

2026

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

Resolution of 3 February 2026 - Woden Town Centre Integrated Land Use Plan

Government Response

**Presented by
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Minister for Transport
February 2026**

Introduction

On 3 February 2026, the Legislative Assembly passed a [resolution in relation to a Woden Town Centre Integrated Land Use Plan](#).

This resolution of 3 February 2026 builds on the previous [Assembly Resolution of 20 March 2025 in relation to the establishment of a Woden Town Centre Working Group](#), which referred a number of matters to be considered by a cross-directorate working group regarding future planning for the town centre (the Working Group). A progress report in response to the Assembly Resolution of 20 March 2025 was tabled by the Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development in the ACT Legislative Assembly during the last sitting week of 2025 (the Progress Report).

Also related is the [Inquiry into the role and function of Woden Town Centre in the context of a compact city](#) (the Inquiry) being undertaken by the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning (the Committee), which considers similar matters to the two Assembly Resolutions. The ACT Government has provided a submission to the Inquiry (the Government Submission), which was developed in consultation with the Working Group, and provided evidence to the Committee through public hearings were held in December 2025. There is currently no indication of when a report will be released.

This Government Response responds to parts (3)(a)-(e) of the Assembly Resolution of 3 February 2026 and has been developed in consultation with the Working Group. The ACT Government will provide quarterly reporting to the Assembly on the work of the Working Group, beginning with this response, and respond to other matters as required by the Assembly Resolution.

Response to the Assembly Resolution

Woden Town Centre Working Group

February 2026 Update

Since the Q4 2025 Working Group meeting on 15 October 2025, the Working Group was consulted on and contributed to the development of the Progress Report. Members also noted the December 2025 hearings for the Inquiry and will provide inputs to the Government response to the Inquiry report once released.

The Working Group has also emphasised the importance of maintaining housing diversity, affordability, and access to open space and essential services, given residential growth is expected to continue in medium and high-density formats, especially near the Woden Town Centre and along future light rail corridor.

Out of session advice and discussion during December 2025 and January 2026 was undertaken with members to review and provide comment on the draft Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework (the Framework) to help prepare for public consultation. Information was also shared with the Working Group on the Government's commitments for a dog park and a 50-metre outdoor pool in the town centre, to discuss the alignment of these commitment with other, ongoing work.

The Q1 2026 Working Group meeting on 16 February 2026 was intended to focus on movement and connectivity including traffic modelling and congestion, to address (3)(c) of the Assembly Resolution of 20 March 2025, however, this was modified to consider the new Assembly Resolution of 3 February 2026.

In response to the Assembly Resolution of 3 February 2026, the Working Group welcomed new members from artsACT and the Better Regulation Team and provided input to this Government Response. An updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Working Group, which reflects the additional membership and expanded scope of work in response to this Assembly Resolution, was also circulated out of session and agreed by the Working Group at their meeting on 16 February 2026; the updated ToR is provided at [Appendix A](#).

A forward work plan will be developed so that the Working Group is able to progress consideration of areas within the scope of consideration alongside ad-hoc developments as they arise. Upcoming public consultation on the draft Framework will also guide the Working Group in considering how the government addresses local challenges, particularly balancing residential growth, economic activity, and community amenity.

Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework

Land use plan assumptions, options and criteria

The Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework (the Framework) will provide an integrated Land Use Plan for the Woden Town Centre (WTC or Town Centre). The Framework will bring together land use, transport, public realm, housing, community facilities and renewal initiatives in order to deliver a coordinated, strategic approach to planning and future development as the town centre continues to evolve as a key hub for employment, education, housing and community life.

The draft Framework will outline the following priorities and directions for the Town Centre to:

- align future development with major infrastructure, including Light Rail Stage 2B, the new Woden Interchange and strengthened active travel and public transport connections;
- highlight opportunities to improve public realm and provide new usable green spaces within the commercial core;
- identify potential locations for placemaking and entertainment precinct investigations, including opportunities within the Woden Town Square and West Plaza; and
- support the Town Centre's continued role as a major employment and services hub, while enabling additional housing and community-focused uses in locations with strong access to public transport and amenities.

