



ACT
Government

Business Case for Project Development Funding

C.24
CMTEDD
CC

Project name:	Design and development of the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct
Brief description:	The project will deliver a state-of-the-art Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct in Canberra's city centre, hosting a diverse range of events, exhibitions, and performances.
Funding requested (\$'000):	9,555 capital funding
Total FTE impact (no.):	5.5
Sponsoring Agency:	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Sponsoring Minister and Ministerial Portfolio:	Minister for Economic Development
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Sign-off

Sponsoring Agency: Economic Development, CMTEDD

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Sponsoring Minister: Minister for Economic Development

Andrew Barr MLA

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Signature

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1. Executive summary

The Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct (CCP) will transform the city centre with state-of-the-art convention and exhibition facilities, and a dynamic entertainment arena. The project will redevelop the current Canberra Olympic Pool site into a premier business and event destination for both local and international audiences.

The Precinct will look to deliver 8,000 sqm of flexible exhibition halls, expandable to 10,000 sqm with the arena floor. It will include a 7,500 seated arena for concerts and basketball, and a 3,000-seat plenary, which can be divided into two for simultaneous events. This precinct will be a vibrant hub for conventions, exhibitions, and entertainment, driving economic growth and enhancing Canberra's cultural landscape.

A 50:50 co-funding arrangement between the ACT Government and the Australian Government was sought through the National Capital Investment Framework, with this project being a key consideration. On 12 July 2024, ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr wrote to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese seeking \$31.055 million support for the CCP and relocation of the existing Canberra Olympic Pool to a new site in Commonwealth Park.

On 6 April 2025, the ACT Government and the current Federal Government committed shared funding of \$200 million to build a new convention centre and aquatic centre for Canberra. \$31.055 million of the Australian Government funding has been allocated for feasibility and detailed design work for the CCP project to progress the project to be "construction ready". Therefore, the combined capital injection should co-funding be realised, will be \$62.11 million.

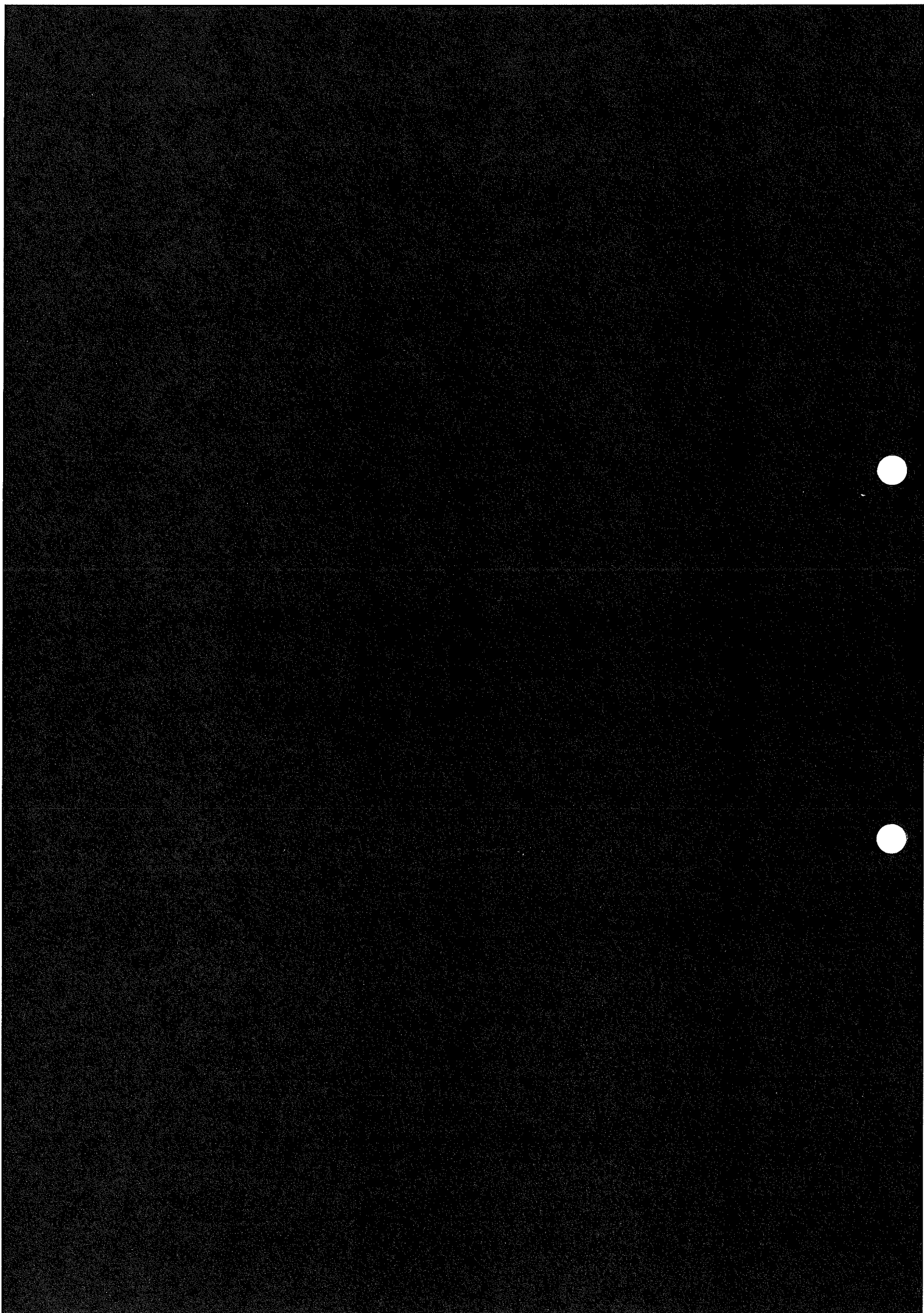
ACT Government has already invested \$2.896 million in the project, allocated in the 2024-25 Budget across two financial years (2024-25 and 2025-26). This has been indicated as an offset to this cofunding request.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Note: The 4% fee for Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR) services is not included in the Capital injection of this business case, as iCBR do not have a component in this business case (*Administrative Arrangements 2024 (No 1)*).

