

2024

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION – REPORT NO 12 -
INQUIRY INTO SKATEBOARDING AND SKATE PARKS IN THE ACT – GOVERNMENT
RESPONSE**

**Presented by
Ms Yvette Berry MLA
Minister for Sport and Recreation
December 2024**

Introduction

The ACT Government welcomes the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion (the Committee) Report on the Inquiry into Skateboarding and Skate Parks in the ACT.

The ACT Government is committed to investing in safe, fit-for-purpose and inclusive infrastructure in urban open spaces to ensure our community has opportunities throughout the ACT for active and passive recreational activities that are compatible with lifestyle choices of all age groups.

There are seven (7) major skateparks located in each major district area and a further 12 parks offering skating features. The seven major skateparks are popular for predominantly skateboard, BMX and scooter use of skate parks. Many parents, carers and friendship groups congregate alongside active participants and enjoy use of nearby ancillary facilities such as shade, seating and playgrounds.

The Government would like to thank the Standing Committee and everyone who took the time to participate and contribute to the Inquiry. The Committee made 33 recommendations in their report.

In this response, the Government has:

- **Agreed in principle** to 8 recommendations.
- **Noted** 10 recommendations.
- **Not Agreed** to 1 recommendation.
- **Agreed** to 9 recommendations.
- **Existing Government Policy** to 5 recommendations.

The Inquiry has provided a valued opportunity to hear the skating community and the broader community's views on the future of skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT, including the planning and designing of infrastructure in urban open spaces to meet the needs of skaters and the community.

Recommendations and Government Response

Recommendation 1: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide additional funding to support art and culture activities at skate parks in the ACT.

Government response: Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government's *Canberra: Australia's Arts Capital – Arts, Culture and Creative Policy 2022-26* commits to supporting arts practices that reflect Canberra's diverse community and create an environment that is inclusive, safe and welcoming to all. Funding provided through the [ACT Arts Fund](#) supports Canberra artists, organisations and community groups to undertake arts activities across a broad range of artforms and practices. While arts and cultural activities at skate parks in the ACT may be eligible and supported through the ACT Arts Fund, any additional funding specific to skate parks is subject to future budget processes.

Recommendation 2: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish a skate park strategy for Canberra.

Government response: Agreed

The ACT Government will work with skate users and skate user representative organisations to develop an ACT Skate Strategy.

Recommendation 3: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government encourage the integration of skating into the community by building skating facilities close to urban hubs.

Government response: Existing government policy

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

Recommendation 4: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government design skating facilities that promote the active use of the space and enliven areas to ensure there are always bystanders (for example, shopfronts and food vans) for the safety of users.

Government response: Existing government policy

As per the response to recommendation 3, skatepark facilities are generally located alongside other public spaces. Activating public spaces and having bystanders for increased safety will continue to be a consideration when planning future facilities.

Recommendation 5: The Committee recommends that skateboard deterrents and skate-stoppers are only used in public places across Canberra when necessary, and that the reasons for those deterrents are publicly and accessibly listed.

Government response: Agreed in Principle

The TCCS Municipal Infrastructure Standards for Street and Park Furniture (MIS – 20) includes consideration of armrests and slats perpendicular to the length of the seat to help to reduce damage caused by skaters and vandalism.

The TCCS Municipal Infrastructure Standing MIS 17- Shopping centres and commercial areas identifies the following relating to skateboarding:

- requirements to be designed to resist vandalism and resist damage from skateboarding (see MIS 05 Active travel facilities design).
- Retaining or freestanding walls in shopping centres and other civic spaces should be designed to discourage damage from skateboarding.
- Skateboard riders are attracted to using sections of smooth surfaced walls, and the action of the skateboard along the wall can cause discolouration and damage. To discourage the activity, the walls should be a broken surface such as pointed brickwork, or interrupting continuous runs of walling by installing metal lugs, or set recesses, into the top edge.
- Street furniture should be chosen to suit its location, function, comfort requirements and users. Consider whole of life cost including materials and designs that are easy to clean and maintain, resist vandalism and discourage damage by skateboards are other considerations.

