



**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: 066

Submitter: Rollo Brett

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## Submission to the Inquiry into Woden Town Centre

From Rollo Brett

We are an affluent and privileged community in Woden. Consequently, we access Woden Town Centre by car and we come mainly for food; Coles/Woolworths, or, for youth, McDonalds.

The apartment towers try to contain their residents by providing cafes, gyms and (small) swimming pools.

What would enliven Woden Centre? What would divert community members from other places into our own Valley facilities ? Some issues arising from community conversations:

**Youth:** A youth survey should be taken to ascertain this as many comments to me have been disparaging and distrustful of a government that removed the 50 m pool and the indoor basketball court.

**Theatre space:** An inviting theatre space would attract many diverse groups from within the community; musical (of all genres) theatrical, performance, oratory, advisory, cinematic, lectures, U3A presentations, school functions, book launches, and “Town Hall” meetings. Note that a consequence of this would be the requirement for parking after hours when public transport goes “quiet”.

**Town square:** How to enliven the town square? Picolo Mondo is the closest place to get a coffee to enjoy in the outdoors accepting that this is on a lower level. Is Westfield specifically encouraging internal eateries and discouraging any facing the square ? The current design of the square is oriented to small groups/individuals. With only one power point in the square there is only capacity to power a small musical event.

Could a **weekly market** draw community ? Could the Canberra College country market be encouraged to move/enliven the square ? And would other activities follow that lead ?

**Transport:** Plans for changes to public transport around Woden Town Centre have left three significant issues inadequately addressed.:

1. **Light rail 2B** has missed the opportunity to ease the increasingly fraught problem of transport to and from Canberra Hospital for staff, patients and visitors. A rapid transit system should be established now.
2. **Light rail 2B** will NOT go south. DA for the duplication of Athllon Drive does NOT include light rail, nor allowance for bus-only transit lanes. What consequential plans could

be made to ensure that the 80,000 Tuggeranong travelers transiting at Woden could be drawn to the town centre ?

3. **Light rail 2B** missed the opportunity to serve the Woden Valley by stopping at the town centre and not going south to Mawson/Beasley St South. This, tied with the reduction of 80 car parking spaces may reduce the attractiveness of the town centre, diverting community to Mawson, Weston Creek, Erindale or, preferable, to local suburban shops.

**Library:** The Woden Library provides an essential service to the community. It is important that the services that it provides are maintained. It would be a boon if an opportunity arose whereby the library could be moved with a frontage onto the town square.

**Woden Valley community Service** also needs a place of prominence in the community and facing the town square would be helpful.

**Banking** is a community service. In conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, the banks should be required to maintain their presence in the town centre and, viewing present demand, improve their responsiveness to community needs. This of course is a fraught issue as directors are required to act in the interests of shareholders rather than the community/ customers. Reversing the sale of the Commonwealth bank seems highly unlikely.

Considering the Manuka fracas regarding cinemas, it is hoped that Territory planners will be granted the authorities to demand compliance with the elements of development approvals so that facilities such as cinemas can not be dumped pre-emptorally.

Yours faithfully

Rollo Brett