



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair), Mr Jonathan Davis MLA (Deputy
Chair), Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT

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Yvette Berry MLA

Deputy Chief Minister
Minister for Early Childhood Development
Minister for Education and Youth Affairs
Minister for Housing and Suburban Development
Minister for Women
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
Minister for Sport and Recreation

Member for Ginninderra

Mr Michael Pettersson MLA
Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601
By email only: LCommitteeECI@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Chair

Michael

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion (the Committee) Inquiry into skateboarding and skateparks in the ACT.

I have addressed the Terms of Reference as follows:

[Accessibility of skateboarding and skate parks across the community](#)

The Canberra community is well served by a total of 19 skateparks, or one skatepark per approximately 22,000 head of population, a ratio very similar to a slightly larger sized community such as greater Newcastle (1:21 000). These skateparks are managed by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and cater not only to skateboarders but also cyclists, scooters, rollerbladers and roller-skaters.

There are currently seven large skateparks located at the Belconnen Town Centre; Canberra City; Eddison Park in the Woden Town Centre; Weston Creek, near Cooleman Court; Tuggeranong District Park, Greenway; Yerrabi District Park, Gungahlin; and Erindale.

A further 12 smaller skateparks are located at; Kambah; Fadden Pines; Richardson; Campbell; Charnwood; Kippax; Lanyon; Rivett; Stirling; Macarthur; Barton; and Flynn.

Skatepark facilities throughout Canberra are typically provided within land designated as urban open space. The infrastructure is generally delivered in close proximity, or in combination with other public

ACT Legislative Assembly London Circuit, GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601



+61 2 6205 0233



berry@act.gov.au



[@YvetteSBerry](https://twitter.com/YvetteSBerry)



[YvetteSBerry](https://www.facebook.com/YvetteSBerry)



[Yvette_berry_mla](https://www.instagram.com/Yvette_berry_mla)

activity hubs such as district playgrounds, group centres, community recreation parks and open space areas.

Many of the existing skateparks in the ACT are older than ten years and may have retrofitted active travel connections. However, typically skateparks are serviced by accessible footpath and shared path connections.

Infrastructure provided within skateparks includes seating options and landscaping. In larger skateparks, such as at Belconnen and Tuggeranong, facilities extend to shelters, toilet facilities and bins, consistent with the need to service larger visitor numbers. Four of the parks have lights activated from 5pm to 10pm daily to facilitate evening use.

Skateboarder Safety and Welfare

Urban Open Space - Municipal Infrastructure Standard 16 provides broad guidance on safety and siting issues for skateparks including recommendations on offsets from road reserves and residential housing as well as recommending appropriate recreation locations.

With regard to the maintenance of skateparks, TCCS employs a hierarchy of audit inspections across the skatepark network to remain abreast of maintenance requirements and other issues that may impact on user safety.

Annual audits are undertaken by suitably qualified skate park auditors they rely on a number of national standards and codes when undertaking the annual audit processes, including:

- Australian Standard EN 14974:2021 Skateparks – Safety requirements (2021);
- Australian Building Code – referenced for handrails and fall heights;
- Public skatepark Development Guide (IASC, Skaters for Public skatepark, Tony Hawke foundation);
- Best Practice Manual – Skateparks and BMX Facilities (Civil Mutual Plus) BSEN 14974:2006 – Facilities for users of roller sports equipment – Safety requirements and test methods (BSI – British Standard);
- ASTM F2480-18 Standard Guide for In-Ground Concrete Skatepark (American National Standard);
- ASTM 2334-18 Standard Guide for Above Ground Public Use Skatepark Facilities (American National Standard); and
- The Skate Facility Guide.

Audits include three levels of inspection as follows:

Visual routine inspection (undertaken by TCCS staff) - This serves to identify obvious hazard sources that could be triggered as a result of visitor use, weathering or vandalism. The frequency of the visual routine inspection varies from park to park dependent on the intensity of use, material properties etc.

Operative inspection (undertaken by TCCS staff with the assistance of specialist contractors as required) – this is a more detailed inspection for checking the operational safety and stability of the skate elements with regards to any wear, these inspections are carried out every 1 – 3 months. Particular attention is paid to transition areas of the rolling surfaces and joints.

Annual main inspection (undertaken by suitably qualified contractors) – this inspection is carried out to identify the general operationally safe condition of skate elements and rolling surfaces, eg conformity with the relevant standards including any change as a result of the assessment of safety measures, repairs, parts replaced or added elements, weathering, presence of rotting or corrosion.

Audit findings are presented in individual reports for each skate park/element and provide a thorough depiction of the current state of the infrastructure. The reports provide recommendations on repair works, in a safety hierarchy framework (eg, critical, minor, routine repairs) and includes potential cost estimates for maintenance works. These reports are used to prepare funding requests for annual repair works across the Territory's network of skateparks.

Skatepark Planning and Maintenance

The ACT Government does not have a specific skatepark design policy or framework and relies on appropriately qualified design consultants to prepare designs. These designs are required to be reviewed by Playground Certification experts who reference the relevant Australian Standards including Australian Standard EN 14974:2021 Skateparks – Safety requirements (2021).

