

Select Committee on Estimates 2026–
2027

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

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Sport and Recreation

Reference: Sport and Recreation

Hearing: 31 July 2026

In relation to: Indoor Facilities

Question received: 31 July 2026

Answer Due: 17 August 2026

(1) The 2018 indoor sports facilities plan said: “The ACT Government has not directly developed and managed indoor facilities. The provision, and wide distribution across Canberra, of government-owned multi-purpose indoor sport & recreation facilities would have significant budget implications and may impact on the viability of existing sport-owned facilities.” Given the loss and impending loss of several privately-owned sport and recreation facilities, and the growth of our population, is this still the Government’s policy position?

(2) Why does the ACT rely on the private sector to fund and develop critical community infrastructure like indoor sport and recreation facilities?

(3) Why does the ACT Government publicly fund aquatic facilities but not indoor sport and recreation centres?

(4) Do you agree that there appears to be an emerging market failure when it comes to the private provision of sport and recreation facilities in the ACT?

(5) My office’s analysis of four local government areas in Melbourne found that the average government-owned indoor sport and recreation facility court per capita was 1 for every 28,000 people (which does not include privately-owned facilities or school facilities). How many does the ACT have?

Mr Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The ACT Government position has evolved since the release of the 2018 *Planning For Indoor Facilities and Other Sport and Recreation Infrastructure report*. While the considerations outlined in the Plan regarding the financial implications of government-owned facilities and the importance of maintaining a viable network of existing providers remain relevant, the ACT Government is increasingly taking a direct role in facilitating and delivering indoor sport infrastructure. Examples of projects where the ACT Government will be the land custodian and asset owner include
 - The expansion of the Belconnen Basketball Stadium announced as part of the 2026-27 Budget will see the expanded asset being directly owned by the Territory with a long-term sublease to be provided to Basketball ACT to manage the day-to-day operations of the facility.
 - A parcel of land has been set aside in the Casey Group Centre to support the delivery of a future indoor sports facility (up to four indoor courts).
 - Opportunities for additional indoor sports facilities, including the potential provision of up to four indoor courts, are being explored in Woden and through future planning for the Education Precinct and sport and recreation facilities in the Molonglo Town Centre.
2. The ACT Government does not rely solely on the private sector to develop community infrastructure such as indoor sport and recreation facilities. There are a range of delivery models in the ACT, including direct government investment, partnerships with sporting organisations, grant support to assist upgrade of sector owned facilities, and, where appropriate, private sector investment, to support the provision of indoor sporting infrastructure across Canberra.

In addition to the projects outlined in response to Question 1, the ACT Government has significantly increased the supply of indoor court space through the delivery of new and upgraded ACT public schools. These facilities are available for community use outside school hours and provide additional capacity for local sporting clubs and organisations.

Recent examples include:

- Two courts at Aunty Agnes Shea High School
- One court at Margaret Hendry School
- Two courts at Shirley Smith High School
- One court at Franklin School
- Two courts at Throsby School
- One court at Charles Weston School
- Two courts at Evelyn Scott School
- Two courts at Garran Primary School (under construction)
- Two courts at Whitlam School (under construction)
- One court at Strathnairn School (under construction)

3. The ACT Government supports the provision of both aquatic facilities and indoor sport and recreation centres through a range of funding, infrastructure and partnership arrangements, recognising that ownership, operating models and funding sources vary across facilities. Indoor sport and recreation facilities are supported through direct government investment, school-based infrastructure available for community use, and partnerships with sporting organisations and other providers. This approach helps increase access to quality indoor sport and recreation opportunities across the ACT.

As outlined in response to Question 1, the ACT Government is increasingly taking a direct role in facilitating and delivering indoor sport infrastructure.

4. No. The ACT Government considers that current challenges reflect changing market conditions, including rising costs, increasing demand for facilities, changing participation trends and broader facility management pressures. These changes are requiring governments, sporting organisations and private providers to consider alternative approaches to the planning, funding and delivery of sport and recreation infrastructure.
5. The ACT does not currently have any standalone ACT Government-owned indoor sport and recreation centres in operation. However, as outlined in response to Question 1, the ACT Government is taking an increasingly active role in facilitating and delivering indoor sport infrastructure, with options for a number of larger indoor government-owned court facilities across Canberra currently being progressed.

Comparisons with other jurisdictions may not provide a like-for-like assessment, as definitions of indoor sport and recreation facilities, ownership arrangements and levels of community access can vary. The ACT does not routinely report indoor court provision using the per-capita measure outlined in the question. Any assessment of indoor court availability should also take into account the significant contribution of ACT Government school facilities, which are made available for community use outside school hours. The ACT is recognised as a national leader in this regard, substantially increasing the supply of indoor courts available to the community.

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

Signature:



Date:

By the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Mr Chris Steel MLA

19 / 8 / 26