The draft Framework is being developed using four primary inputs, which are described in further detail below:

- uplift capacity assessment
- Interagency Advisory Group advice
- technical studies
- community engagement

This combination of these inputs will guide decision-making for land use in the corridor and inform development of the final Framework.

Uplift capacity assessment

The uplift capacity assessment will identify which parts of the Southern Gateway corridor (the corridor) are most suitable for future housing growth. This process included an initial assessment of section and blocks within the corridor, consideration of proximity criteria (identified in the table below), and followed by detailed desktop and onsite analysis to assess suitability.

Proximity criteria

Using a transport-oriented development approach, building height assumptions were applied according to walking distance from key destinations.

Location	Higher densities	Moderate densities	Lower densities
Light rail / rapid bus	within 200 m	within 400 m	within 800 m
Local centre	–	within 200 m	within 400 m
Group centre	within 200 m	within 400 m	within 800 m
Town centre	within 200 m	within 600 m	within 1,200 m

Criteria used to assess suitability

Following application of the proximity criteria further criteria were applied to determine where uplift is appropriate, including:

- Existing density and character: Favouring low-density RZ1 areas without heritage constraints.
- Road capacity: Preference for areas connected to collector roads and active travel routes.
- Street layout and connectivity: Highly connected street grids and walkable environments score highest; cul-de-sac and curvilinear streets score lowest.
- Proximity and quality of open space: Areas close to well-designed parks and blue-green corridors are prioritised.
- Section orientation: Larger, deeper, well-oriented blocks are assumed to be more feasible for redevelopment.
- Living infrastructure: Tree canopy and ecological values are considered, balancing amenity with development potential.
- Topography: Flatter land has been assumed to be more suitable for redevelopment than steep land.

Interagency Advisory Group

An Interagency Advisory Group was established in July 2024 to provide ongoing support and input to make sure interests from across government are considered as part of the draft Framework.

The Interagency Advisory Group is composed of members from the City and Environment Directorate (CED), Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR), the Education Directorate, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD), the Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD), Canberra Health Services (CHS), and the Suburban Land Agency (SLA).

Technical studies

The draft framework is informed by multiple studies, including:

- Canberra Strategic Transport Model 2.0;
- Transport Corridor Assessment;
- community, sport and recreation needs assessment;
- employment lands study;
- flood study;
- infrastructure capacity study; and
- missing middle suitability study.

These studies provide the evidence base for land-use options, infrastructure staging, and uplift feasibility.

Community engagement

Feedback from future community engagement will inform development the Framework and ensure local perspectives shape the final recommendations.

Land use planning update and analysis

The Terms of Reference for the Working Group (at [Appendix A](#)) have been updated in response to Assembly Resolution of 3 February 2026. A summary of the data analysis and other land use planning matters which will be considered by the Working Group is provided below.

Housing analysis

The most recent market housing analysis data made available to the Working is the 'Market Trends' dataset produced by Cotality (formerly Corelogic) for the month of November 2025. This data, with comparison to other Town Centre (suburbs), is summarised in the below tables.

Table 1. Number of dwellings (categorised by house or unit)

Town Centre/Suburb	Total houses	Total Units	Total Dwellings
Gungahlin (Gungahlin)	1,791 (42.5%)	2,421 (57.3%)	4,212
Belconnen (Belconnen)	894 (15.0%)	5,059 (84.9%)	5,953
Civic (City)	336 (13.4%)	2,176 (86.6%)	2,512
Woden (Phillip)	612 (12.4%)	4,305 (87.6%)	4,917
Tuggeranong (Greenway)	339 (11.6%)	2,572 (88.4%)	2,911
Molonglo (future centre)	nil	nil	nil

*This data does not show the size of houses and units.

Table 2. Average hold period for dwellings (categorised by house or unit)

Town Centre/Suburb	Average hold period – houses (years)	Average hold period- units (years)
Gungahlin (Gungahlin)	12.5	7.1
Belconnen (Belconnen)	9.7	9.0
Civic (City)	No data	8.9
Woden (Phillip)	9.6	8.2
Tuggeranong (Greenway)	8.2	7.2

Molonglo (future centre)	nil	nil
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*The hold period refers to a period of property ownership, not whether the property is owner occupied or rented (or a mix of both) over that period.

