



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

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ACT
Government

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Standing Committee on Environment,
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Introduction

Planning context

Commonwealth Government

The *National Capital Plan* (NCP) is the strategic plan for Canberra and the Territory and ensures that they are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.

The key matters of national significance include:

- The pre-eminence of the role of Canberra and the Territory as the centre of National Capital functions, and as the symbol of Australian national life and values.
- Conservation and enhancement of the landscape features which give the National Capital its character and setting, and which contribute to the integration of natural and urban environments.
- Respect for the key elements of the Griffins' formally adopted plan for Canberra.
- Creation, conservation and enhancement of fitting sites, approaches and backdrops for national institutions and ceremonies as well as National Capital uses.
- The development of a city which both respects environmental values and reflects national concerns with the sustainability of Australia's urban areas.

This recognises the value of the unique purpose, setting, character and symbolism of Australia's national capital. The ACT Government Territory Plan must not be inconsistent with the NCP.

Part Three of the NCP, Land Use Plans and General Land Use Controls, set the broad framework for land use in the Territory, including the general location of town centres and industrial areas. Part Three also shows areas that may be suitable for future urban development and indicates the national and arterial road system.

Under 3.5 Employment location:

One of the key principles of Canberra's urban structure has been that a hierarchy of centres has been developed, with each town having a centre acting as a focal point for higher order retail functions, commercial services, offices and community facilities.

This hierarchical principle, at the metropolitan level, means that:

- Canberra Central continues to be the main location of office employment
- City is to be encouraged to develop as the most specialised retail, commercial, cultural, entertainment and tourist centre
- town centres provide retail, commercial, cultural, entertainment and other facilities to meet community needs, and serve also as locations for office-based employment.

Consideration of employment location should have regard to objectives that are of importance to the quality and significance of the National Capital. These are to:

- avoid deterioration of the environmental and visual quality of the Central National Area of Canberra
- maintain the option of further employment in the Town Centres
- preserve the setting and significance of the Central National Area as a location for major national institutions
- ensure the dominant role of the City Centre (City) is maintained in the hierarchy of centres.

For these reasons the National Capital Authority's principles and policies with respect to employment location are as follows.

A *Defined Activity Centre* under the NCP means 'those sites identified as primary activity centres for the location of major employment generating land uses. Includes town centres and industrial areas, but does not include group or local centres.' (volume 4).

When investigating the Woden Town Centre through this Inquiry it is important to consider the 'Principles for employment location' (3.5.2, NCP Volume 1):

- a) The location of employment in Canberra and the Territory should enhance rather than detract from the city's role as the National Capital. Major employment location proposals must be determined with regard to their transportation and environmental impacts.
- b) Centres at each level in the hierarchy form the focus of a range of retail, commercial and community facilities and services, in which specialisation increases at successively higher levels.
- c) Continued expansion of services and facilities should be provided for and encouraged in each of the town centres.
- d) Each town should have a town centre. The Territory Plan will provide for a range of lower order centres to meet the varying needs of residents.

Note, there are no specific National Capital Plan requirements for the Woden Town Centre/suburb of Phillip. There is a diplomatic estate at O'Malley which is within National Capital Authority jurisdiction, immediately adjacent to the south-eastern border of Phillip (opposite the residential area of Swinger Hill).

ACT Government

The ACT Government planning system was recently reformed to facilitate population growth without compromising the characteristics of the city that we value and includes a new *Planning Act 2023*, Territory Plan 2023 and district strategies. The Woden District Strategy 2023 outlines a strategic vision for 2038 and beyond to 2050, it highlights the key structural elements and directions for the district based on each of the five big drivers:

1. Blue-green network

2. Economic access and opportunity across the city
3. Strategic movement to support city growth
4. Inclusive centres and communities
5. Sustainable neighbourhoods.

Initiatives are then outlined for each of these drivers for the short, medium, long, longer term and 'ongoing'. The Woden District Strategy will be discussed in more detail in response to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference topics.

Terms of Reference

Town Centres should be vibrant hubs for retail, commerce and community services, including a range of cultural and recreation facilities that provide a destination for people to come together and have a sense of belonging.

This Committee will inquire into and report on the current and future zoning needs to support the social, economic and environmental prosperity of the Woden Town Centre and its liveability to support a great quality of life.

This report will be informed by community and business input, identifying opportunities for improved planning for:

- Social connectivity that encourages participation for all demographics;
- Housing, including social, public and affordable housing;
- Employment and economic activity, including the night-time economy;
- Health, education and community services;
- Public spaces that encourage activity and in which people feel safe;
- A range of community facilities/services, including cultural and recreational facilities (with a focus on an aquatic centre);
- Transport and accessibility, to and within the town centre;
- Sustainability and resilience to climate change, including by protecting and expanding living infrastructure and managing Yarralumla Creek;
- Aligning with relevant planning documents, such as the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan; and
- Any other relevant matters.

Response to Terms of Reference

Work is underway in the Government to facilitate cross-government coordination to support the integrated delivery of works and initiatives within and impacting on the Woden Town Centre. This currently includes formation of a Woden Town Centre Working Group.

Term of Reference 1 – Social connectivity that encourage participation for all demographics

Woden District Strategy

The Woden District Strategy promotes inclusive centres and communities by revitalising group and local centres. The Government's shopping centre upgrade program aims to protect local jobs and support local businesses. Many centres across the ACT have received upgrades since 2001, based on condition audits and community feedback. The current pipeline of shop upgrades is listed on the City Services shopping Centre Improvements website at: <https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/Infrastructure-Projects/programs/shopping-centre-improvements>.

The revitalisation of local and group centres does not solely rest with the ACT Government undertaking government funded upgrades on public land or to public spaces and streets in these centres. Private lease holders own land and buildings in many of these centres and private upgrades may play a more significant role in leading revitalisation of a local or group centre than government upgrading works.

In addition, the planning system, planning agencies and land development agencies can encourage revitalisation by private investment through land release and, where appropriate, re-zoning. They can consider whether amendments are required to planning controls to allow additional uses in or around centres.

Planning and non-planning mechanisms will be investigated in a number of group and local centres, with initial possibilities for investigation illustrated in the Strategy. These include Lyons local centre and Curtin and Mawson group centres as initial centres for investigation, building on the future potential extension of light rail to these centres.

Further review of local and group centres (as part of the district strategy implementation) will confirm the priority centres where a program of planning and non-planning initiatives will be considered. The review will consider aspects such as:

- retail and economic characteristics;
- community needs and access to services;
- housing opportunity;
- opportunity to capitalise on planned investments in and around the centre;
- proximity to current and future infrastructure; and

- the government's existing shopping centre improvement program objectives and criteria.

As shown in the Strategy, Woden District has a range of community and recreational facilities, including:

- Woden Library (recently upgraded to include a recording studio, dance studio and new meeting spaces);
- Canberra College Performing Arts Centre;
- Woden Youth Centre;
- Phillip Oval; and
- several district playing fields including Phillip District Playing Fields.

With the central location of the town centre within the district, most areas rank highly in relative accessibility to facilities, though accessibility is lower at the southern end around suburbs such as Torrens and Farrer.

Facilities that are being planned or are in the process of being delivered within the district include:

- a future new Woden Community Centre in proximity to Callam Street;
- future public education facilities at the former CIT Woden site;
- upgrades to Garran Primary School, including a new two (2) court gymnasium that will be available for community use outside of school hours;
- upgrades to Phillip District Enclosed Oval (opposite Canberra Hospital);
- the new CIT campus; and
- expansion of Canberra Hospital.

Additionally, a four-court expansion to the netball courts in Deakin is currently being pursued by the South Canberra Netball Association following the provision of a grant from the Australian Government to support this outcome. This is in addition to an ACT Government funded upgrade to the existing 8 courts.

The North Woden Tennis Club (in Hughes) recently upgraded its courts with support from the ACT Government.

With increasing densities in the town centre, appropriate and accessible recreation facilities are an important consideration. A publicly accessible swimming pool facility will be retained to service the surrounding community.

Responsibilities for different types of facilities rests with different directorates and agencies. The planning and delivery of social infrastructure needs to consider long-term factors, including who will fund and manage facilities over time, not just the initial capital costs involved or locating a suitable site.

City and Environment Directorate (CED) is building on traditional needs assessment to create a repeatable and scalable model that is designed to support strategic engagement with community, developers and

government agencies, ensuring alignment with broader planning goals. Initial analysis, which has considered the growth of the population based on the potential housing demand and the existing provision of facilities in the district, has indicated that further investigation and needs assessments may be required to determine the demand and potential for new or expanded facilities.