[REDACTED]



2. Project context

Key messages

- The proposed Precinct will incorporate a new convention centre and entertainment venue located on the site of the current Canberra Olympic Pool, Block 7, Section 37.
- This business case seeks funding to progress planning and design for the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct (CCP), on the basis that Australian Government co-funding arrangements are realised.
- The ACT is an attractive events destination due to its large population, strong economic growth, and significant tourism market.
- Canberra is a sought-after conference and entertainment location with connections to some of Australia's best universities and research institutions, the diplomatic community, and the Australian Government.
- Current business event spaces, including the National Convention Centre Canberra (NCCC), are at capacity and too small to accommodate the growing business and tourism market.
- The CCP aims to address these issues and aligns with several key ACT and national policies, including the ACT Infrastructure Plan 2023 and the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy.
- This project is seen as a strategic initiative to boost economic activity and support Canberra's growth as a vibrant city.
- A delivery model assessment is currently underway for the project.
- Key milestones and project timeline have been identified but are subject to the outcome of the delivery model assessment.

2.1 Project Overview

Project description

Despite being Australia's capital city, Canberra doesn't have an appropriate place to host large conventions and conferences, or large indoor live performances.

The proposed Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct will be an important part of the sharing of beliefs, arts, culture and customs for both Canberra and the nation. This would be a significant nation building project and will support Canberra's as Australia's meeting place by hosting events of national and international significance.

The Entertainment component of the precinct will boost the national capital's ability to host large events and attract a wider range of touring artists. The Precinct will further enhance our knowledge-

based economy, and support the arts through live performances, furthering our ambition for Canberra to be the knowledge and arts capital of Australia.

The Precinct will be situated between the Australian National University, a new UNSW Canberra City campus and a revitalised Canberra Theatre District. It will deliver significant benefits to Canberra and the Capital Region through economic stimulation, increased social interaction and inclusion, and sustainable design.

The ACT Government will partner with industry, and local and regional communities, including First Nations people, to create a unique precinct worthy of Canberra's identity as the nation's meeting place.

The Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct is currently envisaged to incorporate:

- An active precinct that supports Canberra as the emerging cultural, arts and entertainment hub
- A Convention and Exhibition Centre that services the city, the region, and the nation, that attracts and hosts events of national and international significance
- Space that allows for concurrent uses and events including large-scale banqueting and large exhibition space of between 8,000-10,000m²
- An indoor Entertainment venue for up to 9,500 people that would cater to large-scale touring acts, indoor sports, seated and standing events, contributing to the ACT economy and the wellbeing of Canberrans
- A multi-functional venue that would provide additional capacity for conventions and exhibitions and provide opportunities for groups within the Canberra community to hold large-scale gala dinners, cultural celebrations and awards ceremonies; and
- A central city location, where delegates can stay and easily access services such as businesses, entertainment, food and hospitality.

Project objectives

The vision is to build a Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct that can host a diverse range of exhibitions, events, conferences, touring artists, indoor sporting events and performances.

Key project objectives are outlined below:

- **Premium Convention and Entertainment Facility** - Deliver a premium convention and entertainment centre in Canberra, providing a flexible venue for business, sports, and entertainment.
- **Community and Culture** - Create a sense of identity and community as a destination for locals and visitors which builds on social interaction and cultural fabric of Canberra and the surrounding region.
- **Economic Activity** - Enhance Canberra's reputation as a business and events hub by attracting events that boost the economy and tourism, increasing Canberra's share of the Australian events market.

- **Value for Money** - Ensure the project provides good value for the Territory, unlocking commercial opportunities to lower overall costs.
- **Market Share** - Promote Canberra internationally to attract visitors, draw events that bring investment and foster skills development, and strengthen Canberra's position in the APAC region for hosting events.
- **Design and Sustainability** - Create a venue that respects First Nations culture and revitalizes the Canberra CBD with new developments and public spaces, achieving exceptional standards in both design and environmental sustainability.
- **Canberra as an Emerging Hub** - Support Canberra as an emerging cultural, arts, and entertainment hub, serving the city, region, and nation as an active precinct.

Project background

The Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre project addresses significant gaps in the ACT's event and entertainment infrastructure. The ACT is a favourable events destination for a precinct of this type because of its large population catchment area within Southern NSW, a population that supports the arts, strong economic growth, a significant tourism market and a range of accommodation options. We are home to Parliament House, iconic national attractions and institutions, and our geographic location is an easy option on the eastern seaboard, well connected by air and road.

Canberra is a sought-after conference location due to its unique connections to some of Australia's best universities and research institutions, the diplomatic community, and the Australian Government. The ACT's business event spaces are at capacity. Our current facilities are too small to accommodate the growing business tourism market and are locking the capital out of large business events and conferences.

The current National Convention Centre Canberra (NCCC) has reached its operating capacity, and it cannot increase the size of events or total number of major events held. We are at risk of losing major conferences that are currently held in Canberra due to lack of scale to grow. The ACT also lacks a dedicated large-scale live music venue.

Despite being Australia's capital city, Canberra is often bypassed when it comes to hosting major conferences and music events for two main reasons:

- Conference facilities and infrastructure lack the flexibility, capacity and capability expected by event organisers and attendees of conference events.
- Capacity of the entertainment venues are considered too small or too risky (open air) for larger entertainment acts and indoor sporting events.

Responding to growing unmet demand and accommodating the potential for further growth will provide a major economic driver for the city and bring more visitors to Canberra.

There is a compelling case for a new Precinct that incorporates both an Entertainment venue and new Convention and Entertainment Centre.

