



**Legislative Assembly** for the  
**Australian Capital Territory**

Standing Committee on Environment,  
and Planning

# Submission Cover Sheet

## **Inquiry into the Role and Future of the Woden Town Centre in the context of a compact city**

Submission number: 101

Submitter: Curtin Residents Association

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# Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Environment, Planning, Transport and City Services

## Submission to the Inquiry into the Role and Future of the Woden Town Centre

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### Curtin Residents Association (CRA)

#### Executive Summary

Curtin residents rely on the Woden Town Centre for weekly shopping, health and community services, public transport, sport and recreation, and arts and culture. We want Woden to succeed—and we see this inquiry as a practical opportunity to tune zoning and precinct controls so the town centre grows as a balanced, people-friendly hub. Our submission frames each issue through Curtin residents' use of Woden and ties every recommendation to planning levers within the Territory Plan and associated precinct codes.

We respectfully ask the Committee to recommend:

- Retain or replace a publicly accessible 50-metre pool in Woden, and deliver an indoor multi-court sports facility—secured via a community facilities overlay, lease conditions and/or precinct code controls.
- Reserve and zone a site for a future Woden Arts Centre; deliver the Woden Community Services Hub on schedule and make its hall/rooms genuinely available for community use after hours.
- Create an Urban Open Space overlay and improve the active-travel corridor along Yarralumla Creek; require water-sensitive urban design, canopy targets and green links to Eddison Park and Curtin.
- Embed pedestrian-first, climate-responsive design in the town centre precinct code—minimum winter sun to key public spaces; mandatory wind-comfort standards; continuous, safe walking routes and lighting.
- Complete separated cycling links between Curtin and Woden and along the Civic–Woden spine; provide secure bike parking at the interchange and end-of-trip facilities in new developments.
- Rebalance land use: protect and incentivise employment floorspace and night-time economy uses (office, education, hospitality, entertainment) through mixed-use requirements and modest bonus schemes.
- Manage access and parking equitably: enable short-stay retail parking and park-and-ride at the periphery while preventing spill-over into Curtin's streets via targeted controls.

- Measure what matters: adopt centre-level KPIs (jobs-to-dwellings ratio, open-space per capita, canopy cover, pedestrian counts, sports/arts utilisation) and stage approvals against infrastructure delivery.

## Why Woden Matters to Curtin

Curtin is Woden’s immediate neighbour. Our residents shop at Woden, use its pool and ovals, attend appointments, transfer buses, and will use the future light rail interchange. Parents take children to swim lessons and sport; older residents need short, safe walks, good lighting and accessible parking; students will connect to Canberra College and CIT; families and workers want affordable food, culture, sport and social spaces close to home. When Woden works well, Curtin thrives; when Woden falls short—on facilities, access or safety—Curtin residents feel it.

## Alignment with the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference ask how zoning can underpin social, environmental and economic prosperity. Our recommendations map to five planning levers:

- ZONES & OVERLAYS – designate/adjust zones (e.g., Community Facility, Urban Open Space) and apply site-specific overlays (e.g., arts/sport) to secure critical uses.
- PRECINCT CODES – set built-form and public-realm standards (wind comfort, minimum winter sun to key squares, active frontages, through-block links, canopy/WSUD).
- LAND USE MIX – require or incentivise employment, education, hospitality and cultural uses within mixed-use developments.
- ACCESS & PARKING – embed pedestrian-first design, separated cycling, and balanced parking/park-and-ride in the code, coordinated with transport planning.
- STAGING & KPI MONITORING – condition major residential yield on timely delivery of community facilities, open space, and transport links; publish KPIs annually.

## 1) Sport & Recreation: Keep Woden Active

Issue for Curtin residents: families rely on Woden’s 50-metre pool, whether to learn to swim, to exercise after work or cool down on hot days. Over a decade, Woden has lost indoor sports courts and other venues. Current proposals risk replacing the long-serving 50-metre pool with a smaller 25-metre facility embedded in private development—reducing capacity for clubs, carnivals and diverse aquatic programs.

Curtin residents lost access to a 50 metre pool in Deakin near Alfred Deakin High School some years ago. It was replaced by a 25 metre indoor private pool and two small pools There is now almost no time available for adult lap swimming which is a huge loss adults wishing to stay fit through low impact exercise. If there is no 50 metre pool in the Woden Town Centre, then this will exacerbate the loss of the pool in Deakin.