Future planning for the district's group and local centres will consider opportunities for these types of uses to be delivered, noting that identifying potential locations for any new facilities will require further detailed analysis and due diligence, consultation with the community, and whole-of-government approaches to delivery.

Ideally, facilities should be delivered in accessible locations and co-located with complementary uses in centres. In the Woden District in particular there may be opportunities to align provision of new facilities with key nodes and stops along the future light rail corridor to cater to existing demand and the additional population that will be generated by new development.

In addition to new facilities, renewal and enhancement of existing community facilities will be important to meet the needs of current and future residents. The district has many existing clubs, providing for a range of ongoing community needs and interests. The ACT Government has made a series of commitments to reduce harm from gambling while supporting sustainable clubs. This includes facilitating planning and other processes to allow clubs to diversify to other revenue generating streams, especially development of available land for social housing and land supply purposes, where supported by the community. The initiatives for inclusive centres and communities and implementation pathways and timeframes are shown in the Strategy.

Libraries ACT

Libraries are seen as more than just providing traditional library services. Libraries support and encourage social connectivity and participation for people of all ages, genders and backgrounds through the variety of programs that it offers:

- Early childhood (Giggle and Wiggle, Story Time, Bilingual Story Time, Sensory Story Time)
- School-age children (Lego Club, school holiday programming, Story Dogs)
- Adults (author talks, English conversation classes, Mystery Box)
- Seniors (Geri-Fit, Home Library Service)

Term of Reference 2 – Housing, including social, public and affordable housing

Woden District Strategy

Woden is transitioning from low-density to medium and high-density housing, especially around the town centre and light rail corridor. As Woden was mostly developed in the 1960s and 1970s, much of the district has a low-density suburban character, with cul-de-sac style development, particularly at the outer edges.

As such, separate houses remain the predominant dwelling typology in Woden District, accounting for 58 per cent of dwellings in 2021. However, this share has declined from around 70 per cent in 2016, indicating a substantial shift in the types of housing emerging in new developments. This has particularly been the case with higher density apartment developments being delivered in and around the town centre.

Woden has one of the higher shares of dwellings in semi-detached or medium density housing types – around 20 per cent in 2021 compared to 17 per cent across the ACT. New housing in the district is likely to continue to be of medium and higher density housing forms, particularly catalysed by new development around the future light rail corridor and the town centre.

Most of the district ranks highly in terms of suitability for housing, particularly around the central spine and the town and group centres. Sites identified on the ACT Indicative Land Release Program for the district are expected to contribute to new dwelling supply as well as retail, entertainment and office space in the town centre and key urban intensification areas. As of 2021, Woden District has one of the lower percentages of rental households in housing stress, 19.4 per cent compared to 23 per cent across the ACT

The Strategy highlights the category 1, 2 and 3 change areas in Woden District (based on the locations ranked in the top 25 per cent for suitability across the ACT). There are many steps before development of the category 1, 2 and 3 change areas can happen.

Firstly, further detailed analysis will be required to better understand the best locations for housing development. This analysis will inform changes to the Territory Plan and planning controls. Further planning work and ongoing community consultation will then determine their suitability and realistic capacity for development and inform the type of development on these sites, including sites on the Indicative Land Release Program, so they deliver the desired urban character and a diversity of housing types.

Planning will factor in the other important elements of delivering sustainable neighbourhoods including contributions to sustainability aims and active travel. Some of these areas are also home to blue-green values and Aboriginal cultural and heritage values that should be protected in the detailed planning of these future precincts.

The Strategy highlights areas between rapid transport network stops and centres within the district, primarily through the future light rail corridor and around the Curtin and Mawson group centres where, in addition to the town centre, most new housing in the district will be concentrated. These areas are highlighted to make sure that any future renewal in these 'stop-to-centre' connection areas has a strong relationship and alignment between growth, transport infrastructure and access to amenities.

Stop-to-centre connection areas are areas between a current or possible light rail or rapid transit stop and a local or group centre. They could provide an opportunity for additional development that is well located to public transport and local services.

A strong focus on the public domain should support sustainable neighbourhoods. Having a greater mix of densities and uses in the centres identified may also be appropriate, subject to a detailed understanding of the need for different land uses at a metropolitan level.

An important part of delivering sustainable neighbourhoods will be addressing housing affordability. Planning and land release can contribute to addressing this by planning for a diversity of housing types and land supply to meet different needs and budgets.

The continued delivery of actions under the ACT Housing Strategy will also support future development in Woden. Sustainable neighbourhoods can be enhanced further through living infrastructure initiatives that will result in greater canopy cover and permeability at the time of development in line with the implementation of the ACT Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045. This will contribute to reducing urban heat island effects and improving amenity at the neighbourhood scale.

Next stages of planning reform

The Government is committed to enabling 30,000 homes by 2030. CED is progressing work to support delivery of this commitment.

This includes missing middle housing reforms, including a missing middle design guide, which has been developed to remove barriers to missing middle housing in the RZ1 and RZ2 zones, enable diverse housing choices, and increase density in the existing urban footprint.

In addition to missing middle housing, further planning is underway to support transport-oriented development.

Building higher density housing near high frequency public transport stops is an opportunity to provide more convenient and affordable access to transport for a larger portion of Canberra population, helping reduce congestion on our road network and promoting more sustainable, walkable communities.

More people living near transport hubs provides the opportunity to expand public transport services and active travel with improvements to public spaces, benefiting new and existing residents.

The Planning Strategy (2018) established that the majority of Canberra's future urban growth will occur within our existing urban footprint, with a focus on shopping centres and along transport corridors.

The ACT Government has also agreed in the National Housing Accord to prioritise planning control amendments to support diverse housing across a range of areas, including promoting medium- and high-density housing in well-located areas close to existing public transport infrastructure connections, amenities and employment.

Key to achieving these housing and transport goals is the integration of transport and land-use planning approach, known as transit or transport-oriented development (TOD).

The district strategies identified change areas with good access to rapid public transport where urban change will occur. Planning for these areas will also be progressed to support the development of high-quality transport-oriented development on rapid public transport corridors and the light rail line, including the extension to Woden.

CED is currently undertaking planning for more housing in and around key precincts, shops and rapid transport connections including Woden Town Centre. This includes leading work to develop the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework, to inform future planning and guide development on the land along and adjacent to the Light Rail Stage 2B and Rapid Bus corridor. See Term of Reference 7 for further details.

Term of Reference 3 – Employment and economic activity, including the night-time economy

Woden District Strategy

Woden is positioned as a key employment centre, especially in health (41 per cent of jobs in the Woden District) and knowledge-intensive sectors (39 per cent). The Strategy supports the revitalisation of the town centre as a mixed-use hub with commercial, residential, and educational uses.

With the presence of light rail, the Woden town centre will be revitalised as a mixed residential and commercial hub with an educational focus built around the Canberra Institute of Technology. It will be a busy centre with more people living and working in and close to the town centre. There will be improved amenity through greater tree canopy cover, access to city parks and upgraded public spaces.

The Canberra Hospital campus will be a major health centre for the ACT and region. Its growth in health services, research, training and development will further develop the knowledge economy strengths of the district. The Curtin and Mawson group centres will support more jobs for the district, building on enhanced accessibility from the light rail corridor. Local centres will thrive as strong community hubs supported by increased numbers of residents nearby.

The use of 'Location Quotient' analysis, drawing on the 2016 and 2021 censuses, shows that the health sector is well established and the most specialised in the Woden District, making up a significant share of jobs and driven by the presence of Canberra Hospital. Public administration also retains a large share of the district's jobs, which increased over this period.

Education, professional services, and some population serving sectors are also emerging for the district, while retail employment declined (likely influenced by COVID-19 restrictions during this time). Growth in the education sector will also be enhanced by the establishment of the new Woden CIT campus. This profile of Woden's industry sectors and strengths should inform future planning for the district's economic and employment centres and precincts

Business and innovation

Further development in the Woden Town Centre provides for new commercial opportunities and for new businesses to start or existing businesses to expand.

Business owners or intenders in the Woden district can access a range of government programs for support including the Canberra Business Advice and Support Service, Canberra Innovation Network programs and the Access Canberra Event Coordination and Business Assist Team to help with government licences and approvals.

The ACT Government also welcomes inward investment to the Woden Town Centre as residential, retail and commercial endeavours grow. The Investment Attraction Concierge service within CMTEDD is available to support prospective national and international investors seeking investment opportunities as the future plans of Woden evolve.

ACT Policing

ACT Policing note the importance of economic activity for the viability of a town centre, and the benefits this activity bring to the surrounding region. ACT Policing also note the relationship between increased economic activity and certain crime types, including theft.

ACT Policing acknowledge the adverse effect of crime on the viability of running a business, and our members have regular discussions with retail groups in the Woden Town Centre in relation to concerns about crime, with a view to helping mitigate these concerns where possible.

