



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

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To: LA Committee - Environment <LACommitteeEnvironment@act.gov.au>

Subject: Woden Town Centre

At the moment the primary (?only) activity in Woden Town Centre is commercial and occurs within the Westfield complex. Other activities are splayed out over an area that discourages easy active transport (ie walking) and mitigates against visitors or users of one service or organisation incidentally accessing others.

The Town Plaza is currently a thoroughfare between Charles Perkins House and other government departments, and the shopping centre. Its potential as a passive recreational space is minimised by the lack of shade over most of the searing; and the wind tunnel along the plaza and through to the library and the back of the health centre. The refurbishment a few years ago now, including shaded seating and more small trees, has resulted in greater passive use during lunchtimes; optimally further measures will support and encourage increased use.

The wind tunnel is also a feature of the West Plaza, unfortunately, sweeping from under the CIT building to the stairs up to the Plaza; and north-south, from Grand Central to the David Jones building. It too has minimal shade (the current plantings will eventually provide shade from the sun but there will always be a requirement for shade over seating, e.g. during rainy weather).

To minimise the wind tunnel, there should be no further high-rise towers built around the plaza; optimally the zoning would be changed to much lower than 28 storeys - amenity relies in part on a human scale in open communal spaces. Planting should be maximised, in the Plazas and the thoroughfare between Charles Perkins House, Albemarle building and the Town Plaza.

A toilet block, some shaded seating and a children's play area would encourage people to do more than walk across the Plazas.

The commercial focus of the Centre could be mitigated by the co-location, at ground level, of Woden Community Services, the Woden Youth Centre and other community based organisations in the currently vacant government-owned building along the northern face of the Town Plaza. The co-location of these services next to the Cosmopolitan Centre, which houses Directions ACT and Access Canberra, would create a social services hub that is visible and accessible and links in with Commonwealth government services located along Bowes Street.

This building (along the northern side of the Town Plaza) could also become a hub for cultural activities not currently supported in Woden - a gallery and exhibition space, and venue for concerts and indoor markets.

The Plaza could be further upgraded, with greater power supply etc, to allow outdoor markets and events - the West Plaza is unsuitable due to the (currently closed) road which winds through it, which reduces the space available for stalls etc; and because of the overshadowing of most of the space by the Grand Central Towers - that area will be ghastly in winter for longer than it takes to walk from the interchange to Westfield.

Optimally the site of the current pool would be retained as a pool and a rink, and redeveloped to maintain a logical active recreation precinct along Launceston Street, from Melrose Drive to Athllon Drive, comprising the pool, the rink, the squash courts, Cricket ACT, the football oval. The current bus park on Launceston Street will optimally become parking for park-and-ride and for attendance at sporting activities in that active recreation precinct.

Revitalising the Woden Town Centre - or vitalising it - it's been dead for the fifteen years I've lived in the area - will take time and long term investment, of resources and promotion.

Regards

Fiona Blackburn