This Municipal Infrastructure Standard provides goals and objectives for the design and construction of public assets and spaces. TCCS MIS are based off industry best practice and generally align with standards used by other local government jurisdictions.

Recommendation 6: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government prioritise building new skate parks and skate-friendly spaces in new and growing suburbs, as well as existing suburbs where the community has identified a need for such spaces.

Government response: Agreed in principle

The ACT Government will build a new local skate park as part of the development of Jacka. The Government will also establish an ACT Skate Strategy in consultation and collaboration with skate users and skate user representative organisations. In general, the design and construction of new skate parks in new or existing suburbs will be in accordance with the TCCS Municipal Infrastructure Standards. For example, skate parks may be located in District Parks, Central Community Parks and Community Recreation Park sites. Each site for a skate

park will be considered on an individual basis, based on its merits and how it will meet community expectations.

Recommendation 7: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government integrate skating elements when building new play infrastructure in Canberra, to cater to a wider demographic of the community and encourage multi-use public spaces.

Government response: Agreed in Principle

ACT Labor committed to new skating facilities at Jacka and Kippax at the 2024 ACT Election. Additionally, ACT Labor committed to upgrading Margaret Timpson Park in the Belconnen Town Centre, which will include incorporation of a new playground. The incorporation of skating elements into the upgrade of this park will be considered.

The ACT Government is currently upgrading six playgrounds and building two new playgrounds across Canberra. The playground upgrades are being delivered in consultation with the community and aim to provide people of different ages and abilities with fun, creative and engaging play experiences. Further Playground works are anticipated in the future for Kambah, Wanniasa, Bonython, Isabella Plains, Gilmore, Conder, Florey, McKellar, Gungahlin Town Centre, Amaroo and at Umbagog District Park. The provision of skate elements will be considered on an individual basis, based on its merits, available project budget and meeting community expectations.

When upgrades take place the ACT Government undertakes extensive consultation and summarise the key findings in a What We Heard report. The community is encouraged to provide feedback into this process regarding local need for skating infrastructure.

Recommendation 8: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government update ageing skating infrastructure to ensure it is fit for purpose and aligns to modern skate park designs.

Government response: Agreed

The ACT Government will refurbish the Tuggeranong skatepark, upgrade the Kippax skate park and refurbish the Charnwood Skate Bowl in consultation with local and wider skating communities.

In addition to these upgrades, annual skate park safety audit inspections determine maintenance works and make recommendations for replacement of end-of-life assets when repairs are no longer feasible or cost effective.

Recommendation 9: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure Canberra skating facilities are designed for all disciplines and, where necessary, update infrastructure that has become worn and is no longer suitable for skaters.

Government response: Existing government policy

Recent design processes, such as Kippax Skate Park and Belconnen Half pipe, have considered the diversity and needs of wheeled users (skateboard, inline, BMX, scooters) to ensure the broadest range of users and their varying skill levels are considered in the use and access to facilities.

Where new facilities and upgrades are planned, government will consider how to ensure all disciplines and skaters are included in the design.

Recommendation 10: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government build a skating facility that is useable during inclement weather.

Government response: Not Agreed

Any dedicated indoors skating facilities are typically owned and operated by the private sector, the provision of an ACT Government owned and operated indoor skating facility is not supported at this time.

Recommendation 11: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government build an asphalt pump track.

Government response: Noted

There are a number of pump tracks around Canberra including at; Canberra BMX Club, BMX ramp at the Belconnen BMX Park, Turner Pumptrack, Lismore Trail in Campbell, Davidson Track in Garran, Majura Pines off the Majura Parkway and Stromlo Forest Park.

Currently, there are no immediate plans for building a sealed bike pump-track in the ACT. Development of such a facility would be directly associated with the level of community interest within each regional district.

Recommendation 12: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government build an uphill and downhill asphalt track.