ACT Policing would encourage future economic operators who bring their business to the Woden Town Centre to proactively engage with ACT Policing if they have concerns about the impact of crime on their business, or on the safety of their employees.

ACT Policing has resources available online via the link below to assist business owners with tips for reducing theft and minimising the risk of aggravated robbery.

<https://police.act.gov.au/crime-and-prevention/business-security>

In relation to night-time economy, ACT Policing note that an increase in this area also results in an expansion of liquor licensing compliance requirements, and has the possibly to increase anti-social behaviour associated with bars or clubs providing late night access to alcohol. ACT Policing would encourage the consideration of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles when considering the future of the night-time economy in this region.

Term of Reference 4 – Health, education and community services

Woden District Strategy

The Canberra Hospital precinct is a major health hub, with planned expansions including new theatres and ICU beds. Further detail is provided below.

The new CIT Woden campus will anchor educational growth and support the knowledge economy. Further details are also provided below.

Future planning work for Woden for health, education and community services, includes aged care, schools, and community gardens to meet demographic needs.

ACT Health

The ACT Government is committed to continuing to provide funding to strengthen the capacity of the ACT health system to deliver public health services for all Canberrans, where and when they need it.

The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is developing a Community Health Infrastructure Plan (CHIP), which will outline a forward plan for health and community infrastructure requirements that align with health service requirements in the ACT, including the Woden Town Centre.

The CHIP will be informed by the health services planning work undertaken by ACTHD and Canberra Health Services (CHS), the existing demand of health and community services, the ACT's changing demographics, and the location and condition of existing ACT Government assets.

The CHIP will support a more strategic approach for managing ageing community health facilities, including facilities in the Woden Town Centre like the Phillip Health Centre, to accommodate the changing demographics and increased demand for health services over the short (0-5 years), medium (5-10 years) and long-term (10-20 years).

The CHIP project will provide an overarching pathway for existing facilities to be upgraded or redeveloped, as well as identify where new facilities are required across the Territory and including in the Woden Town Centre.

ACTHD will work closely with other ACT Government directorates including Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR), CHS and the Community Services Directorate (CSD) to undertake a holistic assessment of public facilities used to deliver community-based health services. In addition, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, and Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate will be consulted to inform planning and transport considerations in the CHIP.

The ACT Health Services Plan 2022-2030 (ACTHSP) was released by the Minister for Health in August 2022. The ACTHSP is a key deliverable under the *Accessible, Accountable, Sustainable: A Framework for the ACT Public Health System 2020-2030*.

The ACTHSP sets a roadmap to redesign, invest in and redevelop health services funded by the ACT Government to 2030 as a key deliverable in its commitment to deliver high-quality healthcare and create a healthy future for Canberrans.

The ACTHSP will improve alignment of community-based health services provided by the ACT Government to the needs of district catchments by:

- Establishing and implementing a role delineation framework for geographic catchment-based distribution of community based services that supports access for priority population groups.
- Sourcing and mapping current and projected service activity to locations and place of residence and analysis against population catchment and health status data.
- Assigning required service levels to each district and realign and expand services accordingly.

The ACTHSP will identify other opportunities to improve access to community based medical imaging services.

The ACT Child and Adolescent Clinical Services Plan 2023-2030 (CACSP) was released by the Minister for Health in September 2023 and a key deliverable of the ACTHSP. It sets out a holistic roadmap for children's health services funded by the ACT Government.

- One objective in the CACSP is to improve care and processes for children and their families requiring local outpatient and community-based services. This will be achieved through strategically located, community based, child and family networked services that are shared between health, community services and other providers that reflect best practice models of care.

CIT Woden Campus Project

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Woden Campus will, in the long-term, provide improved educational facilities for Vocational Education and Training (VET) students in the Territory and capital

region. The new campus allows students to learn in state-of-the-art VET facilities that provide them with access to contemporary learning tools and prepare them for jobs of the future.

CIT Woden is a technology skills delivery precinct, with a strong focus on IT, cyber security, business and hospitality skills and training opportunities required to meet the growing demands of industry and the ACT community. The new facility incorporates smart, sustainable campus design and current technology to offer courses that meet the vocational education and training requirements of a shifting ACT workforce. Features will include:

- Specialist learning environments;
- State-of-the-art cyber training and digital learning spaces;
- A training restaurant with commercial kitchen;
- Collaboration and group-work learning spaces;
- Function rooms, activated common areas and greenspace; and
- Maker spaces, incubator hubs and spaces for collaboration with industry and local business.

The smart campus design will enable connectivity for all CIT students across all campuses and courses. This creates a generational shift in access to learning and providing students with a seamless online learning experience, allowing for a smooth hybrid delivery of learning from campus.

It is expected that up to 6,500 students will use CIT Woden each year, activating the area, and stimulating the local economy. In proximity to the growing Woden business district, CIT offers increased opportunities for students to undertake local job training opportunities during their studies

The CIT Woden Campus was awarded 6 star Green Star Buildings v1.0 Designed Assessment by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) on 26 March 2025. 77 points of the 70 required have been achieved. The project is on track for the Green Star 'As-Built' submission, which will be undertaken as a post-completion activity.

With a focus on local employment (and meeting the Territory's Local Industry Participation Policy (LIPP)) this project utilised local Canberra contractors, sub-contractors; providing supply chain opportunities. It also provided the potential for on-site learning in relation to Green Star buildings, sustainable materials, smart campus inclusions and the collaborations possible between the Territory, local contractors, industry, CIT and Canberrans broadly. Outcomes of this project will provide short, medium and long-term employment and enable ongoing upskilling of Canberrans into the future.

The new Public Transport Interchange, part of the CIT Woden Campus Project, will improve accessibility for the traveling public through well thought out design, while also providing greater safety for the community. Active travel is promoted through this project, and the public transport network will be able to expand and efficiently service a growing population in the south of Canberra, whilst also future proofing for the delivery of Light Rail to Woden. This new interchange will allow significantly improved bus services and enhance the public transport connectivity to the area.

The Public Realm areas of this project will work to showcase CIT and its courses and to better connect the Woden community to VET and the surrounding areas. The campus will improve the Woden precinct by creating usable, adaptable spaces that allow for easy movement by community members while also

increasing tree canopy coverage of the area. There will be green, landscaped spaces, sheltered areas, seating and public art that can all be shared by those commuting to and from Woden, local residents, CIT staff and students, people working in Woden and those visiting.

Making way for the new Public Transport Interchange on Callam Street requires roadworks, footpath upgrades, lighting upgrades and work on essential services under the ground. To allow these works to occur some trees in the Town Centre have been removed. Despite the required tree removal, both the amount of green space and the tree canopy will be increased by the end of the project.

Part of the CIT Woden Campus Project is the inclusion of a Youth Foyer, an integrated learning and accommodation facility providing housing for 20 students, between the ages of 16 to 24, transitioning from welfare and service dependence, who seek educational and employment pathways.

The scope of the Youth Foyer is to expand education opportunities for young people who are homeless, or are at-risk of homelessness, by providing 20 studio apartments and dedicated space for around-the-clock staff to assist the youth in achieving academic goals, wellness, life skills and build confidence during their residency (up to two years). The Youth Foyer will ensure vulnerable young people have secure housing and access to key community support services, while they pursue vocational education and training. The Foyer will provide an environment of close staff and peer support, with opportunities for social interaction and teamwork.

The location of the Youth Foyer in the Woden town centre also provides further opportunities for the residents to access other educational facilities, such as Canberra College (a year 11 and year 12 public school on Launceston Street, Phillip,) and increased employment opportunities. It is adjacent to the Woden Public Transport Interchange, enabling the residents safe and convenient access to public transport.

Libraries ACT

Libraries play a critical role in helping support education in the community through the services and programs it provides:

- Services: free access to public computers with internet accessibility to provide access to information and opportunity to increase digital literacy skills, Home Library Service to take the library to the home.
- Outreach activities: finding opportunities to take the library to the community through streams of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disability, multicultural, LGBTIQ+, early childhood.
- Children-focused programming: Giggle and Wiggle, Story Time, Story Dogs, school holiday programming, etc.

The Woden Library was the focus of significant upgrades completed in December 2021. Feedback and ideas from the community informed the designs for the upgrade of the Woden Library. The Woden Library was upgraded to feature a range of spaces for the community to workshop and learn, including:

- The Hive – a hub for digital exploration with a recording studio, recording equipment, podcasting materials and green-screen technology tools.

- The Gathering Space – a place designed for collaboration, which will be available as a meeting space for community groups.
- The Life Lab – a flexible space for learning activities, speakers and dance.
- The Haven – a space for quiet relaxation, study and reading.