The trend across the ACT indicates slightly longer hold periods for houses than units; Woden (Phillip) does not stand out from the other centres in this respect. Detailed data (i.e. which considered house or unit size) is not readily available, however, it is likely any trend turnover in ownership for certain dwelling sizes and or types would apply across the ACT rather than isolated to the Woden Town Centre.

The Cotality report also includes 2011 Census data on the percentage of dwellings in each tenure category (fully owned, being purchased, rented, or other) for the geography of Phillip. Similarly, housing categories are described (separate house, townhouse/villa, unit/apartment, and other) as a percentage of dwellings per the 2011 Census.

As there has been significant unit development in Phillip (Woden Town Centre) since 2011, this can only be considered as a point of comparison if contemporary data can be obtained. Instead, the number of rental listings in the last 12 months (up to November 2025) has been reviewed and summarised in the table below to provide an indication of the rate of owner-occupied versus rented dwellings. Further analysis of this metric would benefit from specialised datasets, however, such data would likely need to be purchased and/or created and is beyond the current resourcing of the working group.

Table 3. Number of rental listings from November 2024 - November 2025 (categorised by house and unit)

Town Centre/Suburb	No. of rental listings - houses	No. of rental listings - units
Gungahlin (Gungahlin)	193	291
Belconnen (Belconnen)	252	481
Civic (City)	229	204
Woden (Phillip)	190	403
Tuggeranong (Greenway)	93	268
Molonglo (future centre)	nil	nil

The ACT Government is also investing in a range of measures to increase housing supply, access, and choice to meet the needs of the Town Centre, including for public, social and community housing.

As of June 2025, there were 897 Housing ACT properties in the Woden District, which includes the Woden Town Centre (Phillip).

Supporting this, affordable housing is provisioned within the Town Centre through means such as:

- selling to eligible buyers through the Affordable Home Purchase Scheme;
- applying affordable housing targets to sites which are yet to be developed; and
- providing affordable rental properties through the Affordable Community Housing Land Tax Exemption Scheme.

The government does not have full visibility of the full number of community housing dwellings and upcoming community housing projects in the Town Centres as the Community Housing Providers (CHPs) operate independently and there is not a current system to accurately and easily count the number of community housing assets per suburb.

Of note, CHPs often leverage external opportunities, such as the Housing Australia Future Fund, to deliver community housing. For instance, Assemble, in partnership with Housing Choices Australia, is planning to deliver 80 social and 161 affordable housing units in Phillip. The project is supported by the Housing Australia Future Fund.

The ACT Government's Affordable Housing Project Fund also aims to grow the supply of affordable rental properties and strengthen the community housing sector. Affordable housing projects being supported through the Affordable housing Project Fund in the Town Centre and surround area include:

- 70 affordable rental homes, as part of a 140-unit Build-to-Rent development, being delivered by the CHC Australia and Canberra Southern Cross Club partnership project in
- 54 affordable rental homes in Curtin, being developed by Marymead CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn.
- 83 affordable rental homes in Curtin, being delivered by Wesley Mission.
- 15 supported residential homes in the MyHome project in Curtin.

Entertainment precinct and identifying place-making areas

Work to investigate other entertainment precincts across the ACT will commence following the completion of the review of the City Centre Entertainment Precinct. This review is expected to be finalised in the first half of 2026. Any future consideration of an entertainment precinct in Woden would occur within this broader, Territory-wide sequencing of work.

Should an Urban Renewal Precinct be declared in future, this would typically involve place-making processes. The Working Group would be well positioned to discuss linkages with these and other projects and initiatives in the Woden town centre in an advisory capacity.

The draft Framework will consider opportunities for both entertainment precinct planning and targeted place-making opportunities across the Woden town centre. This could include examining opportunities within the Woden Town Square and West Plaza to create distinctive destinations and support an activated town centre core.