Economic Development have engaged an extensive team of specialist consultants to complete studies into the Precinct. Undertaking extensive work to identify community needs and the ACT Government's vision, the studies present a compelling opportunity backed by economic and financial data, robust planning, building design and engineering.

To date, the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct activities completed include:

- *Canberra Convention Centre Precinct Project Outline* – which outlines the ambitions for the project and contains a summary of work undertaken to date.
- *Operational Needs Analysis, KPMG* – which included exploration of market demand, articulation of project needs and investigation into potential operating models ([Appendix A](#))
- *Massing Studies, Populous* – explored site options
- *Technical Due Diligence & Site Analysis, Indesco* – undertaken by CRA with SIC oversight
- *Development Potential Assessment, Canberra Town Planning* – identifies development constraints and opportunities
- *Building Typology & Capacity Investigation, Populous* – explored sizing, capacity analysis, event content, commercial frameworks and building typology ([Appendix B](#))
- *Consultant Costings, WT Partnerships* – Convention Centre Precinct ([Appendix C](#))
- *Functional Design Brief, Populous* – Final Draft ([Appendix D](#))
- *Delivery Model Assessment, Market Sounding and Economic Appraisal, KPMG* – In progress

Funding Approach Under the National Capital Investment Framework (NCIF)

The National Capital Investment Framework (NCIF) is a strategic initiative between ACT Government and Australian Government designed to address underinvestment in Canberra's infrastructure. Announced in mid-2023 by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr, the framework aims to recognize Canberra's role as Australia's capital and support its development into a vibrant, globally attractive city.

On 12 July 2024, the Chief Minister wrote to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese seeking 50:50 co-funding to develop the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Precinct to 'construction ready'.

On 6 April 2025, the ACT Government and the current Australian Government committed \$200 million to deliver a new Convention Centre and Entertainment Precinct and Canberra Aquatic Centre.

"We've just launched our ACT Labor campaign for the federal election, but what is really exciting today is that we've announced shared funding of \$200 million to build a new convention centre and aquatic centre for Canberra.

Now for many, many years it has been embarrassing that our city hasn't had a convention centre fitting of a nation's capital, where we can host international conferences. I don't want to trash on the current convention centre, but they're turning away a lot of business and it is not set up for the things that we would want to host here in the national capital. This has been an ongoing campaign over probably about 20 years from our business community and

tourism leaders. And I'm so pleased that today our Federal Government and ACT Government are announcing that we are working together to make this happen.

Member for Canberra, Alicia Payne MP

The investment in the new Canberra Aquatic Centre unlocks the land needed to deliver the new Convention and Entertainment Precinct, with a new larger capacity Convention Centre and integrated 8000 seat Entertainment Centre for live music, entertainment, and indoor sporting events."

ACT Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA

"The convention centre was always a project that needed two governments. It should never have been just the ACT Government on its own. Looking at how it could deliver this and the opportunity to work with Andrew and to really find the room in the budget to invest in a project like this, to match the funding from the ACT government. It's no small sum, \$200 million, \$100 million from the ACT, I know that's hard worked to find that and \$100 million from the Commonwealth to get this project going. So exciting, and I can't wait to get to the next stage. And I know that for many Canberrans that want to see the nation's capital grow and continue to evolve as a great city, a nation's capital, this will be one of those enabling projects."

Federal Senator for ACT, Katy Gallagher MP

This investment aims to address the long-standing need for a modern convention centre in Canberra, enhancing the city's capacity to host major international events and boosting the local economy.

Needs analysis for the project

The NCCC opened in 1989 and is the largest convention and exhibition facility in the ACT. It is the oldest convention centre in Australia without a major expansion or redevelopment; is constrained by its site, age, and condition; and requires continuous investment in repairs and maintenance to extend its life. Compared to facilities on offer in the national and international market, the ACT is becoming increasingly uncompetitive in the business tourism market.

Convention facilities

Canberra has strong drivers of demand for a convention centre including a growing defence, cyber and national security sector, multiple universities and proximity to federal and local government. This is further supported by Canberra's continued local and regional population and economic growth, its demographic profile, and its unique function as the nation's capital.

In May 2024, the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories completed the Inquiry into fostering and promoting the significance of Australia's National Capital. The state of the National Convention Centre Canberra was considered as part of an exploration into

the importance of art and business facilities in promoting the significance of Australia's National Capital.

The Committee acknowledged that Canberra has the demand for hosting business events, yet lacks a facility to meet the demand, and is below the quality of facilities offered in other Australian regional areas with smaller populations. The Committee also acknowledged the need to consider capacity and functional requirements in the development of secure state-of-the-art conference and performance facilities, to support national and international functions and accommodate a variety of performances that play in major Australian Cities. The Committee made the following recommendation:

Recommendation 17

5.56 The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government fund the development of the National Convention Centre to support the national and international meetings of business, community, and government, and to increase visitation to the National Capital.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Entertainment facilities

Canberra faces a significant gap in its live indoor entertainment market, lacking a venue that can host audiences larger than 5,000. Research indicates that large-scale touring acts typically seek audiences of 8,000 to 10,000 people to be commercially viable for mid-tier artists. Canberra is the only state capital without an indoor venue of this size.

Within the spectrum of entertainment venues, Canberra can accommodate sporting events, has a reputation as being a 'festival hub', and has a significant provision of smaller venues (including theatres) that hold smaller scale events. The AIS Arena is the only mid-scale venue, however, is aging and approaching end of life. Its capacity and functionality remain an ongoing issue limiting its appeal.

As a result, Canberra misses out on the larger acts and indoor sports events. The live entertainment industry contributed an estimated \$36.5 billion to the Australian economy in 2019, with almost half of this being delivered by the live performance market which employs over 52,340 full time staff.