New spaces on the ground floor include:

- Two new community meeting room spaces with after-hours public access and upgraded toilet facilities.
- A community kitchen.
- An external awning over the book return chute adjacent the main entry of the library.

Term of Reference 5 – Public spaces that encourage activity in which people feel safe

Woden District Strategy

The Strategy sets out the planning principles for key sites and change areas in Woden that may be suitable for a range of residential and non-residential uses, including consideration of recreation facilities. The planning for these sites is subject to further investigations and community consultation.

Studies are underway in North Curtin in preparation for housing along Yarra Glen. Planning principles for this key site include:

- A park between the urban edge and Yarralumla Creek that responds to topography, includes canopy trees, Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and play opportunities, as well as community gardens and urban farming.
- Community, recreation and retail facilities located prominently to create a destination and activity.
- Public activity hub at key locations includes community facilities and services, amenities and cafes.
- Opportunities considered to enhance the creek line for local area amenity.

Future development of Woden north, including the area near Phillip Oval and the Melrose Drive/Yamba Drive roundabout, should be undertaken with reference to the following principles:

- Protection of the Woden Flood Memorial.
- Walkable street grid, with clear sight lines and more walkable access and local active travel, adds canopy trees and creates regular urban blocks of one hectare or less.
- Linear park adds canopy trees, WSUD and play opportunities.
- Community and retail facilities located prominently to create a destination and activity
- Opportunities considered to enhance the creek line for local area amenity and ecology.

Considerations for future development of the Woden Town Centre, between Launceston Street, Easty Street, Melrose Drive, and Hindmarsh Drive, should refer to the following principles:

- Renewed streets clarify built edges, expand urban tree canopy cover and refine pedestrian safety and amenity.
- Walkable street grid, with clear sight lines and more walkable access and local active travel, add canopy trees and create regular urban blocks of one hectare or less.
- Parks add canopy trees, WSUD and play opportunities.
- Continued activation of the town square to be the central focal point for social and community activity, encouraging people to gather in the area, supporting active ground floor uses and providing a focus for entertainment, markets and other activation of the space.
- Community, sport, recreation and retail facilities located prominently to create a destination and activity. Public activity hubs at key locations include medical and other services, amenities and cafes.
- Building frontages contribute to street identity, spatial definition and oversight of public space.
- Opportunities considered to enhance the creek line for local area amenity and ecology.

Activation of Woden Town Square - the #WodenExperiment

In 2019 the ACT Government worked with Street Furniture Australia on the #WodenExperiment to re-energise the Woden Town Square.

Following a research and design phase, the Government funded upgrades to landscaping (including new trees), street furniture providing spaces to sit and relax, play spaces for children and adults, and practical elements including signage. These improvements are still in place today.

The #WodenExperiment opened to the public on 6 March 2019 with a range of activities and events encouraging the local community to spend more time in the revamped space.

ACT Policing

ACT Policing note the opportunity to integrate crime prevention principles at the design stage when considering the future of Woden Town Centre, including layered security or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. This may include incorporation of enhanced visibility and lighting, decluttering of public areas, and/or increased CCTV coverage.

Consideration of crime prevention principles will encourage the activation of the environment and contribute to public spaces in which people feel safe, including after-hours workers transiting through the Woden Town Centre.

Any areas that are designated as a crowded place, that is, locations that are easily accessible by a large number of people on a predictable basis within the enhanced footprint of the future Woden Town Centre should be assessed as per Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee's Australia's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism. Crowded places are vulnerable to incidents, whether

intentional or unintentional, and can require increased responses from ACT's emergency services. There is an opportunity by considering these vulnerabilities at an early design stage to integrate community friendly mitigation that allow the community to enjoy all future public spaces safely.

Libraries ACT

In the most recent round of community engagement on the proposed Molonglo Library and Community Hub, the community was asked to describe how their current branch (Woden) made them feel. The words most regularly used for Woden were:

- Happy (staff are helpful, space is welcoming, lots of books)
- Safe and supported (not many distractions, helps me find creative information)
- Calm (quiet, comfortable, relaxing)
- Part of the community (because my son can meet other young children and draw).

Each of the ACT's libraries has different functions and different consumer behaviour patterns. For example, in Molonglo people have said they want to visit the library early in the morning, a sentiment that was also shared by users of Woden Library (early Sunday morning and earlier openings generally). Tuggeranong and Erindale libraries are relatively close together – and close to Woden - but each has a very different offering.

Libraries ACT is exploring opportunities with the Community Services Directorate for universal and outreach services at libraries.

Public spaces such as ACT's network of urban open spaces are important for both active and passive forms of recreation and social connection. As Woden Town Centre and the wider district continues to grow there will be a higher emphasis on providing quality urban open spaces.

Term of Reference 6 – A range of community facilities/services, including cultural and recreational facilities (with a focus on an aquatic centre)

Woden District Strategy

The Strategy considers inclusive centres and communities, including retaining a publicly accessible swimming pool and enhancing recreational spaces like Phillip District Oval (upgraded since the Strategy commenced) and district playing fields. It also proposes new arts and cultural facilities to serve Woden and Weston Creek.

Woden District has a range of community and recreational facilities, including Woden Library (recently upgraded to include a recording studio, dance studio and new meeting spaces), Canberra College Performing Arts Centre, Woden Community Centre (Corinna Street), Woden Youth Centre, Phillip Oval and Phillip District Enclosed Oval, and several district playing fields. With the central location of the town centre within the district, most areas rank highly in relative accessibility to facilities, though accessibility is lower at the southern end around suburbs such as Torrens and Farrer.

Facilities that are being planned or are in the process of being delivered within the district include a future new Woden Community Centre, future public education facilities at the former CIT Woden/Woden Valley High School site, upgrades to Garran Primary School (inclusive of gymnasium facilities and or potential indoor sport facilities), upgrades to Phillip District Enclosed Oval, the new CIT campus, and expansion of Canberra Hospital. The hospital's 2024 expansion includes 22 new operating theatres, a new and larger emergency department, additional ICU beds as well as new inpatient units. This new infrastructure, along with that proposed through the Canberra Hospital Master Plan, will support the attraction of clinicians to train and stay in Canberra in the long term.

With increasing densities in the town centre, appropriate and accessible recreation facilities are an important consideration. A publicly accessible swimming pool facility will be retained to service the surrounding community. The new Woden Community Centre is intended to consolidate the operations of WCS and accommodate community activities to meet the future social infrastructure needs of the growing Woden region.

Analysis, which has considered the growth of the population based on the potential housing demand and the existing provision of facilities in the district, has indicated that further investigation and needs assessments may be required to determine the demand and potential for new or expanded facilities including schools, aged care facilities including residential aged care, an arts centre or similar cultural facility serving the Woden and Weston Creek, indoor sports facilities with multi-purpose court spaces, outdoor recreation spaces, and community gardens.

Future planning for the district's group and local centres will consider opportunities for these types of uses to be delivered, noting that identifying potential locations for any new facilities will require further detailed analysis and due diligence, consultation with the community, and whole-of-government approaches to delivery. Responsibilities for different types of facilities rests with different directorates and agencies.

The planning and delivery of community facilities needs to consider long-term factors, including who will fund and manage facilities over time, not just the initial capital costs involved or locating a suitable site. Ideally, facilities should be delivered in accessible locations and co-located with complementary uses in centres.

In the Woden District in particular there may be opportunities to align provision of new facilities with key nodes and stops along the future light rail corridor to cater to existing demand and the additional population that will be generated by new development.

In addition to new facilities, renewal and enhancement of existing community facilities will be important to meet the needs of current and future residents. The district has many existing clubs, both licenced and general community sporting clubs, providing for a range of ongoing community needs and interests. The ACT Government has made a series of commitments to reduce harm from gambling while supporting sustainable licenced clubs. This includes facilitating planning and other processes to allow clubs to diversify to other revenue generating streams, especially development of available land for social housing and land supply purposes, where supported by the community.

Sport and Recreation

There are a number of sport and recreation facilities in and around the Woden Town Centre serving the Woden Valley community, and in some instances the broader community, including:

- Phillip Oval (AFL and cricket; redeveloped in 2018);
- Phillip District Enclosed Oval (rugby league, rugby union and cricket) – currently being upgraded;
- Woden Park (athletics and football);
- Woden Squash Centre;
- Phillip Swimming and Ice-Skating Centre;
- Garran Neighbourhood Oval (sportsground fully restored in late 2024);
- A number of other ACT Government sportsgrounds (Curtin District Playing Fields, Mawson District Playing Fields, Mawson Neighbourhood Oval, Melrose High Synthetic Grass Football Field, Phillip District Playing Fields, Hughes Oval, Pearce Neighbourhood Oval);
- North Woden Tennis Club, which was recently upgraded with ACT Government financial assistance in 2023;
- South Canberra Netball Association (Deakin), which was upgraded in 2025 with financial assistance from the ACT Government;
- Provision of a program and learn to swim pool as part of the Stellar Canberra facility in Phillip;
- A range of indoor and outdoor sporting facilities located at ACT Government schools in Woden; and
- Eddison Park, which includes a range of sport, recreation and outdoor fitness infrastructure.