### **What we're asking for (zoning/precinct controls):**

- Apply a **Community Facilities (CF) overlay** on the existing pool/ice-sports land or an alternative town-centre site to secure an equivalent or better public aquatic facility—a 50-metre pool.
- Amend the **precinct code** to require a “no net loss” test for community sport: where facilities are removed, provide equal or better replacements (on-site or within the town centre) before occupation of new dwellings.
- Identify and reserve a site (or co-locate within CIT/Community Hub) for an **indoor multi-court facility** (basketball/netball/volleyball/futsal) with community hire.
- Sequence major residential approvals with delivery of aquatic/indoor-sport capacity (use **staging conditions** and infrastructure contributions).

### **Why it matters to Curtin:**

A full-length pool supports school sport, club training, water-fitness and health outcomes for all ages. Locating facilities at the transport hub makes participation feasible for Curtin residents (short trips, no cross-city travel). Indoor courts keep kids active in winter and provide safe evening spaces for teens—reducing car dependence and strengthening community ties.

## **2) Arts & Community: A Heart for Culture and Connection**

Issue for Curtin residents: Woden is our closest centre for exhibitions, performances, classes and community gatherings, yet there is no dedicated arts venue and limited flexible civic space. The Community Services Hub (due mid-decade) is welcome, but it will not substitute for a multipurpose arts facility.

### **What we're asking for (zoning/precinct controls):**

- Reserve a centrally located site (Town Square/Town Park/CIT Stage 2) for a **Woden Arts Centre** via zone/overlay now, even if delivery is staged. Protect active frontages and evening use.
- Ensure the **Community Services Hub** includes affordable, after-hours access to its hall and rooms for local groups; embed this in the lease/precinct code as a community benefit.
- Adopt an **Equitable Town Centres** provision: each town centre to provide baseline cultural/community facilities (arts venue, library, halls) with capital sequencing that prioritises under-served districts like Woden.

### **Why it matters to Curtin:**

A nearby arts venue means our families can see performances and participate in classes without driving to venues in the vicinity of Lake Burley Griffen or Belconnen or Tuggeranong. It supports a night-time economy, provides youth activities, and strengthens identity and safety through ‘eyes on the street’ after dark.

### 3) Green Network & Yarralumla Creek: Cool, Connect, Celebrate Nature

Issue for Curtin residents: the green route from Curtin to Woden can be improved and town-centre microclimate can be harsh (wind, heat, winter shade).

#### What we're asking for (zoning/precinct controls):

- Apply an **Urban Open Space overlay** along Yarralumla Creek through the town centre; require continuous public access, habitat planting, and water-sensitive urban design (WSUD).
- Mandate **separated active-travel paths** in the creek corridor linking Curtin–Woden–Mawson, with clear path connections into the mall/CIT/Eddison Park.
- Set **canopy targets** and permeable-surface ratios for the town-centre precinct; require green roofs/walls or deep-soil zones on large sites; convert surplus asphalt to pocket parks.
- Improve **Eddison Park links** (raised crossings, lighting, wayfinding) to create a legible 'green triangle': Creek ↔ Park ↔ Town Square.

#### Why it matters to Curtin:

A shaded, car-free creek path would improve access for families and students to walk or cycle to Woden comfortably. Trees and WSUD reduce heat and make public spaces inviting year-round. This will be particularly important as the impact of climate change increases.

### 4) Access & Connectivity: First-Class for People, Functional for Cars

Issue for Curtin residents: getting to and around Woden must be safe and simple—on foot, by bike/scooter, bus, light rail and, when needed, by car for shopping or mobility reasons.

#### What we're asking for (zoning/precinct controls):

- Embed **pedestrian-first design** in the precinct code: direct through-block links, continuous kerb-ramp networks, protected crossings on desire lines, lighting and CPTED standards.
- Deliver improved **separated cycling links** from Curtin to Woden and along the Civic–Woden corridor; require end-of-trip facilities in major developments.
- At the interchange, require **weather-protected, intuitive** bus↔light-rail transfers and accessible wayfinding; stage works to maintain safe, signed pedestrian routes during construction.
- Adopt **balanced parking**: short-stay retail parking in core; locate park-and-ride at the periphery; manage spill-over into Curtin via time limits/permits where needed. Ensure new developments include parking required by any increased demand.

#### Why it matters to Curtin:

Older residents need close, well-lit parking and step-free paths to the shops. Parents need safe crossings with prams. Students and workers will bike or take transit if routes feel safe and obvious. Good access spreads the benefits of Woden to all neighbouring suburbs.

