



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025**

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by: Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Addressed to: Minister for the Environment, Parks and Land Management

Redirection: N/A

Reference: Environment

Hearing Date: 31/07/2024

In relation to: Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

Question Lodgement Date: 01/08/2024

Date Answer Due: 08/08/2024

1. What is the estimated cost for the construction of the new Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre, and how does this compare to the budget allocated for this project? Given this recommendation from the 23-24 budget report included Recommendation 58, which urged the ACT Government to fast-track the planning and construction of a new Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre, why has this taken so long? How this project to design and build been fully funded or is it subject to further budget bids?
2. Can you detail the costs associated with the temporary visitor centre that has been in operation while the new Visitor Centre is under construction? How do these costs impact the overall budget for the project? How much has been spent so far eg design, approvals? How much remains to be spent, and on what will it be spent?
3. How is the ACT Government ensuring effective consultation with the Ngunnawal people and other stakeholders in the planning and construction phases of the new Visitor Centre? What measures are being taken to incorporate their input and address their concerns?
4. What steps are being taken to ensure that the project remains within effective project management approaches, and how will progress be monitored and reported to ensure the project meets its deadlines and budget constraints? When will a new Visitor Centre be open to the public?
5. In light of the ongoing delays and the need for a temporary centre, how will the ACT Government address any potential issues or challenges that arise from these delays? What contingency plans are in place to minimise disruptions to visitors and stakeholders?
6. Can you provide an overview of any community feedback or concerns received regarding the new Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre, and how this feedback has been integrated into the project planning and development process?

7. Given the importance of the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre to both locals and tourists, what strategies are being implemented to maintain visitor engagement and satisfaction during the construction period?

**Rebecca Vassarotti MLA:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The ACT Government appropriated \$1.91m in the ACT Budget 2024-25 for the demolition of the former Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre, site remediation works, continued stakeholder engagement and additional planning and design.

The additional planning and design will consider the broader requirements for the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve to ensure a new Visitor Centre and associated infrastructure is correctly scoped to the future needs of visitors, Traditional Custodians and staff.

The estimated costs for the future permanent Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre will be known as plans are progressed in 2024-25.

2. The approximate costs to procure and install the temporary Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre was \$220,000. The annual rental cost for the temporary Tidbinbilla Visitors Centre is \$135,576. These costs do not impact on the budget allocated in the 2024-25 budget papers.

The ACT Government provided appropriation of \$623,000 in the ACT Budget 2022-23 to undertake comprehensive community consultation in the development of a detailed design for a new visitor centre at a preferred location. Additional appropriation of \$280,000 was received from the Australian Government Disaster Ready Fund to incorporate design elements for safeguarding culturally significant artefacts at Tidbinbilla.

The funding provided in the ACT Budget 2024-25 will allow ongoing scoping, design, and public and Ngunnawal community consultation about a new visitor centre and the role of the broader Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

3. The ACT Government through the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) has consulted extensively with the Ngunnawal community about the plans for the Visitor Centre. This consultation will continue as a master plan is developed for the broader Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

EPSDD partnered with Murri Matters, a First Nations stakeholder engagement consultant, to ensure culturally appropriate consultation arrangements were adopted.

4. Contemporary project management approaches are being used to deliver the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre project and the broader master plan for the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. These are monitored and reported through EPSDD's capital works reporting mechanisms.

The temporary Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre opened on 12 April 2024. It will remain open until alternative arrangements are decided by the government and implemented.

5. The temporary Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre, located at the entrance to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, provides a modern, safe, and comfortable facility for staff and visitors.

ACT Parks and Conservation staff are on duty in the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre to provide safety and orientation advice, brochures, and maps. Wi-Fi is available inside and immediately outside the building, and there are accessible public toilets. Drinking water is available. Drinks, snacks, souvenirs, books, and gifts are also available for purchase. The Visitor Centre is set up for basic first aid treatment and as a coordination point for search and rescue in the reserve.

Visitors can purchase a day pass or annual pass online via Access Canberra or pay for a day pass at the Visitor Centre (credit card only).

6. Public reception to the temporary Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre has been positive as the facility is easily accessible and provides modern and comfortable amenities.
7. The temporary Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre will remain open until such time that the ACT Government considers and makes a decision on the preferred option for a permanent Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre, and this is implemented.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature: 

Date: 9/11/2024

By the Minister for the Environment, Parks and Land Management, Rebecca Vassarotti MLA