Government response: Noted

There are a number of pump tracks around Canberra including at; Canberra BMX Club, BMX ramp at the Belconnen BMX Park, Turner Pumptrack, Lismore Trail in Campbell, Davidson Track in Garran, Majura Pines off the Majura Parkway and Stromlo Forest Park.

Currently, there are no immediate plans for building a sealed bike pump-track in the ACT. Development of such a facility would be directly associated with the level of community interest within each regional district.

Recommendation 13: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government install safety signs at skate parks that provide modern user instructions and safety warnings that accurately reflect skating culture.

Government response: Agreed

TCCS recognises that improved safety signage for higher risk play facilities including skateparks makes an important contribution to ensuring the safe enjoyment of users. TCCS will undertake a review of safety signage to ensure full compliance with best practice and Australian standards.

Recommendation 14: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government install adequate lighting at all skate facilities in Canberra.

Government response: Agreed

The existing hierarchy of open space is used to determine and prioritise where to enhance lighting at existing facilities. Lighting is generally a requirement at a Town Park/ District Level facility.

This will be taken into consideration as part of future infrastructure planning.

The TCCS Municipal Infrastructure Standard for Recreational Facilities (MIS 21) identifies the following details associated with lighting:

- At the time of writing MIS 21 there was no Australian Standard for Freestyle Skate Parks, the designer shall confirm this is still the case at design;
- Average lux shall be 100 with a uniformity minimum average of 0.5;
- Lighting illumination of surfaces and features shall be even and consistent;
- Lighting shall adequately identify all corners, obstacles and level transitions (shadows shall not hide edge, objects etc);
- Not adversely impact adjacent residents (the lighting designer shall provide documentation demonstrating no light spill onto adjacent residential blocks);
- Lighting shall be on a timer; and
- Associated seating areas and the route between car parking and the skate park are to be adequately illuminated for public safety and community surveillance in accordance with MIS 14 Public lighting.

Future upgrades to existing skate parks will consider the standards identified above associated with lighting.

Recommendation 15: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the weather protection offered at current skate parks and ensure skate facilities incorporate anti-glare designs.

Government response: Agreed in Principle

An assessment of weather protection at skate parks, including anti-glare, will be considered in the feasibility and planning stages of new projects, including refurbishments and upgrades.

Recommendation 16: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider landscape materials during the design of skate parks and surrounding areas to reduce natural debris on skate park surfaces.

Government response: Agreed

The government will consider landscape design to complement skatepark design for future projects, including consulting user groups. This will consider the impact of debris such as loose mulch and leaf litter, as well as general amenity.

Recommendation 17: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review processes for maintenance to reduce debris on skate parks, such as litter and tree detritus.

Government response: Agreed

Regular inspections (by both TCCS staff and specialist contractors) 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.

The ACT Government will review these processes as part of the development of a stake strategy, in consultation with user groups.

Recommendation 18: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implement specific standards for skate park repairs.

Government response: Agreed

The ACT Government will review standards for skate park repairs through the development of a skate strategy in partnership with users of skating infrastructure.

Recommendation 19: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure all maintenance contractors are proficient in modern techniques for the restoration and repair of skate park infrastructure.

Government response: Agreed

TCCS is committed to ensuring maintenance contractors are proficient in modern techniques for the restoration and repair of skate park infrastructure. Proficiency is a key consideration the procurement process.

Recommendation 20: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess maintenance contractors in collaboration with skate park users to inform procurement decisions and ensure, where possible, contractors have specialised knowledge of skating infrastructure.

Government response: Noted

TCCS is committed to ensuring maintenance contractors are proficient in modern techniques for the restoration and repair of skate park infrastructure. Proficiency is a key consideration the procurement process. TCCS regularly consults with the ACT Skateboarding Association including to support the planning and development of project delivery. This has included to seek information on contractors that have the appropriate experience and skill set to deliver these specialist works.

This informs developing the most appropriate approach to procurement to make sure the contractors with the appropriate skill set are engaged to undertake the work. This approach will continue.