## 5) Balance the Land Use: Jobs, Learning and Life after 5pm

Issue for Curtin residents: Woden's rapid apartment growth has not been matched by jobs and civic uses. Without daytime employment and night-time activities, the centre risks becoming a dormitory node—pushing trips (and traffic past Curtin) to other districts for work, sport and culture.

### What we're asking for (zoning/precinct controls):

- Introduce **employment-floor safeguards** or targets for key blocks (minimum office/education/community floors) within mixed-use zones; avoid full conversion of commercial land to residential.
- Offer **modest bonuses** (e.g., height/FAR uplifts) where developments deliver verified public benefits: employment floors, arts/sport spaces, child care, or affordable workspaces.
- Designate and enable a **night-time economy zone/zones** (cinema, restaurants, small venues) with late-trading provisions, acoustic design standards, and active frontages.
- Condition large residential yields on **sequenced delivery** of community infrastructure and public-realm upgrades (sport, arts, green links, interchange).

### Why it matters to Curtin:

A centre with jobs and culture reduces cross-town commuting and gives our families reasons to stay local for work, recreation and entertainment—cutting traffic on Yarra Glen and making the southside thrive.

## 6) Comfortable Built Form: Sunlight, Shelter and Street Life

Issue for Curtin residents: wind tunnels and winter overshadowing make Woden's core uncomfortable, especially for older people and children. New towers must not degrade public life at ground level.

### What we're asking for (zoning/precinct controls):

- Set **minimum winter-sun access** to primary public spaces (e.g.,  $\geq 2-3$  hours on 21 June across a meaningful portion of the squares) and height restrictions for neighbouring buildings.
- Require **pedestrian wind-comfort testing** and mitigation (podiums, setbacks, screens, planting) for all tall buildings; refuse schemes failing comfort criteria at footpaths/squares.
- Mandate **active frontages** with weather protection (awnings/colonnades) and human-scale podiums on key streets and around public spaces.

### Why it matters to Curtin:

Comfortable, sunny and sheltered streets encourage visits year-round—so our older residents feel confident, our kids can linger safely, and local businesses benefit from real street life.

## What This Means in Practice for Curtin Residents

To ground the above in everyday life, here is how these changes would show up for people living in Curtin:

- Weekly shopping feels safer and quicker: clear, direct crossings from parking to shops; better lighting; weather cover; no confusing car–pedestrian conflict points.
- Sport is close and affordable: a 50-metre public pool remains in Woden; learn-to-swim, squads and school carnivals are available locally; indoor courts are bookable for community sport all year.
- Green trips replace short car hops: a shaded creek-path ride or walk from Curtin to Woden takes 10–15 minutes, bypassing traffic and heat.
- Teens have things to do: arts classes, live music, films and sport in Woden reduce long night drives and keep activity local and safe.
- Less traffic through Curtin: more people work and socialise in Woden, lowering peak flows on Yarra Glen; park-and-ride is managed at the periphery, not in Curtin’s streets.

## Delivery, Sequencing and Measuring Success

To keep the centre livable as it grows, approvals should be sequenced and performance made transparent:

- Publish a **Woden Town Centre Implementation Plan** that pairs each major development with its enabling public assets (sport, arts, open space, interchange links).
- Adopt centre-level **KPIs** and report annually: jobs-to-dwellings ratio; sqm of employment floors; open space per capita; tree-canopy %; pedestrian counts; cycling volumes; pool/court utilisation; night-time economy indicators.
- Use **infrastructure contributions** and targeted bonuses to align private investment with community outcomes; require delivery (or bonding) of public facilities before occupation where relevant.
- Create a **community liaison group** (including CRA or others) to review staging, detours and access during construction—so daily access remains safe and clear.

## Conclusion

Curtin’s message is simple: when Woden is complete, balanced and people-friendly, our whole side of the city flourishes. This is not the case now and the current trajectory is making the situation worse. The Terms of Reference invite zoning-based answers; we have proposed practical, modest tools—overlays, precinct standards, land-use safeguards, and staged delivery—to lock in the public good while enabling growth. Please seize this moment to secure a 50-metre pool and indoor courts, reserve a site for an arts centre, green and better connect the creek corridor, put people first in the street network, and anchor real jobs and night-time life in the mix. These are not luxuries; they are the ingredients of a resilient, welcoming town centre that serves Curtin and all of Canberra’s south.