Social infrastructure

Arts centre

Benchmarking indicates a need for accessible arts spaces in Woden over the long term in addition to the existing Performing Arts Centre at Canberra College.

This gap has been acknowledged by the government and is identified for further investigation in the ACT Infrastructure Plan, with a commitment in the ACT Infrastructure Plan Update: Entertainment, Arts and Sports to complete a needs analysis for arts centres in Woden within the next five years.

To deliver on commitment the ACT Government is conducting an Arts Assets Needs Analysis to review arts infrastructure across Canberra. The analysis will assess current and future demand for creative spaces and guide future planning. This will be considered by the Working Group, noting artACT are now also a member.

Of note, the new CIT Woden campus includes state-of-the-art facilities with specialist and large multi-purpose spaces to deliver courses in the creative industries across fashion, graphic design, interior design, media, music, photography and visual arts. The new community centre in Woden is also intended to have large multi-functional space for a range of community activities including the arts.

Multi-purpose indoor sports stadium

The government has recognised the need for more indoor sporting amenity in Woden and is undertaking early investigations to consider a multi-court indoor sport facility at the former Woden Valley High School site, which is currently being used as car park to support The Canberra Hospital. A new facility would help to address long-term demand from multiple districts in the ACT's south and the need for this kind of facility is a priority in the ACT Infrastructure Plan.

It is noted Scentre Group has recently started engaging with the community on a proposed master plan, titled 'New Life in Woden'. This proposal includes the potential provision of an indoor sport court facility as part of a community and recreation precinct in the town centre.

Opportunities to co-locate other social and recreation uses in an integrated multi-use sports facility is recommended and could help to bridge possible gaps across other facility types.

Aquatic facility

Building on the findings of the ACT Community, Sport and Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment and Social Infrastructure Audit (2025), the ACT Government is developing a new ACT Aquatic Strategy to establish clear priorities for future aquatic infrastructure. This strategy will provide more detailed, facility-specific guidance on current and future community needs and may lead to updates to existing benchmarks or broader guidance on facility provision.

Through the new ACT Aquatic Strategy, options to deliver a new public 50-metre outdoor pool in Woden will be progressed. Research has started on potential site options in Woden to meet community needs and requirements.

Tree canopy – a plan to increase the canopy to 30 percent

Canberra's [Living Infrastructure Plan](#) sets out targets aiming to have 30 per cent of our urban environment covered by a tree canopy (or equivalent) in 2045. This includes tree canopy equivalents such as green roofs, shrub beds, wetlands or rain gardens. Canberra's total 2025 tree canopy cover is estimated at 21.8 per cent. Canopy cover in Canberra varies from suburb to suburb. Some older established suburbs have close to 40 per cent canopy cover while some newer suburbs have below 10 per cent.

The 2025 Report to the Legislative Assembly of the ACT: Urban Tree Canopy Coverage Assembly Resolution of 31 March 2025 – fifth update [Urban tree canopy coverage report 31 march 2025](#) report details canopy coverage across districts and suburbs. While the Woden Valley district achieved the 30 per cent tree canopy coverage target in 2025 (at 30.16 per cent) the suburb of Phillip (Woden Town Centre) achieved just under 20 per cent (19.83 per cent) canopy coverage. Additionally, 12.67 per cent of the land area within Phillip was identified as 'Hot & vulnerable'. The Town Centre currently contains a number of surface carparks that are being investigated for redevelopment. Redevelopment would provide an opportunity to improve tree canopy (or equivalent living infrastructure) through the requirements of the Urban Design Guide and Biodiversity Sensitive Urban Design Guide.

Integration of private development

The Territory is aware of a proposal from Scentre Group to undertake a significant development in Woden Town Centre.

The Government is currently developing governance framework for decision making on proponent-initiated land development proposals. This will be designed to consider significant and complex private sector proposals that may involve any combination of amendments to the Territory Plan, direct sale applications, consideration of Lease Variation Charge (LVC) remissions and contributed assets, like community and recreational infrastructure.