National trends show strong growth in live performance attendance in the 5 years leading up to the COVID pandemic at an annual rate of 3.4% per annum. In comparison, within the ACT, growth in attendance outgrew the national average at 3.6% and attendance to contemporary music events doubled the national average.

The ACT's population is currently estimated at 470,000 and projected to reach 500,000 by 2027. The ACT's significant population growth – which continues at pace – adds to the need for a larger indoor entertainment space.

The ACT also benefits from a large population catchment within the region, drawing on patrons within a 3-hour drive not serviced by comparator venues representing untapped markets. Other demographic factors such as a younger median age, and high average income than the national average build the case to support a venue of this type.

[REDACTED]

The national live music market has a wide range of entertainment venues that service a broad range of catchments, Tier 1 facilities host large events and are typically located in larger state capitals with significant populations to support them. Tier 2 venues support performances that attract between 5,000-12,000 people and are in large and regional centres such as Wollongong, Adelaide and Newcastle.

[REDACTED]

Indicative capital value, risk assessment and tier

The Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct is expected to fall within the Capital Framework's Tier 1 Threshold. However, capital value and risk will be further investigated through the activities identified in the Project Business Case stage.

Risk assessment for the project will be developed in the Project Business Case phase, however the key project risks associated with the activities to be funded under this business case, and proposed mitigation strategies, are identified in **Appendix E**.

Stakeholder engagement to date

Economic Development has undertaken extensive stakeholder engagement for the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct project, which will continue throughout its lifecycle. Engagement methods include community and industry forums, information sessions, briefings, interviews, and requests for submissions. This approach leverages industry expertise and existing stakeholder experience, ensuring a wide range of input and perspectives to facilitate an optimal project outcome.

As part of developing the Functional Design Brief, various engagement activities were conducted, including, workshops with key business, tourism, sporting, entertainment and conference industry stakeholders (outlined in Section 4.1). Furthermore, a full-day Enquiry by Design workshop was held, bringing together stakeholders across industry and government to test and further develop the project objectives and assumptions.

The engagement process aimed to inform stakeholders about the project, maintain key relationships, enable stakeholder participation, and ensure their needs were incorporated into the Functional Design Brief. This included testing draft design concepts with selected key stakeholders and clearly communicating project progress. The diverse range of stakeholders involved, including those from tourism, business, music, sport, and government agencies, ensured that multiple perspectives were captured. This structured and collaborative approach, aligned with best practice principles such as inclusivity, transparency, and iterative feedback, effectively informed the Functional Design Brief while respecting established timelines. The feedback gathered from these activities has been thoroughly analysed and integrated, shaping the project brief to reflect the diverse perspectives and priorities identified through engagement.

The project has engaged a First Nations consultant to facilitate meaningful engagement with First Nations stakeholders. The ACT Government, through the Community Services Directorate, has initiated discussions with the Ngunnawal and other First Nations communities. However, an ongoing engagement approach tailored to meet the specific needs of the local communities, focusing on their aspirations to build deeper connections to their Country through the built environment will continue throughout the lifecycle of the project. Economic Development will work alongside Ngunnawal Elders and Knowledge Holders to gain a deeper appreciation of their Country and culture, ensuring that the design of spaces and places centres around Country as the primary point of reference.

Potential delivery models

A comprehensive delivery model assessment is currently underway. Economic Development has engaged industry experts to assist in identifying the most appropriate delivery models based on various project characteristics, including operator model, scale, scope, preferred packaging approach, risk, and market appetite. This evaluation aims to ensure that the chosen delivery model aligns with the project's specific needs and objectives.

Procurement options precedents

A range of different models have been used across Australia for the delivery of convention and exhibition centres:

A range of procurement models involving the public and private sector have been utilised in the procurement and / or operation of Australian Convention & Exhibition Centres (C&EC):

- **Private sector design, construction, financing and (some) operation under a long-term PPP contract** – Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin and Perth. In the case of the Melbourne CE&C, the majority of the events and venue management functions are performed by a State-owned entity (i.e., MCET).
- **State ownership of the facilities with private sector operation under a medium-term management contract** – Brisbane and Cairns. The National Convention Centre involves a long-term lease from the ACT Government.
- **Full State ownership and operation** – Adelaide.

The following table provides a summary of the level of public and private sector involvement in a range of CE&C projects:

Project Element	Geelong C&EC	Melbourne C&EC	Sydney ICC	Adelaide C&EC	Brisbane C&EC	Gold Coast C&EC	Darwin C&EC	Perth C&EC	Cairns CC	National CC
Events management	State	State	Operator (as part of the PPP)	State	Operator	Operator	PPP	PPP	Operator	Operator
Venue management	State	State	Operator (as part of the PPP)	State	Operator	Operator	PPP	PPP	Operator	Operator
Food & beverage (event catering)	State	State	Operator (as part of the PPP)	State	Operator	Operator	PPP	PPP	Operator	Operator
Maintenance	PPP	PPP	PPP	State	State	State	PPP	PPP	State	State
Design and construction	PPP	PPP	PPP	State	State	State	PPP	PPP	State	State
Financing	PPP	PPP	PPP	State	State	State	PPP	PPP	State	State

Current benchmarking across Convention and Entertainment venues in other Australian Capital Cities, demonstrate a mix of delivery and operational models. The choice of model will significantly impact the project's development pathway and milestones. The outcome of this assessment, which will conclude mid 2025, will inform the detailed business case development and guide the options analysis process moving forward.

Indicative project timeline

Table 2: Indicative project timeline

Activity	Start	End
Design and construction	2023	2025
Operational	2025	2028
Maintenance	2025	2028
Events management	2025	2028
Food & beverage (event catering)	2025	2028
Financing	2023	2025
Design and construction	2023	2025
Operational	2025	2028
Maintenance	2025	2028
Events management	2025	2028
Food & beverage (event catering)	2025	2028
Financing	2023	2025

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

NB: These deliverables are subject to change with the outcome of the delivery model assessment and market sounding exercise currently underway.