As outlined above, regular audits enable identification and prioritisation of skatepark repairs and maintenance.

A second pathway to identify and address general minor maintenance needs is through public reporting such as through Fix My Street submissions or through Access Canberra enquiries.

Some maintenance issues can be repaired immediately onsite by TCCS officers if the works are minor in nature, such as surface crack repairs, removal of litter etc. Larger repair works require scheduling with specific contractors such as welding or structural repairs.

Some examples of minor works completed over the last 12 months across all sites include, filling of surface cracks, smoothing rough edges, unblocking drain holes, rewelding of access doors and mesh fencing, general cleaning maintenance such as leaf blowing and picking up of rubbish, and rescheduling of timers for floodlights.

A number of skatepark upgrades have been delivered recently and more are budgeted to be delivered.

In 2020-21 a total of \$0.5M was invested at Eddison Skatepark in Woden and at the Belconnen Skatepark as follows.

In April 2021, \$0.025M was invested at the Weston Creek Skatepark to improve LED lighting.

In July 2022, Tuggeranong Skatepark benefitted from a \$10,000 lighting upgrade and a further \$20,000 was invested to repair the vertical ramps at the park.

Future works in the planning stages include:

- Tuggeranong Skatepark is expected to have improvement works commencing in the coming months. TCCS will shortly tender for a suitably qualified specialised contractor to undertake the works. These works will include replacement of the panelling to the vertical ramp, grinding of concrete lip to bring skating surfacing transitions back to safe levels and replacement of coping and rails.

- A new competition standard half pipe for Belconnen Skatepark. Construction work was due to commence in March 2023, however the construction contractor, went into voluntary liquidation in early March 2023 and the ACT Government is currently working to secure a new contractor to complete the works.
- Tendering is underway for repairs at the Lanyon Skatepark with works likely to progress in the current financial year.

The Canberra Skateboarding Association have previously raised with me the possibility of development of a catch all strategy for skating infrastructure in Canberra. This is something that is under consideration.

Skateboarding and Skatepark History

The Canberra skate culture is very strong and has a large public following. Canberra skateparks attract interstate patrons on a regular basis with an abundance of skate parks and interesting street terrain, all within short travel distances. The Eddison Park and Belconnen Skate parks are referred to as 'world class', by many skate enthusiasts noting unique features and obstacles catering for beginners and more seasoned users and professionals. The Belconnen Skate Park bowl hosts several 'jams' each year which attract a large following.

The BMX community equally values Canberra Skateparks where the BMX, skate and scootering communities share common facilities. The BMX community have expressed concern that its requirements are generally less provided for than the skate community. BMX riders require larger infrastructure, for example bowls that are around 2-3 metres deep to allow for the necessary speed and that provide larger transition space for tricks and jumps.

Relationship with other cultural activities

Skateboarding has a long inter-twined history with graffiti/public art and other urban subcultures. Graffiti and street art inspired artwork is often appreciated by those using skateparks.

The ACT Government's Arts, Culture and Creative Policy, through its strategies of create, develop and promote, seeks to generate increased opportunities for creative participation and to make arts, cultural and creative life visible, accessible and inclusive. The Government supports the preservation of skateboarding parks and facilities around Canberra as important, accessible and visible centres of youth culture.

ACT Government has carried out a number of graffiti projects at skateparks around Canberra where artists have been contracted or funded to create artwork. Often during these projects artists have mentored participants from local youth groups or nearby schools (e.g. Eddison Park, Tuggeranong, Weston Creek, YWCA Mura Lanyon skateparks).

In many cases graffiti art can revitalise concrete skateparks into vibrant hubs for artistic expression. These projects can help the local community using these parks to feel more connection, involved and provide a sense of ownership in these spaces, as well as providing opportunities for local artists.

Subject to available funding, there is opportunity for more graffiti projects to be carried out at skateparks around Canberra and to potentially integrate and celebrate music, street dance and other aspects of urban culture through events and workshops. These projects could involve artists, community groups, local schools, skateboarding and BMX associations and other local community.

There is also a growing opportunity to incorporate graffiti art into skatepark design for new skatepark installs and during upgrades. In these instances, it is important to include budget for artwork from the outset. This can allow designers and urban planners to collaborate with artists from the start of the design process to create engaging and vibrant spaces that draw inspiration from skateboarding and graffiti subcultures.

Any other related matters


TCCS is currently designing a new skate park which will be located at the Kippax Group Centre, Holt. The early planning for the skate park location was undertaken by EPSDD during the Kippax Group Centre master planning process, which was strongly supported by the local community.

In late 2022 and early 2023, TCCS undertook extensive stakeholder engagement with both the BMX and skateboard representatives and in May of 2023 undertook a design and ideas workshop with around 15 members of these community groups to work together on delivering a new and exciting space for the community. Funding for construction has not been secured at this stage, the design work will assist in formulating construction cost estimates to assist with future funding bids.

The ACT Government provided a one-off grant of \$6000 (ex GST) and the use of temporary seating to help facilitate the Belco Bowl Jam on March 11 2023. This event is very well attended every year and continues to grow.

Once again, I thank the committee for the invitation to provide a submission into their Inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Yvette Berry MLA
Minister for Sport and Recreation
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