



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

Submission number: 096

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Date authorised for publication: 16 October 2025

Standing Committee on Environment, Planning, Transport and City Services,
ACT Legislative Assembly

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

Referred petitions : E-PET-003-25 - Improving the Liveability of Woden Town Centre

PET-021-25, E-PET-050-24 - Save Phillip Pool

Dear Committee Chair and Committee,

As a former chair and committee member of the Woden Valley community council (WVCC) from 2008 - 2017. I am happy to appear before the committee inquiry.

In determining the role and future of the Woden Town Centre in the context of a compact city, the committee needs to review previous policies and planning decisions by the ACT Government particularly over the last 25 years. Have the decisions made, improved the quality of life for Woden Valley residents, ACT Government consolidated revenue, small businesses, building owners/developers and major retail operators.

It is also important I believe that the committee, particularly those new to the assembly, should have the reference material afforded to them by the relevant directorates. This should be a simple request with some of that material located in the assembly library. While there are plenty of documents publicly available there is also a significant number of documents that the ACT public has paid for that have not been available to the community.

These documents are background documents to planning reports , masterplans , tender documents, Land sales, and also strategic reference documents regarding specific sites in the Woden town centre. Some of these documents have been released through freedom of information., but should be made available to this committee.

Documents include:

- 1997 Strategic Review of Swimming Pools,
- ACT Sports and Recreation 2003 Facilities Study
- Draft Woden Master plan 2003
- 2004/5 Swimming Pool Review Study
- Variation 262 - Phillip Section 22 Block 2 - Phillip Pool
- Woden Master Plan 2004 (including all background documents)
- Variation 255 - Mawson Group centre
- Strategic and Functional review of the ACT Public sector and Services 2006
- Variation 259 - Woden Town Centre *(important Northern precinct changes) 2007
- Draft Aquatic and Related Facilities: ACT Strategic Plan 2011-2030
- ACT Government Aquatic Facilities Planning Framework 2013-2033
- Woden/Weston community Hub Feasibility study 2013

- Woden Athllon Mawson Community, sport and recreation facilities study 2012/13
- Draft Woden master plan 2015
- Woden master plan 2015
- ACT Indoor Sports Facilities Study 2015
- Woden community hub Feasibility Study 2016
- Draft variation 344 Woden town centre
- Final Variation 344 Woden Town centre
- Woden community centre - Functional design report 2019
- SGS Economics and Planning - Community and Recreational Facilities Assessment –Woden Valley District 2020
- ACT Planning System Review and Reform project
- Proposed New Territory Plan – Supporting Report – Nov 2022
- Draft District strategies : Woden
- Draft Woden Valley District Planning Strategy : Summary
- Woden Listening report Phase 1
- District specifications DS7 : Woden - Part D7 Woden District Policy

There have been many changes to the Woden town centre in recent times; most of those changes have been planning changes to support high rise residential apartment dwellings, but this has come at a cost to the public realm, loss of sporting facilities and the impending loss of a major aquatic centre, the Phillip pool and ice skating centre. There is also the feeling of inequity with other town centres , maybe it's just 'lake' envy, but Woden does lack other cultural facilities like an arts centre and a community hub /centre. The community centre has been in the planning for 20 years! I want to borrow a paragraph from the ACT indoor sports facilities study 2015 conclusion about Sport and leisure facilities in the Woden town centre , and it states:

' In addition there is the pending loss of 3 courts in the Woden Basketball Stadium and the 1 court at CIT Woden (old site) which, if the Woden Town Centre is to be a focus for higher density living, is an issue for creating a contemporary urban precinct supported by a range of sport and leisure facilities.'

On the brighter side there has been the retention and upgrade of the Phillip Oval, the upgrade of the Woden athletics field, Woden library upgrades, the new Woden CIT, New Woden Bus Interchange and the Woden cycleway. Each of these facilities other than the cycleway are upgrades or new builds of facilities that already existed in the Woden town centre. Woden has had higher education facilities since the 1980s with the construction of Callam Offices for Woden TAFE, which moved to the closed Woden Valley High School site before it was eventually closed in 2016. The announcement of a new CIT in 2019 was very welcomed by the Woden community overall. Though the chosen site could have been better located.

In regards to the Phillip Pool and Ice skating centre I propose that the ACT Government negotiate with the current lessee Geocon to surrender the crown lease back to ACT Government ownership with the Ice Rink. (The Phillip Oval was surrendered back to the ACT Government in 2003) This can be achieved with a compensation payout and or land swap (deal). The ACT Government can apply for Federal funding for this through programs like the ' Thriving Suburbs program', which can provide for future upgrades to the outdoor 50m pool ,so it can be used for school carnivals, club training and lap swimmers. Build the indoor 25m pool and toddlers pool, and splash spaces on the northern section

of the site, so the site can be used all year round. Also investigate the viability of heating the 50 metre outdoor pool so that it also can be used all year round.

Several councils and state Governments are upgrading their aquatic facilities by either retaining or upgrading their 50m pool sites by installing other indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities. Here is a list that I have compiled:

- Renewed Mount Druitt Swimming Centre (NSW)
- Renewed Blacktown Aquatic Centre (NSW)
- Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre upgrade (NSW)
- Botany Aquatic Centre Redevelopment (NSW)
- Goulburn Aquatic and Leisure Centre Upgrade (NSW)
- Hawkesbury Oasis Aquatic and Leisure Centre (Vic)
- Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment (Vic)
- Warrnambool's aquatic centre (VIC)
- Aquarena Aquatic and Leisure Centre in Templestowe Lower. (VIC)
- North Bellarine Aquatic Centre, Geelong (VIC)
- Warragul Leisure Centre, (VIC)
- Beenleigh Aquatic Centre (QLD)
- Capricorn Coast Brian Dorey OAM Aquatic Centre situated at Cooe Bay. (QLD)
- Noosa Aquatic Centre Facility Upgrade Plan (QLD)
- Denise Spencer Aquatic Centre Redevelopment (QLD)
- Cleveland Aquatic Centre Update (QLD)
- Millmerran Pool Upgrade. Toowoomba (QLD)
- **Kununurra Aquatic and Leisure Centre redevelopment project (WA) - *The Cook Government will always do what is right by the people of Kununurra, which is why we boosted our funding contribution for a 50-metre pool, instead of the previously proposed 25-metre option.***
- The Fremantle Leisure Centre (IRemediation works on the 50 m pool) (WA)
- Stirling Leisure - Inglewood Outdoor Pool Redevelopment . (WA) *largest outdoor pool in the southern hemisphere!*
- Margaret Kidson Leisure Centre.Swan (WA) New 50m and 25m pools

It makes perfect sense for the ACT Government to retain this facility and upgrade the site for the expanding Woden Valley community.

Sincerely

Martin Miller
Chifley & Woden resident
19 - 09 -2025