Recommendation 21: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government increase the frequency of skate park infrastructure audits and maintenance packages to update and repair defects and safety concerns.

Government response: Noted

Per the response to recommendation 17, TCCS will review processes which will include a review of frequency of audits.

TCCS currently has skateparks added to the Annual independent safety audit inspections undertaken by playground inspectors.

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, e.g. 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 (e.g., 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.

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).

Recommendation 22: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implement a monitoring system for skate park infrastructure that frequently and proactively assesses damage and defects.

Government response: Noted

As per recommendation 21

Recommendation 23: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government install location-specific QR codes at each skate park to support people to easily report maintenance and repair issues on site.

Government response: Agreed in Principle

It is recommended that all maintenance and repair issues are reported through Fix my Street consistent with other playground enquiries. TCCS will include additional information on how to report Fix my Street requests when signage is due for replacement in the future.

Recommendation 24: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government publish the criteria used to determine whether skating facilities are at end of life.

Government response: Noted

Municipal Infrastructure Standards 21 (MIS 21) is publicly available on the City Services Website here:

https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1905562/MIS-21-Recreation-Facilities.pdf

MIS 21 – Recreational Facilities identifies that skate parks should be designed to be durable and have a life span of 20-30 years. The life spans of skate parks can be variable depending on weather, location, use and other factors. When appropriate the life span can also be extended through maintenance and refurbishment. Assessments against MIS 21 are continual and include risk assessments to determine end of life status. The condition audit for skate parks provides recommendations associated with if a skating facility is nearing end of life (per skate element). In some cases, the audit identifies if maintenance treatments are suitable or if an element needs to be renewed/replaced.

Recommendation 25: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to support Canberra skating events, such as the Belco Bowl Jam.

Government response: Agreed in Principle

The ACT Government offers potential funding support to events of this nature through the *ACT Event Fund*, an annual and competitive grant round administered by Events ACT. The 2024 Belco Bowl Jam was supported with \$10,000 through the 2024 Round of the *ACT Event Fund*. Any future grant funding support for the Belco Bowl Jam or other skating events would remain subject to a competitive and merit-based application and assessment process. Outside of funding support, the ACT Government can assist with marketing and promotional assistance to raise public awareness of these events through owned channels where appropriate.

Recommendation 26: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate opportunities to promote Canberra as a skating tourism destination.

Government response: Agreed in Principle

While there is no specific data on skate tourism being a primary motivator for travel to Canberra, it is worth noting that skating infrastructure within the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is featured on travel websites such as TripAdvisor. This suggests that skating may be an activity that visitors choose to engage in while in Canberra, particularly within the family market. To promote this, events occurring at major skating infrastructure within the ACT can be highlighted through ACT Government online platforms, social media channels, and at the Canberra and Region Visitors Centre (CRVC).

The Belco Bowl Jam is an annual event held at the Belconnen Skate Park and has international attendance each year. The 2024 Belco Bowl Jam was supported with \$10,000 through the 2024 Round of the *ACT Event Fund*. Visit Canberra will explore how the Government could further improve promotion and infrastructure to make Canberra more of a skating destination.

Recommendation 27: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore opportunities to build unique skating infrastructure to encourage skating tourism to Canberra.

Government response: Existing Government Policy

The government completed the construction of the competition half pipe (vert ramp) in Belconnen in 2024 and has committed to refurbishing the Charnwood Bowl. The vert ramp has already played host to skaters and spectators from interstate as a high quality, competition grade addition to the Belconnen Skate Park.

The Charnwood Bowl is a unique piece of skating infrastructure which, once refurbished to its former condition, will be an attraction to the ACT for skating enthusiasts.

Availability of appropriate infrastructure in location that are easily accessible from main tourist precincts would support this recommendation. For example, facilities that are in close proximity to main hotel precincts in the city or nearby neighbourhoods.

Recommendation 28: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish a micro-grant scheme for skate park users to add new functionality to existing skate parks.