* The funding for the years 2027-28 and beyond is not being requested at this stage.

2.2 Strategic and policy alignment

Alignment with Government commitments and policies

The Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct stands as a transformative initiative, intricately aligned with both Australian and ACT government commitments, policies, and strategic visions. A new convention centre precinct in Canberra that facilitates both convention and entertainment activities aligns with several ACT and national policy outcomes:

Strategic alignment with ACT Government policies:

- *The ACT Infrastructure Plan 2023* - The recent Entertainment, Arts and Sports update identifies a new Convention Centre and Entertainment Pavilion as a key priority to address the region's growing entertainment needs to foster investment in event, convention, and performance capacity in the city.
- *CBR Switched On: ACT's Economic Development Priorities 2022-2025* – which highlights our ambition to position Canberra as a city that encourages and celebrates innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship
- *T2030: ACT Tourism Strategy 2023-2030* - A key priority of the strategy is to develop, attract and promote a calendar of quality events, including business events
- *The ACT's Statement of Ambition for the Arts 2021-26, and Arts, Culture and Creative Policy 2022- 26*, which stress the importance of drawing in a new range of live acts and visitors.
- *Strategic alignment with Australian Government policies: Revive, Australia's National Cultural Policy* - which aims to revitalise the creative sector and ensure cultural infrastructure such as galleries, venues, theatres, libraries, museums, archives and digital collections, are restored, built and maintained.
- *Australian Infrastructure Plan 2021 (Section 8 – Social Infrastructure)* – outlines Australian government's commitment to Social Infrastructure. This project serves as a strategic solution, connecting people and communities to services and opportunities that enhance their quality of life. "Giving all Australians equal access to social infrastructure is important, because it has a direct impact on liveability — that is, how much a neighbourhood, town or city supports quality of life for the people who live, work and visit there." State of Australian Cities 2010: Liveability of Australian cities, chpt. 6.
- *Closing the Gap National Agreement* – the precinct aims to create this unique precinct, delivering state of the art facilities while working toward the objectives of the Closing the Gap National Agreement.

- *National Urban Policy (under finalisation)* - The Precinct aligns with the goals and objectives of this policy, ensuring fair access to resources, shared prosperity, economic opportunity, and access to employment, services, and amenities that enhance quality of life and foster community connections through partnerships to create purpose-built infrastructure.

The proposed Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct is both a strategic and transformative initiative, that not only addresses identified needs within the Canberra business community but strategically aligns with key Australian and ACT government policies.

Alignment with other projects, Programs and Precincts

The Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct aligns seamlessly with other Territory projects, programs, and precincts by enhancing Canberra's Civic and Culture District. It complements the redevelopment of the Canberra Theatre and the establishment of the Kingston Arts Precinct, creating a cohesive network of world-class venues for arts, culture, and entertainment. This alignment supports the ACT Government's broader infrastructure plan, which aims to boost the local economy, create jobs, and position Canberra as a premier destination for business and leisure.

The location of the proposed CCP is sited between Commonwealth Park and City South East, on NCA designated land. This adjacency provides exciting opportunities to align the project's placemaking and city activation objectives with NCA aspirations for Commonwealth Park, recently unveiled in their Commonwealth Park Masterplan.

The project will integrate with existing public transport and infrastructure projects, ensuring seamless accessibility for both locals and visitors. By fostering collaboration with educational institutions and local businesses, the precinct will also support innovation and entrepreneurship, further solidifying Canberra's reputation as a knowledge economy. This holistic approach ensures that the precinct not only serves as a premier destination for events but also contributes to the overall growth and development of the region.

Alignment to Wellbeing Framework domains and indicators

The new Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct aligns with the Wellbeing Framework by contributing to several key domains and indicators.

The Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct will have significant positive and direct impacts across the primary domain of **economy** from multiple contributing factors to ensure the resilience of the ACT economy. It will enhance economic wellbeing by attracting investment, creating jobs and stimulating local businesses and diversification through the provision improved infrastructure and opportunity. By hosting events, conferences, and cultural activities, the precinct will support community wellbeing by attracting tourists and visitors and further enhance the cultural vitality of the region, making it a more vibrant place to live and visit.

The precinct will have direct positive impacts across the **identity and belonging** domain, fostering a sense of belonging through positive perceptions of increased liveability in Canberra and the additional positive arts and cultural activity impact on wellbeing. Locally held events provide increased and diversified opportunities for the local and broader Canberra community to participate, resulting in direct positive impacts to **social connection**, interaction and cultural engagement. It will

foster personal wellbeing by offering diverse recreational and entertainment opportunities, contributing to the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike. The precinct will have positive impacts on the ACT's knowledge-based economy, contributing to **education and lifelong learning** for all users of the facility and long-term positive impacts to **access and connectivity** through increased opportunity for passive and active recreation and city to lake connection. This will result in short term, transient negative impacts due to construction disruption.

The precinct also promotes environmental wellbeing by incorporating sustainable design principles and green spaces.

A Wellbeing Impact Assessment (WIA) has been included at [Appendix F](#).

3. Project development options

Key messages

- Two options have been identified in Project Development Funding activities, i.e. receiving Australian Government co-funding for the design and development of the project, or project development through ACT Government funding only.
- It highlights the financial, operational, and strategic impacts of each option, guiding decision-making to ensure successful project development and alignment with broader objectives.

3.1 Project development options

When considering the funding approach for the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre project, two primary options emerge: receiving co-funding from the Australian Government or relying solely on ACT Government funding to progress project planning. Each option presents advantages and challenges that impact the project's financial, operational, and strategic outcomes.

This analysis aims to guide decision-making by evaluating the implications of each option, ensuring the project's successful development and alignment with broader objectives.

Option 1: Australian Government Co-funding Received

Description: The project receives co-funding to undertake works through detailed business case development and detailed design.

