



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: 059

Submitter: Patricia O'Connor

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From: Patricia O'Connor [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 4 September 2025 12:04 PM
To: LACommitteeEnvironment@act.gov; OLA <OLA@parliament.act.gov.au>
Subject: Inquiry into the Role and Future of the Woden Town Centre

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Dear Committee

I would like to endorse the Submission by the Save Phillip Pool group to your enquiry:

Submission number: 022

Submitter: Save Phillip Pool

Date authorised for publication: 28 August 2025

The Phillip Pool site was granted a 99 year lease in 2008 without community consultation and the site was sold to a local apartment and hotel construction company Geocon in December 2022. This was shortly after the release of the draft new territory plan, which recommended changing the 50m pool requirement for the site, to a reduced 25m pool and associated smaller pools. The community, having provided feedback on the site and aquatic facilities in general for the Woden area, was blindsided by this recommendation. At no stage prior to the release of the draft territory plan documents was there any consideration about removing the Olympic size pool for a smaller pool. The government ignored this feedback stating that a 'sports and recreation needs analysis' had determined that a 25m pool and associated aquatic facilities would meet the requirements of the Woden community. To date no analysis has been provided by the ACT Government.

After years of holding the line on the needs analysis, Minister Berry, during recent Estimates confirmed that there is indeed no needs analysis document that justified the change of the Phillip Pool lease.

I would also like to draw your attention to the recently published [ACT Population Projections 2025-2065](#) which confirms Canberra will be home to half a million people in 2027, nearly 700,000 people by 2050 and that the population will exceed 800,000 people in 2065.

I quote Minister Steel advising that "The population report shows Molonglo Valley is still expected to be the fastest growing district, with significant expanded development in Denman Prospect and Whitlam. By 2065, Molonglo Valley is expected to home one-tenth of all Canberrans.

"Along with Molonglo Valley, we expect significant increases in Belconnen, North Canberra, Gungahlin and Woden Valley"

One of the arguments used by Minister Berry to justify the change to the Phillip Pool was that people in Woden could use Stromlo Pool – the ACT Population Projections document shows just how untenable this will be with the projected increase in population of the Woden Valley and Molonglo Valley.

I hope you will take into account all of the above, including the Submission from Save Phillip Pool, the recent Petition to Save Phillip Pool which had over 5000 signatures and the appalling behaviour

of the government ministers concerned with this whole affair, including lying about the needs analysis.

Yours sincerely

Trish O'Connor