Government response: Noted

Skate organisations (e.g. Canberra Skateboarding Association) are eligible for funding through the existing Sport and Recreation Investment Scheme. A recent review of the Sport and Recreation Grants Program streamlined categories to offer opportunities for all relevant stakeholders. A “micro-grant scheme” for a specific group within the sport and recreation sector is not supported.

Any funding to support “functionality” of skate parks would need to consider issues such as applicants needing to be legal entities, landowner consent, design standards and risk management.

Recommendation 29: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide assistance to community groups who run learn to skate programs.

Government response: Existing Government Policy

Funding is available through the Sport and Recreation Investment Scheme for eligible organisations to apply for support for initiatives such as program establishment and delivery.

Recommendation 30: The Committee recommends the ACT Government establish a plan to increase participation of women and girls in the Canberra skating community, including:

- investigating any current gender barriers to participation; and
- ensuring skate parks have facilities for women and girls.

Government response: Agreed.

Plans to support and develop participation of women and girls in any given sport or recreation activity generally fall under the remit of the national, state or local sporting organisation. A project of this nature may be eligible for funding through the Sport and Recreation Investment Scheme, however the expectation would be that any potential program is sport-led.

Recommendation 31: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review skating infrastructure in the ACT to assess accessibility, and upgrade facilities to provide designated areas that are accessible and encourage participation by people with a disability.

Government response: Noted

New skating infrastructure will be constructed in accordance with ACT's Municipal Infrastructure Standards (MIS). For example, MIS 21 – Recreation Facilities identifies that district play spaces will maximise the importance of accessibility, inclusion and participation by visitors of all ages and abilities.

The ACT Government will review potential barriers to participation, such as accessibility through the development of the skate strategy.

ACT's Municipal Infrastructure Standards can be found at the following web link:

[https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/plan-and-build/standards-codes-and-guidelines/municipal-infrastructure-design-standards-mis.](https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/plan-and-build/standards-codes-and-guidelines/municipal-infrastructure-design-standards-mis)

Recommendation 32: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, in consultation with the Canberra skating community, assess and place key Canberra skating locations on the heritage register.

Government response: Noted

ACT Heritage assists the ACT Heritage Council (the Council) in administering provisions of the Heritage Act 2004 (the Heritage Act), and a function of Council under the Heritage Act is to encourage the registration of heritage places and objects in the ACT.

Accordingly, where the ACT Skateboarding community is of the view that key skateboarding locations may be of heritage significance, the nomination of said places to the ACT Heritage Register (the Register) should be prepared in accordance with the comments on **Recommendation 33**, below.

Note that the 'Brick Banks at the Erindale Skate Park' (Block 49, Section 132 Wanniasa) were nominated to the Register in 2017.

If the Heritage Council receives, and, decides to accept a nomination application, nomination is the first stage of the heritage listing process and does not equate to heritage registration in the first instance.

Following nomination acceptance, the Council must assess the significance of a place/precinct/object and determine whether any significance criteria under section 10 of the Heritage Act are met, i.e. a decision to, or not to provisionally register.

Unless an urgent nomination application is received and fee paid, there is no statutory timeframe that determines how long a place may remain nominated to the Register before a decision to/not to provisionally register is made by the Council.

Recommendation 33: The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake an oral history of skateboarding in the ACT to appropriately capture the local skating culture and development of global skating infrastructure in Canberra.

Government response: Noted

The ACT Heritage Council would consider a nomination in accordance with the requirements of the Heritage Act.

If there is a combined nomination to the ACT Heritage Register for key skateboarding locations, this should be accompanied by a comparative assessment of said locations in line with the Council's [Heritage Assessment Policy 2018](#). Robust comparative assessment will facilitate any future Council assessment against heritage significance criteria discussed in comments on **Recommendation 32** (above).

ACT Heritage can provide further assistance to TCCS and/or ACT Government agencies on the scope of such an assessment to accompany a future nomination application.