The intent is to ensure that there a robust coordinated decision-making framework that provides an opportunity for the Government to state its site-specific policy objectives and establish the scope for any negotiations. This will draw from models in place in NSW such as planning agreements and the planning concierge.

It is important to note that the *Planning Act 2023* already establishes a clear and independent statutory process for how the Territory Planning Authority assesses proponent-initiated Major Plan Amendments. Under sections 57–59 of the Act, the Authority determines whether to prepare a draft amendment based on planning merit, broader policy objectives, including consistency with the District Strategies.

The 2015 Woden Town Centre Master Plan, together with subsequent zoning and building height changes in the Territory Plan, has already supported significant revitalisation across the town centre. The draft Framework acknowledges that several major proposals are advancing within the Woden Town Centre, and confirms that the area is well positioned for continued renewal.



Woden Town Centre Working Group

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Woden Town Centre Working Group is to:

- Operate in an advisory and information sharing capacity;
- Facilitate cross-government coordination to support the integrated delivery of works and initiatives within and impacting on the Woden Town Centre;
- Identify and where appropriate recommend opportunities for Town Centre improvements that are part of or consistent with existing priorities, considering the physical, business, environmental, and social dimensions of the Town Centre; and
- Consider all areas of the Woden Town Centre including Phillip Service Trades Area.

1.1 Background

On Thursday 20 March 2025 the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution to establish a Woden Town Centre working group, noting that the Woden Town Centre has experienced significant transformation in recent years, marked by:

- Rapid urban densification through the construction of numerous high-density apartment towers;
- The loss of key sport and recreation facilities, including the basketball stadium, bowling greens, bowling alley, tennis courts, YMCA gym, pitch and putt, and the planned closure of the Phillip Pool and ice rink;
- Reduced public transport services, particularly affecting access to essential services on the western side of the town centre;
- Increasing traffic congestion, notably along Corrina Street and Melrose Drive;
- Rising incidents of anti-social behaviour and safety concerns, including the prolonged closure of the Melrose Drive underpass;
- A visible increase in homelessness in and around the town centre;
- The opening of a new Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) campus, expected to serve up to 6,500 students; and
- A lack of coordinated planning, contributing to a decline in community amenity.

On 3 February 2026 the Legislative Assembly passed the ‘Woden Town Centre Integrated Land Use Plan’ resolution. This resolution noted a range of challenges and opportunities for the Woden Town Centre including densification of residential dwellings, provision of social infrastructure and integration of the Southern Gateway Planning and Urban Design Framework with the Scentre Group’s planned redevelopment of Woden Westfield.

2.0 Term

The Working Group will operate for an initial term of 2 years from June 2025 – June 2027.

3.0 Membership

Membership includes representatives from relevant ACT Government directorates and agencies with subject matter expertise.

Directorate/Agency	Areas represented

<u>Chief Ministers, Treasury and Economic Development</u>	<u>artsACT</u> <u>Sports and Recreation</u> <u>Economic Development</u> <u>Policy and Cabinet</u>
<u>City and Environment</u>	<u>Climate Change, Energy and Water</u> <u>Environment and Utilities / RoadsACT</u> <u>Policy, Planning and Built Environment</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>System Policy and Reform</u>
<u>Health and Community Services</u>	<u>Housing ACT</u>
<u>Infrastructure Canberra</u>	<u>Delivery Places and Spaces</u> <u>Transport and Civil</u> <u>Pipeline, Capability and Estate</u>
<u>Justice and Community Safety</u>	<u>Capital Works and Infrastructure</u>
<u>Suburban Land Agency</u>	<u>Place Delivery Group</u> <u>Land Supply Group</u>

4.0 Geography

The working group will focus on the 'Town Centre and surrounds' area outlined below. This area:

- Includes Phillip (core of the town centre) and part of Garran (Canberra Hospital precinct).
- Includes major civic, commercial, and transport infrastructure, with significant residential intensification.
- Is well-connected to surrounding suburbs via arterial roads and public transport.
- Is characterised by demographic diversity and a growing older population, highlighting the need for inclusive infrastructure.

