



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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Submission to the Inquiry into the Role and Future of the Woden Town Centre in the context of a compact city

I have lived in suburbs adjacent to Woden Town Centre (Hughes and Curtin) for 4 decades. During this time I have used Woden for medical appointments, some shopping but most regularly for the library. So, I know the Town Centre well and know how it has changed.

According to the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry:

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 does not describe Woden Town Centre. The extent of its failure to meet this objective, that is, the size of the gap, has increased, particularly over the past 10 to 15 years.

Woden Town Square has been improved a lot in recent years; however: it is simply not sufficiently attractive for those who are visiting Woden. It does not connect to the surroundings, for example the library and medical centre should open directly onto the Square. Ideally there should also be an arts centre or theatre opening onto the Square and of course coffee shops and cafes.

So, Woden Town Centre definitely does not provide a destination for people to come together and have a sense of belonging

Woden Town Centre is unattractive.

There is no inviting entrance either for cars or pedestrians. The exterior of Woden appears closed and fortress like.

It is hot in Summer with too little shade and cold in winter as a consequence of the wind tunnels created by poor building design.

My observations of compact city living in Europe and the Eastern USA is that wide tree-lined pedestrian areas with water features, sculptures and especially seats provide a place for "people to come together". These do not exist at Woden.

Inside the Mall is ugly, the lighting harsh and there are few quiet places to sit and chat. Also, the shops are not diverse enough.

To change the current situation there needs to be more reasons to go there. Start with rectifying the problems I've listed above and also add community facilities:

- Sporting and active recreational facilities, such as indoor courts for basketball, netball, futsal, and volleyball. A public 50 metre swimming pool (those at Stromlo are already overcrowded in summer).
- A community meeting and arts centre.

All sporting facilities and a community meeting / arts centre need to have adequate attractive adjacent spaces that encourage those using these facilities to socialise and foster a sense of community. Shade trees, plants and seats adjacent to cafes are a cost effective way to provide this. Then there would be a desire to linger in *a destination for people to come together and have a sense of belonging*

Judy Ware