



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: 094

Submitter: Name withheld

Date authorised for publication: 16 October 2025

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

Dear Committee

I wish to make a submission regarding the *Inquiry into the Role and Future of the Woden Town Centre in the context of a compact city*.

As a resident of the Woden Town Centre area for the past decade, where we have seen an unfettered proliferation of high-rise apartments (including the excessive overshadowing of pre-existing low-rise developments, which negatively impacts the mental health of residents and the passive solar heating of their homes), **what is needed more than anything else** are expansive, excellently maintained, freely and publicly accessible, proximal, green spaces (grass, large trees, etc.) for the recreation and wellbeing of the community, away from the unpleasantness of road traffic.

Eddison Park borders Easty Street, and *ordinarily there should be no public transport facilities on Easty Street* (prohibited development). This is because the area is zoned PRZ1. But apparently in the name of the “road reserve” a previous ACT Barr Government decided that Easty Street should become a bus layover area. To boot, with the closure of Callam Street to all but authorised vehicles, Easty Street has become the new “Callam”. This has had a huge negative impact on the recreational value of the precinct. **My request to the committee is** that they champion the re-opening of Callam Street to all motor vehicle traffic, they see to it that buses and other heavy vehicles are prevented from using Easty Street as a thoroughfare (with the exception being the need to service local residences and infrastructure), and the bus layovers on Easty Street are decommissioned.

In the same vein, the undeveloped block between HealthPoint, Avoca, Wilara, and WodenGreen (bordered by Guardian Place, Easty Street, and Wilbow Street) – that a previous ACT Barr Government rezoned from RZ4 to CZ2, *contrary to community feedback and years after people had bought into the neighbouring RZ4 areas of Avoca and Wilara – should be bought back from the developer and rezoned as PRZ1*. The block should be developed as a lovely park with beautiful trees, seating, grass, and native plants. This would harmonise with the adjoining / nearby RZ4 and PRZ1 zones, which share noise limits appropriate for the residential zoning of Avoca and Wilara (i.e. maximum overnight noise level 35 dB(A) Mon-Sat, 10pm-7am and Sun/public holidays 10pm-8am).

Disappointingly, successive ACT Barr Governments have let Woden languish. It is high time this unacceptable state of affairs is reversed. The Woden Town Centre needs to have an established and well-maintained critical mass of community infrastructure that supports a new flourishing of community life.

The centre of the overdue rejuvenation of the Woden area should be the activation of the town square as a community heart, with cafés, restaurants, bars, and al fresco dining around the perimeter, markets and other events catered for in the central space, and an arts centre in the precinct.

The town square needs to become a desired destination in a thriving community. For this to happen, **it is imperative that building heights on the perimeter of the town square are kept at a human scale** (low-rise, i.e. maximum three storeys), and buildings further afield are also limited in height so that overshadowing of the town square is prevented and adverse wind conditions are avoided.

Within the Woden Town Centre and nearby suburbs, **there needs to be a variety of community recreational and sporting facilities for use at affordable cost, if not no cost.** Also, in our continuing cost of living crisis, and the increasing urban infill (which is destroying the bush capital character and liveability of Canberra), the health of the community more than ever requires preservation and excellent upkeep of all school ovals for anybody in the community to freely access out of school hours. We need indoor and outdoor sporting facilities. We need to keep a 50m (Olympic) swimming pool in Phillip. The current Phillip pool and ice-skating rink site should be bought back by the ACT Government, and the reclaimed community site should be redeveloped *in true consultation with the Woden community*, to provide a state-of-the-art 50m (Olympic) swimming pool (can open up to the fresh air in the warmer months, and be closed in for the cooler months), complemented by other valued community facilities, e.g. a hydro-therapy pool, a 25m pool, and a toddler's pool. As it sounds like the future development of an ice-skating rink in Tuggeranong may be in doubt, this suggests that the community could value the redevelopment of a state-of-the-art ice-skating rink in Woden too. For the recreation and safety of the community, in addition we need better maintenance and lighting of sports grounds, upgraded toilets and amenities - including safe, accessible, and hygienic change rooms and showering facilities at sporting venues.

Ease of access to the Woden Town Centre via foot, bicycle, public transport (buses, taxis, ubers), and the private motor vehicle must be accommodated. This means adequate parking for private vehicles must be provided, including for free for specified time periods, and otherwise at a reasonable cost. Parking needs to be close to where people need to get to for services, e.g. medical and other health appointments where personal mobility is a challenge. Consideration must likewise be given to the elderly and those who are mobility impaired, who may need to rely on public transport.

Yours faithfully

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