – this is an opportunity to set out ideas about what may need to be measured in order to understand whether this proposal has had the anticipated impact.

What is the measurable outcome?

- Measurable outcomes associated with the delivery of the infrastructure will be detailed in the Tier 1 Business Case. However, it would be expected to include stakeholder consultation (as measured through surveys), which would clearly indicate users' preference for the facility.

How will you measure it?

- Success factors will be reviewed in the Post Implementation review per the Capital Framework

Evaluation

- Success factors will be reviewed in the Post Implementation review of the Tier 1 business case per the Capital Framework.

Who is impacted?

- The Canberra Olympic Pool (COP) is an important community asset and a highly valued location for sport, recreation, and social activities. The existing COP was built in 1955 during the post war period and consists of a covered Olympic size pool, a toddler and dive pool (including platform), a gym, beach volleyball courts, kiosk, picnic grasslands and other community amenities.
- Approximately 145,000 people from both Canberra and Interstate use the facility each year; however, with the population in Canberra growing, locals and visitors to the city are looking for unique experiences.

Will the proposal have a different or disproportionate impact (positive or negative) on any groups?

- The delivery of a new aquatic to replace COP will immediately benefit residents within the city centre/Inner-north catchment. However, it is intended that the facility is designed to welcome residents from throughout the Territory and visitors as a recreational destination.
- Functional Design Brief and Concept Design components of the next phase of work will ensure that new aquatic infrastructure designed to allow for equitable access.

Gendered impacts

- The Functional Design Brief and Concept Design components of the next phase of work will highlight the need to provide equitable access for all residents and visitors.

Impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- The Functional Design Brief and Concept design processes will continue to build on the works undertaken by the CRA on the Acton Waterfront, namely the Ngamawari. *"The name – which means 'cave place' in Ngunnawal language - recognises the cultural importance of the limestone caves flooded during the creation of Lake Burley Griffin. These landmarks played an important role for shelter and art along the Malonglo River. Ngamawari will also feature design input from Ngunnawal creatives to further share First Nations culture and history with locals and visitors. This will include the creation of Ngunnawal artwork opportunities throughout the site".*
- The Functional Design Brief and Concept Design components of the next phase of work will highlight the need to design for country.

Impacts on future generations

- The Tier 1 business case will analyse whole of life operational and asset management costs as well as immediate and wider economic benefits.

Will the proposal have an impact on or be impacted by climate change?

Emissions reduction

- The Functional Design Brief and Concept Design components of the next phase of work will explore a range of climate resilient design considerations, these include (but are not limited to):
 - Low impact construction methodologies
 - Low carbon construction materials
 - Thermal heating/cooling
 - Solar power generation.

Adaptation and risk management

The Tier 1 Business Case will consider climate change impacts, including:

- direct physical risks from the changing climate (e.g. stormwater overflow management and sustainable hardscape design), and
- indirect transitional risks as our societal systems change in response (e.g. access to a variety of climate resilient recreational facilities).

Cross-portfolio collaboration and partnerships

- Stakeholder engagement and community consultation will be an important component of Concept Design development.
- The preferred site in Commonwealth Park has been selected due to its iconic location on the foreshore to Lake Burley Griffin. Designing this facility within such a prominent location will attract interest from a wide variety of stakeholders.
- Delivery of a new facility at Commonwealth Park would involve the ACT Government working in partnership with the Commonwealth Government throughout the design development, regulatory approval and delivery processes. This partnership will be critical to the success of the project.
- Key ACT Government partners in this project include CMTEDD (Convention Centre and Entertainment Precinct), CRA (Acton Waterfront), TCCS and EPSDD.
- Preparation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (consistent with the [Stakeholder Engagement Plan Guidelines](#)) and Tier 1 project governance arrangements will be an important first step for the project.