In recognising the need for further indoor sporting amenity in the Woden Valley, the ACT Government is currently undertaking preliminary investigations into the provision of a multi-court indoor sport facility on the former Woden CIT site. The proposed facility would be co-located with a future ACT Government high-school and would service both the school and community.

Phillip Pool

The Territory Planning Authority is currently assessing a proposed redevelopment of the privately owned Phillip Pool which includes a new indoor facility that includes a 25 metre pool, a dedicated warm water program pool (20 x 10 metre pool), a mix of shallow water bodies, including a toddler's pool, learn to swim pool and water play splash pads – both indoor and outdoor.

The Phillip Pool (Block 2 Section 22 Phillip) originally opened in 1971 and was run by the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) until it was leased to a private company (Glencora Pty Limited) in 1979. The pool included an outdoor 50-metre pool and generous open space areas. The company also built the Phillip Ice Skating Rink on the site, which opened in 1980. The information about the pool history, is detailed in the Territory Lease and building files as well as outlined in records as held with ACT Land Titles.

The whole of Block 2 Section 22 Phillip has been in private ownership and the subject of a Crown lease since 1979. Since then, there has only been one transfer of the lease.

Following the grant of the original lease, the pool was listed as a 'Commonwealth improvement', and in subsequent leases as a 'Territory improvement', meaning the pool would not have been included in any compensation payable to the lessee had the lease come to an end.

The lessee applied for a further 99-year Crown lease on 23 January 1998. The application was approved on the condition that the lessee purchase all Territory improvements (\$180,000) on the block, including the pool.

During the period 1999 to 2008, the lessee occupied the site in accordance with holding over provisions of the former lease, including the pool.

Finalising the application was put on hold due to the lessee disputing the value of the Territory improvements and to provide for continued negotiations regarding repair and maintenance issues.

The lessee eventually agreed to the Territory's condition and paid the amount of \$180,000 for the Territory improvements on 20 March 2008. The further Crown lease application was finalised as a result of the payment and the further 99-year Crown lease was granted on 28 March 2008 for a term commencing on 31 July 1999.

During December 2022, NG Landholdings No.20 (Geocon) purchased the Phillip Pool and Ice-skating Rink. This was a private sale and therefore did not include involvement by the Government or any conditions relating to the transfer of the lease.

A development application (DA-202443325) was lodged with the independent Territory Planning Authority on 13 November 2024 proposing demolition and construction of a new pool facility, 286 residential units and other associated works. No changes to the Crown lease are proposed as part of this DA. Any future lease variations will be subject to another DA, including further public notification.

Under the *Planning Act 2023*, the Authority is required to consider the requirements under the Territory Plan, public representations and entity advice in assessing and deciding a DA.

The current Territory Plan which includes a requirement for a 25-metre pool was first proposed in the draft Territory Plan as part of the [Planning System Review and Reform Project](#). The Government response to the Assembly Resolution, which was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly in February 2025 provides further detail on these considerations. It is available on the ACT Legislative Assembly website [here](#).

The draft Territory Plan was subject to community consultation. The ACT Government responded to matters raised during the consultation process in subsequent [consultation response reports](#) and [explanatory reports](#). The Territory Plan was also subject to a [separate Inquiry](#) and the final Territory Plan was agreed by the previous (Tenth) ACT Legislative Assembly.

There had previously been a long-standing requirement included in the previous Territory Plan for the Phillip Pool that *development for other uses involves redevelopment of the pool as an indoor facility*.

However, the current Territory Plan currently contains specific provisions for the redevelopment of the site, requiring a publicly accessible indoor facility that includes all of the following, at a minimum:

- a 25 x 20 metre, 8-lane swimming pool with water depths of 1.35 - 2.0 metres;
- a warm water program pool with the minimum dimensions of 20 x 10 metres;
- a toddlers/leisure pool, learn to swim pool and/or water play splash pad that is a minimum of 500 square metres in area;
- a transition to the outdoors (including to external gardens, decks and outdoor eating areas to support indoor/outdoor activities; and
- associated amenities to support the operation of the pool facilities.

There is currently no legislative avenue for the Authority to require the proponent to retain the existing 50-metre pool or ice-skating rink or require the development to pause until a new facility is available in the Woden Town Centre. For clarity, the proponent is required to continue operating an ice-skating facility on the site unless otherwise agreed by the ACT Government.

The Territory Planning Authority is continuing to assess and determine the DA in accordance with the statutory requirements.

Libraries ACT

Woden library has a range of community rooms and facilities that are available for the community to use through a hire arrangement. This includes a state-of-the-art podcast and recording studio, large LifeLab (suitable for physical exercise activities such as dance classes), a community studio, individual work pods and more.

Supporting the Arts

The Government built the Canberra College Performing Arts Centre (CCPAC) in Woden Town Centre which officially opened in 2012 and includes:

- a 174-seat theatre
- a dance studio
- music studio with two practice rooms and a recording studio
- a Drama Performance/black box studio
- a loading dock
- front-of-house facilities;
- full box office; and
- kitchenette facilities.

The new Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Woden campus built by the government and opened in July 2025 includes new, state of the art facilities with specialist and large multi-purpose spaces to deliver courses in the creative industries in the heart of Woden across fashion; graphic design; interior design; media; music; photography; and visual arts.

The Government is also committed to a new Woden Community Centre which is intended to also have large multi-functional space for a range of community activities including the arts.

In the 2024-25 Budget, the Government committed to the development of an Arts Assets Needs Analysis (AANA), which will support Government decision making on maintaining current assets to a good condition and inform strategic investment to meet future community demand. Stage one will comprise an audit of arts facilities and spaces in the ACT including services provided and geographical locations; targeted stakeholder consultation; an analysis of utilisation and demand which considers population growth and visitation; and analysis of gaps (or oversupply) in facilities and spaces dedicated to specific artform focus areas. The AANA fulfils the commitment in the ACT Infrastructure Plan Update: Entertainment, Arts and Sports to undertake a needs analysis for arts centres at Gungahlin and Woden over the next five years.

In addition to infrastructure delivery, funding delivered through the ACT Arts Fund supports artists, groups and organisations to undertake arts activities across all artforms including grassroots and community arts and cultural development activities across Canberra. Consideration is given to the breadth of artform and geographic spread and how gaps can be addressed. Tuggeranong Community Arts Centre and Belconnen Arts Centre are specifically required to deliver community arts and cultural development programs in Woden and Gungahlin respectively. Funding is also provided to Warehouse Circus, located in the Chifley Health and Wellbeing Hub, to deliver programs and services for circus and physical theatre emerging artists.

The Regional Arts Program seeks applications from eligible organisations to deliver arts and cultural initiatives benefiting communities in the Molonglo, Weston Creek, Woden, and Gungahlin regions, as well as partner with communities, groups, and artists from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, diverse gender identities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or those living with disability. The 2025-26 round is open for applications until 31 August 2025.

Woden Cemetery

Woden Cemetery, which opened in 1936 is a beautiful park for people to honour and celebrate the life of their loved ones. The park provides burial sites in many different religious and general areas. The mature trees and other stunning landscaped features of the park make it both a popular green space for family and friends to reflect and the broader community to explore and enjoy the grounds.

Woden Cemetery features many interment options, which are explained in more detail in burial services, and include the following allotments:

- Headstone
- Lawn
- Plaque Beam
- Vault
- Christ the Redeemer Mausoleum (enclosed mausoleum)
- Memorial Rock (for cremated remains)
- Tree (for cremated remains)
- Babies Rose Garden
- Children's Garden

Woden Cemetery is accessible all year round and is within walking distance from the Woden Bus Interchange. The Cemetery is currently utilised by the public for walking, running and cycling during daylight hours. However, there is currently little opportunity to better integrate the current cemetery into

the community as all available space within the boundary has been optimised for the provision of interments.

As with any Government facility, the future of Woden Cemetery continues to be considered as part of broader strategic planning.

Term of Reference 7 – Transport and accessibility, to and within the town centre

Woden District Strategy

The Strategy considers strategic movement to support city growth. The light rail extension from the City Centre to Woden is a central feature, enabling transit-oriented development

The future extension of the light rail network from the City Centre to Woden will be a catalysing initiative for the district. It will support movement within the district and between Woden, the Parliamentary zone and the City Centre. The development potential and improved accessibility provided by light rail will facilitate housing and other land use opportunities.