Figure 1 Woden Town Centre and surrounds



5.0 Roles and responsibilities

A Chair will be appointed by the Southern Gateway Taskforce to oversee meetings and ensure alignment with broader governance objectives.

5.1 Probity and Conflicts of interest

The Working Group will facilitate sharing of information across ACT Government at a range of policy and project development stages and members must adhere to sensitivity protocols when sharing or discussing any material with colleagues outside the working group meetings.

The Working Group will maintain a register of decisions and actions through their meeting minutes, accessible to WTCWG and Southern Gateway Interagency Taskforce members.

Members will need to consider any conflicts of interest and discuss with their manager and the Chair as appropriate.

Conflicts of interest must be declared and managed in accordance with ACT Government standards.

5.2 Scope

The Group will provide advice and facilitate coordination of effort across government to support delivery of the below, as agreed in the Legislative Assembly Resolutions and in consultation with community.

1. Articulate a strategic vision for future land uses, major transport networks, open space, and activity centres including Phillip Service Trades Area;

2. Social infrastructure - Identify suitable sites for an aquatic centre, indoor sports centre, and arts centre to meet community needs. Gap analysis, including options and criteria to determine the preferred sites for the multi-purpose indoor sports stadium, the street theatre/art centre, and the 50m pool set in a green environment;
3. Identify and recommend improvements to pedestrian, cycling, vehicle, public transport, and social connectivity;
4. Tree canopy – Enhance the tree canopy and biodiversity, especially around Yarralumla Creek. A plan to increase the canopy to 30 percent;
5. Assess the social and environmental sustainability and climate adaptability of residential towers;
6. Review levels of homelessness and community support services, and identify potential sites for new services as part of the Town Centre development;
7. Housing analysis – apartment size and numbers, ownership/rental mix, vacancy rates, public housing, community housing, affordable housing and unmet housing need. Plan for adequate provision for public, community, and affordable housing;
8. Integration – Coordinate with the development of the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework. consider proponent (developer and/or utility authorities) initiated master plan or direct sale requests to aligns with the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework and Woden District Strategy.
9. Entertainment precinct and identifying place-making areas – planning to create a destination by activating public spaces and supporting the night-time economy;
10. Provide a progress report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of 2025 [completed]. Report back on the above analyses and land use planning by June 2026 and before public consultation on the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework.

5.3 Community Engagement and Stakeholders

Communications and engagement will draw on existing consultation mechanisms to avoid duplication and consultation fatigue.

5.4 Proxies

It is important to have attendance from all working group members. If members are unavailable to attend a scheduled meeting, they must nominate a proxy from their agency/business area to attend.

6.0 Meetings

6.1 Quorum

Quorum is established when four committee members (or their proxies) are present in addition to an Executive member (being the Chair or Deputy Chair).

6.2 Frequency and location

Working Group meetings will be held online via MS Teams.

Meetings will be held quarterly or as required. Meetings and advisory work will be scheduled according to relevant project milestones and deliverables, and Legislative Assembly resolutions requirements for reporting.

6.3 Agenda and minutes

Agendas, minutes, and action items will be documented and circulated within one week of each meeting.

6.4 Decisions and actions

Decisions and actions will be documented in the meeting minutes.

The Working Group will operate in an advisory capacity and as an information sharing body, with recommendations escalated to Strategic Board for endorsement if and where required.

The Working Group will also provide updates as required to the Southern Gateway Taskforce.

The initiation of the working group has been led by Planning and Urban Policy[now Policy, Planning and Built Environment], CED.

A progress report was submitted to the ACT Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of 2025. New reporting requirements for the Working Group under the 3 February Assembly Resolution are to “provide quarterly reporting back to the Assembly of the work and outputs of the Working Group”.

7.0 Secretariat support

Policy, Planning and Built Environment, CED will provide initial Chair and Secretariat support to the working group. This will involve scheduling meetings, preparation and circulation of agendas and minutes and facilitating sharing of relevant information with working group members.

8.0 Terms of reference amendment, modification or variation

Proposed variations to the ToR should be circulated with a meeting agenda and discussed at a working group meeting, then cleared by the relevant executive.