Pros:

- **Financial Support:** Co-funding reduces the financial burden on the Territory, allowing for a more comprehensive and robust project development process.

- **Accelerated Timeline:** With additional funding, the project can progress more quickly through the design and delivery stages, ensuring timely completion.
- **Enhanced Credibility:** Securing co-funding can enhance the project's credibility and attract further investment or support from other stakeholders.
- **Risk Mitigation:** Shared financial responsibility reduces the risk, making the project more viable and sustainable.

Cons:

- **Dependency on External Funding:** Reliance on co-funding may introduce uncertainties if the funding is delayed or withdrawn.
- **Potential for Increased Oversight:** Co-funding may come with additional oversight and reporting requirements, which could add complexity to project management.
- **Alignment with Funder's Objectives:** The project may need to align more closely with the Australian Governments objectives, potentially limiting flexibility in project scope or design.

Option 2: No Co-funding Received

Description: The Project does not receive co-funding and therefore is only funded to initial business case development, seeking internal funding for detailed design and detailed business case.

Pros:

- **Autonomy:** Full control over the project scope, design, and timeline without the need to align with Australian Governments objectives.
- **Simplified Management:** Reduced complexity in project management with fewer reporting and oversight requirements.
- **Incremental Investment:** Allows for a phased approach to funding, starting with internal resources for initial stages and seeking additional funding as needed.

Cons:

- **Financial Strain:** Greater financial burden on the Territory, potentially limiting the scope and scale of the project.
- **Extended Timeline:** Without co-funding, the project may progress more slowly, delaying the realization of benefits.
- **Higher Risk:** Increased financial risk for the Territory, with potential challenges in securing sufficient internal funding for later stages.
- **Limited Resources:** Potential constraints on resources may impact the quality and comprehensiveness of the detailed design and business case.

The decision to either seek co-funding or rely solely on internal resources for the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre project involves balancing the benefits of financial support, accelerated timelines, and enhanced credibility against the challenges of dependency on external funding, increased oversight, and alignment with objectives.

Given the recent commitment by Federal Labor to co-fund the planning phase if elected, **Option 1 – Recommended**, matching the co-funding commitment emerges as the preferred option as it

ensures robust project development, lowers risk by shared financial burden and alignment with broader strategic goals.

4. Planned stakeholder engagement and consultation

4.1 Stakeholder engagement and consultations planned

The ACT Government has undertaken extensive stakeholder engagement which will continue throughout the lifecycle of the project – refer **section 2.1 Stakeholder Engagement to Date**. Moving forward engagement methods will be tailored to the project and will include community and industry forums, information sessions, briefings, interviews and requests for submissions.

Stakeholder engagement will leverage industry specialist expertise and existing stakeholder experience. This project will attract significant interest from the Canberra business community and the broader public, making them critical stakeholders. Engaging with them will ensure a wide range of input and perspectives are available to the ACT Government, facilitating an optimal project outcome.

The table below identifies the key project stakeholders and the impact they have on the project. As the project progresses a detailed Stakeholder and Communication Management Plan will be developed.

Convention Centre Precinct Key Stakeholders	
INTERNAL	IMPACT
Chief Minister Treasury Economic Development (CMTEDD)- Venues Canberra, Visit Canberra, artsACT, Sport and Recreation, Events ACT	These business units have key interests in a variety of successful outcomes from the CCP project. <i>artsACT</i> ensure the ACT has a diverse and dynamic arts, culture and creative sector. <i>Venues Canberra</i> manage the major venues of the ACT Government. <i>Events ACT</i> are the lead agency developing and delivering major events in Canberra. <i>Visit Canberra</i> are the official tourism organisation for Canberra and the ACT Government. <i>Sport and Recreation</i> aim to increase participation from social to high performance sport in the ACT.
City Renewal Authority CRA – Canberra Civic and Cultural District	The CRA leads urban renewal in the designated City Renewal Precinct to create sustainable, liveable, and attractive spaces in central Canberra. The CRA set the vision, direction and implementation of the Canberra Civic and Culture District in which the Civic Pool is situated and will partner with ED to realise strong precinct interconnections to this project.

Infrastructure Canberra (iCBR)

Lead the procurement and delivery of the Territory's infrastructure program. iCBR will lead this project when it progresses to construction. In the meantime, iCBR will provide expert infrastructure planning, strategic guidance, and oversight to the project.

Cultural Facilities Corporation (CFC) – relationship to Theatre Precinct

The CFC has responsibilities which include managing and promoting cultural activities at the Canberra Theatre Centre. The CFC work closely with MPC in the delivery of both the Canberra Civic and Culture District, and the new Canberra Theatre Project.

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) – Traffic Planning

TCCS manages Canberra's public transport system, traffic management, utilities, as well as city services such as public open spaces. TCCS has a key role in ensuring the consideration of broader road network and traffic impacts across the Territory. TCCS is represented on the Executive Steering Committee to assist in risk mitigation and coordination activities.

Environment, Planning, Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) – Planning and Approvals

EPSDD is responsible for city planning and development, climate change and the environment. They have a key role in the broader planning impacts across the Territory and will provide guidance to ensure the project delivers a sustainable and creative outcome that is socially inclusive, stimulates economic growth and innovation, creating a city we can be proud of.

Treasury

Treasury provides strategic financial advice and delivers services to the ACT Government to help improve the Territory's financial position and economic management.

EXTERNAL

Australian Government - National Capital Authority, Infrastructure Australia, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, Department of Finance

The NCA secures the Australian Government's interest in the planning and development of the National Capital to ensure that it continues to serve its national purposes. This is the entity with planning responsibility for the Project, as the Project sits within the Designated Areas under the National Capital Plan.

