



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Fiona Carrick MLA

Addressed to: Minister for the Public Service

Reference: ACT Public Service

Hearing: 21 July 2026

In relation to: Relocation of jobs out of Woden - impact on business

Question received: 28 July 2026

Answer Due: 5 August 2026

Minister - Businesses are struggling in the heart of Woden - the Town Square and West CIT plaza precinct?

- 1) Why is the Government pulling office workers and customer foot traffic out of the heart of Woden — from the Cosmopolitan building?
- 2) What conversations has the government had with the local businesses to determine the impact on them?
- 3) What assessment was done of the impact on Woden traders from moving the Access Canberra shopfront away from its current location?

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- 1) The ACT Government currently leases three floors of 21 Bowes Place (known as the Cosmopolitan Centre) to accommodate Access Canberra office space, a Woden Access Canberra Service Centre, and a Woden FlexiSpace for ACT Government employees. The current lease is due to expire in early 2027. The upcoming lease expiry provided an opportunity for Government to review opportunities to co-locate community facing services, provide alternative FlexiSpace open to staff across the ACT Public Service in the Woden Town Centre and reduce overall costs to the Government.

The co-location of the Woden Service Centre with the Woden Library retains both services in the Town Centre by creating a single, central, accessible and inclusive space for the community to engage, connect and access government services. Community members are

likely to visit either the library or service centre as their primary purpose; however, the shared space makes it more convenient for individuals to explore other services on offer and supports cross-promotion of government services.

The ACT Government also has a separate lease at 21 Bowes Place until 2036 for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Woden Clinic.

- 2) The ACT Government recognises the importance of local businesses to the Woden Town Centre. The Woden Town Centre has seen considerable investment by the ACT Government over recent years with the establishment of the new CIT Woden campus and new Transport interchange. The decision to relocate the Woden Access Canberra Service Centre forms part of broader accommodation planning associated with the expiry of the Access Canberra lease at 21 Bowes Place and consideration of opportunities to co-locate community-facing services within government-owned assets in the heart of Woden.
- 3) Options explored on whether to co-locate the Service Centre into a government-owned asset or continue current arrangements (partially or in full) were assessed by Government as a part of the 2026-27 Budget. The upcoming lease expiry provided the Government with an opportunity to co-locate community-facing services, provide alternative FlexiSpace in the Woden Town Centre and reduce overall costs to the Government without diminishing access to services in Woden.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026–2027

Signature:



Date:

5/18/26

By the Minister for the Public Service, Rachel Stephen-Smith