Future possibilities for the light rail corridor across the Woden and Inner South Districts include:

- Light rail as the spine of Canberra’s public transport network.
- Growth along the multi-modal spine with through traffic directed to peripheral parkways.
- Regeneration through “urban improvement.”
- Housing diversity and new activities that respect character and heritage while enhancing the blue-green network.
- Transforming and humanising Adelaide Avenue.
- Connecting neighbourhoods in west Deakin, Yarralumla, Curtin and Hughes to light rail.
- Improved walkability and cycling connections.
- Unlocking potential at the gateway to Woden town centre.
- Exploring opportunities to integrate Yarralumla Creek into the blue-green network.
- Athllon Drive upgraded with scope for economic opportunities at key nodes.

The rapid transit network may need to be expanded over the longer term to cater to population growth and alleviate traffic demand in congested areas. This will be investigated as part of wider network planning for Canberra consistent with the ACT Transport Strategy. Investigations would consider viability and the costs and benefits that would be delivered.

Regardless of the mode, future planning for the rapid transit network should consider stop locations close to centres and areas of high amenity to allow for integrated and transport-oriented development. In line with planning for the future light rail corridor, measures to improve east–west connections across the district will be investigated.

Planning for the duplication of Athllon Drive should take consider future light rail and mixed-use and residential development opportunities. Athllon Drive will function as an efficient movement corridor for all forms of transport and be integrated with quality urban design outcomes.

Local transport improvements will be needed in Woden, including proposed connections in the active travel network indicated on the map. Better linkages between the Woden town centre and Canberra Hospital will be considered as well as other local transport improvements identified through the implementation of the ACT Transport Strategy.

Initiatives to support strategic movement to support city growth include:

- Light rail mass transit from the City Centre to Woden.
- Improve the urban environment in key road corridors.
- Plan for the future of Athllon Drive as a multi-modal transport and urban corridor.
- Analyse strategic investigation corridors for future rapid transit connections.
- Progressively implement upgrades to priority active travel routes identified in the ACT Active Travel Plan.

Southern Gateway Planning and Urban Design Framework

The ACT Government has commenced planning work on the Southern Gateway Corridor lead by CED.

The development of the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework (the Framework) will establish an integrated land-use and transport plan for the extension of Canberra's mass-transit light rail line to Woden.

Engagement on the draft framework will guide future development along the Light Rail 2B corridor including the Woden Town Centre.

Much like the City and [Northern] Gateway Design Framework, urban regeneration along this southern corridor provides an opportunity to revitalise this part of Canberra.

The Framework is intended to demonstrate design excellence and celebrate Canberra's unique landscape character while placing more value on public places that prioritise pedestrians, cycling and public transport as well as the provision of social infrastructure required for sustainable communities.

Opportunities along the corridor, including Woden Town Centre and Phillip trades area, include more housing, commercial activity, active travel and public transport connections as well as improvements to landscape, streets and public spaces.

During planning for the Southern Gateway Corridor, the community will have an opportunity to provide input on the draft framework through a consultation process.

The Southern Gateway is identified in the Minister for Planning's Statement of Planning Priorities as a priority project for the Territory Planning Authority. It is expected that the Framework will lead to draft changes to the Territory Plan and Woden Valley District Strategy.

Light Rail Stage 2B

The Project would deliver a light rail alignment across Lake Burley Griffin, through the National Triangle, along Adelaide Avenue, and Yarra Glen, before terminating at Woden Town Centre.

Specific to the Woden Precinct, from the southern extent of the Yarra Glen roundabout, the light rail alignment would continue south along the western side of Yarralumla Creek, across Launceston Street, along Callam Street, terminating north of Bradley Street. The light rail would be within the road median (median running), with the exception of the light rail alignment between the Yarra Glen/Melrose Drive/Yamba Drive intersection and Launceston Street which would be outside of the road reserve.

The precinct would include two stops, the Phillip Oval Stop near Irving Street immediately north of Phillip Oval, and the Woden Interchange located on Callam Street between Bowes Street and Bradley Street.

The existing active travel arrangements (shared path) on the western side of Yarralumla Creek would be consolidated onto the eastern side of the creek. A section of this new active travel path would be on an elevated structure to respond to existing flood characteristics of the area, extending north and south around the Phillip Oval Stop.

The existing pedestrian bridge across Yarralumla Creek north of Phillip Oval would be removed. Within the Woden precinct, the light rail would include over-head wiring. The precinct would also include a traction power substation (TPS 10) in an existing carpark off Spoering Street near Phillip Oval.

The Project is currently progressing through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, with a major public exhibition activity expected to commence in late June and run for about nine weeks.

As part of the draft EIS, various commitments have been put forward by iCBR to support and facilitate the ongoing development of the Project. As an example, an inter-agency catchment working group has been stood up to coordinate interactions between the established Project baseline, catchment wide strategic planning, and Project Design development. This coordination will seek to support the Project being designed and operated, while considering strategic planning, to meet the key flood design objectives.

The Project will continue to be designed and in the future operated to minimise flood risks, including to minimise adverse changes to flooding characteristics in affected catchments, including consideration of development setbacks from waterways, protection of overland flow pathways, grading of Project track to limit flood depth during the 5% AEP flood event to no greater than 40 mm above the top of rail, and modifications and upgrades to the existing drainage network and / or new drainage infrastructure. Noting some of the implications of these critical planning activities extend beyond the gazetted Phillip Town Centre boundary, guidance from the committee on the extent of the Woden Town Centre would be beneficial.

Active Travel

ACT's Active Travel Plan supports the vibrancy of our streets and neighbourhoods so they can be better places for people. The vision is for more Canberrans to be walking and cycling more often to improve quality of life.

Light Rail Stage 2B has been designed to support improved active travel connectivity and safety along the corridor. As part of the project construction, which is subject to a future government investment decision, new infrastructure will be delivered to enhance walking and cycling access, including pedestrian and cyclist

bridges, new shared paths, connections to existing active travel networks and bike and scooter parking at light rail stops.

Key features include four new pedestrian and cyclist bridges over Adelaide Avenue (at Kent Street and Carruthers Street), Yarra Glen, and Yarralumla Creek near Phillip Oval. These facilities will provide safer and more direct crossings for people walking and riding; and support broader efforts to encourage active travel in the Woden corridor.

A shared path along Adelaide Avenue and Yarra Glen, that would be aligned with the design of Light Rail Stage 2B, has been considered by Infrastructure Canberra through the Stage 2b design process.

Early concept designs will inform further consultation on more direct walking and cycling link between the City and Woden.

Further work on the broader path connection is being considered as an allied project, separate to Light Rail Stage 2B in terms of required approvals, detailed design, and future government investment and procurement.

Similar to the City and Gateway Urban Design Framework, the development of the integrated land-use and transport planning along the Southern Gateway corridor (the Southern Gateway Planning and Design Framework) will also consider the active travel connections for consultation with the community based on concept design work undertaken by Infrastructure CBR.

Transport Canberra

Transport Canberra currently service the following routes in and around the Woden Town Centre ([R4](#) [R5](#) [R6](#) [57](#) [58](#) [60](#) [61](#) [62](#) [63](#) [64](#) [65](#) [66](#) [70](#) [71](#) [AMC Shuttle 902](#)) Further details can be found here: [Routes by suburb or place - Transport Canberra](#)

With recent budget announcements, Transport Canberra will increase Sunday local route bus frequency to hourly services, from the first service until at least 2pm.

The ACT Government's vision for transport is for a world class system that supports a compact, sustainable and vibrant city.

We will target investment to support the efficient movement of people and make good use of limited road space, reduce carbon emissions and drive a compact urban form.

ACT's transport network is a key enabler to support population densification. It will be important to continue to protect the safety, function and efficiency of ACT's transport network, including arterial roads into the future.

ACT's new planning system, including the assessment outcomes identified through the Territory Plan, aim to support access and movement across the ACT. This includes better integrating land use and transport planning.

CED (Transport Canberra and City Services) has recently released updated Guidelines for Transport Impact Assessment, to support sustainable growth and development.

Transport Canberra and City Services is a referral entity and are referred Development Applications (DAs) to comment on due to being a key land custodian, service provider and infrastructure manager, and provides comments to CED (Territory Planning Authority) for their consideration as part of the outcomes-based assessment process.

The sequencing of major transport infrastructure projects to meet population projections needs to be carefully considered. This includes prioritising public transport, walking and cycling to encourage more sustainable travel.