Canberra Business Chamber, and Canberra Convention Bureau

Leadership groups for the Canberra Business and Convention sectors, have each been approached to seek their views and input. The success of the

	CCP project is of significant interest for these collectives. Will be part of an advisory group to provide their ongoing views to the project and ensure appropriate outcomes.
Current Operators - IHG and the management of the NCCC	Invaluable operational experience and knowledge of the local convention and event market.
First Nations Communities	Ongoing engagement tailored to meet the specific needs of the local communities, focusing building deeper connections to Country through the built environment.
Professional conference organisers (PCOs) and other facility users	Subject matter experts with vested market interest in the project.
Community Groups - Music ACT, ACT Multicultural Advisory Council.	Community representatives with vested interest in the project.
Live music promoters such as TEG Dainty, Live Nation and AEG Ogden	A range of representatives from the live performance industry (ranging from sole operators to not-for-profit organisations to large commercial entities).
Event organisers and other facility users	Ranging from community, all levels of Government, and the private commercial centre, these stakeholders are potential facility hirers, visitors, and delegates.

5. Approach

Key messages

- As outlined in the *Administrative Arrangements 2024 (No 1)*, CMTEDD are responsible for the coordination and planning of strategic economic development infrastructure and projects including the CCP.
- Economic Development will follow established project development principles and steps in carrying out the groundwork for the development of the project in accordance with the ACT Government's Capital Framework.

5.1 Key deliverables and timetable

A project program, up to the delivery stage, has been developed at **Appendix G**. The project programs, particularly pertaining to delivery timing, are at low maturity. The program at **Appendix G** reflect an approximated estimate of construction commencement assuming:

- minimal to no delays due to issues such as latent condition and enabling works etc, that might delay project construction commencement dates;
- no delays to accommodate or coordinate phasing the construction commencement of these projects with other Tier 1 projects proposed across the Territory (e.g. The Canberra Theatre, Canberra and Northside Hospital, and Light Rail projects etc), as well as consideration of the national market. There is a limit to the capacity of Tier 1 construction contractors. At present the national and local construction industries are experiencing high demand. Construction Industry market conditions, and fiscal constraints will need further consideration as these projects progress towards their delivery stages.
- program aligns with the relocation of the city pool.
- no additional planning or construction is required to relocate existing infrastructure on proposed sites.

The program identifies the key activities, milestones, and critical paths. Economic Development will develop communications strategies that ensure collaborative approach across Government and extensive community consultation.

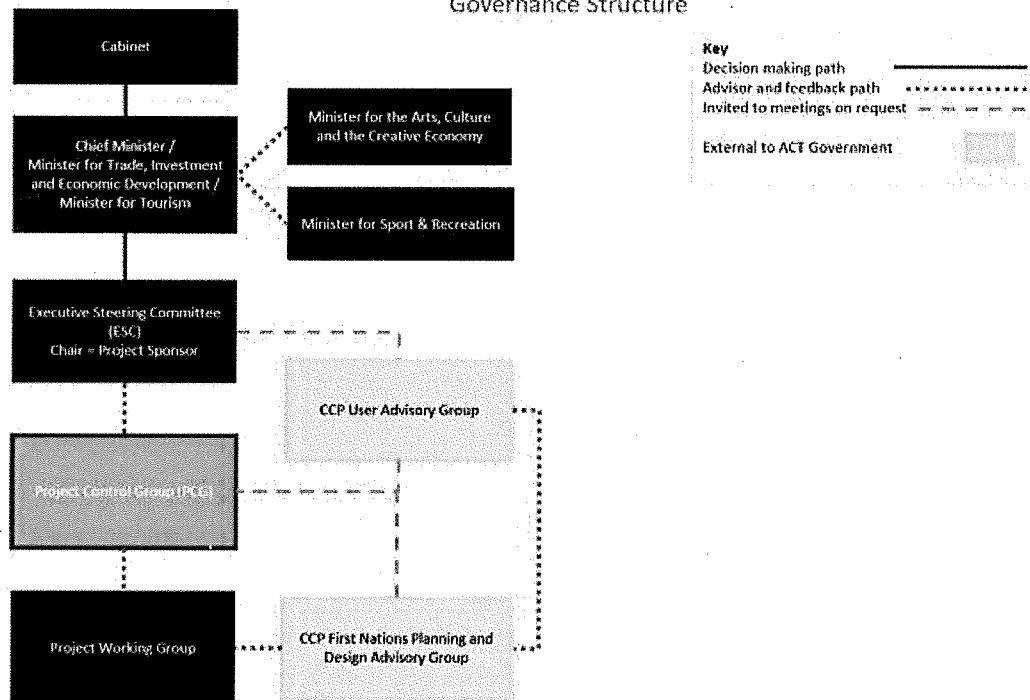
Economic Development and Infrastructure Canberra will continue to work collaboratively to achieve the required deliverables underpinning the planning, and design stages for the project. Budget and Ministerial accountability for the CCP will be transferred to Infrastructure Canberra, upon designation of the project, timing of which is subject to deliverables and at the discretion of the Chief Minister.

Key deliverables and timetable have been identified in **Section 2.1 Table 2**. These deliverables are subject to change with the outcome of the delivery model assessment and market sounding exercise currently underway.

5.2 Governance

The key directorate and project owner within ACT Government is Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD), led by Strategic Infrastructure Coordination within Economic Development, in close collaboration with City Renewal Authority (CRA) and Infrastructure Canberra (ICBR) where required.

Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct Governance Structure



Economic Development will be the key point of contact for the Australian Government for all project development issues.

A Project Governance Framework is under development and will provide clear and transparent structures for decision-making, risk management, and communication to ensure project objectives are met. These Governance Frameworks provide overall governance for the “Develop” and “Prove” stages of the projects, in accordance with both the ACT Government’s Capital and Partnerships Frameworks.

Direction will be provided by an Executive Steering Committee, with advisory working groups established to ensure user needs are considered at every stage. iCBR, CRA, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD), and Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) will be integral members of the executive steering committees.