The Woden Interchange is a key upgrade to keep Canberra moving, which will significantly improve the capacity and safety of the interchange and enhance the public transport connectivity to the area, with the design anticipating the extension of mass-transit light rail to Woden on Callam Street.

Term of Reference 8 – Sustainability and resilience to climate change, including by protecting and expanding living infrastructure and managing Yarralumla creek

Woden District Strategy

The Strategy enhances Yarralumla Creek as a key ecological and recreational corridor, integrating it into the blue-green network. As redevelopment occurs in Woden District, careful consideration will be given to plan and enhance the network of green spaces and waterways (the blue-green network), thereby protecting environmental and cultural values and enhancing their sustainability and resilience to climate change.

Any development planning must also respect the heritage values of the district. These heritage values protected under the *ACT Heritage Act 2004* and identified in full on the ACT Heritage Register.

Priority areas for conserving and restoring grassland, woodland and aquatic habitats and the connections between them are highlighted in the Strategy. This includes enhancing and reinforcing green connections between the district's nature reserves as well as cross-district links within the urban environment.

While threatened species and ecological communities are currently protected by legislation, new development in Woden will need to consider how to best protect and enhance the natural and cultural values and connectivity within and between aquatic and terrestrial environments, including through the application of water and biodiversity sensitive urban design measures on blocks and in public open space.

Yarralumla Creek and Long Gully Creek are the key riparian corridors for the district. More detailed planning will be undertaken for the Yarralumla Creek corridor including opportunities to integrate the creek into the blue-green network, aligned with the vision for the light rail corridor. Planning for light rail will be coordinated with planning for the blue-green network to make sure environmental values are maintained and complemented by any new development in the corridor.

Water sensitive urban design throughout the suburbs within this district will assist with reducing flood risk through the Woden town centre and improve water quality outcomes for Yarralumla Creek and the Molonglo River. Potential future constructed wetlands and other projects will also assist in improving amenity through the district and provide urban cooling benefits during densification and revitalisation of the town centre.

The blue-green network can be further enhanced through living infrastructure initiatives that will result in greater canopy cover and permeability at the time of development. The initiatives for the blue-green network and implementation pathways include:

- Enhance connectivity corridors for priority areas of grassland and woodland, areas of threatened species and nature reserves.
- Enhance linkages from Mount Taylor to Oakey Hill through Curtin Park.
- Explore opportunities to integrate Yarralumla Creek into the blue-green network along Athllon Drive and Yamba Drive.
- Undertake more detailed planning for the Yarralumla Creek corridor as an enhanced blue-green network connection.
- Implement enhanced water sensitive urban design (WSUD) and biodiversity sustainable urban design (BSUD) and improved tree canopy cover and permeability as part of all future development planning in the district.
- Continue works to address risks of flash flooding (1% AEP flood) around Woden town centre and Mawson group centre.

Woden is valued for its natural features, connections and heritage. The Woden District is bordered by the environmental features of Oakey Hill, Red Hill, Mount Mugga, Mount Taylor, Farrer Ridge and Issacs Ridge nature reserves.

It includes important areas of threatened ecological communities and threatened species such as Pink-tailed Worm Lizard, Perunga Grasshopper, Button Wrinklewort, Small Purple Pea, Hoary Sunray, Little Eagle and Superb Parrot.

Yarralumla Creek, the major watercourse through the district, is adjacent to Yamba and Athllon drives and an important riparian corridor. Given the proximity of Yarralumla Creek and the built-up nature of the town centre and Mawson group centre, there is potential for flooding in some areas; this will be managed with drainage system improvements according to the principles of water sensitive urban design.

Exploring opportunities to integrate Yarralumla Creek into the blue-green network could also provide opportunities to improve ecological connectivity and amenity value between core habitat areas in Red Hill and Oakey Hill nature reserves, as well as between the Molonglo River corridor to the north of the district through to Mount Taylor and Farrer Ridge nature reserves to the south.

As this corridor also presents significant opportunities for transport infrastructure upgrades (including light rail) and increased density of residential dwellings, biodiversity sensitive design principles should be applied to manage conflicting land-use priorities along these important landscape features.

As an older district, many suburbs are characterised by larger blocks and higher tree canopy cover (all suburbs except Phillip had more than 25 per cent canopy cover in 2020), contributing to the broader blue-green network and green space corridors between suburbs.

During hot weather, Woden has suburbs that are hotter than average (e.g. Pearce) and cooler than average (e.g. Hughes). The commercial areas of Woden town centre and Mawson group centre are notable “hotspots”.

The district includes several areas of heritage significance including Aboriginal cultural sites, Woden Cemetery and the Swinger Hill Cluster Housing precinct. In addition, the Radburn precinct is an important historic character element of Curtin. The Radburn concept was an innovative town planning initiative for the design of new residential areas in the 1960s and 1970s, based on a model used in the community of Radburn in the United States. It emphasised a pedestrian-friendly design where homes faced onto shared green space with no back fences. Local shops and schools could be reached using paths and underpasses without crossing a road, reducing reliance on private vehicles.

Sustainable neighbourhoods can be enhanced further through living infrastructure initiatives that will result in greater canopy cover and permeability at the time of development in line with the implementation of the ACT Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045. This will contribute to reducing urban heat island effects and improving amenity at the neighbourhood scale. The initiatives to support sustainable neighbourhoods include:

- Further detailed analysis and modelling to identify future housing needs not able to be met by change areas across Woden District.
- Detailed analysis and planning for change areas to accommodate future housing and opportunities in identified stop-to-centre connection areas.
- Plan for centres (Woden town centre, Curtin and Mawson group centres) to apply district strategy objectives in planning for residential and mixed-use development.
- Continue planning for selected key sites identified on the Woden District Strategy Plan.
- Identify and prioritise local-scale projects to promote active streets, celebrating existing leafy areas and local centres.
- Achieve improved tree canopy cover, permeability and urban heat outcomes in development precincts.
- All development precincts provide the infrastructure needed to deliver the net zero emissions transition.
- Investigate planning and design provisions that encourage the supply of affordable housing.

Climate Change

The ACT Government is taking action to mitigate urban heat across the city. This includes strengthened planning provisions as part of the 2023 planning system, additional tree planting and stronger tree protection legislation. The Government is committed to continuing work in this area, including appointing an ACT government landscape architect and developing a landscape plan for the ACT. Updated 2025 tree canopy cover, surface permeability and urban heat mapping is also underway.

The benefits of good tree canopy cover and permeable surfaces in mitigating the impacts of heat is well known. Without mitigation, urban heat can impact public health during heatwaves, reduce the usability of public spaces and increase energy demand for cooling. A 2017 CSIRO study for the ACT Government found temperature differences across Canberra due to the urban heat island, impacted in some local areas by low tree canopy cover and extensive hard surfaces (Meyers et al., 2017). Urban heat islands form when roads,

buildings and pavements absorb and re-radiate heat, raising local temperatures – especially at night. In addition, the ACT is facing unavoidable climate change impacts including more frequent and intense heatwaves, which will increase the impact of urban heat on the Canberra community.

The Woden Town Centre is a known urban heat hotspot, with some areas recorded at over 4°C above the average surface temperature in the ACT in 2017, and is particularly strong in the Westfield precinct. This increased heat is likely due to the concentration of hard surfaces and limited tree canopy cover. In contrast, surrounding residential areas exhibit cooler conditions, highlighting the role of living infrastructure in moderating local temperatures. In 2020, the suburb of Phillip had an overall average tree canopy cover of approximately 20 per cent and surface permeability of around 40 per cent, with Woden Town Centre noticeably lower for both. In comparison, Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City sets 30 per cent targets for tree canopy cover (or equivalent) and permeable surfaces for Canberra's urban footprint by 2045.

Several recent surveys of residents have highlighted that the community value Canberra's blue-green corridors highly. The construction of wetlands and related 'living' water quality assets along the Yarralumla Creek corridor will both serve to protect Yarralumla creek and promote other functions of value to the community:

- improve local amenity
- create spaces for meeting and reflection
- reduce urban heat
- increase biodiversity
- better align (than the concrete channel) with Ngunnawal values for custodianship of the landscape.

Constructed wetlands are more complex and difficult to maintain than concrete channels and the territory will need to be prepared to fund the ongoing operation and maintenance of any wetlands added to the corridor.

Care must be taken in considering the naturalisation of the concreted portion of Yarralumla Creek to ensure that flood and construction risks are well mitigated. Off-line water quality assets (constructed wetlands etc.) might be preferable to replacement of the concrete drain.

Buildings and civil works should be designed in a way that minimise the amount of impermeable surfaces and, where impermeable surfaces are required, they detain and then slowly release as much water as possible to reduce stormflows.

City Services

Woden Town Centre as an area represents a significant potential risk in terms of flooding and flood-based incidents occurring.

The drainage and stormwater infrastructure is generally at mid to late useful asset life with major investment into sub-surface infrastructure required to avoid flood impacts in the event that Yarralumla channel is modified or undergoes a re-naturalisation process. Additional pressure will be placed on the

drainage infrastructure, impacting the flood profiles of the area following the eventual urban densification in the catchment, as well as development of Light Rail through to Woden Town Centre.

Flash flooding and water inundation experiences in the area are not uncommon due to the nature of the catchment, that collects a large component of the valley, and a range of downstream conditions that restrict the movement of flood waters through the channel.

With anticipated increases in severity of weather events due to climate change scenarios, consideration of the hydraulic performance of the catchment is required to mitigate any flood impacts. Options such as maintaining the capability to move large volumes of water quickly from the catchment, temporarily storing stormwater (that is, sedimentation ponds) during large events to reduce flow velocities, or a combination of techniques, should all be considered.

Term of Reference 9 – Aligning with relevant planning documents, such as the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan

Woden District Strategy

The strategy aligns with the *Planning Act 2023*, ACT Planning Strategy 2018, National Capital Plan, and Territory Plan.

The *Planning Act 2023* is the foundation of the planning system. It sets the legal framework and processes, from planning new suburbs to new infill buildings and transforming our suburbs.

The ACT Planning Strategy 2018 informs policy development and investment in Canberra and its districts. It supports coordination and implementation of strategic planning across government.

The National Capital Plan is the strategic plan for Canberra and the Territory. It ensures that Canberra and the Territory are planned and developed in accordance with their national significance.

The Territory Plan outlines what developments can be built where. It guides developers through the planning process. It also gives the Territory Planning Authority the tools to assess and consider development applications

There are nine districts within Canberra and each one has their own district strategy. The strategies help direct forecasted growth to areas of Canberra that are best suited for it. They also outline what future services, transport and infrastructure is needed in those areas.

Term of Reference 10 – Any other relevant matters

City Renewal Authority

The City Renewal Authority (CRA) is charged with shaping the growth of the central parts of Canberra to make it a great place to live, explore and enjoy.

Our designated precinct we work in spans Dickson, Braddon, Civic, Northbourne Avenue, Haig Park and Acton Waterfront. While the Woden Town Centre falls outside of this precinct, we acknowledge the importance of well-functioning secondary town centres in supporting a sustainable, competitive and equitable city.

Ongoing improvements in Woden, such as enhanced public transport, active travel infrastructure, diverse housing and education facilities are contributing positively to this goal. There is a need for continued efforts to revitalise the Woden Town Centre to ensure these outcomes can be achieved.

Much of this work is being undertaken already with improvements to public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure, a greater diversity of housing types, and investments in education and training. There is a need to continue to revitalise civic spaces in and around the town centre, as well as support businesses and community services.

The CRA supports exploration for revitalisation including:

- consideration of new arts and community facilities, particularly in under or un-utilised locations;
- increased social and affordable housing options, particularly at medium densities and diverse typologies; and
- creation of additional opportunities to connect to natural landscape and improvement of civic landscaping.

The CRA also encourages Country-led approaches critical to ensuring any future planning for the Woden Town Centre and its surrounding area are developed in partnership with First Nations peoples.

As the next stages of light rail commence, it will be critical for the CRA to work in partnership with relevant agencies, community and private sector to take full advantage of the benefits this public transport investment creates. That includes opportunities for densification and improved servicing between Woden Town Centre and the City Centre, and to harness and support new economic investment.

Canberra has a long-established hierarchy which sees our City Centre as the primary economic and employment hub. The City Centre has a substantial night-time economy, a program of activation, and a bustling CBD. This long-term sustainable growth, economic prosperity, culture, creativity and vibrancy is supported through the extensive work of the CRA. The City Centre Marketing and Improvements Levy provides around \$2.5 million annually to support these activities.

Town centres are secondary to the City Centre, and offer high order retail functions, commercial services, offices and community facilities. This hierarchy is critical to ensuring Canberra's long-term viability, particularly given Canberra's relatively small population size, geographic area and economic structure.

In the context of considering a future Woden Town Centre, it is essential that any future planning for Woden Town Centre is carefully scoped to complement and connect with, rather than compete with the City Centre.

Revitalisation of Woden should aim to create a self-sustaining town centre that supports local needs while preserving the primacy and performance of the City Centre. This balance is essential to maintaining a coherent and effective urban structure for Canberra, while maintaining investment and economic performance of the City Centre.

ACT Policing

Woden Police Station was built in 2005 and provides policing services for the ACT Policing Woden Patrol Zone. The Woden Patrol Zone services the ACT's largest geographic area and its largest population base. It includes South Canberra, Woden, Weston Creek, Molonglo, and Uriarra, with a 2024 population of approximately 113,000.

Through the 2023-24 ACT Government Budget process, funding was provided to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) to support a review of the adequacy of the existing Woden Police Station and its ability to expand its operational footprint to meet future needs. A number of options will be worked through as part of this feasibility study, including consideration of the impact of the ACT Government election commitment to establish a new Molonglo Police Station.

ACT Policing note the operational importance of access for emergency service vehicles to move around Town Centres, and would suggest this factor is considered in the context of the future of Woden Town Centre.

It is also important to consider that development of large-scale infrastructure has the ability to potentially hamper emergency services communications. ACT Policing has previously had to work with infrastructure providers to remedy radio communications at large sites. ACT Policing would encourage early engagement with our Commercial team where possible to mitigate this issue in the future.

Justice and Community Safety

The potential growth in the South Canberra would warrant considering new ways to deliver emergency services. Such things as the establishment of a Southside Hub and Spoke model for emergency services responses rationalising existing Emergency Services Agency (ESA) facilities in the Woden area. This approach may consider such things as the Ambulances services and their proximity to The Canberra Hospital (TCH) at Woden.

The future provision of emergency services around Woden will warrant a review the service delivery model to accommodate electric vehicle charging, vehicle sterilisation and restock practice. Any review would also need to consider minimising area overlap as a result from the Molonglo station that is being constructed, and the potential accommodation needs for Non-essential Patient Transport (NEPT), Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response (PACER), electric vehicle charging, and dwell time at TCH that results from vehicle sterilisation and restock practice.

Suburban Land Agency

The Suburban Land Agency (SLA) is committed to delivering people-focused urban renewal and greenfield development across the ACT, with a strong emphasis on creating sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant communities. Our work is guided by principles of design excellence, environmental sustainability, and community engagement, and we play a pivotal role in shaping Canberra's suburban and urban form.

While the SLA's remit spans the entire Territory, our involvement in the Woden Valley is particularly significant. Through the Indicative Land Release Program (ILRP) and Indicative Land Supply Program (ILSP), the SLA is actively progressing multiple development sites within the Woden District. These projects are central to achieving the ACT Government's goals for a compact, connected, and liveable city.

Public infrastructure investment

SLA developments are accompanied by substantial investment in public infrastructure, including upgrades to roads, active travel networks, public domain improvements, and green and blue infrastructure. These investments enhance connectivity, safety, and amenity, supporting a more walkable and liveable urban environment.

Housing diversity and affordability

SLA projects deliver a mix of housing types and tenures, including social and affordable housing. This supports population growth, housing choice, and equity, and aligns with the broader goals of urban renewal in Woden.

Community building and place outcomes

SLA prioritises place-making and community development in all its projects. In Woden, this would include creating civic spaces, supporting local businesses, and enabling arts and cultural facilities in underutilised areas. These efforts foster a sense of belonging and identity and will contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre.

Urban repair and integration

SLA recognises the need for urban repair in areas where over-scaled and outdated infrastructure has compromised liveability. Our approach to development in Woden includes addressing these challenges through integrated planning and design.

Governance and coordination

SLA is well-positioned to lead or support urban renewal efforts in Woden where multi-agency coordination is required. Our capacity to deliver complex projects and our commercial acumen ensure that government investment is leveraged effectively for community benefit.

Country-led approaches

The SLA supports planning and development that is undertaken in partnership with First Nations peoples. We recognise the importance of Country-led approaches in shaping the future of Woden and ensuring culturally respectful and inclusive outcomes.

As Canberra's urban structure evolves, it is essential that the Woden Town Centre is revitalised in a way that complements the City Centre while serving the unique needs of its local community. The SLA's work in Woden is aligned with this vision—supporting densification, economic development, and improved servicing, particularly in light of the next stages of light rail.

We welcome the opportunity to continue to contribute to the transformation of Woden into a self-sustaining, vibrant town centre that reflects the values of a compact, equitable, and resilient Canberra.