The projects will also establish Project Review and Risk Committees when and as appropriate.

Following the establishment of iCBR lead Program Boards on 1 July 2025, Governance arrangements may transfer.

5.3 Project Team resources

As outlined in the *Administrative Arrangements 2024 (No 1)*, CMTEDD are responsible for the coordination and planning of strategic economic development infrastructure and projects including the CCP.

This business case seeks funding to adequately staff the CCP project within Strategic Infrastructure Coordination (SIC) team in Economic Development for the duration of the project development phase.

Table 3: Proposed Resources

Milestones	FTE	Indicative cost	Description
Executive Level 1.4	0.5	318,411	Project Director – Responsible for strategic leadership and the delivery of the project through the inception, feasibility and planning phase
Infrastructure Manager 3	1	557,204	Project Lead – Senior Infrastructure Specialist responsible for oversight of project development, technical, commercial, project management, governance, communications & stakeholder engagement, risk management
Infrastructure Manager 1	2	990,100	Senior Infrastructure specialists responsible for technical and commercial streams including procurement, contract management and project management
Senior Officer Grade B	2	832,266	Administrative officers responsible for Project Reporting, Financial & Budget tracking, preparation of Ministerial Documents & Responses, FOIs, Cabinet Submissions, Project Governance secretariat, Document Control & QA, Comms & Engagement, procurement support
TOTAL	5.5	2,697,980	

Economic Development will work collaboratively with iCBR to ensure smooth transition from the project development phase through to delivery.

6. Funding request

Key messages

- This business case is seeking ACT Government funding to progress planning for the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre precinct project over the next two years.
- On 6 April 2025, the current Federal Government committed to delivering a new Convention and Entertainment Centre including \$31.055 million across the forwards to 2028 -29 FY – with this funding included in the 2025-26 Federal Government Budget, released on 25 March 2025.
- Given the complexity of this project and governance requirements associated with development and delivery of a Tier 1 project, an ACT Government team of 5.5 FTEs is recommended.

6.1 Funding history

The 2024-25 Budget provided \$10 million in funding to the Strategic Infrastructure Coordination business unit with Economic Development to progress planning for a number of key infrastructure priorities including, the Canberra Stadium, Exhibition Park in Canberra Stage 1 Redevelopment, Manuka Oval Eastern Grandstand, Telstra Tower, Canberra Aquatic Centre and the Canberra Convention and Entertainment Centre Precinct.

Following the 2024 ACT Election, *Administrative Arrangements* changed, and the Canberra Aquatic Centre Project transferred to iCBR, as a result the \$750,000 allocated to the project from within the SIC budget was also transferred.

Within the 2024-25 Budget, \$2.896 million was allocated internally against the CCP project, \$1.122 million has been expended in the 2024-25 FY with a further \$1.774 million expenditure budgeted in 2025-26. The total value of \$2.896 is proposed to be offset against the budget request.

6.2 Funding requested

Economic Development engaged WTP Australia Pty Ltd (WTP) in the capacity of Quantity Surveyor to provide an indicative estimation of consultant costs for the development of a Tier 1 business case for the CCP to help inform budget requests to the ACT Government.

WTP brings extensive experience providing expert cost management advice for some of the most complex infrastructure projects both in Australia and around the globe. WTP have an inherent appreciation of government requirements and processes, significant benchmarking data and an understanding of all aspects of the construction industry and of the current market environment.

Costing Assumptions:

- All figures exclude Goods & Services Tax (GST).
- All figures are rounded to the nearest thousands.
- The proposed Project Team staff costs are included in the financial summary below.
- Consultant costs associated with Development Application, final design, tender & procurement services and any services during the construction phase have been excluded.
- Estimated costs are based on January 2025 prices with no provision for escalation.

A high-level summary of the consultant cost estimates is outlined below and further itemised at **Appendix C**.



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ACT Government have already invested \$2.896 million in the project, allocated in the 2024-25 Budget across 2024-2026. \$1.122 million of this funding has been expended in the 2024-25 FY with a further \$1.774 million expenditure budgeted in 2025-26. The total value of \$2.896 is proposed to be offset against this initial budget request.

7. Risks and sensitivities

Key messages

- A Risk Register has been developed to identify key project risk ([Appendix E](#)).
- The key risk for the projects at this stage is that the elected Australian Government may not agree to co-fund 50:50.
- Other risks in this planning phase largely relate to consultancy procurements – around process, delays, and market heat. Staff resourcing and consistency of corporate knowledge is also of note.
- Apart from risks relating to funding from the Australian Government, all of the risks identified in the register can be managed through identified controls. Should negotiations for 50:50 funding from the Australian Government fail to eventuate, the recommended Option 3 must be fully funded by the ACT Government.

7.1 Key risks and sensitivities

The key project risks associated with the activities to be funded under this business case, and proposed mitigation strategies, are identified in [Appendix E](#).

At this stage of the project, risks are primarily associated with the timely procurement and execution of the required studies and reports. These risks can be mitigated through following best practice procurement methods and continuous monitoring of the progress and work of consultants. A new consideration of risks will be required at the business case stage for all projects as they approach and enter the construction phase.

Appendices

Attachments to this Business Case include:

• <i>Appendix A</i>	Operational Needs Analysis – CC and ENP – 2023
• <i>Appendix B</i>	Building Typology and Capacity Assessment - Final – 2024
• <i>Appendix C</i>	Consultant Costs Estimation - 2024
• <i>Appendix D</i>	Functional Design Brief – Final draft - 2025
• <i>Appendix E</i>	Preliminary Risk Register
• <i>Appendix F</i>	Wellbeing Impact Assessment
• <i>Appendix G</i>	Project Delivery Program
• <i>Appendix H</i>	Average Salary Costings
• <i>Appendix I</i>	Enquiry by Design Report - 2024

